Introducing mother tongue-based education through early childhood in Myanmar

By Cliff Meyers

The Myanmar National Early Childhood Care and Development Policy was signed by the President in June 2014, with significant provisions for the use of mother tongue-based education (MTBE) in preschool and the first years of primary. The National Education Law, which was approved by Parliament and then amended within six months, stipulated a different vision for the use of ethnic languages in formal primary schools.

The purpose of this session is to provide an overview of the legislative processes surrounding MTBE in Myanmar, and then to describe the process followed to develop kindergarten teacher guides, big books, and other materials in 65 ethnic languages over the period 2015-2016. A brief analysis of the process of materials development, the issues encountered, and the lessons learned will be provided, as well as recommendations for future consideration. The paper will provide insights into the relationship between policies, politics, and practice, as well as the challenges in turning policy into actual implementation processes.