
An Evaluation Research of the Experiences and Perceptions of teachers and parents regarding Inclusive Education

In collaboration
Between ADRA (Myanmar) and ECDC



Technically supported by
Dr. Lian Kual Sang

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1. Research Background

Based up and in conjunction with Myanmar's National Education Strategic Plan (NESP), SEAQE Myanmar is collaborated with private education actors to promote the inclusive education in the schools and communities. The teachers were trained and improve knowledge/skills on how to use the various teaching methodologies for the children with disabilities. The NESP is a comprehensive, widely-known and evidence-based roadmap intended to reform the entire education sector over five years, from 2016 to 2021.

To examine how the intervention is faring, SEAQE Myanmar has collected the data and types of disabilities from the targeted schools and communities in the 2nd year of the project. It is found that the number of disable children enrolment rate has increased in the targeted Government and ACS schools. It seems the perception of inclusive education among the parents and the teacher's performance has improved after receiving the training from the project.

Encouraged by the result of the data collected in earlier year, ADRA Myanmar has identified ways and innovative approaches which align with the Government Strategies. The SEAQE project was funded by NORAD and ADRA Norway which aims to support marginalized children, youth and women to access quality formal and non-formal education in Kayin State, Myanmar. The SEAQE Project is a partnership of Karen Teachers Working Group and Adventist Community Service in basic education component and, the project collaborates with Government Technological High School, Hpa-An in the TVET component.

Over the phases of implementation, SEAQE has found there is a need/gap still exists in the education programs, especially for the children who have difficulties in physical and mental in both Primary and Secondary level education. In order to get more realistic information on the gaps on access to quality basic education, this research project was proposed and developed. This project attempts to find *'the perceptions and Experiences of Teachers and Parents on inclusive education in the Community schools/ACS in Kayin State, Myanmar'*. The SEAQE project is expected to culminate at the end of 2018. This small research could be termed as an 'Evaluative Research' because it tries to find the gaps and develop strategies to improve the future ADRA programme in Myanmar, especially with regards to inclusive education and ways to promote inclusive education through evidence based.

2. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the research is to find out the perception and the experiences of teachers and parents who received training on inclusive education and what needs or gaps are still remain for the disable children in education.

3. Research Main Objectives and Questions

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are as mentioned follows:

- To document the reasons why so many disable children and youth are out of school (or) what are the barriers for disabled children attending schools?
- To reflect and adapt the approaches/contribution of SEAQE Project to create better inclusive education in Kayin State
- To learn and how to adapt future ADRA Myanmar education programs that address gaps found

Main Research Questions

The main research questions are as follows:

- What are the reasons (or) barriers for children with disabilities in the research area are not at the school?
- What are the results of approaches/contribution of SEAQE Project to create better inclusive education in Kayin State?
- How the approaches/contribution of SEAQE Project be adopted to create better inclusive education in Kayin State? (or) What are the lessons learned? And, how to adapt future ADRA Myanmar education programs that address gaps found?

4. Research Design

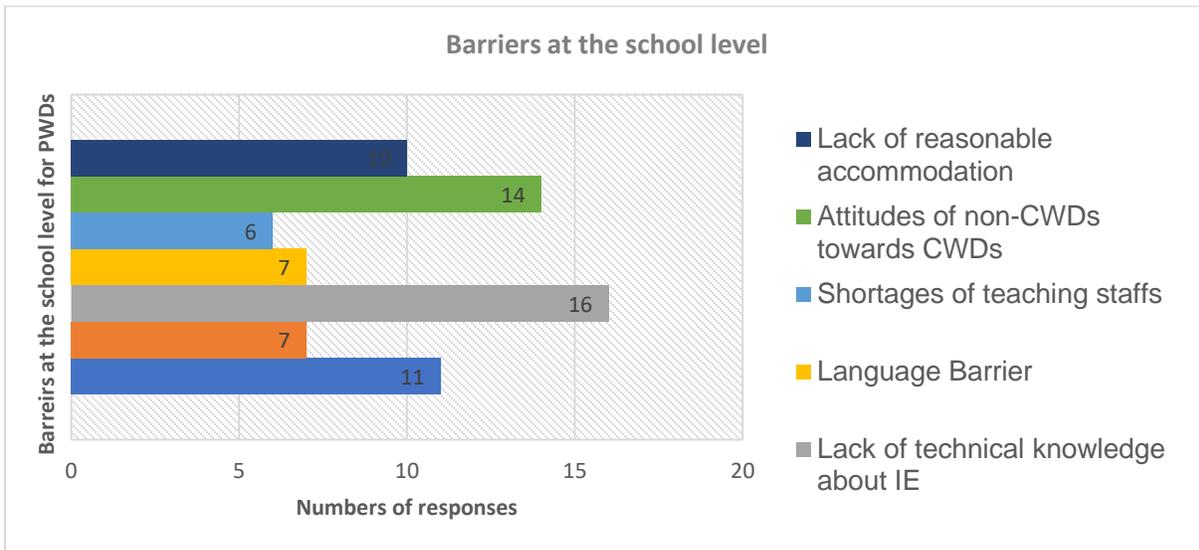
The study data was collected by using the methods of focus group discussion and individual in-depth interview. Regarding the research selects participants from 20 villages stretching three different townships. They are fourteen (14) villages from Hlaingbwe Township, one from Kawkarick and five from Kyainseikgyi Township. The data and information are collected using total four (4) focus group discussions, and 23 in-depth interviews methods. In order to ensure the quality of the data, the research collects data from varying groups such as: Parents sending CWDs to school, Parents who do not send CWDs to schools, CWD students attending at ACS school, CWDs who do not attend school, Government school Teachers, Government School Heads, Township Education Officer, ACS Heads, ACS teachers. The research applies the Purposive Sampling Method using specific criteria in the participants' recruitment process. The data collection team is made up of 3 ECDC staff, 4 ADRA staff and, 3 volunteers. All of them received 2 days trainings on data collection procedures.

Originally, the ECDC and ADRA (Myanmar) scheduled to conduct the research training and start the data collection activity on the 2nd & 3rd weeks of October 2018, allowing plenty of days for the data collection. However, the dates and weeks being fixed for the data collection coincided with examination weeks of the government schools in Kayin State. Therefore, the data collection activities were pressured to complete in the second week of October, using only three days for data collection activities.

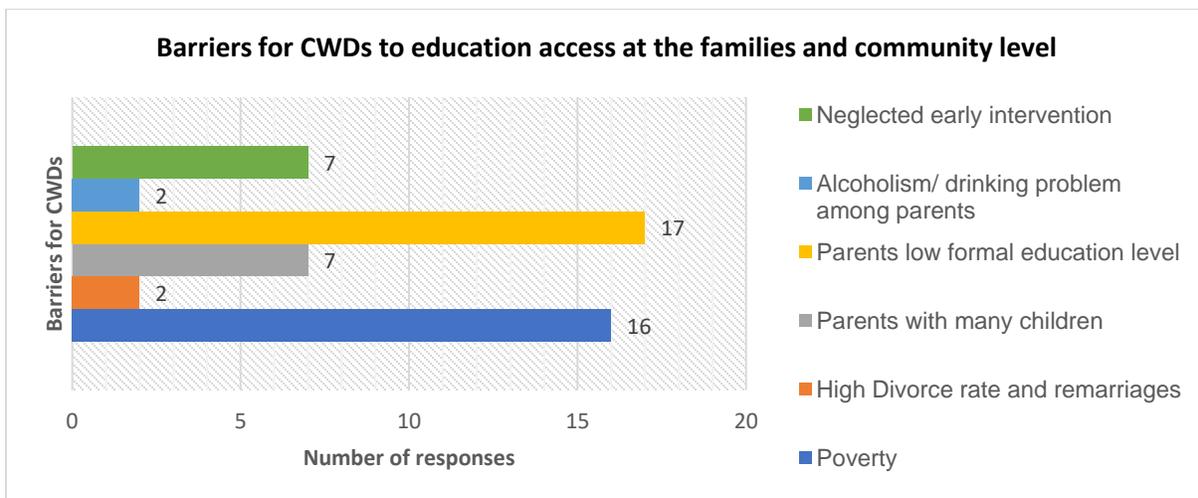
5. Findings

5.1 Findings responding Objective 1 and Question 1

The research identifies there still various barriers remain for CWDs regarding their right and accessibility to education. The research places those barriers into three categories, such as (1) School Level Barriers, (2) Family/Parents and Community Level Barriers, and (3) Policy and Regulatory Barriers. The barriers for CWDs in schools and the numbers of the responses for each barrier are mentioned in the following bar;



Barriers for CWDs to education access at the families and community level and the numbers of the responses for each barrier are mentioned in the following bar;

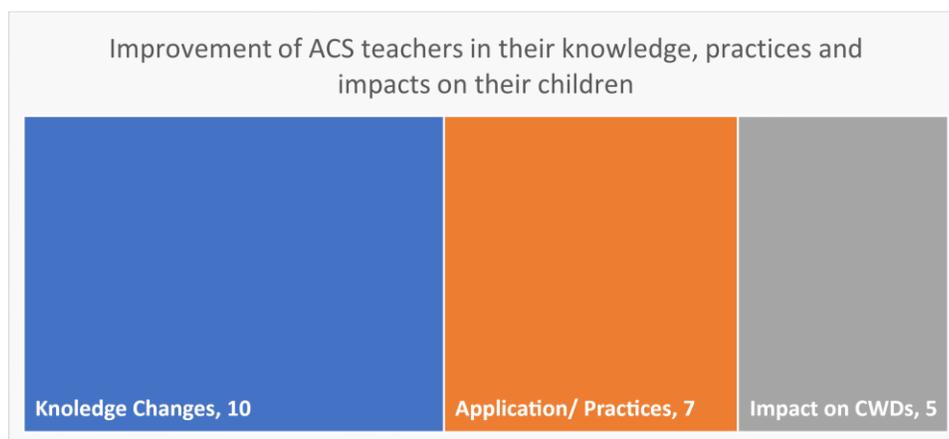


Policies and law related to inclusion education have come out at the national level. According to 9 respondents, there is no specific guidelines and any action taken by the policy level and decision makers for the purpose that CWDs in Kayin State can access and engage in mainstream education. It is found that this lack of guideline and action at the policy level is one of the biggest barriers.

5.2 Findings responding Objective 2 and Question 2

5.2.1 Effectiveness of SENs trainings

To know effective of trainings, we study improvement of ACS teachers in their knowledge, practices and impacts on their children through attending Special Needs Education trainings provided by ADRA. We have found the achievements as follows;



The research also finds SEAQE project has some positive impacts especially on the ACS teachers and ACS heads, and CWDs who attend ACS schools. However, the project impacts on other groups such as the parents of CWDs, community and non-disabled school children are relatively insignificant. Even among the ACS schools and its teachers, the ability or/and extent to implement what they learned for the trainings are restraint by factors that are beyond the schools and teachers' control. They've learned and know about inclusive education and the right of CWDs but, their ability to implement and take action on the knowledge, that empower and accommodate the CWDs are, restraint. Except the ACS teachers and heads, the awareness and knowledge on issues related to disability, equal opportunity to education and inclusive education are very limited among groups participating in the research.

5.2.2 Different between ACS teachers and Government teachers

5.2.2.1 ACS Schools (Heads/Teachers)

It appears many ACS teachers (who attended trainings under SEAQE program) gained limited knowledge with regard to Inclusive Education. But to be fair, most roughly know they need to pay attention to and accommodate the CWDs. Below are some comments that reflect ‘the acquired knowledge regarding disability and inclusive education, and the applications of what the teachers learned from the trainings

“we used paper to make pets such as dogs, birds etc to explain the children...we applied various methods to accommodate....(we) also tell stories for their moral and emotional development..”
(ACS teacher & ACS head)

“We arrange different methods of assessment for a child (CWD)..” (another ACS Head)

” Before training the teachers wish to separate the CWDs from the none disabled children but after receiving training they know they should be in the same class... before attending training we just say the blind but after trainings we say “ visually impaired’.” (ACS teacher)

“Every child has the right to Education, the CWDs is no different. He/she should have equal opportunity for education: (ACS teacher)

However, it is interesting to learn some ACS teachers still think the CWDs should be better separated from other children and teach them separately.

” In my class there is only one CWD, if there are 5 or more CWDs I think it is better to separate them for other children and teach them separately..”(ACS teacher)

One interesting finding is that some teachers could not exactly name the approaches, methods; concepts are exactly learned under the SEAQE program. For instance an ACS teacher says.

“I attended trainings organized by ADRA but I could not exactly tell what topics they taught now, I do not remember what have been taught there”(ACS teacher)

5.2.2. 3 Government schools (Teachers. Heads/official)

The teachers, the school head, and official have limited technical knowledge about disability and, lacking experiences in teaching CWDs in classrooms with none-CWDs (also see 6.1.10). They don't know how to teach and communicate with CWDs in appropriate ways. Some of them even do not know types of disability clearly.

“The challenges were many. When I taught the child with hearing impairment, I couldn't explain about teaching. I asked her to learn by heart. She wrote words by looking with her eyes. Her spelling wasn't correct. Since she didn't understand meanings of words, she couldn't write properly”. (In-depth Interview, government school teacher)

The teachers and officials think the children with disability should attend special school education. (see also 6.1.9)

“If CWDs were taught in special schools by special teachers, these children would be taken more care. We were afraid that we weren't able to take sufficient care of them (CWDs) because we had to look after both CWDs and non-CWD.” (In-depth interview, government school teacher).

Interestingly, a school head appears to have a degree of knowledge about CWDs. This head of the school head have learned from trainings provided by Eden.

“In the past, the school ignored the disabled children, but now we take CWDs to the school, some CWDs could not catch up with other children but we do not force them let them study in their own paces, we try to accommodate them.... (head who received trainings -government school)

*The analysis in section 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 indicates there is difference between the ACS school and government schools in term of their knowledge and actions concerning IE for CWDs. It is noteworthy that even a little training can have impact on the training participant, example of the government school head, who happened to have attended IE training.

5.3 Findings responding Objective 3 and Question 3

It is found that there is the need for more and tailored trainings aimed for schools, teachers, parents, community and the students (both CWDs and non- disabled). In addition, an increased in advocacy efforts and activities, technical and other means of supports are found to be needed for the teachers and at the schools.

The research is fully mindful of Myanmar current social, political, economic environments. It's also aware of the fact that project like SEAQE operates in a very restricted environment plus, is working with limited resources. Based on the research finding and, consideration of the prevailing situation of the country, the research proposes ADRA to focus on (1) Awareness and Advocacy efforts aiming at both government agencies, parents, donor agencies and a wider public. This includes targeting of the decision makers for diplomacy and evidence-based approaches regarding the implementation of NESP, (2) Provision of better and well-designed trainings for various stakeholders, and (3) Mainstreaming disability issue into its education programs as a cross-cutting issue. This may include but not limited to the allocation of specific budget for Inclusive Education for CWDs in its programs and, endeavor to reduce school level barriers and family/ community level barriers.

6. Recommendations

Poverty, high divorce rate and other prevailing social problems in the community and, various factors poise as barriers to CWDs inclusion in education. What this research would like to suggest is this. ADRA's strategy and plan need to be closely linked with two aspects. The first is to address the "School level barriers and, secondly to increase awareness/advocacy campaign on disability and inclusive education that targets the parents, students and at community level and beyond. School level barriers are much influenced by the Education Department policies, regulation and other supports. Specific methods under two suggested perspectives are as below

To focus more on Advocacy

The research highlights there is the need to increase advocacy activities. There need to be clearly stated: strategy, course of actions and the methods aiming at the immediate stakeholders including donor agencies, if possible the society. As highlighted in section 7.1, all stakeholders except ACS school heads and teachers do not have sufficient knowledge on issues related to CWDs and inclusive education.

To increase the numbers of target groups for trainings and capacity buildings

Advocacy activities alone cannot be that effective in passing the knowledge of Inclusive education and the right of CWDs to people. The advocacy activities need to be followed by trainings. Here, proposed trainings must be tailored according to the type of trainings participants. Training made

up with suitable contents could be a powerful tool to impart important knowledge that can easily be translated into actions.

Capacity building trainings are to be arranged and tailored for the teachers, parents, CWDs, non-disabled children and people across community. The community and the immediate family of CWDs understanding on CWDs and inclusive education are important. Because the family and community desirable/ positive attitudes will affect the time, resources and sacrifices that the immediate family members, community and teachers are willing to make and, further the degree of advocacy efforts they would like and could put in, in order to ensure the children with disability receive the education to which they are entitled to.

More funding and other supports

Of course, the effectiveness of Advocacy efforts and trainings will be clipped unless appropriate funding and other supports are available to the community, schools, parents, teachers, CWDs and other students. This research finds that significant barriers to equal education are an inadequate system of learning support and inadequate training and support .Therefore, allocating specific budget for the mainstreaming of disability into education programs to implement inclusive education more effectively and more widely. Developing of indicators related to disability should be included into the programs and projects developed to measure how these projects and programs can reach out to CWDs concerning inclusive education.

Try to provide reasonable accommodation

It is recommended in line with Article 24, Paragraph 2 (c) that at least the school should provide reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities regarding their engagement in their schools and classroom settings. Although some actions taken for the purpose of reasonable accommodations may be costly, however some may not be. They depend upon teachers' classroom management skills and their attitudes towards disability. Some reasonable accommodations can be created by using local resources.

Early intervention for holistic development of CWDs

As a strong recommendation for the future of ADRA Program, actions for early intervention for CWDs should be taken for developing potentials of CWDs to their extent as much as possible in line with National Strategic Plan for early Childhood Intervention because it focused on both education and health (NSPECI:2017-2021)

Ministry of Education, Schools/Teachers taking leadership

The Ministry of Education and the schools need to be serious about the inclusion in education. The ministry needs to lay out guidance, regulatory requirements for all schools in the country and, design and offer trainings for teachers and schools across country. ADRA is in a good position to advocate and, work with the Education sector. This ministry is in fact crucially important. It proposes, establishes and amends policy, regulation, guidelines. Funding and budgeting will follow as the regulation dictates.

As a consequence of funding problems, schools lack resources and face budget constraints. This may lead them to discriminate or not be able to provide sufficient supporting environment to CWDs.. The education teachers and officials need clear directives and timetables on how to proceed. These directives should clearly state what is expected of schools and how they should accomplish these goals. If the Education department wants schools to address barriers to learning such as poverty or a lack of parental support, they should suggest the steps by which schools are to do this. Included in these methods should be timelines for expected progress. If the expectations are not met, clearly state the penalties that will be given for those schools that do not make acceptable progress.

Acknowledge the challenges

It is also fundamentally important to realize the challenge is huge in the implementation of inclusive education in a poor country like Myanmar. The support system and funding are, in current country situation, very limited. Therefore, any organizations that are engaging in the field of Inclusive Education should be aware of the fact of an enormous task that exists before them. Patience, hard works and good planning and strategies are much needed.

7. Limitations of the Research

The following limitations would have effect on this research project;

- Interview Settings
- Language barriers
- Transportation and communication
- Insufficient time for the research process

- Limited knowledge of participants about inclusive education

8. References

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Acronym and abbreviation

No.	Acronym & Abbreviation	Full description
1	ACS	Adventist Community Service
2	ACS school	ACS supported school
3	ACS Teacher	Teacher from ACS supported school
4	ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
5	CWDs	Children With Disabilities
6	ECDC	Eden Center for Disabled Children
7	FGD	Focus Group Discussion
8	IE	Inclusive Education
9	NSPECI (2017-2021)	National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Intervention
10	NESP	National Education Strategic Plan
11	Non-CWDs	Non-children with disabilities
12	SEAQE	Strengthening Education Access, Quality and Equity
13	Stakeholders	Government Agencies, Schools (both ACS & Government), parents (CWDs & non CWDs), CWDs and non CWDs, Community, Funding Agencies, Professionals
14	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training