Pushing the child centred approach in Myanmar – the role of cross national policy networks and the effects in the classroom.

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Abstract

In Myanmar schools, rote learning is the norm. International aid and education organisations based in the country have been trying to promote the child centred approach (CCA) as a much more progressive form of teaching and learning. CCA is being rolled out principally through monastic school networks aided by international and national NGOs and commercial teacher training providers and consultants. The interaction between INGOs and NGOs, international funding and local monastic schools has created an interesting international and cross-national interagency network.

The article is based on original fieldwork research in Myanmar with classroom observations in 11 non state sector schools, interviews with 66 teachers and 19 teacher trainers. Focus groups were also held with 58 parents or grandparents across four schools.

The roll out of CCA has led to a number of different local reactions. Whilst many will admit that CCA is a ‘better’ approach to teaching and learning, the principal issue identified by teachers, head monks and parents is the fact that this western approach undermines traditional hierarchical structures of respect for teachers and elders, leading to a culture clash at home and in the classroom.