

Presentation for Myanmar (Burma)

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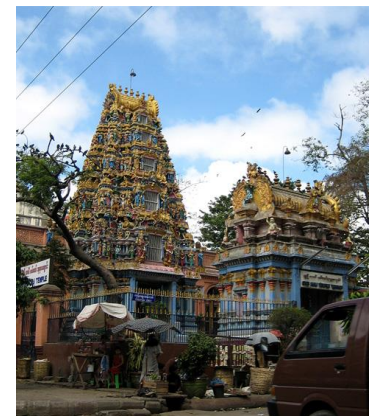




Brief Country Profile



- ❑ 676,578 Square kilometers
- ❑ Largest country in mainland South-East Asia Region
- ❑ Country population – 51.5 millions (2014 Census)
- ❑ 88% are Buddhism and others are Christianity, Islam and Hinduism (2014 Census)
- ❑ Weather – 3 seasons: Summer, Rainy and Winter
- ❑ Average temperature – 19°C to 40°C



General Living of Persons with Disabilities in Myanmar



- Persons with disabilities (PWDs) – 4.6% (2.3 millions) – (2014 Census)
- Only 2% of them completed university degrees.
- 53% of Children with disabilities are no schooling.
- 85% of Adults with disabilities are jobless.
- The economy of Myanmar being based on Agriculture but 62% of Households with disabilities have no cultivatable land.
- Assistive devices including wheelchair and mobility aid are not produced locally and not available in the community.
- No PA service in the country and normally family members serve this duty.
- Disability access in public places and government services are very limited.
- PWDs and their families are the most poorest and marginalized group in the country.
- There are only 4 rehabilitation centers, 2 vocational training centers, 15 special schools and 17 disabled people's organizations for 2.3 million PWDs in Myanmar.

Government's Dealings Vs Movements of PWDs

- The government ratified the CRPD in 2011, enacted the Law for PWDs in 2015 and released its' By-laws in 2017.
- The current democratic government formed the National Committee for the Rights of PWDs in early 2018 where chaired by State's vice president, represented by various ministries and disabled people organizations.
- National Election Management Body (UEC) amended the elections by-laws and electoral policies and promoted disability access in democratic elections.
- Ministry of Education amended the National Education Law and mainstreamed inclusive education perspectives across the law.
- Ministry of Social welfare, Relief and Resettlement adopted the National Strategic Plan for the Development of PWDs (2016-2025)
- The relevant laws, policies and mechanisms were well developed and promoted due to several movements of PWDs and their organizations, however the implementation with budget allocation is still question to make the rights of PWDs a real.
- While individual disabled people's organizations were working for their growth and advocating for their target issues, they collectively established the Myanmar Federation of PWDs in 2014 at national level to stand for human rights and inclusion of PWDs.
- Advocate PWDs and their organizations including my organization-MILI actively involved in facilitating and making above laws, policies and mechanisms and influenced the parliaments & relevant ministries to listen the voice of PWDs and follow the CRPD's principles.
- Currently we have very good laws and mechanisms however the daily lives of PWDs are still under the struggles due to lack of government's financial support for PWDs and their organizations.

Access of PWDs to Education in Myanmar

- Ministry of Education adopted the policy of inclusive education, however disability is still a clear obstacle for PWDs in attaining on education.
- 2010 government survey shows that one in every two PWDs in Myanmar never attended school, compared to a national primary enrollment of 84%.
- Only 2% of PWDs completed the university degrees, compared to 12% of the non-disabled population.
- There are 5 major barriers currently facing by PWDs: (i) architectural design & geographical location of schools, (ii) attitude & teaching capacity of school teachers to accept PWDs, (iii) teaching method and teaching aids for PWDs, (iv) public transportation system and (v) perspective of community towards disability.
- 99% of domestic universities and local schools are not physically accessible for PWDs, especially the architectural designs of classroom, library, assembly hall, toilet, dormitory, etc.
- Parents are willing to send their children with disabilities to schools but most of them cannot effort to do so due to their poverty.
- Within limited opportunity throughout history, a few PWDs overcame those challenges and finally became the educated persons. Later, they become the leaders for disability rights movement and advocates for promoting inclusive education of PWDs in Myanmar.
- The current government committed to accept more PWDs in schools, removed some institutional barriers that restrict PWDs to be school teachers, offered more financial assistance for PWD students and set-up new Alternative Education Department for out-of-school students, however there remains a huge gap to implement the inclusive education in the country.
- While a few disability organizations working hard for promoting disability inclusive education, many PWDs and majority of policy makers still have the mindset that special education is only the best for PWDs.



Promotion of Employment, Career Development and Government Support for PWDs

- Government is considering to implement quota system under domestic disability rights law, however there remains many steps to get agreement among government, private sectors and disabled people's organizations.
- Due to advocacy of a few disability organizations including my organization – MILI, some private organizations and business companies such as Myanmar Apex Bank, KBZ Bank, Blue Ocean Operating & Management Company, Shangri-La Hotel, Novotel Hotel adapted their work places accessible and hired more PWD employees.
- Promotion of employment is major component of Disability law and National strategic plan of Ministry of social welfare, however there is no specific mechanism and concrete budget yet to implement it by the government and relevant stakeholders.
- Government has been operating one vocational training school for disabled adults but not mainstream PWDs in regular courses of their other vocational and technical training centers running for non-disabled populations.



Accessibility (Use of Public Transportation and Facilities)

- Promotion of accessibility is one of chapters under disability law, however there is no coordination body yet to implement it. Policy makers, architects and people (even PWDs) do not properly aware on the concept and importance of accessibility and university design.
- People look PWDs from charity and medical perspective, not from social and right-based yet, therefore we cannot see many PWDs in public places and community activities.
- Due to poverty and lack of support from government, PWDs cannot effort to buy the assistive devices such as wheelchair, therefore they cannot go out to participate in political, economic, social, cultural and religious activities as well as disability movements.
- At the present, public buildings, facilities and public transportation in capital city, other cities and rural area are not friendly for disabled, elderly and pregnant women. PWDs normally use the city taxies and it makes more cost and burden for PWDs and their families.
- Recently, my organization organized a National Seminar on University Design Cities in collaboration with regional government and municipal agency, and discussed to promote accessible public transportation and barrier-free environment in the cities. At the same time, we provide advocacy trainings for disability organizations to understand on universal design.



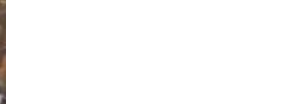
Advocacy Activities of Me and My Organization-MILI

- My organization-MILI is self-help organization led by disabled persons run for PWDs to fight and promote the rights and inclusion of PWDs in Myanmar.
- The organization is structured and functioned by 3 pillars: (i) Development pillar, (ii) Political pillar and (iii) Social-business pillar. The head quarter is based in Yangon and her 28 local branches are operating across the country. There are currently 54 employees and 4,752 disabled members in the organization.
- We are leading organization in advocacy and disability rights movement in the country.



Advocacy to Parliaments, Government Ministries and Election Management Bodies

Actively involved for disability rights law, election law and national education law to include disability-inclusive chapters and sections, and worked together with parliaments, government ministries, election management bodies, political parties and human rights institutions.



Promoting Disability Access in Democratic Elections

- Worked with Election Management Bodies and Political Parties, build their capacity on disability inclusion and advocated to mainstream disability in their policy and institutional agenda.
- Influenced to amend electoral legal frameworks and poll workers manual to be disability-inclusive.
- Promoted disability-friendly polling stations and created accessible ballot paper for voters with visual impairment.



Other Issues and Challenges

- Nation-wide statistic & data on disability are not available in the country. It makes hard for evidence-based advocacy works and planning of disability programs.
- Limited number of DPOs in the country those who have capacity to conduct strategic advocacy works.
- Lack of financial support from national government for DPOs to support for independent living of PWDs.
- Taking an inclusive approach and support for independent living of PWDs is everyone and every organization's responsibility and needs to be viewed as 'need to do', not 'nice to do'
- Inclusion made-easy but requires commitment from all.





Thank you for your attention.

