The Center for Promotion of Monastic Education (CPME)

A Journey of Social Transformation from Within

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This booklet is published by the Center for Promotion of Monastic Education (CPME) in collaboration with Phaung Daw Oo Monastic Education School (PDO), the Socially Engaged Monastic Schools (SEMS), the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM) and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).

Introduction

The CPME (Center for Promotion of Monastic Education) was the brainchild of a group of dedicated social activists, engaged Buddhist clergy and inter-faith practitioners, who believe that the creation of a more socially just, peaceful, and sustainable society in Myanmar requires the engagement and attitudinal transformation of all segments of society, especially the poor and marginalized who constitute the majority of the population. The entry point for such engagement and attitudinal change is believed to be Education, especially education through the monastic school system.

To achieve this long-term vision, the decision was to establish an institutional umbrella for the project, called the Center for Promotion of Monastic Education (CPME) for provision of effective and systematic training for monastic school abbots/principals and teachers to change the way they traditionally run monastic schools. The hope is to develop a selected number of monastery-based schools as model schools of holistic learning for children and members of the community which simultaneously transform attitudes, promote analytical thinking, and inculcate practical life skills. The key strategies are the following:

1. Training and exposure of Abbots/Principals of selected monastic schools to alternative education models to encourage them to better manage and lead "child-friendly and thinking schools".

2. Training of monastic school teachers in self-awareness, pedagogical methods in RWCT/CCA *, and practical life-skills to empower them to better execute their role as teachers in the school and in the community, and develop their self-confidence, knowledge and skills to stimulate children's learning and thinking.

3. Training of pedagogical trainers/mentors to support and coach abbots and teachers in improving education practices in the monastic schools through use of simple monitoring tools and regular school visits.

In addition to these three key capacity development components, the project also aims to improve the learning environment by provision of basic learning materials to schools such as books for libraries; and teaching aids.

* RWCT means "Reading Writing for Critical thinking" and CCA means "Child-Centered Approach"

These inter-linked activities are meant to help develop leadership skills of abbots, monks, nuns, and teachers to stimulate learning and thinking among children, promote more open and democratic processes of school management; and mobilize increased participation of children and parents, and break the "walls" that separate monastery, school, and community.

The author has been involved with the project since its inception as an external education advisor and has followed the progress of the project over the past three years through annual visits to project schools where, apart from observing changes in the schools and teachers and students in classes, I also conducted many in-depth focus group discussions with trainers, teachers, parents and students, and one-to-one interviews with abbots, monks and nuns and project management staff. In addition I followed the progress of the project through its annual review meetings, teachers' alumni meetings, and Board Meetings.

In my assessment, the CPME Project has achieved almost all the objectives agreed in the project framework, and in many ways, its results and impact have exceeded the original project targets and expectations. More importantly it has begun a process of the transformation of attitudes and behavior of all the key actors involved – from abbots, teachers, students, and parents, to the project managers and trainers.

As the CPME Project in its first phase is meant to be a trial project that strives to impact on the monastic school system – its leadership, education process, and content – to bring about education and community transformation, it is important to document its achievements and challenges before expansion. Just as importantly, it needs to document the context, motivation, the processes, and the experiences of the people who support and drive the project, as well as the experiences and changes in the behavior and attitude of

the key beneficiaries towards their roles and responsibilities. In so doing, we hope to capture the lessons and experiences learned for wider sharing and learning, not only within the monastic education system, but also with broader education and development community.

This study has three parts, the first part documents the motivation and experiences of the main thinkers and initiators behind the project, those who facilitated and supported the Project, as well as key management and technical staff who managed and implemented the activities. The second part documents some of the perceptions of the actors who participated and benefited from the project, namely the abbots, teachers, parents and students. They are now the frontline change agents in their schools and communities. The third part documents the major achievements and challenges of the project, which are excerpted from the final report of the author's monitoring visit to schools and project offices in Yangon and Mandalay in September 2012.

To bring to life the rich and complex circumstance which shape the thinking of the key actors concerned, and also to give voice to those involved in the change process to tell of their transformative experiences, the study uses mainly interviews and reflections to illustrate and capture their journey of personal and institutional transformation. However, this journey of change has just started and for it to have broader impact on the monastic school system and the community, it must be continued. More monasteries and schools must join this journey and they must be supported generously. It is hoped that there will be many private individuals, civil society groups, governmental and development agencies, and corporations that value education and development for the poor in Myanmar who will join them on this journey.

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Modern education is premised strongly on materialistic values. It is vital that when educating our children’s brains that we do not neglect to educate their hearts, a key element of which has to be the nurturing of our compassionate nature.

— The Dalai Lama

PART ONE

The Context, the Thinkers and Drivers of the CPME Program

The Context

To some extent the CPME Project and is unique and is very much shaped by the context of the political, social and economic context of present day Myanmar* and the special role and function of monastic schools in society. After nearly half a century of absolute rule in Myanmar, the military exercised a near complete stranglehold of the country's political, social, and economic life. Repeated heavy-handed crackdowns on any form of political and civil dissent, indiscriminate violation of human rights, and near-total control of freedom of movement and information has left a population isolated and cowered. Many who did not accept the political constraints or abuses fought back and were killed or imprisoned during the crackdowns, as happened in the Students' Revolt of 1988 and the Saffron Revolution led by the monks in 2007.

* The country is officially called Myanmar, but many people still prefer to use "Burma" when referring to the country. In this study, the terms "Myanmar" and "Burma" are used inter-changeably, depending mostly on how the informants interviewed for the document referred to the country when interviewed in English.

But for the majority, including many social activists, intellectuals, rights and peace advocates, spiritual and community leaders, they had no choice but to remain inside the country and find other means of struggle. Cowered, but not defeated, they continued their social activism quietly toiling under the radar screen of the generals and hoping not to attract too much attention and interference. Over the years, they have built alliances, and liaised with like-minded groups and organizations from the region and beyond. They have learnt and expanded their knowledge and perspectives on development theories and issues, established informal networks and community-based groups, and have used their experience to educate, and improve their communities and society from within. This is the context under which the CPME Project was developed.

Below are interviews with the thinkers, supporters, and management and technical staff which helped shape and drive the project to achieve the vision they share. They all come from diverse backgrounds. Most have little or no formal background in Education, but all are engaged in community or social action of one kind or another. It is such diversities of professional, educational, ethnic and religious backgrounds that helps the CPME Project not to be stuck in a narrowly educational mould, and is one of the factors of its relevance and appeal.

Venerable U-Nayaka

Thant Lwin Maung (Ko Tar)

The Thinkers

Below are interviews with two of the main proponents of the CPME Project, Thant Lwin Maung (Ko Tar), and Venerable U-Nayaka. They have both helped shape the project's framework and approach based on their personal struggle and experience. Both are strong-willed and visionary and often do not see things eye-to-eye, but both share the same passion for education as the key to social transformation of Burmese society and the way for the poor and disenfranchised to escape poverty, ignorance and oppression.

Thant Lwin Maung (Ko Tar)

The Orthorpedic Surgeon turned Writer and Social Activist

Thant Lwin Maung (better known as "Ko Tar") is Myanmar's leading writer, poet, and publisher, and a well-known and respected social thinker promoting non-violent democratic change. Ko Tar studied medicine and became one of Burma's leading orthopedic surgeons. He then left medical practice to become a successful businessman. Now he devotes most of his time to writing, publishing, and supporting social causes. Using his own money, he has set up a school offering free education for children in his neighborhood, a private school teaching an international curriculum in Burmese and English. He also generously donates cash, books and learning materials to many monastic schools. Now besides writing, translating and publishing books, he also spends a great deal of his time working and mentoring civil society groups, youth groups, socially engaged inter-faith and inter-ethnic groups, and networking with regional social action groups. The CPME Program can be said to be his "brainchild," and its vision and approach has been very much influenced by his thinking, knowledge of Burmese politics and society, and his knowledge of Buddhism and the role of monastic institutions.

You are a well-know writer and social thinker in Burma; what has helped shape your political and social outlook?

I have lived through much political and social turmoil in the country, and like many Burmese I am troubled by what's happening. However, I am not inclined towards direct political activism or confrontation, not like a number of friends from my generation. So I kept reading, studying about peaceful change and transformation. I attended SEM's Peace Leadership Training and later many other types of workshops and meetings on social engagement, conflict resolution, sustainable development, environmental justice arranged by SEM or similar types of non-governmental organizations. Overtime I have built a large network of friends and acquaintances inside and outside

the country, mostly from inter-faith groups; peace activists, rights activists, writers groups, community action groups, consumer activists, and so on. I also try to be the bridge between these groups and the friends and colleagues I know and trust in government, university, and business. I try to broaden understanding, debate, and consensus among all these groups about development and change, knowing that radical actions are not very suitable for us and for our groups. Actually, my aims are quite modest.

As one of the key proponents of the CPME Program, can you explain what motivates you to initiate a project like CPME?

I used to visit my home village once a year, usually bringing some gifts, like footballs for the children to play, and prizes for the football tournament. This makes the villagers and children happy, but I felt that it was not enough. Being from the village myself, I always felt that it was better to make sure that rural children get a good education. There is a big monastery in the village and the space is big enough to accommodate a primary school. So Idecided to help the monastery set up a proper monastic school by donating benches, school bags, exercise books, and I helped build a latrine. There were already some voluntary teachers helping in the monastery, so they were asked to continue to teach in the school. From this experience, I learned that it is not too expensive or difficult to set up a monastic school. If the better-off people can help build and support the monastic schools in villagers, then poor children in rural areas will be able to get some schooling – at least learning how to read and write. That was my original thinking of supporting monastic education – actually, it was quite simple then.

Later, as I gotmore involved in helping my village school, and seeing how it is the poor's basic conditions of illiteracy

and ignorance that are exploited by the officials, I knew I needed to find ways to fight against the perpetuation of such illiteracy and ignorance among the poor. So that was what got me more involved in working with monasteries and in pushing for more appropriate education for children in monastic schools.

Then, in 2008, I met a number of friends and supporters from the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). They had visited Phaung Daw Oo Monastic Education School in Mandalay and were impressed by its work and its Abbot, Venerable U-Nayaka. They wanted to hear my opinion on the role of monastic education in Myanmar and whether I considered supporting monastic schools appropriate for promoting inter-faith and inter-ethnic peace and social justice for the poor in Burma. I strongly supported that idea and asked them to also discuss it with the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM) and other civil society groups.

Later, AFSC organized a number of meetings comprising community development leaders, monastic schools leaders (like U-Nayaka, U-Therinda), SEM staff, and me. We brainstormed on how and what actions to take to improve monastic education, and eventually agreed on a work plan. That was how the CPME Program started.

For me, in the context of Burma, there is very limited space for peaceful change. By promoting monastic education we can tap on the "earned space" of the monastery to bring about social transformation from within.

Can you explain what you mean by the "earned space" of the monastery, and why is this space important to bring about social change?

The concept of space comes from the book by Gary Snyder, *A Place in Space,* where he talks about how everyone must have one's own place. In Burma today, all political

and social space has been encroached by the omnipresent military, except for the monastery which has still retained the "space". Monasteries in Burma have through out history served as a place for education and a place of protection for everybody, especially the under-privileged and dispossessed. It is a space the monasteries and the monks have "earned" because of its embedment in Burmese culture and belief system. This is why the military government has not been able to encroach on that space, and despite repeated attempts to "gain" the space through intimidation, like during the Saffron Revolution, it has failed. This is why monasteries have been allowed to continue to operate monastic schools, even though they have to accept restrictions and oversight. Hence we need to take advantage and use that space for promoting education and social change as outside of that space there is very little room for non-violent change.

How can the CPME Project support your vision of using the space for education and social change?

To be able to make use of the earned space for social transformation effectively, the monastic schools must consciously learn to use this space more effectively. Hence my vision for the CPME Project is that it should not be too narrow and should not be just about improving pedagogical methods. The monastery school should be a place for the community to come together – a meeting place, and a safe space for children to learn and explore, and enjoy – not just a place for monks and teachers to impose their thinking. And for those who have graduated from there, the school can still be a space to come back and find a spot for their own development and contribution.

Can you describe more specifically what CPME does to move closer to this vision?

The CPME Project is supporting the vision andusing the space for social transformation by taking actions to tackle the fundamental issues of monastic leadership, ignorance, and the skill gaps in poor communities. Our abbots have been too isolated and too shut-off under the military government; we now use the CPME project to expose them to new ideas, and to learn new approaches to education and community development from nearby Thailand and Laos. They can learn and interact with community leaders, socially engaged monks and nuns working on alternative education, organic agriculture, environment protection, and community development.

I also draw inspiration from the Jesuits and the training they received prior to going on their missionary work overseas. It is not only intellectual training that can change people, it is about changing attitudes and mentality. My experience with the teachers in my own school also shows that pedagogical training alone does not work; they seem to lack something. So we proposed to add *Self-Awareness Training* for teachers to prepare their minds, to help them discover themselves, to learn about trust, and about how to overcome fear. This helps them become open to new ideas and less authoritarian.

We also train teachers to teach using *RWCT methods,* because we need to give children skills to ask questions – it is a way of interaction and inter-communication. It is important that children have confidence to enquire and find out. RWCT helps expand that space for children and it is also a way to change teachers – to become facilitators rather than authoritarian figures. It is the basis for promoting dialogue and democratic practices.

We also want village children, by the time they leave primary school, to have some basic skills to make a living and gain self-confidence. Skills needed for rural children and urban children are different. For rural children they may need appropriate technology and basic agriculture skills; for urban children they will have other skills, like language and vocational training. Schools should be the place to provide those skills. So we included *life-skills training* for teachers to teach children and parents. We also promote reading and computer literacy by encouraging schools to set up libraries and computer rooms, and so on. Now I am promoting establishing micro-credit unions in the village to support small businesses. If we can do this successfully and spread this through the monastic schools across the country, we can transform communities from within. Only then can alternative social structures be created.

Why didyou start the Socially Engaged Monastic Schools (SEMS)? How is SEMS different from CPME?

SEMS is not different from CPME. SEMS basically replicates the CPME model. I started SEMS because I want to expand the model to more monastic schools beyond the target set under the CPME Project. There are many other monasteries and monks that need to be supported. Also I feel that there should be many centers to promote monastic education, not just one center based in Phaung Daw Oo. It is like the concept of having many dots, not just one big DOT. With many dots, the monasteries will get connected and a natural network will form and evolve.This is why in the next phase of the CPME Project we agree that we need to establish a number of "hubs" of monastic schools across the country.

Venerable U-Nayaka

The Monk Who Wants a Monastic School in Every Village

Venerable U-Nayaka is the Abbot and Principal of Phaung Daw Oo Monastic Secondary School. It is one of the largest and most well-known Monastic Schools in Mandalay and offers a full education cycle from kindergarten through 12th Grade. Apart from offering general education, Phaung Daw Oo Monastic School also operates a vocational section which offers vocational training in carpentry, mechanics, and electrical works. The monastery school has an enrolment of more than 6,000 children attending general education and 200 students attending vocational education.

The school is also one of the few schools in Myanmar that has an impressively well-stocked library and a computer center. Apart from education, Phaung Daw Oo also operates a clinic providing free medical service for the sick. Ven U-Nayaka is one of the key proponents and driving forces behind the CPME Program. He is now the Director of the CPME Project with PhaungDaw Oo serving as the project home.

What motivated you to establish such a large monastic school like Phaung Daw Oo?

When I was a young monk in my early 20s I was residing in a monastery in the Delta region. Like other monks I would go on my alms collection every morning, and every morning I would walk by a three-storey building Christian school. Every morning I would see neatly dressed children going to the school and the Christian Brothers greeting the students at the gate and guiding them into clean and airy classrooms. Whenever I peeked into the classes, the children appeared to be concentrating hard in their lessons and the teachers teaching and managing the classes so effectively. This made me think, "Why are Christian schools so good; why can't we have good monastery schools like that too?"

After I returned to Upper Burma to complete my University studies, the desire to establish good monastery schools never left me. With permission from the Abbot, I started to conduct free tuition classes for children in the monastery.

In 1982, my brother (who is also a monk) and I established Phaung Daw Oo Monastery and I continued with providing free tuition to children nearby. It was only in 1993, that I officially opened Phaung Daw Oo School. At that time I already had 400 students enrolled in the school, and all the 50 teachers teaching in the school were my former students who volunteered to teach in the school without pay. For two years, the teachers received no pay, and it was only later when I got more donations that I could pay them some small salary. As more and more children came to enroll in my school, in 1994 Phaung Daw Oo School was upgraded to middle level, and then as a full secondary school in 2000 offering classes from kindergarten to senior high. Later, to meet the demand of students, I opened a vocational section teaching carpentry, machinery, and electronics.

What made you so interested and committed to education?

Experience from other countries has shown that education can upgrade the nation, and a nation's development and progress depends a lot on education – but not any kind of education – it must be good education. Myanmar's education system is just rote learning – in the past and now. Proper education should promote critical thinking. With critical thinking, we get creative thinking and with that people can solve the problems they face. With critical thinking people will be able to understand big concepts like democracy and how to do things right and avoid wrong.

As you know, Myanmar has had a military government for more than 40 years and the common people have only experienced fear and oppression. We are afraid of saying what we think, we are afraid even to think, and not daring to think is the greatest danger. We have lost our democracy because of the military government. And now, we are not even ready to receive parliamentary democracy. Now we have a parliament – but I don't think people are really ready even for the parliament. So we need to get people educated.

So how do you encourage education that promotes critical thinking; is your school doing that?

I try to encourage that kind of learning in my school and so I keep trying and learning about how to make my school better. I welcome anyone who can help — Burmese scholars, foreigners, embassies, and NGO donors — I welcome them and let them support my school. Sometimes they volunteer their services; sometimes they donate money; sometimes they offer training to my teachers; sometimes they want to do a project with my school – I welcome them all. I also send my teachers, as well as teachers from other monastic schools, to as much training as I can – Training in CCA (Child-Centered Approach), RWCT (Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking), HIV/AIDS, and life-skills, and so on. I just want to get as much assistance as I can for teachers to learn how to teach better.

From your experience and involvement with different education projects and training programs, which project or program in your opinion has been effective in helping improve monastic education?

Actually every project and teacher training in support of education is good and can help us improve monastic

education step by step. All our teachers are volunteer teachers, they have no formal teacher training; they only have a good heart and want to work with the monastery where many of them studied as children. So if they seriously apply the training they learned the children will benefit. But not every teacher can apply what they learn – sometimes, they get tired and they forget, and sometimes methods are hard to apply. But from what I see and learn, I must say that of all the training and education projects that I have been involved in, the training in RWCT (Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking) and the training from the CPME Project have made the greatest change in the way the teachers teach and the way the children learn.

Can you tell me more about the RWCT Training and the CPME Project and how you got involved?

In 2005, my school sent 9 teachers to attend RWCT training in Chiang Mai taught by Dr Thein Lwin (a Burmese education specialist). They learned how to apply the RWCT methods (Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking) in teaching. They also brought back the RWCT teaching manuals and trained other teachers in the school. The teachers liked the methods and the children learnt better. However not all the teachers consistently use the RWCT methods. Many teachers only use the methods occasionally, and quite a number stopped using the methods after a while, saying that it needs a lot more time than the traditional methods.

Then in 2007, I met two people from the American Friends Service Committee and asked for assistance to further improve monastic education. At that time, I just thought that if we can get funds to conduct additional training or re-training for teachers in RWCT or CCA, then more teachers and children will benefit. Instead of agreeing to

support my ideas for more funds for training, AFSC organized a meeting for me to meet with a group of Burmese scholars and Thais from the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM) who have been working in Myanmar to promote Engaged Buddhism. We met to discuss how to support monastic education. After several meetings, the ideas of the Center for Monastic Education (CPME) Project evolved and developed. Then we agreed that Phaung Daw Oo would manage the implementation of the project with guidance from a Board of Directors, and technical advice from SEM.

After 3 years implementing the CPME Project, what is your assessment of the project?

I am very pleased with the results of the CPME Project. The CPME Project is not just focused on teacher training; it is about changing attitudes of everybody involved in monastic education – it is about changing the attitudes of the abbots, the teachers, and also the parents. The other education projects and training are useful but they are usually short courses of 5 – 10 days, that is not enough to support teachers to practice and do not help to change their attitudes. CPME training is different; it goes for 10 weeks and is very comprehensive and also focuses on changing teachers' attitudes through learning self-awareness before training them in RWCT. Also the CPME Project trains teachers in life-skills and environmental education. In Burma, many teachers normally do not want to work with their hands or touch mud – now they learn how to make gardens and how to build mud-houses. These are useful skills that they can now teach to the children and the parents.

How do you want to improve the CPME Project further?

There are still many areas in the CPME that need improvement, especially training the abbots. Giving the abbots exposure visits to gain experience is very important, but we need more training for the abbots. Most of the Buddhist monks have little experience in administration – they must learn more about how to administer schools and how to manage project money. They must also learn to accept new ways of doing things. That is why I do a lot of advocacy meetings with the abbots and monks, and a lot of talking and persuading of the abbots to change.

What is your vision or dream for education in Myanmar?

There are more than 1,500 monastery schools in Myanmar, and all of them need to improve. So my dream is that all the monastery schools can have a chance to be part of the CPME network and learn to use its training methods. I also have a dream that every village in Myanmar has a monastery school to teach children. A donor is already helping me to do that by donating money to start monastic schools in villages that do not have schools.

The Facilitators

Both Ko Tar and U-Nayaka has drawn inspiration for their work from a large number of people and facilitators, especially from the Spirit in Education Movement of Thailand and the American Friends Service Committee. Both SEM and AFSC come from a long tradition and practice of Engaged Buddhism and Pacifism that relies on spiritual values of peace, non-violence and compassion as the basis for social action and social transformation. It is through their regular interaction with SEM and AFSC, and by participating in their many training and seminars, that Ko Tar and Ven. U-Nayaka were exposed to the philosophy of inter-faith movements, peace action, and alternatives to mainstream education and development.

Below are interviews with Somboon Chungprampree (Moo) from SEM Thailand and Patricia DeBoer from AFSC who have provided continuous advice, advocacy, and financial support to the CPME Project. In addition, the study also interviewed Kyaw Thu, the Director of Paung Ku, a friend and supporter of the CPME through the Socially Engaged Monastic Schools (SEMS) started by Ko Tar.

Somboon Chungprampree (Moo)
The Student Activist turned Engaged Buddhist

Somboon Chungprampree (better known as "Moo") has been involved in social activism since his university days, supporting environmental justice, and protesting against dams, political and social oppression, and so on. In 1997, he started working with the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM), a well-known organization founded by Thailand's foremost Thai intellectual and social critic, Arjan Sulak Sivaraksa, who is also one of a handful of leaders worldwide working to revive the socially engaged aspects of spirituality. Moo, as the Program Director of SEM, has travelled widely throughout Myanmar, training and supporting the work of civil society and community-based organizations in Myanmar in promoting strong, independent yet participatory, compassionate, and responsible communities. Apart from managing SEM, he is also the Executive Secretary of INEB (International Network of Engaged Buddhists).

What motivated you to work for SEM and how is SEM's work different from other kinds of social activism?

SEM brings spirituality and social actions together. When I was in the university, I was working on many social issues with other student activists, but I soon found our approach to social activism is full of hatred, full of anger. This caused

many to "burn out", despair or give up. So I turned to spiritual reflection and learnt how to bring spirituality and compassion into social action. I found that this was more effective; I learned that for social action and social change, "hatred" is not enough. We need to learn with the heart and we need to reflect and contemplate.

Why and how did SEM get involved in CPME?

SEM has been working in Myanmar since 1996, providing Grassroots Leadership Training (GLT) and Peace Leadership Training (PLT) to religious leaders and community leaders; and we have trained over 500 people. Many of the GLT/PLT alumni are now working as community mobilisers on sustainable development, environment protection, youth development, gender equality, and inter-faith movements. Among them are also many Buddhist monks and nuns, and many are already involved in community development and community education. So when SEM was asked to partner with AFSC to support monastic education, SEM was thinking how it could integrate education and social action into monastic education and how to bring in monastic education as another force for social reform to influence mainstream development and education.

SEM was started in Thailand – Did SEM try to work with education to promote social reforms in Thailand?

The Thai experience is different. The Thai education system is under the government and monasteries do not have schools providing general education to children like in Myanmar. For Thai social activists who want to support a more socially engaged type of education, they must establish their own alternative education centers. In Myanmar, space

already exists and many monasteries are already providing education for poor children and poor communities, and hence there is opportunity to use monastic education to influence mainstream development and education.

From your experience and engagement over the last three years, how do you assess the achievement of the CPME Program?

I have not visited many monastic schools and communities, but from those I visited, I see many practical changes in the schools and in the community. Also from reflections with abbots and teachers, I find that many abbots and teachers have gained a lot of inspiration and motivation from CPME.

They speak from the "heart" and you can see their eyes sparkle when they speak. They now talk about concepts of non-violence, participation, holistic development, and integration with the community with conviction and understanding. It is clear that the desire for change is real and that they are more open to alternatives. This forms the foundation for building greater change.

What should be the future directions for CPME?

The CPME Project is now only working with about 10% of the monastery schools, and mostly only at the primary level. To have impact it needs to reach more schools and it also needs to get into the higher levels of education. CPME must work towards building a critical mass within the monastic school system to really bring about change. However, in expanding its reach, it must also focus on quality rather than just quantity, and it needs to work on building a system, strengthening connections and alliances, and give people a platform of learning and sharing.

What advice do you have for donors and supporters of the CPME?

CPME should be seen as a social experiment to bring about social and education transformation in the special context of Myanmar where the mental and political space for change is still quite limited. CPME can exploit the space available within the monastic school system to push for change. Hence the supporters and donors to CPME need to be flexible and allow CPME to be bold and to experiment and innovate, and not to become too locked into a project "mould"; otherwise it would kill its dynamism.

Patricia DeBoer
Educator and Peace Activist

Patricia DeBoer has lived and worked in Asia since 1991. She is currently the regional director of the American Friends Service Committee's programs in Asia and was the AFSC's country representative in Cambodia from 2001–07.

Before joining AFSC, Patricia worked for five years with the United Nations Development Programme in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, focusing on programs in governance, environmental protection, and women's empowerment.

She has a master's degree in international education and has worked as a junior high teacher in Japan and as a political organizer and lobbyist in the United States.

Why is AFSC interested in supporting monastic education in Myanmar and how did AFSC get involved in this area of work?

We decided to work with the Buddhist Sangha in Myanmar because they are playing an important role in nurturing civil society. Buddhist monasteries are the center of community life: supporting educational needs, providing a social safety net, and organizing the festivals and ceremonies that bring the community together. We asked leaders within the Sangha

how we could best help, and they suggested we could help them improve the quality of education in monastic schools. They hoped that helping children to develop their thinking skills would also help develop active citizens. With Myanmar now undergoing reforms, the Buddhist Sangha will be important in developing a peaceful, inclusive and democratic society.

What kinds of support has AFSC been providing to the CPME Program?

AFSC has supported CPME from its inception, including the initial planning and piloting phases. AFSC believes that supporting local initiatives is the best way to strengthen civil society. We wanted to help build Myanmar civil society, not create our own training program. So we focused on supporting CPME's institutional development. We have provided the services of an education adviser and supported advisors on program and financial management. We also contributed to some of CPME's core costs and supported the exposure trips for abbots and nuns who lead the monastic schools. We found that involving these abbots and nuns – the school principals – was essential to the success of the program. It is only through their leadership that teachers are given room to change the way they teach.

From your knowledge and assessment of the CPME Program, what are its achievements and its weaknesses?

The program has three main strengths. One is that it encourages real change in the attitudes of the teachers – the program aims to change people's hearts, not just give them technical skills. The second is that children are noticeably happier with the change in teaching style, are encouraged to ask questions, and become more interested

in learning. The third is that the program changes not just the teachers and students, but also the relationship between monastery and community. The monastery becomes an active center of community participation: parents, teachers, children and principals begin to interact more.

The main difficulty for the program has been insufficient and inconsistent funding. This has made institution building, forward planning, and monitoring of teachers' progress more difficult. Hopefully, the program will find new ways to mobilize resources both locally and from international sources. In any case the program will face new expectations to which it will need to adapt.

What recommendations can you make to improve the effectiveness and outcomes for the CPME Program in the future?

The move towards a hub approach – having more than one training center – is a move in the right direction. The program will benefit from sharing the burden between a group of capable monasteries. How to make the hub approach work effectively will need to be carefully worked out. The program must be allowed to experiment and make mistakes occasionally, in order to maintain its creativity and enthusiasm. Donor attitudes and flexibility will be important to the success of the program.

Would AFSC continue with its engagement in the Program? If yes, in what capacity and in what areas?

Over the next few years, AFSC will continue its core support – focusing on local initiative and institution building – to the best of our ability. We have only small resources, so substantial support from other donors will also be needed.

We will also integrate this program with our regional work on interethnic peace building, allowing the program to learn from the experience of our other partners in the region. Many monastic schools in Myanmar are experienced in working with multiethnic student populations, which is important for the building of a peaceful and democratic multiethnic nation.

Anything else you would like to add to help readers understand the CPME Program better?

The CPME program also inculcates positive attitudes towards preservation of the environment, appreciation of nature, and interaction with the natural world. This is good for children's mental well-being. It is very relevant to the rural communities where many monastic schools are situated. And it is most relevant to a world in which destruction of the environment is accelerating. The CPME program produces well-rounded individuals – inquisitive, environmentally conscious, community-spirited, and caring.

Kyaw Thu
Promotor of Development to Bridge Social Divisions

Kyaw Thu is a social activist and has worked in development for many years. In 2007, he became the Director of Paung Ku (meaning "bridge"), a consortium of 9 international NGOs and 3 local NGOs. Paung Ku's main objective is to provide capacity development to civil society organizations working on community-based development and education, mentoring CBOs, and channeling small grants to support their work. Paung Ku has supported the expansion of the CPME Project to more schools through the Socially Engaged Monastic Schools (SEMS). Below is what Kyaw Thu has to say on why he thinks the CPME Project is worthy of support and expansion:

Why is Paung Ku interested in supporting monastic education through SEMS?

Buddhist monasteries are traditionally places for providing social protection for ordinary people in Burmese society. Monasteries and monastic education can be a very powerful social force for change, but in the Theravada Buddhist tradition, it is less active in social engagement. After talking to Ko Tar, I was attracted to the concept of the "earned space" of monastic schools, and the potential to mobilize

this "space" for real social engagement. Also I like the fact that CPME/SEMS work mainly with rural schools in poor communities, where monks and laity are part of the same social fabric and are part of the community. Together they can become a powerful internal force for community empowerment. In partnering with CPME/SEMS, we are supporting this important social movement to benefit the society.

Can you tell us what activities you have funded in the CPME Program and why you think that it is useful?

I have supported SEMS to send monks and nuns on exposure trips to Thailand and Laos. I think giving monks and nuns exposure and experience of less conservative Theravada traditions is beneficial. Our monks and nuns can have opportunities to meet people and organizations involved in engaged Buddhism and local development. They can see and learn that there are many ways to support change. From what I know, the exposure trips have been quite successful, and have already given our monks and nuns new ideas to help their communities and support social projects.

As you know the CPME Program would like to continue beyond the end of this project phase; how would you like to see Paung Ku's future cooperation with the CPME?

Paung Ku views its cooperation with the CPME as a mutually beneficial experience. Paung Ku likes the way the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM), the key supporter of CPME, works. SEM has a much more cultural and spiritually sensitive approach to development – a more "heart-to-heart" approach. Many international NGOs and

local NGOs working here do not work that way; their approach to development is very much influenced by "western" thinking. Paung Ku wants to learn and promote a "heart-to-heart" approach to development more, as we think it gives greater sustainability to development. Working with CPME, we hope it can provide a bridge to transform the western framework of "modern development" towards "heart-to-heart" development. So to the extent feasible and within our capacity, Paung Ku would like to continue to be a partner with CPME. However, we will need to work out the specifics of that cooperation. There will be some areas where Paung Ku can help, for example, Paung Ku can help identify partners to support CPME/SEMS and channel resources towards its work, and also Paung Ku has some capacity to help with monitoring, learning and sharing.

In what other areas would Paung Ku like to see CPME put more effort?

Through experience, I see the importance of bridging the divisions and tensions between people of different religious beliefs and ethnic groups – like Buddhists with Christians and Buddhists with Muslims, etc. The Buddhist monasteries which are part of the CPME network can play an important role to support the building of such bridges and serve as a good model to reduce ethnic and religious tensions and divisiveness that exists in Burmese society today. At present the State has control over the Sangha, but the monastery schools through their work can also influence the Sangha to do more in the area of peace-building. This is not to say that the CPME Project must cover all monastery schools – with careful selection of monasteries and focal areas, the work of the monastic schools will create ripples of change which will grow and its impact will spread.

The Doers

The CPME is a complex project, managed entirely by local trainers, managers and administrators with only occasional advice from outside. This has enhanced a sense of ownership and made the project participants more committed and self-reliant. However, there are also management and capacity constraints. Monks and nuns have little background and experience in managing projects and providing training on pedagogical topics. Although Phaung Daw Oo Monastic Education School had some previous experience in project management and teacher training, their management capacity was still relatively weak, largely constrained by a lack of professional staff in most aspects of administration, financial management, and reporting. Teacher-training was previously ad-hoc, with trainers relying largely on traditional pedagogical methods which the monastic school teachers found difficult to put into practice after the training.

Hence the CPME Project had to find a new team of trainers who committed themselves to designing a new training curriculum and to ensuring that the modules were linked, relevant to the monastic schools, and focused on supporting change. The project management team also needed to be mentored and coached with on-the-job practice and advice. Through this process, after 3 years, all the trainers and management staff agreed that the results were worth the struggle, and that they themselves have learnt and changed and become more committed in the process.

The team of trainers and project staff include not just ethnic Burmese and Buddhists, but also Christians from ethnic minorities that work side by side with the Buddhist clergy, reflecting the diversity and inter-faith nature of the project.

Thet Nai
The Karen Christian Self-Awareness Trainer and Green Advocate

Thet Nai, one of the first Grassroots Leadership Training (GLT) alumni of Spirit in Education Movement (SEM), is a Karen Christian. He worked as a project manager of the Spirit in Education, Yangon Branch, responsible for managing and supporting civil society groups in the areas of community development, agriculture, environment, and Nargis recovery. He is also an experienced trainer in areas of leadership development, participatory processes, team-building, peace-building, inter-faith mobilization, and local wisdom.

He now runs Gaia Green Company, under which are the Gaia Education Center, Gaia Sustainable Management Institute, and a Green Store (promoting organic food and sustainable living). He was involved in the discussions and formulation of the CPME Project from the start and has been a key trainer for the Self-Awareness Training component for teachers. As the Project Manager of SEM-Yangon, he was also the liaison for the CPME Project with SEM-Thailand, AFSC, and Phaung Daw Oo. Below are his insights about the CPME Project.

What made you interested and involved in the CPME Project?

As a Karen Christian, I would like to see the people of different faiths and ethnicities live in peace and harmony in Myanmar. So even from my school days, I have been interested in promoting good inter-faith relations. The

monastery is one of the most important institutions in Myanmar and the schools run by monasteries are important centers of education for the poor and for promoting tolerance, non-violence, and inter-faith harmony. But the education provided by the monasteries is not very relevant and related to the issues faced by the Burmese society today – the education system is conservative and operates within an old paradigm. I am interested to see monastic education utilize its potential to educate and to build peace. At SEM Yangon we have some skills to contribute to monastic education and so that was why I agreed to be a partner for CPME and support its training.

What kind of training and support did you provide to CPME?

For SEM, we do not see formal education as our main goal to bring about societal change. We believe that we must promote alternative education processes which gives value to local wisdom, participatory processes, and locally-friendly education relying on inductive processes. Formal education relies mainly on didactic methods which make people inferior and undermine their confidence, whereas inductive approaches help people to build awareness of their strengths, develop confidence, and value local resources and grass-root processes. So right from the beginning when the CPME project started to design its teacher training curriculum, SEM and some other CPME supporters proposed that the teacher training component of the project must start with Self-Awareness Training before going on to other types of training.

Why is training in self-awareness such an important part of the CPME training program, and why must it come first?

Awareness operates at different levels – from personal to global. The personal level of awareness means one has to know oneself; the next level is the group self – understanding the others within the group; the next level is understanding of the society (community level); and next is the global level. It is by getting these various levels of awareness that people understand their position within their community and society. The teachers in the monastery schools themselves received poor education when they were young. They are also victims of social isolation and social discrimination because of their poverty and low status. We need to break their low self-esteem and fear, and help them understand themselves and their roles in society and value themselves, strengthen their confidence and to trust one another and help one another within their group and in their community.

In project terms – self awareness training utilizes many activities during training such as discussions, role play, meditation, yoga, reflection, stories, trust-building and team-building activities. These activities lead participants to recognize their true selves and relations with others, to strengthen confidence, and to understand social perspectives.

How do you assess the success of the Awareness Training in the CPME Project?

I think it's quite successful. In meetings with the alumni and during conversations with them, I feel that there is an increase in self-esteem and self-confidence. They become proud of what they are doing – not in materialistic terms. They also express increased care for others and for the community.

Are there any suggestions you would like to give to improve the Awareness Training in CPME?

To have the best result, there needs to be follow up with the alumni after the training to understand the dynamics in the monastery, especially the power relations and inter-personal relationships between the monks/nuns and the teachers and to help bridge the gaps; otherwise the alumni will lose motivation and dynamism in their everyday work.

What about the abbots and nuns, should they also be given awareness training to lead monastic education?

In Buddhism abbots and nuns are already practicing meditation and contemplation daily to gain awareness, so there may be resistance if they are asked to attend awareness training. However, monks here are very hierarchical and the way abbots run the monasteries tend to be authoritarian. To address the awareness training for abbots there must be outside facilitators working with inside trainers – the approach should be more coaching and mentoring and understanding the power relations. Not only monks but people in leader roles should all understand the power context. To be able to motivate everybody to work towards the goal, leaders must break through the power cycle, and see their power relations. They need to learn to listen, and deep listening is very important for abbots, so that people can have confidence to ask questions. Another way is for abbots in CPME schools to meet with progressive monks – monk leaders who lead without being authoritarian. Also we need to build teachers' leadership skills – how to lead without creating conflict, lead with consensus.

Kaung Nyunt
The Engineer turned Educator

Kaung Nyunt has a degree in civil engineering. After his graduation he spent some time working in the Government Irrigation Department. Later he worked with the China National Petroleum Company as a seismic surveyor. His experience working with the Chinese Company and Government Department opened his eyes to how the poor Burmese villagers were at the mercy of corrupt corporations and officials who cheated them and violated their rights. He realized that the poor were easy victims of such abuse largely because of their lack of knowledge and education about their rights. This made him realize how important it is to educate the poor so that they can have access to information and know their rights. Kaung Nyunt later gained a scholarship to Chiang Mai where he was trained by a well-known Burmese educator as a trainer in Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT). He returned to Yangon after Nargis and was hired by an NGO (Partners Asia) where he was involved in community recovery projects. As his main interest is in education and RWCT training, he was asked to assume the post of Education Director of Partners Asia where he continues to support education in poor communities. He is now a volunteer trainer on RWCT for the CPME Project.

How did you get involved with the CPME Project?

I knew both U-Therinda from the RWCT training in Chiang Mai, and Mr Thant Lwin Maung (Ko Tar), who is a well-known writer and social commentator in Myanmar. In 2008, they approached me to help with their monastic education project, and as I was already regularly helping U-Therinda with RWCT training, I agreed to help. So that was how I became involved.

What is your role in the CPME Project?

My role was to help with training of the teachers in RWCT, and also to help with reviewing and revising the RWCT part of the teacher training manual. As a number of my project schools are also CPME schools, I also helped the project with school monitoring and coaching of the teachers.

From your experience in monitoring of the schools and teachers, what is your assessment of the changes in the teachers and the schools?

There are quite significant changes after the schools participated in the CPME Project. Many teachers are able to use the RWCT methods quite effectively, they are also able to write lessons plans better, and they have become more enthusiastic about their work. Many now have good relations with one another and also with the principals.

What do you think are the factors that made the CPME Project effective in changing the attitude of the teachers and the school?

Actually there are many factors which make the CPME Project quite successful. In talking to the teachers they all

said that they were able to change largely because of the self-awareness training. At first this took me by surprise. For me RWCT training was enough to help teachers teach and guide children's learning. RWCT training is very comprehensive, covering lesson planning; use of discussion, question techniques; games and role play; etc. So I never paid much attention to the other training. I just focused on my part of the training. But when I kept hearing from the teachers how crucial self-awareness training was in changing their attitude and giving them the motivation to practice RWCT methods, I became quite curious. So I sent 3 of the office staff to attend the self-awareness training. When they returned after the training, I noticed quite a change in the way they worked – the staff who kept to herself most of the time became better in interacting with others; another staff who was quite impatient became calmer and kinder, and another seemed more interested in community development and so on. Now I am quite convinced that self-awareness training has triggered something in the teachers and made them more receptive to learn and practice RWCT methods. It also made them more open and effective in communicating with parents and with other teachers. Also I learned from Ko Tar how the exposure visits for abbots have made them better leaders and more supportive of the teachers. So I think that there are many factors working together that have made the CPME Project quite effective.

What are some improvements you think are still needed for the CPME Project?

First, the CPME Project must have a good team of trainers and facilitators. Now the CPME Project is too dependent of volunteer trainers and facilitators, with each person being responsible for some specific topics. This can affect the

consistency and continuity of the training from one topic to the next. It also puts the project at risk, if some volunteers decide that they could not help with the training anymore. Hence over the long-term, and especially if the CPME Project expands to more schools, the Project will need 2 or 3 teams of reliable trainers.

Second, for the training program, I would also like to suggest additional topics to be included, such as health, art and theatre and parents education. This will add to the richness of the training program.

Third, I also think, not only the abbots, but the trainers also need to be sent on exposure visits to learn good education and community development lessons and experiences from neighboring countries. As trainers they will be effective in transfering the experience to many teachers. It will also be more cost effective.

Lastly, even though the abbots have benefited a great deal from the exposure visits, I think many abbots still need leadership training to ensure that they become real leaders to champion transformation of monastic education in Myanmar.

Ven. U-Therinda
The Monk Who Wants to Teach like Buddha

Venerable U-Therinda is from Mandalay and is the principal of a monastic school outside Mandalay city. He has been trained as an RWCT trainer in Chiang Mai by Dr Thein Lwin. Prior to being part of the CPME team, he was already asked frequently by Phaung Daw Oo to conduct RWCT training for monastic school teachers. In 2008, he was proposed by U-Nayaka to participate in the CPME project and to be a member of the CPME technical education support team. He was in one of the first groups of monks to go on an exposure visit to learn about alternative education and community development in Thailand. As a member of the CPME technical education support team, he has been involved in developing the training curriculum for CPME, including designing and adapting the Self-awareness and RWCT training modules used for training teachers in the CPME Program. He is now a trainer for CPME's Self-awareness and RWCT training and also supports monitoring of schools and teachers to provide post-training coaching and mentoring to the abbots and teachers.

What made you interested in improving monastic education?

The Buddha is a great teacher and all monks are expected to follow Buddha's example and provide education for the

people. In Myanmar, the monasteries have always been a place of education and monastic schools have a long history in Myanmar. But nowadays, the quality of education in monastic schools is not very good; the method of teaching is very traditional – just teacher talks and children listen; just memorization, no thinking. So I want to improve monastic education – I want the monastic schools to use the Buddha's way of teaching.

What is the Buddha's way of teaching?

The Buddha's way of teaching is very scientific – it asks people to think for themselves, to analyze, and the Buddha taught by asking questions and led the people to find their own answers, to discover their own path. This is why I think RWCT is very useful – it is Buddha's way of teaching; it is using questions; it is using discovery; it is reflecting, thinking and analyzing.

You have conducted many RWCT trainings for monastic school teachers in the past, so how is the RWCT training different from the CPME Training?

Any type of training takes time, we must have enough time for people to understand, and then to practice. In the past when we did RWCT training, it was too short, and it was not very systematic. We only focused on teaching methods, we forgot to stress changing attitudes. Also in the past in the RWCT training we did not pay attention to the role of the abbots, we only trained teachers and some junior monks. The teachers trained in RWCT know the methods, but are not confident to use the methods without the support of the abbot or the parents.This is why some teachers could change the way they teach and some teachers did not change.

So, when we started to develop the CPME Program, we discussed all these issues faced in the past and how we can overcome them. So in the CPME program, we tried to look at the whole picture – and we were advised to include the abbots, teachers, parents in the process of change. In CPME we now train the heart with Buddhist teachings and awareness training; we train the head using RWCT methods, and we train the hands by learning practical life-skills.

It was not easy at first, not everybody was convinced, including myself. In working with CPME, I also slowly changed. In the past I tended to focus only narrowly on improving teaching and so I tried to train as many teachers as possible in RWCT to improve their teaching methods, hoping that when teachers gain teaching skills, they will apply these skills in the schools. But from working on the CPME project, I came to understand that teachers alone cannot change teaching and learning; they need support from others in the school – especially the abbots, other teachers, and also the parents. They need to learn how to explain what they want to do, and they need their support and their agreement. They need confidence that they can improve teaching and help children learn.

So I myself changed and now I try to communicate with all the people involved – the abbots, the monks and nuns, the teachers, the parents, the community leaders, and township officials of what we try to do, and why we need their support. So I have now broadened the way I work. I also think I have become more open – open to new ideas and new ways of working. I also now study and read more about education as I need to learn more and know more in order to convince others.

After working with the program for three years, how do you assess the effectiveness and changes brought about by the CPME program?

The training has become better; and the teachers and abbots have become more aware and more skilled; they have also become more involved. Abbots are now more interested to work with the community, and the community now has a deeper interest in working with the school. Teachers can use their knowledge and new methods to teach because their abbots now support them; they are more aware of themselves and have gained confidence and commitment for education. Life-skills education helps them know how to help the community and the school generate income, and so the community sees the value of the school beyond just being a place for children to learn. So I can say that CPME has been quite effective in making monastic education better – more and more like Buddha's way of teaching.

What recommendations would you like to make to the next phase of the CPME Program?

I want to see the CPME Program expand to more and more schools. I want to recommend self-awareness training to be part of all RWCT training; but actually not only in RWCT training but in any kind of professional training, like vocational training, etc. This is because in Myanmar, many people have difficulties working in teams. With awareness training they learn to become more open to themselves and more open to others. When we become open, the learning will improve. Also some teachers still need guidance and coaching so that they can improve their skills.

Zaw Nyunt
The Gardener Turned Life-skills Trainer

Zaw Nyunt, was a former student of Phaung Daw Oo. After university he returned to Phaung Daw Oo. He and his wife needed work and a place to live, so in 2008 when U-Nayaka offered him and his wife work and a place to live in the CPME Garden Center he accepted. As the Manager of the Garden Center he had to do everything – he is the gardener, the electrician, the construction worker. His wife is the cook, the cleaner, and the odd-job worker.

Why did you want to be a CPME Life Skills Trainer?

I had no idea that I would be a trainer. My wife and I needed jobs and a place to stay. Since I went to school in Phaung Daw Oo, I decided that I should try to get some job at the school. So when U-Nayaka said he needed a manager and a cook for the CPME Garden, which he said he would develop into a training center, I agreed to work there. At least my wife and I would have a place to live in.

So how did you become a Life Skills Trainer?

I guess when Saya Htun and Phoung-Phoung-ji (honorific term to address monks) saw that I could work hard with my hands, they gave me the chance to be a Life Skills Trainer. When the CPME program organized the first training session for teachers, Saya Htun asked me to helped with training arrangements and to participate in the Self-Awareness and the Life-skills training components. I already know many skills, like gardening, making bio-fertilizers, making charcoal and mud-house, so I was quickly asked to assist the Trainers in this part of the training. Now, whenever there is any teacher training, I do the life skills training. Saya Htun also asks me to help him do school monitoring, and whenever I go visit the schools, the teachers always ask me to help them do life skill training for the community. I have helped build many mud houses and taught many people about making gardens.

How do you like your work with CPME?

I like it very much. The CPME Project is really good. When I go visit the schools, I can see that everybody is now happy with the school. The training helps the teachers and children and the people in the community a lot; it is very practical and useful.

What are your plans for the future?

My wife and I like living in the Garden Center a lot, and we like the work here. So I want to continue to work with CPME and work as the Garden Center Manager and Trainer as long as I am needed here.

Htun-Htun Oo
The Tour Guide Who Became CPME Project Manager

Htun-Htun is the CPME Program Manager at Phaung Daw Oo School. He was one of the first students to attend Ven. U-Nayaka's tuition classes, and the first batch of students to complete primary school education at Phaung Daw Oo School. From 1996-2007 Htun-Htun worked as a tour guide, but he always kept his ties with U-Nayaka and helped out with management of U-Nayaka's projects. In 2008, at the request of U-Nayaka, he quit his job and worked as a full-time manager of Phaung Daw Oo School. In 2009, when the CPME Project needed a Project Manager, U-Nayaka again asked Htun-Htun to accept the Project Manager's position to manage the CPME Project.

Tell me about your experience with managing CPME Project?

Frankly, at first I was reluctant to take on the role of Project Manager. Even though I was already working in Phaung Daw Oo School, I had little understanding about education – my job then was only to help U-Nayaka write project proposals, request money for teacher training and construction of school buildings, write project reports and manage budgets. I was an administrator and I did not need to know very much about education theories or teaching methods. I only accepted to be the CPME Project Manager because U-Nayaka asked me and I could not say "No".

I only began to understand more and more about education when I had to take the monks on exposure trips to Thailand and Laos. Like the abbots, it was eye-opening. The approach to education and development in other countries was very different from our monastic schools; it was more open and more participatory. I began to understand that we need to develop our monastic schools if our country wants to progress.

After three years, what changes did you see in the schools and monks?

Most schools have improved. Some schools have improved amazingly, but some schools could only improve slowly – step by step. Actually, all the monks want to change – some can change faster, but some did not progress so well because there are too many demands on them.

On the whole, the trainers have become better and better – most trainers are RWCT alumni, so they understand the methods of teaching well. After they participate in the self-awareness training with the teachers, they themselves have become better trainers and mentors for the teachers.

As Manager of CPME, what would you like to see improve that would make the project even better?

As Manager of CPME, I would like to see proper selection of abbots and schools to participate in the Project; the abbots who really want to participate in the Project will be committed to change their schools for the better, whereas the abbots who are not very interested in joining the Project, it is very difficult to change their minds. Also younger abbots are more open than very old abbots.

Also we must find ways to keep the teachers after the training, like giving them better salary. Otherwise they will leave if they find better jobs. Maybe we can reward some teachers by taking them to join some exposure visits. Teachers too need to see and learn from experiences from other countries – not just the abbots.

Salai Tial Awi Thang (Awipi)
The Aspiring Chin Christian Writer

Salai Tial Awi Thang (Awipi) is a Christian Chin from Chin State with a degree in Linguistic and English Literature. He has been working as a Project Staff with the Socially Engaged Monastic Schools (SEMS) since January 2011. Prior to joining the SEMS Office, he worked for four years with the Shalom Foundation supporting Nargis victims and Policy Research. Now he is mainly responsible for liaising with SEMS' monastery school abbots and teachers, organizing training and meetings, supervising SEMS team and managing SEMS budget.

As a Christian and as an ethnic Chin, what motivated you to work with SEMS?

I have known Saya Tar* since my university days and I have always been interested in writing. I am also interested in working on social issues, community development and local empowerment. So when Saya Tar asked me to join his work in SEMS, I saw this as a good opportunity to learn from him, especially learning from him about writing and publishing. Through Saya Tar's network I also had the opportunity to attend a number of training like GNH (GrossNational Happiness), and Consumer Education.

I have never been involved with monastic schools and socially engaged Buddhism before. However, as a Chin living in Burma, I understand the special role of Buddhism in my country, and to bring about social change, we must engage the Buddhist monasteries and the monks. The monastery is a center for community gathering, religious activities and education. Hence the monasteries can have a major influence on community social and political development. But for this, we need good abbots, monks and nuns who are socially aware and able to lead the community. Their role in the community is much more powerful and effective than politicians and intellectuals. So our program for monastic education can potentially be very useful to open the minds and change the attitude of the monks and nuns and to help them become effective community organizers and social transformers.

What is your experience working with monastic education and what are the challenges?

After working with monastic education for one year, I am more convinced of the significant role of abbots. But I also realize that changing the abbots and monks and nuns is a very difficult task. Abbots and monks are used to being served and obeyed by the lay people, so many think and act superior to everybody in the community. I also observe that monks and nuns are in many ways separated from the people and from the community, for example they eat separately from the lay people, and such separation can create a barrier to building solidarity between the monastery and the community. I have also experienced that when some monks and nuns are very active and involved with the community, some conservative people criticize them and consider their behavior inappropriate.

For SEMS, another challenge is with the shortage of trainers and facilitators. For Self-awareness Training we have limited trainers, same for RWCT. Also some of the trainers are very young and inexperienced. Hence we need to build a broader resource network of trainers.

In your opinion, what can the CPME/SEMS project do to overcome these challenges?

I think we need a number of strategies – the current exposure trip for abbots to learn from other countries is good. But that is not enough; we must do more – we should support continuous learning for the monks and nuns in our project schools. For example, we must provide them with more books on engaged Buddhism and we need to translate books by socially engaged Buddhist scholars like Thich Nhat Hanh. We also need to support more study sessions for monks and nuns, and teachers to give them new ideas and new ways of doing things. This is why Saya Tar always tries to have orientation meetings and talks with the monks and nuns and teachers. In addition, we should provide more reading materials to schools to encourage teachers and children to read and learn on their own. Writing and translating children's books and engaged Buddhist books are in much need. We should support writing of more books, if we want to improve monastic education and community development. Another suggestion is that abbots should also work with other Buddhist groups, for example Buddhist Youth Groups and Christian groups.

What is your vision of the CPME/SEMS Program in the future?

I would like to see SEMS/CPME in the next few years provide a model for Buddhist-based education and mobilization and show the way to other monastic schools and influence the Buddhist Sangha to be more progressive. I want to see more comparative studies between engaged Christian teachings and engaged Buddhist teachings. This would promote some cross learning.

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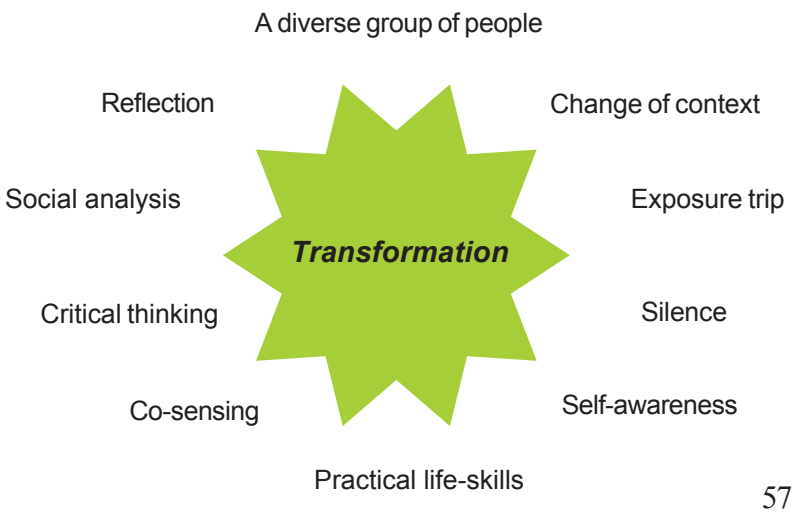
A true education is unique for it encourages us to learn from inside to solve problems outside. An education or “sikkha” in Pali means getting to look into oneself. In other words, it is a real attempt to see the cease of one’s suffering. Thus, knowledge and practice are indivisible; they go hand in hand.

— Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

PART TWO

The Participants and Frontline Change Agents

In Buddhism, the concept of "Metta" (compassion) prevails in its teachings and its work, the CPME hopes to encourage the practice of "metta" in monastery schools beyond a form of charity (providing free education, free food to poor kids), to an active form of engagement to shape the minds, hearts and hands of children and their families. To do this there has to be a change of the authoritarian and hierarchical structures of the monastery and the leadership style and behavior of those that lead and work in the monastery schools and their communities. To achieve this process the CPME relies on change that focuses less of the individual and more on the group, drawing on the strength of its diversity to create an ecology of learning, sharing, experiencing, and contemplation. Below is a diagrammatic representation of the learning process promoted by the CPME—factors that cause change.



Over a three-year period, the CPME Project has trained 57 abbots and 3 nuns, and 236 teachers. Many have changed their attitudes in leading and managing the schools from a traditional, top-down style to embracing a more open, consultative and facilitating style. In the process they are now the change agents for the schools and the community.

Let's listen to what some abbots, nuns, teachers, have to say of their experiences and let's listen also to the parents and the children's reaction to the changes they see.

The Abbots Exposure Trip to learn from nearby countries is a cornerstone of the change process for the monastic schools leaders. Here is what two abbots have to say about how this experience inspired them.

Abbot U-Wayama of Shwe Kyaung Monastic School in Tada Oo Township of Mandalay Region, is in his late 50s. His monastic school is located in a rural community about 10 miles outside Mandalay City. The people in the area are mainly farmers and many also raise a few cows. His school was selected to be among the first 10 schools to participate in the CPME Program. He went on the exposure trip to Thailand and Laos in the beginning of 2009 and here is what he has to say about the exposure visit and the changes it has made on him and his leadership style.

"The visit to Thailand and Laos was my first trip outside of Myanmar and it made a big impression on me. We visited many places, but there were a few which stuck in my mind most. I was particularly impressed with Moo Ban Dek in Thailand where I really see that we can run a school in a different way. At Moo Ban Dek, children actively make decisions in running the school and village – not the principal and not the teachers. There I also saw that teachers do not talk a lot or read from books, they just provide guidance and do many activities with children. So children are always interested and actively learning either on their own or in groups. This is an eye-opener for me as it is so different from what we do in Myanmar.

"Then in Laos, I learned about HIV/AIDS counseling where I saw monks helping HIV positive people in a very gentle and kind way. I do not see this very often in Myanmar. Also there are other things I see in the visit which are different from Myanmar, for example, the way the cities and public places are kept clean. All these things made me think a lot, and especially how I can use some of what I see and learn to do things better in my own monastery and in my school.

"Over the past 3 years, I have made many changes; the key changes I made include first changing myself. I learnt to become more open-minded, more receptive to new ideas. I understand why the CPME program wants to target the abbots first, because the abbot as head must lead the way and then others will follow. If the abbot does not change or support the change, the others will be afraid to do things differently.

"I was also lucky; I was given opportunities to participate in other trainings, like CCA training and CPME school management training. I see how important it is to keep learning, so I now support the teachers in the school to attend training – as much as possible. The teachers are young and can learn fast and absorb new ways of doing things more easily. After they come back from the training, I also encourage them to apply what they learn. I just bought a computer for the school. I want my teachers to learn how to use the computer. This will help them gain new knowledge.

"In the past year, I have also reorganized the way the Parents-Teachers-Association (PTA) works. In the past we had a PTA, but they just did whatever I ask them – they had no plan. So I encouraged them to make their own work plan – they decide each month what they want to do for the monastery and school and they share it with the teachers and with me, and we agree and they make a work plan for the year. This is something new for all of us, but after a few

months the parents and teachers like it and they don't need to ask me what to do every time.

"We have also improved on the way the students' council works following the Moo Ban Dek's example, but also adapting it to suit our school. Now the teachers and students set up and agree on rules on how to handle discipline, how to help with the cleaning of the school and classrooms, and how to help children who have difficulties in learning and so on. This way, the children learn how to follow school and class rules, understand their responsibilities, and help one another. Since the children are the ones who help set up the regulations and the rules themselves, they are more willing to follow the rules. All these changes mean that teachers now have more time to concentrate on improving their teaching and do not have to handle matters which can now be done by parents or children.

"I still have many plans for my school and village. I would like to make a proper playground and help develop a sports team for the school. Now that I have improved the school, I want to spend more time to work with the villagers to improve their livelihoods."

From interview on 05 September 2012

Abbot U-Kawvida of Maha Thiri Linkara Monastery in Kangyidaunt Township, Ayeyawady Region, is in his early 40s. His school is in a rural area about 2.5 km from the main road. His school is the only school providing education up to Grade 8 in the area. Very few children complete high school as the nearest high school is very far away. The communities around the school are poor, depending mainly on farming. His school joined the SEMS Program in 2011 and he went on his exposure visit to Thailand and Laos in March 2012.

"I was very excited about my visit to Thailand and Laos and recorded every place I visited using my video camera. This way I can replay the video and watch and listen again to everything I saw and heard. I liked everything I saw and learned a lot, but I really like the projects I saw in Laos. I was particularly impressed by the cooperation between the monks and people, and their cooperation with the government in Laos. We don't have this kind of close relationship in Myanmar. In Laos, the monks in Vientiane are involved in training monks from the countryside and also teaching Dharma in government schools. The monks

also work with young people who are addicted to drugs and helping them through Dharma teaching to stop taking drugs and live healthy lives. Also from the visit to a school in Laos [Don Koi School], I learn that education is not only teaching the lessons in the textbooks; there they also teach recycling waste, learning about the environment, and also teaching compassion. These are all new for us in Myanmar.

"From the trip I learnt a few lessons which I now apply in my work. I learnt from the Lao monks that I have to try to work with all groups in society – the government, the military, different ethnic groups, and religious groups. I also learnt that working in a participatory way is more successful and is the best way to gain support from the people. Now, before I start something new, I consult with the village elders, villagers, teachers, and also the young people. I also learnt to give more autonomy to the children in the school – this I have learnt from Moo Ban Dek of Thailand.

"The visit also gave me courage and confidence that I can do a lot more for my school and for the nearby villages. We are quite far from the main road and many of our villages are very prone to flooding. So after I returned I set up a program called Buddhist Dharma and Social Services Groups and announced this using a brochure which was distributed to the villages and nearby towns. I was surprised that many people want to become members of the groups. Now I already have 700 members working in 5 different groups: a Health Group which mobilizes blood donation and provides emergency transfer for very sick people to the hospital; an environment group with volunteers responsible for dam watch duties to warn the people of possible floods once the water level reaches a critical level; an aged care group that provides basic food and salt to the old and poor; an education group that offers free English lessons to children; and a saving group that provides small loans to people wanting to start small businesses.

"I am very happy that the Buddhist Dharma and Social Services Groups have received a lot of support from the public and we are able to mobilize funds to support the activities quite quickly. I have set up a committee to manage the funds and decide on what activities to support. We now have different types of donations: voluntary donations from members and donations in kind – for example, I just received an ambulance from the township government and a dental chair for the clinic. I also use donations to the monastery – 500,000 Kyat every month – to support the projects. I have just started an Endowment Fund for the Program – this is a fund set up to receive donations from anybody, including the township government. I hope that the Endowment Fund can grow and we can use the interest to fund the activities – that is my dream!

"My experience also taught me that it is always difficult to change people, but if the strategies are locally relevant, it will be easier to persuade people to participate and also overcome conflict. For example, as a result of the dam-watch project, many families received warning ahead of time and managed to move their belongings to higher ground before their houses were flooded. Also the emergency transfer of sick people was much appreciated, as even at night we can use the ambulance to take the sick to the hospital. These are very relevant activities and they help bring people to work together for the good of our community."

From Interview on 03 September 2012

Training of Teachers in Awareness, RWCT, and Life-skills provides the basis for changing the heart, developing the mind, and using the hands. We now hear some feedback from a few teachers on the training and how the skills they have gained, and how they have used it to improve and stimulate children learn and be active:

Naw Ei Ei Thu

Ms Naw Ei Ei Thu teaches the community learning center for children at the Layeinsu Buddhist Mingalar Association supported by SEMS. Ei Ei attended the CPME training in 2011 and has this to say about the CPME Training.

"For me, I found the training on RWCT most interesting and useful. I have never been to any teacher training course and from RWCT I learn techniques like brainstorming, free writing, and diary writing in my classes. I also like the self-awareness training, because it helps me become more 'mindful' and understand myself better, like understanding the 'yin-yang'."

Naw Khat Wai Soe

Ms Naw Khat Wai Soe is a colleague of Ei Ei Thu at the community learning center for children at the Layeinsu Buddhist Mingalar Association.

"I like learning by doing and so I like the life skills training a lot. The skills are very relevant for our local communities.

"I found the training package so useful that I shared the training modules with my cousin who is a teacher in the government school. After reading the modules she told me this kind of training should be taught to all the teachers in the public schools, especially the RWCT training because it helps make children think and ask questions."

Teacher from Thamaing Thit Monastic School in Mandalay Region which joined the program in 2010:

"In the past we thought that children should sit quietly and listen carefully, but now we use the techniques learnt in CPME training and encourage them to ask a lot of questions. We also encourage them to do 'free write', a way of letting children write out their feelings and ideas. Through this we get to understand their feelings and fears better. Knowing their feelings and emotions, we can help them learn faster."

All monastery schools rely on **the parents and members of the community** to support them through alms giving to the monks and through contribution of their labor and cash to maintain, repair and build the monasteries and classrooms. In turn, the children get to attend school, learn Buddhist teachings and culture at the monasteries for free. However, this symbiotic relationship between monasteries and the community has been a relative passive one, with the parents mainly doing what the abbots tell them to do. The CPME program now motivates the abbots and teachers to change this age-old relationship between the monastery and the community into a force to support learning and development and change within the community. This is happening as can be seen from the interview below.

The Parents-Teachers Association of Shwe Kyaung Monastic School in Mandalay Region

The Parents-Teachers Association of Shwe Kyaung Monastic School in Mandalay Region has operated informally for many years, but in 2011, it decided to re-organize itself more formally and has appointed a committee to manage its affairs. The PTA was motivated by the changes it saw in the school after the abbot and teachers went to the CPME training. Now the PTA makes an annual workplan jointly with the teachers. The annual plan is reviewed every month at the PTA meetings and is adjusted as needed.

Examples from the PTA workplan include: cooking monthly lunches for the children, cleaning of the school, organizing the community, helping out duringmonastery ceremonies, holding meetings for parents on education and health, growing peanuts to generate income, organizing children's competitions, and so on. As a result of the improved planning and work organization, the PTA of Shwe Kyaung Monastic School is reported to be running more smoothly than before.

Now the PTA wants to do more for the school, with tentative plans to organize fundraising activities to develop a fund to help needy children from the community attend Phaung Daw Oo Secondary School after graduating from primary school. The PTA also intends to ask parents to help teachers teach certain subjects in class, like teaching the legends of the village, making handcrafts and so on. The PTA also wants to start Dharma teaching in the summer for children and adults.

Interview with the PTA Committee members and parents on 05 September 2012

Parents' meeting with Thamaing Thit Monastic School of Mandalay Region

The parents of Thamaing Thit all live near a gold mining company deep in the Mandalay Hills. They have migrated into the area, lured by the prospect of finding gold, but in fact most only work as day laborers at the gold mining company or are panning gold by themselves. Most of the villagers are poor and are grateful that there is a monastery school nearby to which they can send their children for free. The Thamaing Thit School has been part of the CPME Network since 2009.

In a meeting with the parents, they reported that they are happy to see the changes taking place in the school, especially the fact that the school now has a new building and the classrooms are more airy and larger than before. Of the parents at the meeting, only two (fathers) had been to primary school, all the others said that they had never been to school because they were too poor. That was the reason why they want their children to be educated and have a better life than theirs.

When asked about the changes they see in their children in the last two years, they all said that their children now enjoy school and that they seem to be learning a lot. A mother noticed that her children are doing a lot more drawing than before and are learning many songs. Another reported that the teachers are teaching differently – they are more caring and now teach the children about hygiene, and when the kids go home they share this with their parents. The children also spend a lot more time in school working together on school projects of one kind or another. Another mother said that she stopped smoking because her daughter informed her that smoking can cause diseases.

A father also said he stopped drinking since April this year because his daughter told him that she did not like him getting drunk and angry. This kind of behavior, the parents said, is new and it is because the children are learning a lot more from the school and are sharing their knowledge and reasoning with their parents more than they did before.

In response to their participation in the Parents Teacher Association, all said that they are willing to participate and help the school and monastery in any way they can. They agreed that the Abbot is a good leader, is kind, and always discusses and seeks their opinions on how to improve the school. A father proudly said they helped to level the land to make a football field for the school because their children wanted to have a place to play. "The monastery school is the only school nearby; without this school, our children will have no other school to go to. Now our abbot is working hard to raise funds from the gold mine company to donate money to help build a clinic in the school. We hope he will succeed."

Education is supposed to help children prepare them for life, providing them with skills to make a living and participate in the building of their society. Yet, for most children, they consider school to be a boring place where they are only expected to memorize and recite facts and figures for exams, which they instantly forget once the exams are over. They see teachers as authoritarian figures who expect them to sit and listen quietly all day. No wonder the only time kids love is when the school bell rings for recess or end of the school day. The CPME Project hopes to change this, encouraging children to learn to think, to learn through play, to learn how to work with each other, and also to share the responsibility in decision-making to improve the school and themselves. This is quite revolutionary. Below, in a meeting of a students' council, the children shared their experience of this new style of education.

> The children reported that the Student Council was formed in 2009 upon the suggestion of the Abbot. They were selected to represent the students and meet once every two weeks with the abbot and teachers, normally after school. Their role is to find out from the other students their needs and present them to the abbot and teachers. For example, the students complained about the toilets not working, the students want to make a garden, and the students wanted to have a football field. They presented these ideas and discussed them with the abbot and teachers. Sometimes the abbot would ask them to help out with problems in the school – for example, how they could help to keep the school clean – or the teacher would ask them what they can do to help children who have behavior problems. They discuss the issues and together agree on a plan.

They said they are proud to serve on the Students' Council because they can help the abbot and teachers solve problems. They also feel proud that the students who elected them are happy with their work. Also their parents are proud of them, and because of that their parents also listen to them more – not just telling them what to do.

When asked what other changes have taken place in the school, the students said that their teachers are teaching better, using stories and songs to help them learn and remember, and encouraging them to ask questions. Many students said that the teachers listen to them more and consult with them; for example, the class rules are now set up by the students and teachers together, and when the teachers do not follow the rules, they can remind the teachers – and the same goes for them if they break the rules.

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An Education is related to all aspects of life. It prepares a breeding ground for humans to grow and flourish. It imparts us an awareness to develop and empower ourselves and to learn to stand steadily in the world. It helps us to be free, to accrue a critical thinking to seek virtue, beauty and truth by ourselves and for us to initiate, be creative and be responsible.

— **Waldorf Education**

PART THREE

CPME Achievements and Challenges (2009-2012)*

Part three of this study is excerpted from the report of the CPME Project Assessment submitted to the CPME Board of Directors at the end of project period ending 2012. The purpose of including this report is to enable the readers to have a more comprehensive view of management structure of the Project and the achievements and targets as set out in the project framework and to help to provide more factual information. This is to add to the "human" and motivational stories and perspectives presented in Part One and Part Two of the study.

1. Introduction

This report, funded by AFSC, is prepared for the CPME Board of Directors as the end-project assessment report of the CPME Program. The assessment is conducted by the Education Advisor who visited a sample of project schools from 30 August through 11 September 2012 .**

* The findings of the achievement and challenges of the CPME Project is based on the final monitoring visit and rapid assessment of the CPME Project in Yangon and Mandalay in September 2012.

** The Education Advisor has been involved with the formulation of the Center for Promotion of Monastic Education (CPME) program from its inception and participated in several program reviews and training activities over the past 3 years of program implementation. She has also conducted annual monitoring visits to the project monastery schools since 2009. This end of project monitoring and assessment visit is the 3rd monitoring visit conducted.

The purpose of this end project monitoring and assessment is as follows:

1. To monitor program progress in schools and conduct a rapid assessment of CPME program outputs and outcomes after 3 years of program implementation;

2. To document program success and challenges, experiences and lessons-learnt from the CPME program and to share these experiences and insights with other education and development practitioners interested in monastic education and/or education reform in Myanmar;

3. To use the lessons learnt from the last three years to formulate the next phase of the program.

The Center for Promotion of Monastic Education (CPME) program covering the period 2009 through 2012 is officially complete as of August 2012. By end August 2012, the CPME program has completed almost all proposed project activities as set out in the 3-year program frame, and has met most of the program objectives. Not only has the program met most of its objectives, its model of education/ community development is currently being replicated to other monastery schools and communities by a local organization under its Socially Engaged Monastic Schools (SEMS) project.

In general, the program's approach, processes, and activities have been welcomed by the monastic schools system, and the different training activities have brought about positive changes in attitudes and practices of the monastic schools' abbots, monks, nuns, and teachers who are using the knowledge and skills acquired in their daily work.

As a result there has been noticeably improved learning outcomes and skills development among children, and increased enthusiasm and support and participation from parents and community members.

2. Background of the CPME Program

The CPME (Center for Promotion of Monastic Education) was the brainchild of a group of dedicated social activists/ intellectuals, engaged Buddhist clergy and inter-faith practitioners, who believe that the creation of a more socially just, peaceful, and sustainable society in Myanmar requires the engagement and attitudinal transformation of all segments of society, especially the poor and marginalized who constitute the majority of the population. The entry point for such engagement and attitudinal change is believed to be the monks and nuns in the monastic school system.

Currently monastery-based schools number more than 1,500, distributed across the country and provide schooling to more than 10% of the poorest school-aged children (or more than 250,000 children) in the urban and rural townships. These monastery-based schools offer free education to very poor children regardless of ethnicity and religious affiliations and serve the poorest and most marginalized communities. However, the quality of education provided by most monastery-based schools is of low quality and relies mostly on top-down management by abbots and teaching by rote by teachers, commonly described as the teacher-centered approach (TCA). As a result children coming out of the monastery schools have limited knowledge, analytical capacity, and life-skills, meaning that most will be destined to low level employment and will be unable to break the cycle of inter-generational social and

economic deprivation and political marginalization.

However, despite the poor quality of education, "the monastery is a space for everybody and it has traditionally protected the underprivileged and dispossessed, and is even today considered a center of Burmese culture. This is the space 'earned' by the monks and even under the military regime the space existed and this existing space should be promoted".* Hence, the CPME program should use this "earned space" of the monks and nuns to transform education as an avenue to foster meaningful, holistic and integrated learning for poor children and promote sustainable development of their communities.

The initiators of the CPME program, who are themselves deeply steeped in Burmese culture and Buddhist teachings, also believe that change must come from within and must be organic and driven from the heart and not only the head. Hence the CPME program does not just resort to addressing the prevailing poor quality of education by improving pedagogical and management practices in monastic schools. The program also stresses the importance of transformation of attitude, behavior, and leadership roles of the key actors within the monastic school system (starting from the abbot down), while at the same time empowering the teachers, monks and nuns with appropriate knowledge and skills to stimulate learning of children under their care. At the same time to bring about improvement of the community, the CPME program also wants to encourage the learning of practical knowledge and life-skills for the community to improve their lives and livelihoods.

This holistic approach is believed to be the most effective and sustainable way to breaking the cycle of ignorance, poverty, and isolation of poor communities in Myanmar. In other words, the project aims to build upon

* Interview with Mr Thant Lwin Maung (Ko Tar), a key founder of the CPME Program and member of the CPME Board.

Myanmar's twin pillars of respect of Learning and Buddhism to bring about the type of social, economic, and psychological change needed to gradually empower poor children and their families to become more self-reliant and confident from the bottom-up.

To achieve this long-term vision, the decision was to establish an institutional umbrella for the project, called the Center for Promotion of Monastic Education (CPME) for provision of effective and systematic training for monastic school abbots/principals and teachers to change the way they traditionally run monastic schools. The hope is to develop a selected number of monastery-based schools as model schools of holistic learning for children and members of the community which simultaneously transform attitudes, promote analytical thinking, and inculcate practical life skills. The key strategies are the following:

1. Training and exposure of Abbots/Principals of selected monastic schools to alternative education models to encourage them to better manage and lead "child-friendly and thinking schools".
2. Training of monastic school teachers in self-awareness, pedagogical methods in RWCT/CCA *, and practical life-skills to empower them to better execute their role as teachers in the school and in the community, and develop their self-confidence, knowledge and skills to stimulate children's learning and thinking.
3. Training of pedagogical trainers/mentors to support and coach abbots and teachers in improving education practices in the monastic schools through use of simple monitoring tools and regular school visits.

* RWCT means "Reading and Writing for Critical thinking" and CCA means "Child-Centered Approach."

In addition to these three key capacity development components, the project also aims to improve the learning environment by provision of basic learning materials to schools such as books for libraries; and teaching aids.

These inter-linked activities are meant to help develop leadership and skills of abbots, monks, nuns, and teachers to stimulate learning and thinking among children, promote more open and democratic processes of school management among abbots and teachers; and mobilize increased participation of children and parents in developing the learning and living environment of schools and communities, and break the "walls" that separate monastery, school, and community.

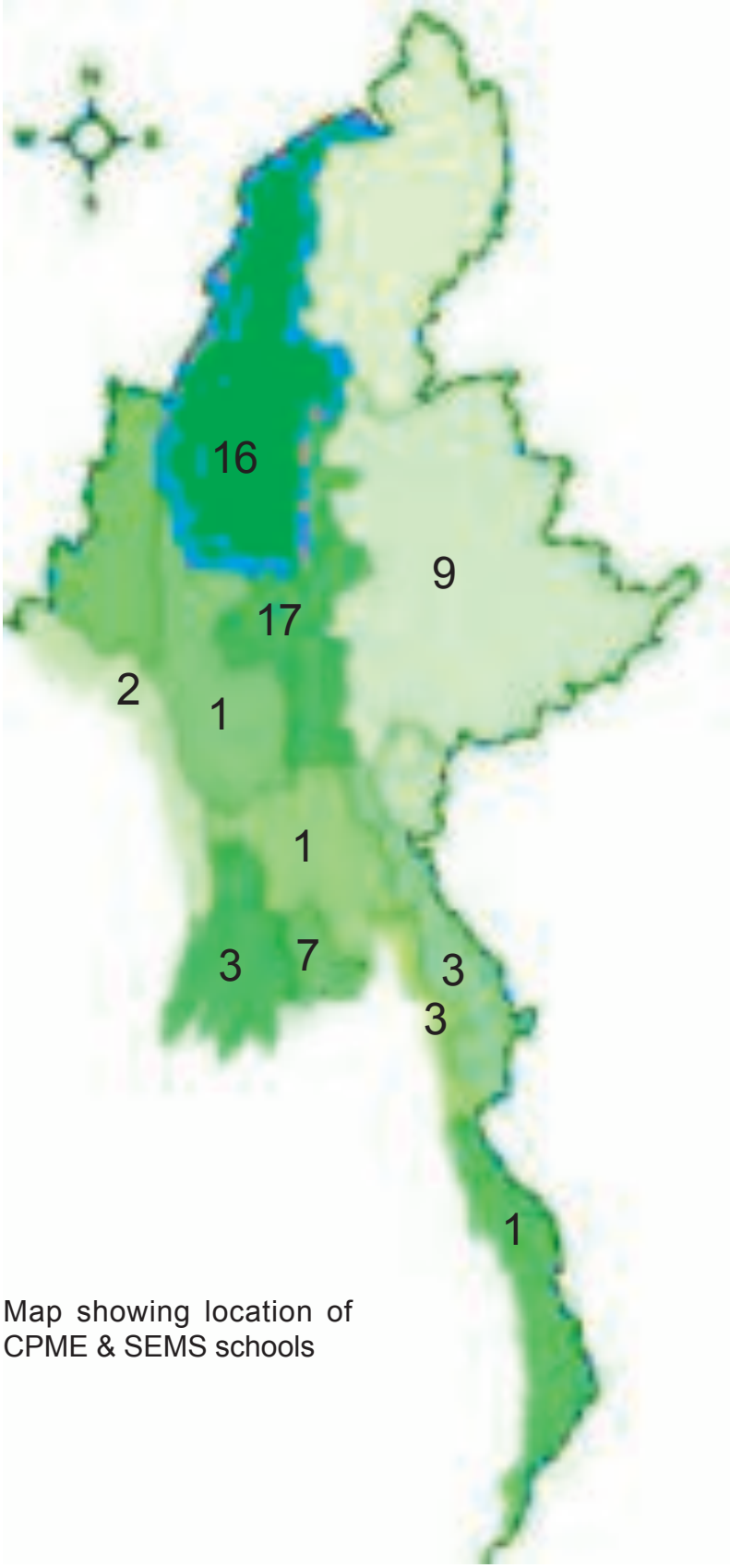
3. Assessment Approach and Processes

For this assessment mission, a total 7 monastery schools were visited; 3 were schools visited previously and 4 were new schools. The monitoring and assessment method relies largely on rapid assessment processes (RAP) of observations and qualitative techniques of participant interviews and focus group discussions across all stakeholders/participant groups to capture the thinking and reflection of the changes and challenges which have taken place over the past three years. Interviews and focus group discussions at school level focused on identifying actual change at the classroom level, as well as deeper attitudinal change of abbots, teachers, and parents over the past 2-3 years. This is also complemented with interviews with CPME program Board members; partners; trainers; and key program staff. In addition, key program reports, including annual reviews, training reports, etc. were reviewed.

4. Key Findings

4.1. Program Reach

In terms of reach of the program, the CPME program has exceeded the planned target of 40 monastic schools. The CPME model and its approach are already being replicated by another local organization under its project called Socially Engaged Monastic Schools (SEMS) to 20 other schools. Hence by end August 2012, the CPME program has reached a coverage of 60 schools (40 from the original CPME program and another 20 schools under the SEMS project) in 10 divisions across the country, including many in predominantly ethnic minority areas. Hence the program has benefited both Burman and non-Burman children. The program has trained a total of 60 principals (monks and nuns) and 236 teachers through various training activities which they now apply to benefit an estimated 20,000 students. The CPME training program is considered to be so effective that some other organizations supporting monastic education have also incorporated some of the training modules used in the CPME program (especially those related to awareness training of teachers) to supplement their training in teaching methods. Such cross-learning and replication is not only healthy but testifies to the relevance and effectiveness of the CPME program's strategies and approaches.



Map showing location of CPME & SEMS schools

Showing location and number of CPME and SEMS schools in each state/regiom

	Areas	No. of CPME Schools	No. of SEMS Schools	Total
1	Shan	5	1	6
2	Mandalay Region	13	4	17
3	Sagaing Region	10	6	16
4	Yangon Region	6	1	7
5	Mon State	2	1	3
6	Ayeyawady Region	1	2	3
7	Kayin State	1	2	3
8	Rakhine State	2	0	2
9	Bago Region	0	1	1
10	Taninthayi Region	0	1	1
11	Magway Region	0	1	1
	Total	**40**	**20**	**60**

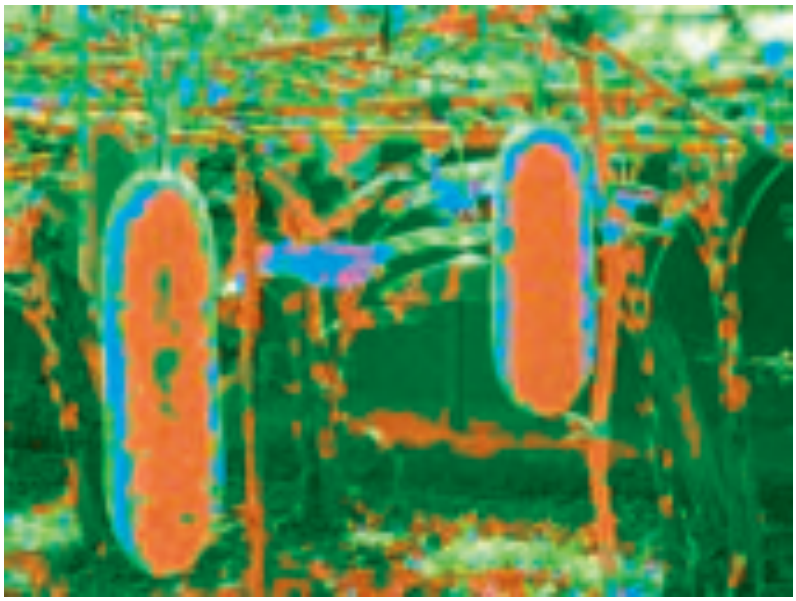
Of the 60 schools, 4 are nunnery schools.

4.2: CPME Training Center

The 12-acre CPME Garden is located about 20 km away from Mandalay. At the beginning of the program, it was still a largely unused piece of land with some fruit trees and brush. This land was designated to be developed as a garden-cum-training center for the CPME Program. After 3 years of hard work, the garden is now developed and fully functional providing a space for training for the CPME program as well as a facility for training by other NGOs or civil society groups.

"In 2008, the Garden was no more than a piece of land, with one shack, no electricity, and water must be carried from a spring. We had to clear the land, construct the buildings, build a small hydro-electric dam to provide electricity; dig drainage systems to bring water to the facility, and make the garden by growing fruit trees and vegetables – all are mostly done by hand and sheer hard work."

(Interview with Zaw Nyunt, manager of the garden)



The products from the garden such as fruit and vegetables are now adequate to partially meet the food needs for participants in training. When there is no training, excess vegetables and fruit are sent to Phaung Daw Oo Monastic School to feed the novices and children.

The center now has 8 mud houses which can be used as training rooms and dormitories, and a fully equipped kitchen. The center has electricity generated by a mini-hydro power dam, and water piped in from a nearby spring.

The CPME Garden is managed by a Garden Manager who also serves as a CPME Life-skills Trainer. Monks and novices from Phaung Daw Oo School also come and work in the garden during weekends, such as weeding and cleaning the garden, planting, and also making of mud-houses. Much of the funds for the construction of the garden were mobilized mainly through the hard work of Venerable U-Nayaka, the Principal of Phaung Daw Oo School and a founding member of the CPME program.

4.3: Program Management and Governance

By the end of the current program cycle, all the necessary program management structures and systems are in place and program management has become more and more professional and efficient both within the CPME and SEMS Management Offices. Record keeping, donor-management, and reporting systems are in place. The program management team of both projects is headed by a program manager who is responsible for overall program management, organization of program training and activities, monitoring, fund-raising and reporting.

The CPME Project Office based in Phaung Daw Oo School is managed by a program manager and assisted by a staff of 10 persons, with 2 staff responsible for overseeing the CPME Garden/Training Center, 2 administrative assistants responsible for finance and accounting, 6 teacher trainers-cum-supervisors, and 1 engineer for supervision of construction and maintenance. After 3 years of regular coaching and support from the Finance Officer and Program Advisor from the Spirit inEducation Movement of Thailand (SEM-Thailand), the management staff of the CPME program have acquired strong management, accounting, and program skills and can now operate and manage the program largely on their own.

The SEMS Project Office is smaller, being established only a year ago. It is managed by a project manager and 2 volunteer staff and assisted by the same team of trainers who conduct the teacher training activities for the CPME program. The management of the SEMS program has also benefited greatly from the close advice from Mr Thant Lwin Maung (Ko Tar), one of the key founders and a Board Member of the CPME Program.

The Governing Board set up by the CPME program is still in place although the frequency of Board Meetings has been reduced to one meeting per year. The reduction of Board Meeting frequency is the result of the maturing process of the program which now requires much less advisory support, but it is also a consequence of inadequate funding.

4.4: Exposure Visit and Training of Abbots

In all, a total of 57 abbots and 3 nuns have participated in the exposure visits to Thailand and Laos. They are taken to visit several alternative education centers and participatory community-run development projects of these countries with the intention of giving them opportunities to see and experience for themselves different or new ways in leading and managing monastic schools and communities.

The experience over the past 3 years has proven that the exposure visits have had a very positive impact on changing the attitude and leadership styles of the abbots and nuns upon their return. Most were inspired and energized by what they saw and learnt from the visits. Some were inspired by the democratic and participatory process of school or community management and decision-making; others were impressed by the important role monks played in teaching ethics to children and young people in schools, or support and care of HIV/AIDS infected people and in drug rehabilitation programs of young people; some were attracted to community-managed libraries for children; and yet others were encouraged by the promotion of organic farming and the adoption of recycling as a means of environment protection and income generation.

Upon their return, the abbots and nuns from both CPME and SEMS have quickly adopted or adapted many of the lessons and practices learnt to their own monastic schools, and more importantly, they have quite dramatically changed the way they lead and manage their schools and monasteries. Repeatedly, many abbots reported that the exposure visits have made them more open and democratic in the way decisions are made; more consultative with teachers, parents, and also students; and more willing to devolve responsibilities to others. Many also reported that such participatory approaches are in fact more effective than the mostly autocratic top-down decision-making processes they had used in the past. The change in their leadership and management styles have resulted in making teachers more confident and enthusiastic in their work, children happier and more active in school, and parents more supportive and cooperative in helping out the school and monastery.

There are a number of reasons why the exposure visits had such a positive impact on the behavior and leadership styles of the abbots and nuns. The most important reason is that the CPME/SEMS program management has largely followed the recommendation of choosing schools whose abbots and nuns are eager and committed to improve their schools and communities. * This means that the abbots and nuns chosen for the project are already inclined towards learning new ideas and are open to change. Many are aware

* In the first year of the CPME program, two of the abbots selected lacked strong commitment to change and as a result, little improvement was made in their schools. This convinced the program management to be more careful in school selection in order to achieve the program's goals and objectives. Hence for Year 2 and Year 3 of the CPME program, only schools with abbots who are committed to improve their schools were selected to participate, thereby ensuring that the program's investment in capacity development is not wasted.

that they have been left behind by years of isolation from new information and knowledge and therefore they value the exposure visit as an opportunity to learn and experience. For most, the hunger and curiosity for information and knowledge of the outside world rendered whatever they see and hear from the visit as refreshing and interesting, and hence they are eager to try out some of what they learnt upon their return. The process of transformation is further reinforced when the abbots and nuns witness for themselves that the adoption of new practices and leadership styles actually bring about positive change in their schools.

4.5: Training of Teachers

Over the three years the CPME program has trained a total of 156 teachers and SEMS has trained a total of 80 teachers (Average 3-4 teachers per school each year). The training comprises 3 key components:

Self-Awareness Training:

The 2-weeks training includes sessions on meditation; team-building and community building; leadership skills; child rights; problem solving, and facilitation and communication, etc.The training is designed to encourage the teachers to build trust, cooperation and collaboration with each other; self-confidence, inner change and outer change; self-mindfulness and personal development. It is also designed to get teachers to understand their own capacity to work and teach, mobilize support from parents and the communities, and broaden their world view and understanding of their role as teachers in society.

Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT):

The 6-week RWCT training focuses on building teachers' pedagogical skills in understanding phases of children's development, child rights, use of child-centered teaching and learning strategies, and also practical sessions for building the teachers' own skills in critical thinking in reading and writing. In addition, the training also dealt with classroom management, lesson planning and use of questioning techniques, games, songs and enquiry learning to make learning joyful and stimulate creativity.

Practical Life-skills Training:

Practical life-skills trainingcovers two-weeks of learning practical skills and visits to community gardens and farms. The participants learnt about organic agriculture; making of charcoal, soap and shampoo; construction of mud-house, bio-gas production, making of energy-efficient stoves, etc. In addition they also learnt about healthy living, healthy foods; common disease prevention; micro-finance, and environmental conservation and protection. These are practical skills which teachers can easily transfer to children and members of the community to improve their life and livelihoods and also enrich the learning environment of the schools.

Interviews with abbots and teachers indicated that they were very appreciative of the training. Repeatedly, over the past three years, I have heard the teachers say that the CPME training curriculum is different from other in-service teacher training programs they attended in the past and the training approaches used are different. All the teachers say that the CPME training is more effective and has helped them change the way they teach.

Success factors of the CPME training program:

The CPME training is more comprehensive and covers a whole range of skills which support teachers in their work at school and in the community. This is different from other in-service teaching training courses they attended in the past which focus only on improving teaching methods (e.g. use of Child-Centered Approach (CCA) and little else).

From the awareness training, teachers learn to understand themselves better, including their own feelings and emotions, and by extension they learn to appreciate how others feel and think, and hence help build better relations and manage interpersonal conflict. They also learn to appreciate that children like adults also have feelings and emotions and they must also learn to manage and respect that. This component in the training curriculum is the key driving force for teachers' behavior change after the training.

From the RWCT training and practice, teachers learn the importance of stimulating children's analytical skills as part of learning; they also learn how to plan lessons, manage the classroom, adapt their teaching to children's different needs and abilities, use discipline appropriately; and use various inquiry and activity-based methods to make learning fun and meaningful. The learning of such methodological skills by itself is apparently not enough to motivate the teachers to adopt the new methods. Many teachers had already attended similar training in the past, but many quickly lapsed back to using the old ways of "teacher centered approach" not long after the training. The reasons, as explained, are that they needed to first change their attitudes and have deep understanding of themselves before they can change the way they work. Also, in the past there was little support or encouragement from their abbots to make any change. Now with the CPME program, the leadership and support for change has come from the abbots, and so

teachers feel empowered and encouraged to practice the new teaching methods.

The CPME training also has a third component – practical life-skills training. From this component, the teachers learn that acquiring of book knowledge alone is not enough; education must also support inculcation of practical skills for livelihood improvements not only for children, but also for teachers and parents alike. Most of the schools visited now have implemented the life skills components in the school either in the form of school gardens, mushroom growing or making and selling of shampoos and other products to generate income for the school or for the community.

The CPME program also fosters support networks for the teachers. The CPME training program stretches over a 10 week period which is much longer than other short-term in-service training of 5-10 days. Also, 3-4 teachers from the school are trained by the program. By bringing teachers to live and learn together and share problems helps create a community of shared learning and experiencing. Over the 10-week period, many teachers often develop a strong sense of fellowship and friendship which continues even after the training. As a result a mutual support network is developed both in-school and across schools, which the teachers can call upon for assistance whenever they face challenges or difficulties after they return to their own monastic schools.

The solidarity and fellowship established among teachers during the training is further reinforced by the annual teachers' and abbots gathering supported by CPME. These gatherings provide teachers another opportunity to share and learn and exchange problem-solving ideas with one another. Through such exchange meetings, teachers' enthusiasm for improvement is sustained and their professional skills enhanced.

Schools have become safe and healthy places of learning and living

The project through abbots' exposure, and various capacity development activities have significantly improved the attitudes and performance of the abbots and teachers and also led to changes to the schools. Many schools have improved their teaching and learning environment. A number of the monastery schools have successfully mobilized funds from local supporters or foreign donors to construct new school buildings, toilets and libraries and learning centers. Many schools were also able to mobilize parents and other supporters to make playgrounds, gardens, and have started clinics, computer and English Language classes not only for the students in the schools, but also young people in the community. From the lifeskills program, some schools have also successfully started income generating activities to raise funds for the school. As a result, many CPME schools have become safe, healthy, and joyful places of learning where teachers are confident and enjoy their work, and children are active and enjoy learning.

New toilets

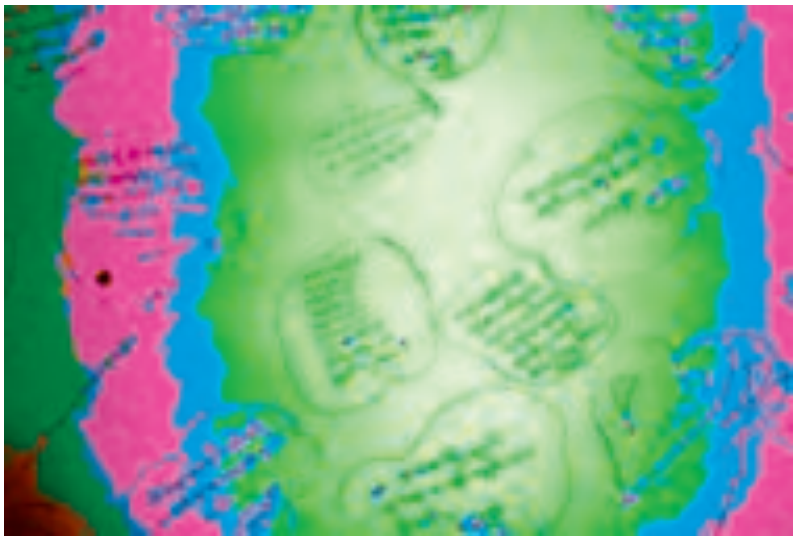
Monastic schools now promote democratic and participatory processes of learning and management

Abbot U Gunadaza of ThamaingThit Monastery School, Mandalay Region:

"I learnt that in many places the leaders consult with the people and that a participatory process in decision-making is more effective. Actually it is quite difficult to do things in a participatory way; it is time-consuming and takes a lot of patience. But I kept trying and I established teachers' meetings every week, students' council meetings every two months, and village/parents council meetings at least twice a year. Now the school operates better and I get energy from the meetings, because teachers and parents are more cooperative, and the children are doing much better. We now have less problems with discipline, not like before."

Teacher from ThamaingThit Monastery School, Mandalay Region:

"In our school, we have regular teachers meetings to share information with one another and help one another. Our rule is any teacher who goes for training must share what is learnt with other teachers. This way we can help one another and give information and knowledge to one another. For example, last year two teachers went to Yangon for training on the environment and the information was shared with other teachers. Now we can explain about environment better, like air pollution. CPME training makes us more open to sharing and also using information, and linking information and knowledge, in our teaching."



Children's *Free Write* to express their feelings

Another clear trend is that many monastic schools now practice more democratic and participatory management. Abbots have learnt to become more consultative and they encourage teachers, children and parents to give ideas on how to improve the school and monastery. This is very different from the past where management is mostly top-down and decisions are made by the abbot himself. This has not been a very easy process for the abbots, teachers, and parents alike because they were brought up to accept top-down management from young. However, after three years of hard work, and having witnessed the positive results of participatory decision-making and more democratic management practices, most schools have changed their management style. Now many schools have instituted regular abbots-teachers meetings, students' councils, and parents-teachers associations (PTA). This process has helped everybody learn how to accept new ideas, listen to others, and share knowledge and responsibilities.

Most impressive is how the process has helped improve class discipline, reduce problems of bad behavior, and taught children to become more responsible and helpful. Parents have also learnt that their engagement in the PTA is not only a "duty", but a means to genuinely help the school and teachers to improve education for their children. This is why a number of PTAs have changed from an informal gathering of more active parents to repair the school, cook during festivals, and help with odd jobs, to become a more formal organization with a committee, and a monthly work-plan which they use to guide their work. As a result, sense of ownership and pride is high, and many monastic schools have become, or are on the way to become, real centers of sharing, learning and sustainable living.

The encouragement of children to use "free-write", a RWCT method, and the empowerment of children to participate in setting rules of behavior and through students' councils has clearly made children more active in school governance and also more responsible. In interviews with students, such sentiments are clearly expressed and it's clear that they now feel that they are treated with respect and their ideas taken seriously. Such transformation in the school and community environment over a period of just 3 years is quite remarkable and has contributed to the high demand from other monastic schools to join the program.

Class rules agreed between children and teachers

Community library

The Parents-Teachers Association of Shwe Kyaung Monastic School in Mandalay Region has operated informally for many years; but in 2011, it decided to re-organize itself more formally and has appointed a committee to manage its affairs. The PTA was motivated by the change it saw in the school after the abbot and teachers went to the CPME training.

Now the PTA makes an annual workplan jointly with the teachers. The annual plan is reviewed every month at the PTA meetings and is adjusted as needed. Examples from the PTA workplan include: cooking monthly lunch for children, cleaning of school and community, helping out during monastery ceremonies, hold meetings for parents on education and health, growing peanuts to generate income for the organize school, organizing children's competitions, and so on. As a result of the improved planning and work organization, the PTA of Shwe Kyaung Monastic School is reported to be running more smoothly than before.

Now the PTA wants to do more for the school, with tentative plans to organize fundraising activities to develop a fund to help needy children from the community attend Phaung Daw Oo Secondary School after graduating from primary school. The PTA also intends to ask parents to help teachers teach certain subjects in class, like teaching thelegends of the village, making handcrafts and so on. The PTA also wants to start Dharma teaching in the summer for children and adults.

PTA of Shwe Kyaung Monastic School

4.7: Monitoring and Follow-up by Trainers

After 3 years the mentoring and follow-up of teachers and schools by trainers have become more systematic and according to plan. Each monastic school has been visited at least once a year, but many at least twice a year. The trainers now clearly understand the importance of regular follow-up and coaching for enhancement of impact and sustainability of the CPME program. However, the difficulty faced by trainers/supervisors in monitoring continues to be inadequate trainers and funds.

The trainers/supervisors also expressed that they are generally pleased with the changes in the schools. They report that abbots and teachers work together more harmoniously and parents have become more supportive of the monasteries and schools.

The assessment also shows that the monitoring indicators set up for the CPME program have been largely met (See Annex 1).

5. Concluding Remarks

After 3 years the CPME Program has made significant progress proving that the program strategies and approaches are appropriate in the Myanmar context. Every monastic school visited and every teacher or parent or child interviewed all verified to the positive impact of the program. Everybody also said that the school is now better than before; the abbots are more friendly and open, the teachers are very helpful, and the children learn better and ask many more questions. Teachers and parents are also proud that the children are more alert and happy and also more responsible and active in school and at home. Most of the abbots are also satisfied about the progress of their monastery and school, especially about the greater support they now get from the parents and community. Many also take pride in the fact that not only are the schools providing better education for children, they have become centers of learning also for the community. Such progress has encouraged the abbots to try even harder to mobilize resources to start new initiatives, for example, setting up better libraries for the school and community, setting up clinics, opening computer classes, and starting micro-credit unions/saving groups and so on. Indeed the CPME/SEMS Program has been instrumental in transforming the monastic schools into holistic and appropriate learning centers for children and the community, and reinforcing the concept of the monastery as an "earned space" for social change.

Recommendations for the next phase of the program

The CPME program has also been replicated by SEMS, thereby expanding the coverage of schools beyond what was originally planned. Although the CPME Program and the SEMS program use similar approaches and training curriculum, the emphasis is slightly different. The CPME Program focuses more on improving education of children in the monastic schools, whereas the SEMS places emphasis more on community development. In fact, to be really effective, the program should emphasize both improvement of education for children and support for community development. Hence it is recommended that there should be cross learning and cross visiting between the abbots and teachers of both CPME and SEMS schools in order to share experiences and lessons learned.

In preparation for the next phase of the program, the trainers of the CPME and SEMS teams have already reviewed and revised the teacher training modules and the school management modules. This will further streamline and improve the training of teachers and abbots of the next batch of monastic schools.

With the end of the first 3 years of the program, all stakeholders and key supporters and donors of the CPME Program are eager to see the CPME program continue for another cycle in order to consolidate the progress already made and further expand the influence of the CPME strategies and approach to enhance the influence on the entire monastic school system. A new proposal for the next phase of the CPME program is currently being discussed and drafted. It is already foreseen that with the experience already gained in the program and to ensure that the capacity of the current management and training teams will not be over-stretched, there has to be some changes made to the management and organizational

structures of the program. Over the next phase of the program, it is recommended that some larger and better developed monastic schools with good leadership should be supported to become "hub schools", meaning that they should be developed to serve as focal schools and be supported to develop capacities to become demonstration-cum-training centers for other nearby monastic schools. This way the program will not be overly dependent on the capacities of the program management and training teams of CPME and SEMS and the management and training capacities be devolved to the hub-schools. This means that over a period of 3-5 years there will be an expanding number of hub schools developed to serve the needs of more and more monastic schools, thereby building a Coalition for the Promotion of Monastic Education (CPME) throughout Myanmar. It is only through this can we hope to have impact on the whole monastic education system to become truly centers of education excellence and sustainable community development.

Annex 1: Achievement based on indicators developed as per CPME Program Proposal

Training curriculum and materials are revised/ updated and followed.

DONE.

The CPME Training curriculum and materials have been closely reviewed by trainers based on feedback by teachers and trainers after each training.

A last comprehensive review of the curriculum modules have been completed in July 2012 with funding support from Pyoe Pyin. This is done in preparation of the next phase of the program.

Description of latest round of curriculum revision:

CPME trainers responsible for each of the 3 major training segments: Self-awareness Training; RWCT Training; Life-skills Training, together with the key CPME management staff and SEMS management staff came together for a 3-day workshop and reviewed all the modules and training materials and agreed on which sections to revise, which sections to streamline to eliminate repetitions and standardize the language to eliminate confusion. The result was an updated and revised curriculum which is assessed by all the teacher trainers, and management staff as more cohesive, consistent and integrated. The revised curriculum is now being printed and ready for use in the next phase of the CPME Program.

Monitoring indicators are revised/updated and being used.

DONE

All monitoring indicators are revised and updated. Additional self-monitoring forms developed and trainers/ teachers trained in their use.

School monitoring is fairly systematized. By end August 2012 – all trainers visited all CPME schools at least once with about 60% of schools being visited 2 times.

Teachers appreciate school monitoring visits, but most teachers report that they do not use the self-monitoring forms regularly, saying that discussing the issues with trainers during the school monitoring visit is adequate for them.

Description of school monitoring indicators/methods:

The monitoring indicators have been revised in 2010 by the CPME trainers with advice from the Education Advisor. They reviewed the various school monitoring indicators recommended for use in the RWCT training program in Chiangmai together with some school monitoring indicators used by UNICEF and Save the Children Fund which support large government education reform programs in Myanmar. The trainers used their knowledge and experience of the monastic education system and familiarity with the goals and objectives of the RWCT and CPME training programs and selected a list of school monitoring indicators to use in the school monitoring visit. The list of indicators included:

- monitoring of schools (physical condition e.g. cleanliness; availability of toilets; water, etc.)
- classroom management
- classroom teaching e.g. use of questioning techniques; use of teaching aids; activity-based learning, etc.
- teachers' preparation, e.g. lesson planning
- children's behavior, e.g. responsiveness; teamwork, etc.
- application of practical life skills in school
- existence and functioning of students councils; parents teachers association, etc.
- extra-learning facilities e.g. school libraries; play facilities; computer or English classes, etc.

The trainers use the monitoring list as the basis for monitoring and have discussions with abbots and teachers in the school for any improvement needed. They also use techniques of focus group discussions, which they learnt from the Education Advisor to have discussions with teachers, students and parents to get more qualitative feedback for key stakeholders.

Recommendation:

Despite the improvement of the school monitoring system over the last 3 years, it is proposed that a similar workshop like the one done for revision of the training curriculum be conducted also for revision of the monitoring indicators and forms prior to the start of the next phase of the program. This is to ensure consensus and standardization of the school monitoring system before the new CPME Program starts.

All participating schools receive monitoring visits and followup records exist for 100% of the schools trained.

DONE

Supervisors and teachers have notebooks keeping the results of each monitoring visit. Teachers report that they refer to their notes from supervisors regularly.

Monitoring visits to schools indicate that abbots are allowing teachers to use new teaching methods.

DONE

By 2012, there is no more resistance by abbots on use of new teaching methods; in fact, most abbots (at least 80%) not only allow teachers to use new teaching methods, but also encourage teachers to use them and also when some parents do not understand why such methods are used, abbots will also explain to parents that such methods are beneficial to children's learning.

The school monitoring and Annual Review indicates that the new methods are being effectively applied in at least 80% of 2010-2012 schools.

DONE

By 2012, more than 80% of teachers are able to use the new teaching methods effectively; even those who are newly trained apply them without any sign of resistance, unlike before. This is mostly due to the fact that many monastic schools have heard of the success of the CPME program, giving confidence to abbots and teachers from the newer schools to learn and apply the methods with enthusiasm.