

# SEEding Opportunities for Education and Employment in Myanmar

Myanmar | Duration: June 2022 - December 2024 | Implementing partners: Not disclosed

## The Challenge

The ongoing conflict since Myanmar's February 2021 coup has particularly impacted several ethnic areas in the country's southeast, where intensified military offensives and airstrikes have caused widespread internal displacement, especially in mountainous border districts. Newly displaced civilians join long-term IDPs from previous decades of conflict, and together with host communities, they struggle with severely limited access to mother-tongue education, vocational training, and traditional livelihood opportunities. The situation is especially dire for local education departments, which face challenges in continuing to offer education to children. Protection services are primarily provided by civil society organizations and service providers, in the absence of an accepted national authority.

## The Solution

This project supported children, youth, and unemployed IDPs and host community members in Myanmar, across the full spectrum of educational opportunities, from basic education through to vocational skills training in a number of Myanmar's most widely-spoken languages. It employed information communications technology (ICT) for blended learning to reach hard-to-access children in challenging political and security contexts, while reinforcing protection services through increased awareness and establishing Community-Based Child Protection Groups. The project promoted peacebuilding and pluralism using a toolbox containing multilingual resources for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and community-based civil society groups. Additionally, it capitalized on an innovative market systems development approach, documenting outcomes and developing a case study to equip stakeholders with tools for implementing MSD in similar contexts.



# What Made This a Promising Practice?

The project pioneered innovative approaches in several areas. First, the use of low-cost tablets with solar chargers and portable offline servers provided multilingual e-learning without internet access, crucial in conflict settings where traveling to urban centers is dangerous. Second, the project fostered collaboration between community-based organizations and small businesses to implement peace and pluralism initiatives, stimulating cross-pollination between sectors. Finally, the practice explored equitable partnerships with international private sector actors, including a private-sector e-learning provider, moving beyond traditional contracting approaches to create innovative perspectives and expertise in sustainable business models.

## The Response

- **Digital training sustainability:** The project explored nominal pricing for courses to increase perceived value, tiered service structures, and diversified income through alternative revenue streams like sponsorship and sustainable advertising.
- **Child protection without de facto authorities:** A strong collaborative network of local protection actors, humanitarian organizations, and the Protection Cluster was formed to sustain child protection services. Community members took active roles in safeguarding children, with Community-Based Child Protection Groups leading efforts.
- **Youth migration challenges:** The project faced difficulties in increasing employment for IDPs due to youth migration to Thailand and other countries. In response, the focus expanded to include adults, and seed grants for entrepreneurial activities were increased from US\$350 to US\$700-\$1,000 to address high inflation.

## Lessons Learned

The project demonstrated that sustainability required exploring business approaches to digital training, including pricing strategies and diverse revenue streams. For child protection, strong collaborative networks and community ownership proved essential when working without formal authorities. The project also highlighted the importance of adapting to migration patterns by expanding target populations and providing more substantial start-up support for entrepreneurs in an inflationary environment. Involving education departments in technology adoption helped advance the sustainability of project outcomes.

## Key Results

### Education & Technology:

- Provided low-cost tablets with solar chargers and portable offline servers to enable multilingual e-learning without internet access
- Combined traditional teaching with technology-enhanced learning to reach children in conflict-affected areas
- Improved learning system interfaces and addressed digital literacy challenges by leveraging tech-savvy students' expertise

### Economic Development:

- Collaborated with international and local private sector actors to adapt business toolboxes for MSMEs in high-conflict environments
- Supported businesses to contribute to conflict transformation and assist those affected by internal displacement
- Introduced new business models for MSMEs and Employment Agencies operating in conflict-affected areas

### Protection & Empowerment:

- Established Community-Based Child Protection Groups to strengthen referral systems and case management
- Involved state education and cultural departments to ensure their buy-in for tablet-based teaching
- Expanded target population to include training and employment activities for adult community members who couldn't migrate



## **LiD** Lives in Dignity GRANT FACILITY

The Lives in Dignity (LiD) Grant Facility was an EU-funded initiative managed by UNOPS that promoted development-oriented approaches in forced displacement settings. With €24 million allocated between 2021–2025, the Facility supported 14 innovative, multi-stakeholder projects across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Its flexible funding model empowered local actors, strengthened partnerships, and fostered integrated programming across five key areas: livelihoods, service delivery, housing and spatial planning, protection, and disaster- and climate-related mobility. The Facility prioritized community-led solutions, localization, and social cohesion, advancing sustainable development for both displaced populations and host communities. **Find out more at** [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/programming/programmes/lives-dignity-grant-facility\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/programming/programmes/lives-dignity-grant-facility_en)