

Karen Education and Culture Department

Strategy Plan 2019-23

June 2019

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ACRONYMS

BE	Basic Education	NFE	Non-Formal Education
DEO	District Education Officer	OOSC	Out-Of-School Children
DES	District Education Secretary	SMT	Senior Management Team
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	TEO	Township Education Officer
HE	Higher Education	TES	Township Education Secretary
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	ToR	Terms of Reference
MoE	Ministry of Education	VT	Vocational Training

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The KECD manages and supports the provision of, and equitable access to, sustainable, quality education services across wide areas of SE Burma/ Myanmar.

Through a comprehensive and highly participatory process, the KECD's Strategy Plan (2019-23) outlined below asserts the unpredictability of its operating environment yet defines its Strategic Goals and Core Objectives for the short-to-medium term, together with operational Lines of Action and Performance Indicators in pursuit of these and to measure their impacts.

The resulting (4) Strategic Goals of the KECD over the next (5) years are:

- **National Relevance**
- **Organisational Excellence**
- **Service Integrity, Quality and Innovation**
- **Culture and Community Peace-Building**

The Core Objectives pursuing the Strategy Plan include a number of professional disciplines and creative approaches to the work of the KECD. These include:

- Developing and rolling-out a raft of key integrated policies and procedures to further professionalise its organisational culture
- Diversifying the types of education services available to meet the varied needs of young people
- Broadening the Department's authority to include 'Culture' within its mandate and activities
- Supporting the development and availability of Eastern Pwo Karen language educational materials

This Strategy Plan has been translated into (Sgaw) Karen and Burmese, and shared with the KNU EC, its District and Township Education Offices, operational partners and strategic stakeholders. It will be reviewed and revised periodically to ensure it reflects the dynamic environment that KECD works in.

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Karen National Union, the Karen Education and Culture Department (KECD) is the governing body that works alongside communities to oversee the standardisation, structuring, delivery and monitoring of sustainable quality educational activities for the Karen peoples inside SE Burma/ Myanmar.

The KECD works with local communities, community leaders and local authorities, as well as regional and international decision-makers to ensure that educational policies and practices adopted and implemented promote peace, democracy, equality and inclusion.

KECD's previous Strategy Plan covered the period from 2013-15. Although many of its Goals and Objectives have continued to be relevant in the years since, for various reasons, it has not been formally updated until now.

KECD's Strategy Plan for 2019-23 defines the overall directions of the Department over the next (5) years. This period is likely to be defined by a number of significant events and ongoing developments in Burma/ Myanmar and Thailand, including:

- The substance of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) in securing a truce in fighting
- The wider ongoing political negotiations towards a revised political system
- The results of the 2020 national elections in Burma/ Myanmar
- The next KNU Congress and leadership elections (expected in 2021)
- The status and future of the refugees in Thailand and IDPs across SE Burma/ Myanmar.

As such, this Plan reflects the extremely unstable and unpredictable setting in which KECD envisages itself operating through over the next (5) years.

METHODOLOGY

This Strategy Plan has been developed through a series of workshops and consultations with a wide range of stakeholders and informants and grows from the KECD's previous 2013-15 Strategy Plan. The initial drafting of the Plan was conducted during the KECD's Annual Meeting during April-May 2019 at its head office in Thay Bay Hta, Hlaingbwe Township in Hpa'an District.

A total of over (100) education staff and representatives from both its Central Offices, all (7) District and most of its (25) Township Education Offices participated, with two external consultants invited to facilitate the process, thus bringing objectivity and impartiality to the proceedings. In summary, the participants:

1. Conducted an analysis and evaluation of the Department's governance and management systems, and identified priority issues requiring redress.
2. Reviewed its 2013-15 Strategy Plan and evaluated the relevance of its individual components to the Department's current and medium-term future.
3. Defined planning assumptions of both its external operating environment and internal organisational context over the next (5) years.
4. Clustered these (3) groups of findings into Strategic Goals and supporting Core Objectives.
5. Proposed specific Lines of Action to inform the Department's Annual Operating Plans and activities over the next (5) years.
6. Reflected on work activities over the past (12) months and identified further specific Lines of Action.

Following this initial drafting, the KECD's Senior Management Team (SMT) met with the KECD's Heads of Bureaux over the following weeks to complete and approve the Strategy Plan, including defining Lines of Action and Performance Indicators. The resulting Strategy Plan is framed by (4) Strategic Goals and driven by (16) Core Objectives.

Due to the ongoing contestation of KECD's education system, the KECD leadership initially anticipated that advocacy would form one of the Strategic Goals. However, following review and finalisation of the Plan, it became clear that advocacy is a cross-cutting component reflected in many of the Core Objectives, and therefore does not constitute a distinct Goal within the document.

This KECD (2019-23) Strategy Plan has been translated into (Sgaw) Karen and Burmese, and shared with the KNU EC, its District and Township Education Offices, operational partners and strategic stakeholders. In consultation with staff, the Senior Management Team (SMT) will review and revise the Plan as necessary on an annual basis to ensure it reflects the dynamic operating environment that KECD works in.

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

The following are priority assumptions identified by staff as highly influential issues facing the Department and its operations over the coming (5) years, and thus to be considered in our Strategic Planning:

EXTERNAL OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

- Burma/ Myanmar authorities will increasingly recognise the KECD education system, its teachers and students, and mutual partnerships will increase. However, at the same time, the influence of the Burma/ Myanmar MoE and its administration on schools will increase in KECD areas.
- Many refugees will return to SE Burma/ Myanmar from Thailand and integrate into existing communities and schools. The barriers and challenges faced by returning students will continue unless more systematically addressed.
- The rising cost of living will increasingly affect students' abilities to attend school, resulting in increasing school drop-outs, Out-Of-School-Children (OOSC) and informal migration, together with a subsequent undermining of their protection environment.

INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

- KECD's provision of education services will diversify (including the utilisation of technological advances) and, although the number of higher education programmes will reduce, the quality of services and staff will improve.
- Opportunities to teach Karen language(s) in schools will increase, but tensions will increase over the exclusive use of Sgaw Karen in KECD's curriculum. As such, the Department will formalise and embrace cultural issues under its authority and activities.
- KECD will ramp-up its organisational development initiatives, including the formulation and implementation of policies and standard procedures, resulting in improved departmental discipline, intra-organisational communication, teamwork and staff motivation.

STRATEGIC GOALS

CORE OBJECTIVES

LINES OF ACTION

INDICATORS

MEANS OF VERIFICATION

GOAL #1: NATIONAL RELEVANCE

CORE OBJECTIVES

1.1 KECD is a key stakeholder in the development and review processes of national strategic and technical instruments (strategies, policies, standards, frameworks, etc).

Lines of Action:

1. KECD will seek pathways to become more involved and influential in the review and development of the NESP.
2. KECD will continue to be a core partner and informant in the Myanmar Education Partnership Programme (MEPP), as it moves into Phase 2 and beyond.

1.1 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. *Written invitations to NESP workshops and inputs informing workshop outcomes and outputs documented.*
2. *KECD informs and influences the outputs of MEPP Phase 2 and beyond.*

1.2 The KECD education system, its certification and documentation, as well as its students and staff are recognised and offered equal opportunities by MoE.

Lines of Action:

1. Pursue pathways for effective and change-making advocacy in co-ordination with other Ethnic Education Service Providers (EESP), (I)NGOs, donors and other stakeholders.
2. Closely co-ordinate with Mother Organisation in preparing and carrying out bilateral and multilateral negotiations with the Burma/ Myanmar government on the issue, both during discussions on Interim Arrangements as well as the wider peace process.

1.2 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. *Documentation and reporting on advocacy actions and impacts.*
2. *Internal documentation and progress reports on activities and impacts.*

1.3 KECD leads and/ or actively contributes in local, regional and national co-ordination forums.

Lines of Action:

1. Strengthen relations, information-sharing and general co-ordination with Karen armed groups and Culture and Literacy Committees in line with the vision and aims of the Karen National Plan.
2. Continue to participate in KKEST advocacy and co-ordination activities.
3. Continue to participate in regional and national co-ordination forums and activities, including NNER and Kayin State Education Sector Co-ordination Meetings.
4. Actively seek other complementary or alternative forums to strengthen its co-ordination activities.

1.3 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. *Internal documentation and progress reports on networking activities and impacts.*
2. *Attendance records of meetings; documented participation in actions.*
3. *Attendance records of meetings; documented participation in actions.*
4. *Internal documentation and progress reports on new networking activities and impacts.*

GOAL #2: ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

CORE OBJECTIVES

2.1 As part of KECD's deep commitment to good governance and organisational development, a comprehensive raft of integrated policy and procedure manuals guide the operations of the Department, and are well-understood by all staff. Dynamic 2-way verbal and written communication is a core component of intra-departmental co-ordination.

Lines of Action:

1. Roll-out a two-stage training on the Department's policies and procedures, initially to all field and station staff. Selected members of staff then roll out training to all school staff in pure KED-administered schools as well as in mixed administration schools, where possible.
2. Policies and procedures will be a core component of orientation sessions for all new staff when starting their employment.
3. All policies and procedures will be reviewed and revised as necessary on an annual basis.
4. The ongoing quality of intra-departmental communication to be a key theme in informal and formal staff appraisals.

2.1 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. *Agenda and attendance list of trainings. Post-training assessment forms completed.*
2. *Personnel records of all new staff.*
3. *Annual workshop documentation.*
4. *Quarterly staff meeting minutes and annual staff appraisal documentation.*

2.2 The Department maintains an appropriate number of skilled staff to achieve its goals. The roles and responsibilities of individual staff members and their collective Bureaux, Units, etc are clearly defined through up-to-date job descriptions and Departmental policies.

Lines of Action:

1. Implement new staff motivation/ retention policies and strengthen staff recruitment processes.
2. Issue job descriptions for all staff and review during annual appraisals.
3. Finalise and circulate organisational and staff structure charts to all Bureaux and Units.

2.2 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. *Staff retention rates and staff recruitment processes improve; internal reports and quarterly staff meeting minutes.*
2. *All staff have clear and relevant job descriptions; annual staff appraisal documentation.*
3. *Organisational and staff structure charts distributed; internal reports and quarterly staff meeting minutes.*

2.3 A robust system of M&E is in place which meaningfully informs both programme development and reporting to authorities and donors. Donors and authorities consider KECD's external reporting to be substantive, highly accurate and to consistently meet their requirements.

Lines of Action:

1. Develop an M&E Framework and Plan and have competent staff in place to efficiently and effectively conduct M&E activities.
2. Utilise the improved data collection and management to strengthen reporting systems.

2.3 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. *M&E Framework and Plan developed and implemented; M&E activities conducted in an accurate and timely manner.*
2. *Written feedback from donors and authorities.*

2.4 Adequate and sustained funding and facilities enables the Department to fully manage and administer its programmes.

Lines of Action:

1. Develop a fund-raising strategy to strengthen its financial security.
2. Work towards having a minimum financial reserve of 6-months of expenses as a buffer to any financial shocks.

2.4 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. *Fund-raising strategy developed.*
2. *Level of financial reserve improves; bank account reconciliation and annual accounting statement.*

GOAL #3: SERVICE INTEGRITY, QUALITY AND INNOVATION

CORE OBJECTIVES

3.1 Pure KECD-led schools are effectively managed by the local community without unwanted interference.

Lines of Action:

1. Conduct school management capacity-building activities with PTAs and the general community; raise awareness on the importance and relevance of the work of KECD and the need to maintain autonomy of schools.
2. Maintain both involvement through Mother Organisation and with MEPP in negotiations and advocacy towards agreed Interim Arrangements and the wider peace process.

3.1 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. Trainings and awareness-raising conducted; DEO/ TEO reports and post-training assessment forms.
2. Internal documentation and progress reports on activities and impacts.

3.2 Communities and individuals inside Myanmar have access to adequate, diverse, affordable, appropriate and quality educational opportunities (including BE, HE, VT, NFE, etc), with concentrated assistance to marginalised and culturally diverse groups.

Line of Action:

1. Broaden networks with existing and potential partners, donors and agencies as well as with government agencies to identify more potential opportunities to provide more education services.

3.2 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. Networks broadened and opportunities for new education services identified; internal documentation and progress reports on activities and impacts.

3.3 KECD's full curriculum package is regularly reviewed and revised to ensure its contents are up-to-date, culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate. As a result, teachers and students have adequate quality and appropriate teaching resources, learning materials and associated aids. Technological advances and opportunities are utilised as possible.

Lines of Action:

1. Conduct a comprehensive curriculum review every 5 years and implement appropriate recommendations.
2. Keep abreast of developments in technology and consider appropriate opportunities to integrate into school programming.

3.3 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. Comprehensive curriculum review conducted, and recommendations implemented.
2. New and appropriate technological developments considered; quarterly staff meeting minutes.

3.4 Teachers are able to access regular quality teacher training suitable to a low-resource educational setting in both methodology and subject.

Lines of Action:

1. Continue to provide quality subject content and methodology trainings to teachers at least once a year, together with follow-up mentoring. (KTWG provides regular general teaching methodology, classroom management and child psychology trainings).
2. Strengthen co-ordination with KTWG in materials and module development.

3.4 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. Subject trainings and follow-up mentoring conducted at least annually; internal documentation and post-training assessment forms.
2. Co-ordination with KTWG on materials development improved; feedback from Curriculum Unit, end-users, and subject trainers.

3.5 Adequate and sustained funding enables the Department to effectively carry out its programme activities.

Lines of Action:

1. Develop fund-raising strategy to strengthen financial security.
2. Work towards having a minimum financial reserve of 6-months of expenses as a buffer to any financial shocks.

3.5 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. Fund-raising strategy developed.
2. Level of financial reserve improves; bank account reconciliation and annual accounting statement.

3.6 Complementary programmes supporting the wider well-being of students are added to programme activities.

Line of Action:

1. Consider adding suitable extension programmes to operations, including possibly:
 - Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) planning with prone schools
 - School Health project
 - Vocational Training
 - Non-Formal Education
 - Boarding House project

3.6 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. Additional extension programmes considered; internal documentation, quarterly staff meeting minutes, donor proposals and agreements.

GOAL #4: CULTURE AND COMMUNITY PEACE-BUILDING

CORE OBJECTIVES

4.1 Refugee and IDP students (and their families) are able to (re)integrate into the different school systems and local communities safely and in dignity.

Lines of Action:

1. With KRCEE, harmonise transition mechanisms between refugee camp schools and schools in operational areas in SE Burma/ Myanmar.
2. DEOs and TEOs increase awareness and understanding among receiving communities on (re)integration issues.

4.1 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. Complementary transition processes are harmonised and functional; KECD-KRCEE meeting minutes, internal DEO/ TEO reporting.
2. Awareness-raising conducted; internal DEO/ TEO reporting.

4.2 Inter-communal relations between different Karen factions are built and strengthened through the provision of education services and systems, especially in un(der-)serviced and conflict-affected areas in the regions in which we work.

Lines of Action:

1. Strengthen relations, information-sharing and general co-ordination with Karen armed groups and Culture and Literacy Committees in line with the vision and aims of the Karen National Plan.
2. Establish and make available guidelines for schools to develop Eastern Pwo Karen language learning materials in line with KECD policies and practices.

4.2 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. Internal documentation and progress reports on networking activities and impacts.
2. Guidelines developed in line with KECD policies and practices; internal documentation.

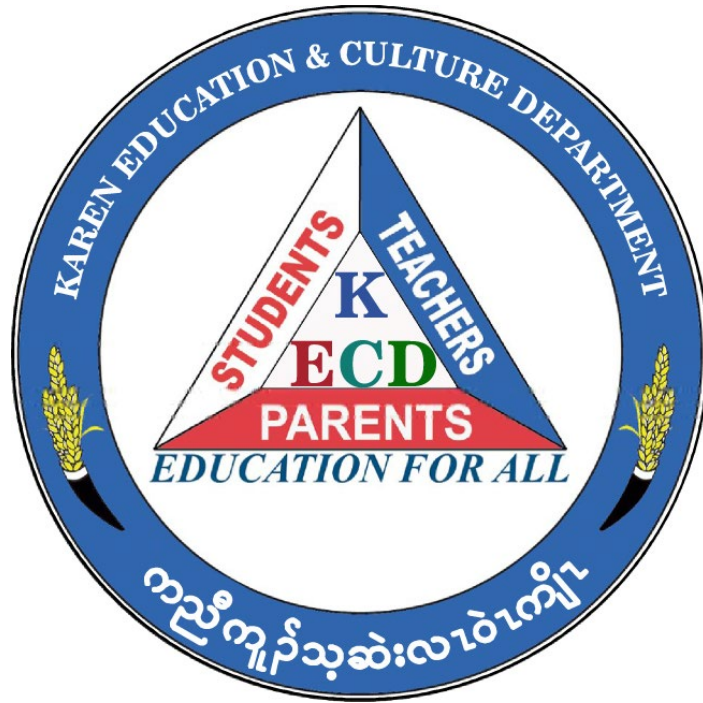
4.3 KECD integrates culture issues into its regular activities, including addressing tensions over the exclusive use of Sgaw Karen in KECD's curriculum.

Lines of Action:

1. Establish a functional Culture Committee under KECD and develop Terms of Reference to define its responsibilities.
2. Establish and make available guidelines for schools to develop Eastern Pwo Karen language learning materials in line with KECD policies and practices.

4.3 Indicators/ Means of Verification:

1. Culture Committee established and ToR developed; Job descriptions developed, Organisational and Staff Structures updated, staff reporting.
2. Guidelines developed in line with KECD policies and practices; internal documentation.



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