



The road to Mandalay - where providers play the long ball game

Market Research  
Strategy  
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# Myanmar – by the numbers



Population: Estimate 52 million

Age: Estimate

**0-14:** 14,679,919:

**15-24** 10,147,655

**25-54:** 24,394,052

GDP per capita:\$1,275 USD

Internet users: 14,264,000

Mobile subscriptions: 50 million

Facebook users: 14 million

Corruption Perceptions Index:

136/176

## Market context

- Successful national elections in 2015.
- Peaceful transition to a new government in April 2016
- Changes already underway
- Education reform a national priority
- Market reform and the opening up of certain business sectors for foreign investment, including education.

*“The conditions for international education in Myanmar resemble those of Malaysia and Singapore in the early 1980s and Vietnam in the 1990s, before the TNE booms in those countries. Assuming that there is political stability and the continued implementation of reforms, a similar trajectory could manifest itself in Myanmar.”*

## Overview

- Foreign direct investment addressing skills gap
- Bi-lateral and multi-lateral donor agency support for educational initiatives
- Private sector investment in education encouraged
- Government focus on quantity of HE graduates and quality of degrees
- Potential introduction of loans or innovative financing for education
- Significant demand for education
- Domestic and foreign private sector investment in international schools

### However...

- Limited capacity to quickly increase the domestic supply of quality education
- Low per-capita incomes
- Corruption

## Education: key facts



- Total schools – 47,363
- Total school teachers – 340,955
- Total school students – 9,258,000
- VET – approx 450 institutions
- Total number of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) – 169 under 12 Ministries
- Total number of HEI students:
  - FT 225,178
  - Distance Ed – 411,164
- Previously been a K-10 school system now moving to K-11 and then K-12

## Education: key challenges

- Quality of education
- Limited access
- Demand on government resources
- Regulatory framework for public-private partnerships

*“Access to education is also one of the greater challenges because your major urban centres which are Yangon and Mandalay you have got 9 million of the 50 million people living in that catchment area so their access to universities is relatively good but outside of that the vast majority of the population have difficulty accessing university.”*

# Outward mobility

*“There is a lot of aspiration for offshore education. It’s a status symbol, very few people can afford it”*

*Currently the UK, US and Australia are top priorities for Myanmar students”*



- Growing interest amongst Myanmar students to study overseas particularly at the higher education level
  - International student enrolments from Myanmar increased 13% between 2015-2016 (albeit off a low base)
- Self-funding on the rise
- The UK, US and Australia potentially appealing destinations
- Access to international education is becoming easier:
  - Introduction of bank loans for students to fund their studies
  - Ability to move money internationally more easily

## Outward mobility: some challenges

- Post study in-country salaries for graduates

*“The wages they might get are not consistent with the cost involved in studying overseas. The average wage might only be 500 – 1000 a month and when your spending \$100,000 on education overseas it’s a long time to pay back on that.”*

- Knowledge of Australia as an education destination

*“They (parents) may have a good understanding of say the UK education system. But often it’s quite challenging for students or guidance counsellors to convince parents about Australia as an education destination because the parents don’t know much about it”*



## Demand for Transnational Education

- Growing interest in TNE

*“It’s similar to when we were setting up in Vietnam in 2000 or China in the early nineties.”*

*“it is a very immature market”*

- The government appears open to foreign provision as a way to help realise their education agenda

- Early days

*“The regulation is hardly in place. You know it’s still so fresh here. The democracy has only been in place for 2-3 years now so it’s very new and we just have to see how it evolves”*

- Growing interest amongst parents and students for quality education provision

*“My experience with the Burmese students that we have is their parents are just crying out for quality in education. They want their kids to have an education future and if that can be delivered in Burma at the required quality, fantastic”*

# Demand for Transnational Education

- Interest reportedly focussed in the major cities of Yangon and Mandalay
- Interest exists at all levels including:
  - Schools
  - Bridging/foundation programmes to allow students entry into foreign universities
  - ELICOS
  - VET
  - Higher education - UG and to a lesser degree PG – at least for the moment

*“I saw that there was a great demand for English language and quality, I didn’t think anything else out there was fantastic.”*

## Some of the challenges in delivering TNE in Myanmar

- Access to suitably qualified teachers
- Desire from students to want ‘foreign (rather than Burmese) teachers’

*“We’re fine having Burmese national or non-native speakers (teaching English) as long as they are qualified, however, the students seem to want a foreign teacher and we unfortunately haven’t been able to successfully place Burmese teachers very well”*
- Cultural fit
- Finding a suitable partner

*“The biggest challenge really for us - is for the Burmese partner to understand our education delivery. The important thing is that the partner has a background in education and is sensitive and receptive to issues within education.”*

*“Who understands how it needs to be. You know there are just these things that people didn't think were important that we did. So there needs to be complimentary understanding and flexibility”*

## Some of the challenges in delivering TNE in Myanmar

- Regulatory concerns

*“You could be regulated out. You might unless you’ve got the right partner”*

- Overall lack of quality assurance

- Overall political and economic climate

- Lack of quality provider institutions to partner with

*“the partners you would be dealing with, the universities, their quality standards are just non-existent. It will change quickly, but it’s still early days”*

- Sense of entitlement amongst some kids

*“One of the challenges for us is explaining that this is a pass/fail course. Just because you enrol doesn’t mean that you’re going to pass”*

## Some of the key lessons learnt in delivering TNE in Myanmar

- **It's a long term investment**

*“I think it's about having longevity. It's really about resilience. This is not a country for the short term where it's easy to make money or gains quickly. It's a country that does take time and you do have to have the resilience and understanding that setting up an office or a partnership will take time”*

*“Too many institutions have too high an expectation of what's going to occur in the first 12 – 24 months to be realistic in the market.”*

- **Finance**

*“One of the big things in Myanmar is access to finance is really challenging, things take longer and cost more than you anticipate. Its very challenging and its easy to get stuck.”*

- **Due diligence**

*“Make sure you do your due diligence, do your homework, have realistic expectations, it's a long term gain but in 5 years if you don't do it someone else will and you will think wow wasn't that a good idea wish I had done it.”*

**Thank You**

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