

Groundbreaking Research Reveals: "Bottom-Up" Education Boards as the Engine for Myanmar's Federal Transition

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MAE SOT, THAILAND – The Institute for Peace and Social Justice (IPSJ) today published the findings of an in-depth action research study titled "Strengthening Bottom-Up Implementation of Local Education Boards for Myanmar's Federal Democratic Transition." The report offers a clear roadmap for how local communities in resistance-controlled and ethnic-administered areas are laying the groundwork for a federal state through decentralized education governance.

Led by Dr. Daisy and a team of dedicated researchers, the study examines the performance of Local Education Boards (LEBs) across four key regions. The research shows that despite the challenges of ongoing conflict, these grassroots organizations are effectively managing schools, safeguarding students, and implementing localized curricula that reflect Myanmar's diverse ethnic identities.

Bridging the Gap Between Resistance and State-Building

The study highlights a crucial shift in the Spring Revolution: the move from "emergency response" to "institutional building." In areas controlled by Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs) and resistance groups, LEBs have become the main means for democratic governance.

Our research indicates that education is not just a service—it is the primary arena of federal state-building," said Dr. Daisy, Lead Researcher. "By taking control of their schools, local communities are practicing the very self-determination and power-sharing that will shape the future Federal Democratic Union of Myanmar."

Five Strategic Thematic Areas

The study highlights five key pillars that influence the success of Local Education Boards.

1. **Governance & Structure:** Successful LEBs adopt a "Triple Legitimacy" model, blending the authority of elected officials (CRPH/NUG), the territorial control of EROs, and the grassroots energy of Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) educators.
2. **Access and Equity:** In conflict zones, LEBs serve as the "first responders" for education, setting up learning centers for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and making sure that language and cultural barriers do not stop children from learning.
3. **Financial Management & Accountability:** The research shows a heavy dependence on "Social Monitoring" and community-based funding. Transparent reporting to parents and local donors has fostered strong trust, which is vital for sustainability without centralized state budgets.

4. **Teacher Development:** The study highlights the exceptional efforts of CDM teachers and volunteers. It advocates for a "coordinated system" to offer these educators professional certification and long-term career opportunities within a federal framework.
5. **Democratic State-Building & Policy Implementation:** LEBs act as interpreters of national policy. The research found that although NUG and ERO policies exist, their success entirely depends on "localization"—the ability of local boards to adapt rules to their specific conflict environment.

Overcoming Coordination Overlaps

A key finding of the research is the existence of "coordination gaps" between different levels of authority. The study observes that roles sometimes overlap among the NUG Ministry of Education, ERO education departments, and local LEBs. To address this, the report recommends formalizing coordination methods and establishing a "Federal Education Council" to harmonize standards while maintaining local autonomy.

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***About IPSJ-** The Institute for Peace and Social Justice (IPSJ) is a Burmese-led, rights-based institution dedicated to advancing federal democracy, inclusive governance, and climate resilience in Myanmar through research, dialogue, and institutional reform.*