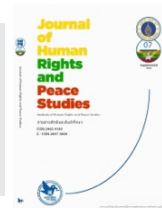




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Violence Against Children: the Practice of Corporal Punishment in Primary Schools of Myanmar

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ABSTRACT

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All forms of violence against children are becoming a national issue in Myanmar, framed in terms of violations of children's rights. Corporal punishment is a common form of violence experienced by pupils at all ages, although it is most often found in primary schools. Based on the international provisions on the rights of the child, the new 2019 Children Rights Law prohibits corporal punishment. Despite this, corporal punishment and other forms of violence are still widespread in Myanmar. This can be explained by the existence of strong socio-cultural factors, attitudes and beliefs which consider physical punishment a normal part of a child's education, both within the family and at school. The article builds on fieldwork carried out in Mandalay, including interviews with teachers and other school professionals, parents, and government officials. The article documents the reality of corporal punishment in schools from the point of view of the school professionals and parents. It analyses the main issues at stake in relation to the international and domestic human rights frameworks on the protection of children against all forms of violence. The findings of this study contribute to a better understanding of corporal punishment in schools, and proposes a focus on various initiatives to secure a safe learning environment for children, such as a code of conduct and ethical rules for teachers, and training in human rights and child protection as well as in alternative classroom management.

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Introduction

Violence in schools is one of the most visible forms of violence against children. It is related to various factors, including gender and social norms and wider structural and contextual factors such as income inequality, deprivation, marginalisation and conflict (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2011). Violence against children in school settings is common in many countries and comprises physical violence, including corporal punishment, psychological violence, including verbal abuse, sexual violence, including rape and harassment, and bullying (UNESCO, 2017). The academic literature shows that harsh corporal punishment and school-based violence are still a common feature of contemporary educational systems (Garner, 2014). The most common form of corporal punishment reported by children in the literature is to be beaten by their teachers with hands or a variety of objects, including sticks, straps and wooden boards on virtually every part of their bodies, although the hands, arms, head, and buttocks are common targets. They are subject to corporal punishment when they have not done their homework, for poor exam results or being disobedient, for example by coming late to class, bringing a cell phone to school, running in the hallway, sleeping in class, answering questions incorrectly, having an inappropriate manner, using bad language, not bringing a text book, making noise in class, etc. (Gershoff, 2017, p. 224). Violence against children in school is facilitated by socio-cultural norms that justify its use as a way of disciplining and building children's character (Ssenyonga et al., 2018, p. 435).

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989), violence against children refers to “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse” (Art.19, para 1). Although Myanmar ratified the CRC in 1991, Section 66 of the now repealed 1993 Child Law allowed for a form of “admonition by a parent or teacher... which is for the benefit of the child”. In addition, Section 89 of the 1861 Penal Code, which is still in force, states that: “nothing which is done in good faith for the benefit of a person under 12 years of age... is an offence by reason of any harm which it may cause.” As a result of a legal

reform, made in cooperation with UNICEF, in 2019 Myanmar repealed the 1993 Child Law. Article 69 of the New 2019 Child Rights Law provides that “Parents, guardians and teachers shall guide the child to foster the habits of compliance with conduct or discipline described in Section 68 without using any type of punitive measures including corporal punishment”.

This article analyses the factors that explain the challenges seen in implementation of the new legislation and also looks at the key measures required to protect children against all forms of violence in primary school, taking into consideration the changing needs and context of Myanmar. The purpose of this work is to support the development of schools and of teachers’ professional conduct in a way that fulfils the objective of a safe learning environment in primary schools, as stated in the 2019 Child Rights Law.

The article builds on evidence from a qualitative study, envisaged as “multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive naturalistic approach to its subject matter” (Creswell, 1998). The article surveys international children’s rights standards as well as relevant domestic standards, such as the new Child Rights Law (2019), the Basic Education Law (2019) and the Penal code (1860) in order to understand the legal situation of children in relation to school corporal punishment. This is supplemented by a review of relevant scholarship and publications by international organization such as UNICEF and UNESCO, and by international NGOs working with children’s rights. This desk-based review informs the tracing, collection and critical analysis of the empirical data. For the case study, we selected three public primary schools in Mandalay and collected data through interviews. The purpose of interviews was to understand the actual situation on the ground for principals, teachers and parents, and to identify and analyse challenges related to the implementation of the two new 2019 laws. A total of 21 persons were interviewed:

- Three senior officials: one Director and one Deputy Director of the Department of Basic Education, and one Township Education Officer from the department of Basic Education (identified as Expert 1, 2 ,3)
- Three Principals from each of the three public primary schools (identified as Principal 1, 2, 3);

- Three teachers from each of the three public schools (identified as Teacher 1 to 9): they all had at least fifteen years of service;
- Two parents or guardians from each of the three public schools (identified as Parent 1 to 6).

The Coronavirus situation forced some modifications to interview plans: after getting prior permission, sixteen interviewees were interviewed face-to-face, in a socially-distanced way, while remaining interviews took place remotely, on the phone or by email. When interviews were made by e-mail, there was however no chance to ask follow up questions to responses or to understand their motives. Prior to interviews, the consent of the interviewee was recorded through a signed consent form and some interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewees.

The goal of the interviews was to get an understanding of the everyday experiences of teachers and parents as well as of their level of awareness of the legal framework around corporal punishment and its consequences. The topic of violence in primary schools is sensitive and it can be difficult to get schoolteachers to admit they have failed to protect vulnerable pupils. Interviews therefore contained indirect questions to teachers, such as: “Have you ever witnessed severe beating of pupils by your colleagues?” or “How do you think verbal scolding and beating can affect the mental and physical development of children?” Some questions related to their awareness of international and national human rights protection afforded to children, while others addressed the further physical and mental development of children.

There is little existing research conducted using interviews with teachers and parents, asking directly about their understanding of corporal punishment and its consequences. Notably, this article does not address sexual violence within the school setting as it was deemed too sensitive and is generally well hidden and difficult to persuade people to discuss it. This is, of course, a major limitation to this case study.

Prohibition in international human rights law of violence against children, including corporal punishment

Article 19 of the CRC guarantees the protection of children from all forms of physical and mental violence. In addition, Article 37 protects children from cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment. Article 28 (2) of the CRC states that “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention”. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has consistently argued that such punishments constitute a violation of the rights of the child and a denial of children’s integrity (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2007). Since 2006, the UN has worked actively and at the highest level to combat violence against children, seeking to put “an end to adult justification of violence against children, whether accepted as ‘tradition’ or disguised as ‘discipline’” (United Nations General Assembly, 2006). It must be noted that violence against children is also targeted by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG Goal 16 and target 16.2 highlight the need to work towards ending “abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.” At the regional level, ASEAN adopted a Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Children in 2013 and the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children, 2016-2025, providing a comprehensive roadmap to implement the Declaration. Furthermore, in 2016 the ASEAN Guiding Principles highlighted that no violence against children is justifiable and that all violence against children is preventable (ASEAN, 2016).

Frequent and severe violence, including emotional abuse and humiliation in school, remains widespread throughout the world (Lansdown, 2006). Violence is also perpetrated by children against other children and by children against teachers, and it is equally important to challenge such behaviour (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] & UNESCO, 2007). Worldwide, 40% of all countries legally accept the use of physical punishment in the education context (Ssenyonga et al., 2018, p. 435). Myanmar legally permits the use of physical punishment as noted in the Penal Code 1860 providing “nothing which is done in

good faith for the benefit of a person under twelve years of age ..., of the guardian or other person having lawful charge of that person, is an offence by reason of any harm which it may cause, or be intended by the doer to cause, or be known by the doer to be likely to cause, to that person”(U Thet Phae, 2000)⁴ (date. The frequent use of violence is more likely to occur in low- and lower-middle-income countries (Kaltenbach et al., 2017, pp. 35-53).

A recent UNESCO report explains that school-related violence in all its forms is an infringement of children’s and adolescents’ rights to education and to health and well-being (UNESCO, 2019). Studies of the consequences of corporal punishment show that it carries multiple risks of harm and has no long-term benefits and long-term negative impacts on children (Gershoff, 2002, pp. 539-579). The literature on school-based violence highlights some important questions relating to the capacity of children to learn and the ability of teachers to practice (Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020, p. 69). Corporal punishment is for instance a predictor of depression, unhappiness, anxiety and feelings of hopelessness in children and youth (Deb & Subhasis, 2010, p. 5). Recent research on physical, psychological and social impact of school violence on children confirms that violence against children is a significant cause of physical problems, psychological distress, permanent physical disability and long-term physical or mental ill-health (Ferrara et al., 2019; Volungis & Goodman, 2017). More recently, UNESCO has noted that physical or corporal punishment carries serious repercussions for the student’s mental and physical health: it has been linked to slow development of social skills, depression, anxiety, aggressive behaviour and a lack of empathy or caring for others (UNESCO, 2019).

Corporal punishment also breeds resentment and hostility, making good teacher-student and student-student relationships difficult to maintain in the classroom. It makes the teachers’ work harder, less rewarding and immensely frustrating. Furthermore, it neglects to teach students how to think critically, make sound moral decisions, cultivate inner

⁴ Concerning Section-89, Myanmar legal Scholar U Thet Phae mentioned in his Criminal Law Manual that it can be assumed that the use of corporal punishment by the guardian or teacher are permitted as the way of character building for the interests of the children” by citing the case of *King-Emperor vs Ma Ba Thaung* (1925, Vol. 3 Yangon 661).

control, and respond to life's circumstances and frustrations in a non-violent way. Such punishment shows students that the use of verbal, physical or emotional force is acceptable, especially when it is directed at younger, weaker individuals (UNESCO, 2019). An educative process in which violence is learned in childhood, through the experience of corporal punishment, may have lifelong effects and is internalized as a normal method of interacting with others (Fry, 2016, p. 13). Research indicates that violence perpetrated by teachers is a harmful experience associated with "physical injuries, child aggressing and antisocial behaviour and depression and posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms" (Ssenyonga et al., 2018, p. 435). A Myanmar teacher shared his experience that those who are subject to corporal punishment "inevitably start to bully others, the child who is being hurt will hurt others" (Mudditt, 2013).

School-based violence against children in Myanmar

According to several case-studies, corporal punishment and the use of violence are part of the culture and are perceived as the most useful of pedagogical tools for the majority of teachers (UNESCO, 2017). With reference to Aung Thein Kyaw's parenting book, Jessica Mudditt stated that violence towards children is common practice and an accepted part of Myanmar culture – including in schools, where teachers use caning and other painful techniques to discipline students (Mudditt, 2013). Win Han Oo also points out that some stories of "King Min Don and dried fish" told in all Myanmar primary schools, and often referred to by teachers and parents alike, support corporal punishment (Win, 2015, p. 395). This shows that in Myanmar, as everywhere, school-based violence is not a problem confined to schools but a complex, multifaceted societal issue. Schools are social spaces within which the power relationships, domination and discrimination practices of the community and wider society are reflected. Violence against children in schools is linked to socio-cultural traditions, political agendas, the weakness of education systems, community practices, and to global macroeconomics (United Nations General Assembly, 2006).

This situation is reflected in the law in Myanmar. Section 89 of the Penal Code states

that “nothing which is done in good faith for the benefit of a person under twelve years of age ..., of the guardian or other person having lawful charge of that person, is an offence by reason of any harm which it may cause, or be intended by the doer to cause, or be known by the doer to be likely to cause, to that person” (The Penal Code, Section 89). For instance, in the case of *King-Emperor vs Ma Ba Thaung* (1925, Vol. 3 Yangon 661), the court held that it is permitted for the teacher to use corporal punishment to maintain discipline in school and to ensure that the child learns. The Court furthermore considered that the use of corporal punishment does not amount to intentionally hurting the child. It is considered socially acceptable. However, an old case shows that the teacher who uses corporal punishment in anger and without compassion may be punished. In the case of *Maung Kyaw Swe vs Union* (1966), pupil Maung Kyaw Swe threw sand in a bathroom that was used by the school headmaster, U Kaung Wah, thinking that he was throwing sand on a friend. As a result, the headmaster was angry and beat the student 14-15 times with a flat bamboo cane. The pupil was injured and hospitalised. In this case, the court considered that the headmaster’s use of corporal punishment was abusive and caused the student some hurt. The headmaster was punished under Section 323 of the Penal Code. The case decided in 1966 is remarkable and definitely compatible with international human rights norms for the protection of children from all forms of physical and mental violence, and consistent with the provision that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child’s human dignity.(Article-19 and Article-28 (2)of the CRC).

As a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and a member of ASEAN, Myanmar should take appropriate measures to ensure protection of children from all forms of violence, injury, abuse and neglect, to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the dignity of the child. In 2012, the CRC recommended that the state of Myanmar “ensures that legal provisions prohibiting corporal punishment in school were effectively implemented and that legal proceedings were systematically initiated against those responsible for ill-treating children” (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2012, para 53-54). The Committee also asked that the provisions of the Child Law and the Penal Code authorizing corporal punishment be withdrawn and that the state

of Myanmar prohibit “unequivocally by law and without any further delay corporal punishment in all settings, including the family, penal institutions, and alternative care settings” (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2012, para 53-54). They also advised that “public education, awareness-raising and social mobilization programmes involving children, families, communities and religious leaders on both the physical and psychological harmful effects of corporal punishment” be strengthened, “with a view to changing the general attitude towards this practice and promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment” (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2012, para 53-54). This is in line with literature in the field of corporal punishment that recommends legislative reform banning corporal punishment, education about the negative consequences of corporal punishment, provision of alternative discipline methods, and allowing possibilities to report the use of corporal punishment and appropriate penalties (Kaltenbach et al., 2018, pp. 35-53).

In 2019 the adoption of a new Child Rights Law demonstrated Myanmar’s efforts to align national policies and regulatory frameworks with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Section 3(v) and (w) of the Child Rights Law clearly define all forms of physical and mental violence against children; corporal punishment is recognized as a form of either physical or mental violence against children. Section 56 provides that no one shall commit violence against children. Section 100 provides that anyone who commits physical or mental violence, including corporal punishment, shall be punished by one to six months imprisonment, or by one to a fine of 300,000 Kyats, or by both. Section 69 of the Child Rights Law states that children are not to be subject to corporal punishment, but are to be guided by telling them how to behave. In addition, Section 40 of the 2019 Basic Education Law states that by building constructive teacher-student relationships students are to be taught in a way which does not hurt them physically or mentally.

The 2019 Child Rights Law is a positive legal reform which sets generally higher standards for safeguarding the rights of children in all circumstances, especially by providing a legal framework to protect children from violence. Section 70 of this law reiterates that the state holds the primary responsibility to protect the child against violence in school by

taking the necessary measures to remove the cultural barriers driving violence and abuse in the school environment, posed by both individuals or school communities.

Case study: the lack of implementation of the law

The following interview data show that the situation is in reality very different from the goals of the international and domestic legal framework on the protection of children against violence.

School rules and class management

Teachers working in stressful conditions and overcrowded classrooms indicate that they sometime have difficulties to manage their class. One principal interviewed reported: “it is not easy to control students from different family backgrounds and different environments” (interview with Principal 3) and one expert said “it is more difficult to control children who are spoiled by their parents” (interview with Expert 3). For teachers with big classes, verbal threats or beating the table with a cane is a very common and generally accepted way of managing the class without it necessarily leading to corporal punishment.

All schools have rules that must be respected. They include attending classes regularly, no fighting, wearing formal clothes, not carrying mobile phones or valuable items, not dyeing hair, not stealing , etc (interviews with headmasters). Teachers and headmaster say that, when school rules are not obeyed by pupils, “we inform their parents and get their agreement not to do that again, and sometimes beat the students at their parents’ request” (interview with Principle-2,3 and Teacher-4,6). It must be added that there are no comprehensive internal rules which describe the obligations of the teachers, such as the prohibition of corporal punishment. According to our interviews, each school has formed an “Association of school actors and parents”, which meets but has not adopted a code of conduct. The association seeks to support and cooperate with the school actors in some activities of the school, but are not likely to be involved in school discipline. Indeed, it should be a forum where they are able to discuss and develop a code of conduct that can guarantee the absence of the use of corporal punishment against children.

Corporal punishment

When asked which common forms of punishment are practiced in school, one teacher said: “scolding, sitting/standing while holding or pulling ears in view of all classmates, pulling hair, hitting on the head, etc” (interview with Teacher 6) These punishments are implemented for various reasons, such as not paying attention, failure to do homework, causing disruption in class, falling asleep, not following school regulations, not obeying instructions of the teachers, failing to achieve high marks in tests, etc. Five out of the nine teachers said that “beating pupils for misbehaving in class is for their own good.” Some principals justified these reactions by stating that it “may be that teachers could not control their anger or did not want the child to resist. Sometimes teachers might use corporal punishment because they are under stress.” (interview with Principals 1 and 3) Only one teacher sought to prevent such punishments: “I try to remind my colleagues not to do it when I see that they are severely beating their pupils. I think using corporal punishment depends on one’s individual mindset” (interview with Teacher-4). This shows that teachers’ attitudes towards the use of verbal threats and corporal punishment is generally positive with such approaches considered a necessity in the education of a child and the managing of the classroom. Principals 2 and 3 explained that “students would ignore school rules if we did not beat them and would use them only for their own benefit.” Teachers also explained that they have to beat students when they fight with each other, especially when parents of injured children ask them to beat the children who injured their own child. Our case study also shows that half of the teachers consider that corporal punishment also helps with their teaching: they regularly use it for minor bad behaviour, such as answering a question wrongly, being late to class, having forgotten to do homework, or even bad handwriting. The reason is that teachers traditionally believed that the use of physical punishment is effective and the only way to maintain school discipline. It should also be noted that teachers sometimes resort to psychological violence, scolding pupils by calling them names such as stupid, troublemaker, etc. as this form of punishment is somehow seen as socially acceptable.

Interviews with parents show that 80% of them ask the teacher to beat their child

when they misbehave in school. One teacher reported that a parent asked him to beat his child until it was painful, which also suggests possible violence in family settings. Parents consider that there is a need for corporal punishment by both parents and teachers in many cases of child misbehaviour to change the behaviour of the child, such as when results at school are poor. Corporal punishment may also be the simple result of anger and cumulative stress to which teachers are subject. . They consider that corporal punishment is an efficient form of punishment. This is supported by other interviews, where school professionals have said: “We wouldn’t be able to control students without corporal punishment” (Expert 3 and Principal 2). Parents and school professionals believe that corporal punishment is essential to make children improve their behaviour: therefore beating a child for misbehaving in class is considered a normal way to build his character. This attitude fits with the traditional norm that says “Listen to what parents and teachers say” and “keep children in order from an early age”: corporal punishment by adults is completely accepted and integrated as a method of education from primary school.

In summary, our interviews consistently show that the use of violence and corporal punishment are part of school culture and are perceived as the most useful of educational tools by the majority of parents and teachers.

Legal Awareness of School Actors and Parents

When asked about the 2019 Child Rights Law and the Basic Education Law, 75% of school professionals interviewed said that they “don’t know exactly the provisions, and that there is no formal instruction issued by the [Department of Basic Education of the Ministry of Education]. But we have learned, by hearsay and from social media like Facebook, that beating the children will be punished with six months’ imprisonment” (teacher interviews). Some teachers mentioned that their headmaster had occasionally shared such information during meetings. Only two of six parents interviewed knew (but not clearly) about the legislation prohibiting the use of violence.

The opinions of teachers on these new provisions revealed that the biggest challenge for them was that they “have not received any training in alternative ways of

character building or disciplining pupils and want that kind of training from the Ministry of Education” (interviews with teachers 1,2 and 3). In addition, teachers reported that they “are willing to have training on human rights education and child protection because we have only received teaching methodology trainings (for respective subjects) offered by the Department of Basic Education” (teacher interviews).

Finally, the interviews show that a minority of parents do not like their children being beaten by teachers (Principal 1 and teacher 4). Headmasters receive significant complaints from parents related to harsh corporal punishment by teachers against their children. Principal 2 explained that when such complaints occur, he negotiates with the guardians or parents of the child and the teacher until they reach agreement. As a result, cases relating to corporal punishment are rarely reported higher up in the hierarchy. This is confirmed by public officials in charge of the handling of complaints who said that most complaints concerned quarrels between pupils (Expert 1) or discrimination in class seating plans (Expert 3). Finally, one parent said that she dared not complain about the teacher because she was concerned that her child might be ignored or not favoured by the teacher.

According to the interview data analysis, it is rooted the practice of corporal punishment against the children in the Myanmar education system, for example since the past when the parents take their children to the monastery schools of the villages, they have to let the Monk beat and give any punishment their children if the children do not obey the discipline. It is also found that some contents in the textbooks like the story, the moto encouraging the practice of physical punishment against the school children. The policy makers should raise the issue the corporal punishment in schools and eliminate all causes of corporal punishment in schools.

In 2104, the Ministry of Education made some positive reform to include the civic education in the curriculum in order to pursue the objective of National Education Law. It clearly provides the curriculum should be the production of good citizen who value democratic and human rights standards. On the other hand, the teachers have the responsibilities to develop democratic practices. However, in practice, teachers have no enough training about human rights education in order to launch the civic education

effectively. The educational campaign programs for teachers should be promoted in the current education system to end the violent against children in school setting.

In addition, it is claimed that the current education system needs to promote the education through human rights in the class room practically. All stake holders should emphasis for the development of the code of conduct in the public schools, which reflect the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms , for example to respect the other's opinion, to express their though freely, to protect the child against violence in school environment, etc. Thus, the authority should implement the

Conclusion and recommendations

Our fieldwork confirms some particularities around the prevention of violence against children in primary schools I Myanmar. It confirms that verbal threats and physical violence are quite commonly applied to discipline children in schools. Main findings of the study include:

- The practice of corporal punishments against children is well-rooted not only in school settings but also in many families, such as beating by the teachers with hands or variety of things including sticks, cane, wooden rulers, dusters etc.
- The teacher did corporal punishment in order to make better for their pupils when the students have not done their homework, for poor exam result or being disobedient, coming late to school, running in the hallway, sleeping in class, answering questions incorrectly, bad handwriting, using bad language, not bringing a text book, making noise in class, etc.
- The circumstances that indicate teachers to do corporal punishment are while they working in stressful conditions, they could not control their anger. Moreover, the parents ask the teacher to beat their child until it was painful is one of the most important point intends to do

corporal punishment.

- Most of the parents and school professionals believe that corporal punishment is essential to make children improve their behavior which exist a strong socio-cultural factor.
- The practice of physical and mental violence against children is well-rooted, not only in school settings, but also in many families;
- School professionals and parents have limited legal awareness and do not know about the provisions of the Child Rights Law;
- In the absence of child rights-based training, teachers and other school professionals are more likely to resort to violent methods simply because they have not been provided with the skills and knowledge to impose alternative models of discipline;
- There are no clear and comprehensive school disciplinary rules which describe the ethics and legal obligations of teachers not to use violent punishment;
- Cases are not reported even though some parents dislike their children being beaten by their teachers. Parents are afraid to report due to fear of being blamed or fear of reprisals (i.e. new beatings) against their child;
- There is a cultural acceptance of corporal punishment in both school and family settings which leads to a very weak enforcement of the law.

In summary, although Myanmar has new legal provisions in form of the 2019 Child Rights Law that ban corporal punishment and other forms of violence by teachers, violence in school settings is still prevalent in schools in Myanmar. It should be stressed that efforts to end violence in schools must seek to promote a change in the attitudes of parents, families and wider communities in Myanmar. Changing the culturally rooted acceptance of violence against children is a challenging task. So far, the social and cultural norms that

influence the interpretation of law and policy are not compatible with internationally recognized principles, and this hinders efforts to combat violence against children in education settings in Myanmar. Moreover, reporting and response mechanisms are not provided for in the new law.

As a way forward, we propose the following recommendations: firstly, cultural attitudes to violence against children must be changed through training in order to protect children in schools. In this regard the school professionals must acquire legal, ethical and professional knowledge and an awareness of their responsibilities and obligations by attending human rights training initiative administered by Ministry of Education. Secondly, teacher education and training programs must include knowledge on violence against children and on child protection. This should be embedded in national child protection training for teachers. Thirdly, each school from primary level, should establish violence reduction initiatives, and community parenting programmes. Heads and teachers must receive training in how to implement alternative non-violent disciplinary measures and class management. Fourthly, to follow up on the existing legal commitments, each school should establish procedures for handling disciplinary issues in the classroom, as well as a code of conduct for pupils and teachers and school policies prohibiting violence and corporal punishment. This can be developed in cooperation between teachers and parents. Finally, we would like to recommend these initiatives should engage school professionals, parents, communities, civil society organizations and local politicians. They should be supported by more data and knowledge to further define, monitor and measure school-based violence in Myanmar so that all children have access to safe, non-violent and inclusive learning environments.

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