

Appendix 2

The Karenni school system

Half the observations took place in school classrooms. This section includes basic information about the Karenni school system to help the reader navigate the results presented below.

The system broadly follows that in Burma, although in the Karenni camps nursery schools (or kindergartens) are treated separately from primary schools.

The current Burmese basic education system dates from 1962, when all schools were nationalised following Ne Win's coup. In 1964 the current '5-4-2' system was set up, consisting of primary school (standards 0 to 4) for 5-10 year-olds, middle school (standards 5-8) for 10-14 year-olds, and high school (standards 9-10) for 14-16 year-olds (Thein Lwin 2000: 21).¹

In Karenni camps, in addition to the basic system there is an accelerated school for students, usually older, who have missed normal schooling, and

¹ Thwin Lwin (2000) includes a detailed historical account of education in Burma.

a post-10 school which delivers a 2-year program for students who have completed high school. A small proportion of post-10 graduates have the opportunity to enter one of several 'post-post-10' schools (located in other areas, and mostly outside refugee camps), one of which prepares students for study at regional universities.

Primary school classes are streamed by age, with group A the oldest group and group C the youngest; middle and high schools are streamed by ability, with group A judged more able than group B etc.

Table 7 shows numbers of students and teachers in the northern camp in July 2003.

Table 7: School system, Karenni northern camp

school type	standard	target age of students in Burmese sys	schools	students	teachers
nursery	KG	5+	10	1219	n/a
primary	1-4	6+ to 9+	11*	3730 [†]	195
middle	5-8	10+ to 13+	3	1429 [‡]	57
high	9-10	14+ to 15+	1	472	22
post-10	11-12	n/a	1	54	4

* including 1 Kayan and 2 Catholic primary schools

[†] includes 124 in accelerated school

[‡] includes 75 in accelerated school

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Subjects and hours per week of study are shown in Table 8.

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Table 8: School subjects and hours of study, Karenni camps

	nursery	primary	middle	high	accelerated	post-10
Agriculture				2		
Art	yes	2	2	yes	2	
Burmese	alphabet only	5	4		4	
Computer				2		1
Drama						1
Economics				2		
English	alphabet only	5	5	5	5	13
Geography		3	3	3	3	
Health		4	2		2	
History			3	3	3	
Karenni		5	4		4	
Library		2				1
Maths	nbrs only	5	5	5	5	4.5
Medic (?)				2		
Music	singing	2	2	yes	2	
Rhymes	yes					
Science			3	5	3	5.5
Sewing				yes		
Social studies						4
Sport		2	2		2	
Technology				2		
Thai				2		
hrs/week		35	35	33	35	30

Science includes Physics, Chemistry and Biology

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Post-10 data from OSI Burma Project Education Office 2004

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