

Executive Summary

This is a study of 25 institutions caring for children in Myanmar, located in Yangon, Mandalay, and Pyin Oo Lwin, caring for a total of 2,865 children. The study was conducted from September 2004 to February 2005, simultaneously with training caregivers and principals in 75 institutions and building training capacity in 11 trainers. Government (Department of Social Welfare – DSW), Monastic, and Private institutions participated in both the study, in the training, and as trainers. 12 of the 14 private institutions are Christian. Combined with the monasteries, this means that the majority of non-government institutions are faith-based.

Although these institutions are popularly referred to as “orphanages”, in fact less than 20% of the faith-based ones are, that is, where neither parent is living, or the child is abandoned. In contrast, approximately 60% of the children in the DSW institutions are orphaned or abandoned. The children in the DSW institutions are mostly Bama children, whereas the children in the faith-based institutions are from the ethnic minorities.

All of the institutions face a shortage of caregivers, but the shortage in the monastic and DSW institutions is compounded by overcrowding. There is also a shortage of funds and material resources. The government and most of the private ones try to supplement their income from donations and with IG activities, but they are not very successful.

The DSW and those institutions which have been registered with the government, have a board of management and some degree of financial accountability. The majority of the others do not have an accounting system in place, they do not understand basic principles of management, nor is there a proper recording system in place in regards to the children. The majority do not have Intake Forms, Health Forms, nor Personal Files for the children.

There is a general lack of understanding about Reunification and Reintegration issues. Since the objective of the faith-based institutions is to provide education, discipline, and religious instruction for disadvantaged/ minority children from remote areas, there is little consideration of reintegration until children come into their teen years. There is a somewhat vague assumption that the majority of children will go back to serve their own communities, but there is no well-conceived plan in place. The result is that the children either remain in the cities, finding jobs or doing religious work – because they have had no contact with their communities over many years – or, the ones from the monasteries, may join the military.

Because of a lack of training, the faith-based institutions have little or no awareness of the CRC or Myanmar’s Child Law. The DSW institutions have had the training, but do not understand how to implement it. There is little to no understanding of abuse nor how to protect children from it. Children too are not aware of their rights. Discipline is often harsh, with little recourse for the children. There is little understanding of children’s psycho-social needs and how to meet those. Play is not valued, nor encouraged, only good behavior, doing well in school, and following religious instruction.

These institutions are not good environments for children. The recommendation of this study is to immediately facilitate a participatory training on the above issues to the caregivers and principals of all such institutions in the country. However, because training is not very effective on its own, a networking and support system should be established, through an appropriate NGO such as CFN. This would provide a means for those institutions, which have had the training, to share ideas and encourage each other to slowly make changes, in line with their training, until they become truly child-friendly environments. Simultaneously, families and communities should be strengthened to care for their own children. The misconception that institutions can provide a better environment than disadvantaged families and communities must be changed, through advocacy and awareness campaigns, especially for religious leaders.

A Study of Institutions Caring for Children Deprived of Parental Care Myanmar, 2004/2005

Introduction

Myanmar children are considered by their parents to be jewels (*Yadanars*), and so they are brought up and raised according to religious teachings, traditional practices, customs and culture to become precious persons for the families and their country. However, like many developing countries with long years of internal conflict, lack of educational opportunities in remote areas, death of one or both parents, and increasing poverty, many of the children are sent to residential care and thus are deprived of parental love and care. Myanmar is no exception.

The government, under the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), runs 32 institutions caring for children in various cities throughout the country. However, because the demand is so much more than the capacity of DSW, other organizations are trying to fill the gap. Some of the religious groups, such as Buddhist & Christian monasteries and convents, other church organizations, and Hindu and Moslem organizations provide residential care for children. World Vision International operates Drop-In centers for street children in Yangon and Mandalay and hostels for those street children who wish to attend school. In recent years there has been a proliferation of private institutions, especially in the major cities, run by individual families or churches. Most of the children in them are from the ethnic minority groups in remote, economically depressed areas of Myanmar. Their main purpose is to provide these children with an education as there are very few schools in those areas. No comprehensive survey has been done to determine the number of these institutions. The majority are not registered with DSW.

From September 2004 to February 2005, Yinthway Foundation was contracted by Unicef to implement the following activities:

- Train a core team of 12 trainers, who would, in turn, train the caregivers in institutions.
- Train caregivers from selected institutions caring for children (DSW and non-DSW) on social work, childcare, protection, and family/social reintegration.
- Develop advocacy and training materials to improve the well-being of children deprived of parental care.
- In collaboration with DSW and partners, develop standards & policies to improve the well-being of children deprived of parental care.
- Conduct an orientation workshop for DSW Social Welfare Officers and Principals of Institutions to enable their awareness of and support for the above activities.
- Conduct a study of children deprived of parental care in selected institutions.

This document is a report of the study.

Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to better understand the situation of children in out-of-home care in selected institutions. The specific objectives are:

- To collect and analyze data concerning the situation of the children in the targeted institutions and how their rights for survival, protection, development, and participation are being met.
- To make recommendations to improve the well-being of these children.

- To look at the feasibility to promote alternative family environments in Myanmar.

Methodology

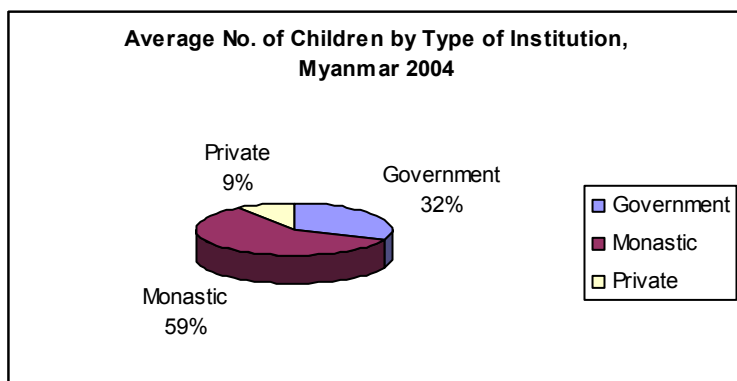
Originally, the participants who attended the caregiver training, from 75 institutions caring for children in Yangon, Mandalay, and Pyin Oo Lwin were asked to record information concerning their institutions on forms. However, much of the data proved to be either inaccurate or unreliable and the study team had no way to check its validity, so the study was narrowed down to 25 institutions which had actually been visited by the team. The first 7 were selected as a sample of the different types of institutions caring for children in Myanmar. The consultant, project assistant, and the 12 core trainers visited them to both understand the variety of situations in which children are being cared for in order to determine what to include in the 5-day caregiver training and to collect data for this study. (See Annex #1 for the names of the trainers). The remaining 18 institutions were chosen from the 20 institutions visited in the follow-up/monitoring trip 2 months after the training was completed. An assessment form was filled in on each institution, which included observations and interviews. For the 7 institutions visited at the beginning of the project, the principal & some staff were interviewed. During the follow-up trip, FGDs were conducted with staff who attended the training, staff who did not attend the training, and with children. (See Annex #2 for the forms & questions used). Besides the data and information collected from the actual visits to the institutions, much information was gleaned during the discussions which were a part of the 10 caregiver trainings in Yangon, Mandalay, and Pyin Oo Lwin. 75 institutions participated in these trainings. A major constraint of the study is that, because of time limitations – there was only a half-day visit to most of the institutions - the data collected was from interviews with the person in charge. Actual records were not checked. There may be some discrepancy between the actual facts and what was reported.

Of the 25 institutions included in this study 6 of them (or 24%) are operated by the Government, 5 of them (or 20%) are operated by Buddhist monasteries or convent, and the remaining 14 of them (or 56%) are privately operated. Of the private ones all except 2 of them -World Vision Drop-In Center and Yadana Foster Home – are operated by individual Christians or churches. (See Annex #3 for the names & locations of the institutions).

It is interesting to note that, although the number of centers for DSW and the monasteries were fewer, the number of children in them was greater than the combined number in the private ones. (Table 1)

Table 1 Average Number of Children by type of Institution

Type of Institution	Total Children	No. of Institution	Average No. of Children
Government	884	6	147
Monastic	1,364	5	273
Private	617	14	44
Grand Total	2,865	25	115



Data Collected During the Study

The Children

Although the institutions in this study are referred to as orphanages, it is interesting to note the data. Only in the government institutions are the majority orphaned or abandoned, with 60% of them falling in this category. In both the monastic and private institutions, true orphans are approximately only 20% of the total number of children. (Tables 2, 3 &4)

Table 2 Orphan status by type of institution

Type of Institution	Total
Government	516
Monastic	182
Private	160
Grand Total	858

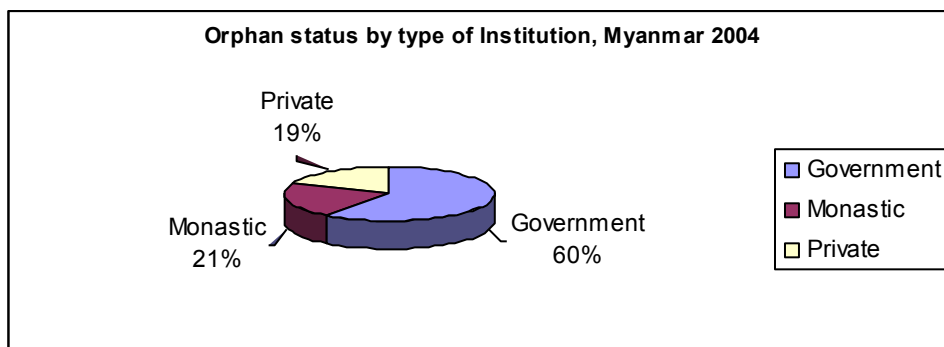


Table 3 One parent Living by type of institution

Type of Institution	Total
Government	221
Monastic	280
Private	396
Grand Total	897

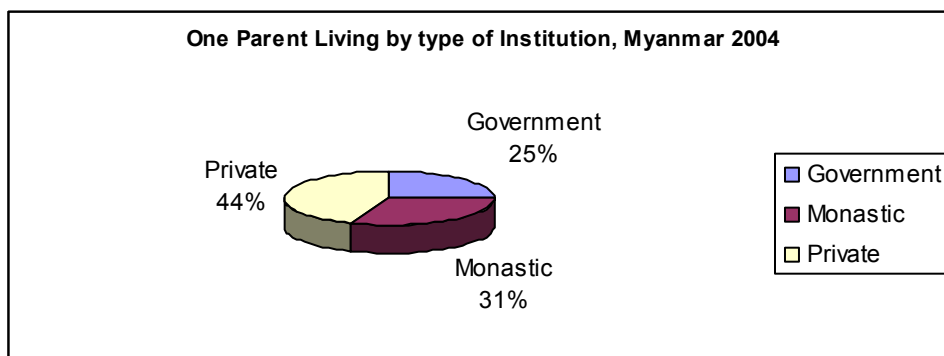
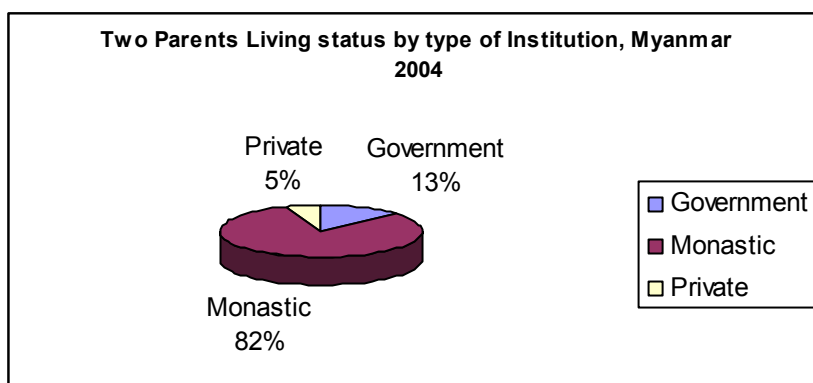


Table 4 Two Parents Living by type of institution

Type of Institution	Total
Government	147
Monastic	902
Private	61
Grand Total	1110



It should also be noted that the children in all the monastic institutions are boys and in the convent, Aye Yeik Mon, are girls. In 3 of the 4 monasteries they are there as novices, at least through the primary grades as they attend the school at the monastery. After finishing standard 4, the boys can choose to either continue with monastic education or to remove the monk's robes and enter the government middle and high school. Only in Doepin do some of the boys who come not enter the novitiate from the beginning.

It is also interesting to note the ethnicity of the children and how that is divided by type of institution. In the government institutions the majority, 89%, are Bamar, 5% from other non-ethnic groups, meaning Chinese and Indian, and only 6% being from the ethnic groups. In the monastic institutions, a little more than half are Bamar, with the others being from the Shan, Palaung, and Pa-O ethnic groups – all of which are majority Buddhist groups. In the private institutions, 32% are Bamar and 2% are Chinese and Indian, but these are mostly in Yadana Foster Home and the WV Drop-In Center. The other 12 institutions, being Christian, have only 1 or 2 Bamar, Indian, or Chinese in them, with the majority being Kachin, Chin, Lisu, Naga, and Kayin, all of which are ethnic groups which are mostly Christian. (Tables 5, 6, 7 & 8)

Table 5 - Number of Children by ethnicity in all Institutions

Ethnic Groups	Number of Children
Bamar	1757
Chin	133
Kachin	125
Kayin	52
Lisu	64
Naga	40
Palaung	211
Pao	113
Shan	245
Other non-ethnic	61
Other ethnic	64
Total	2865

Table 6 - Number of Children by ethnicity in Government Institutions

Ethnic Groups	Number of Children
Bamar	789
Kayin	14
Naga	5
Shan	13
Other non-ethnic	43
Other ethnic	20
Total	884

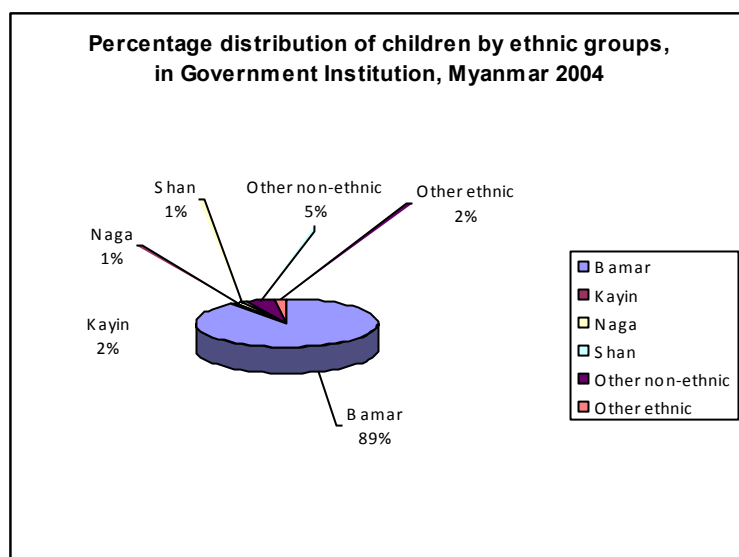


Table 7 - Number of Children by ethnicity in Monastic Institutions

Ethnic Groups	Number of Children
Bamar	768
Palaung	210
Pao	113
Shan	222
Other ethnic	51
Total	1364

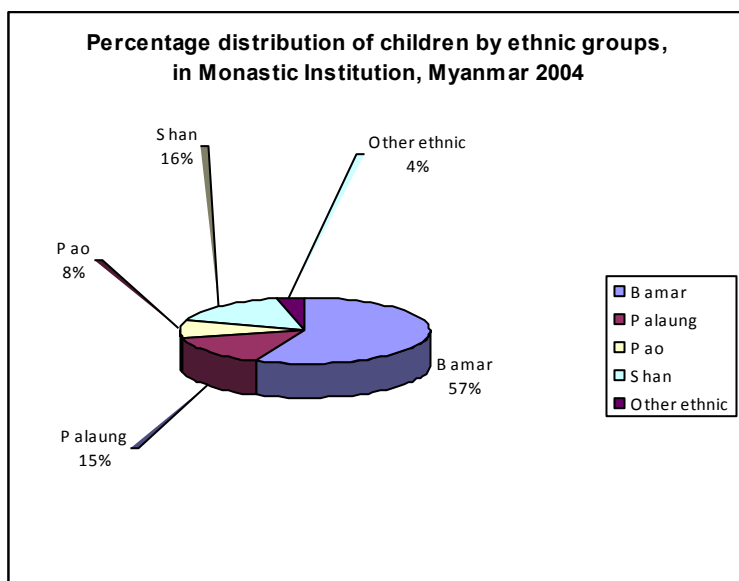
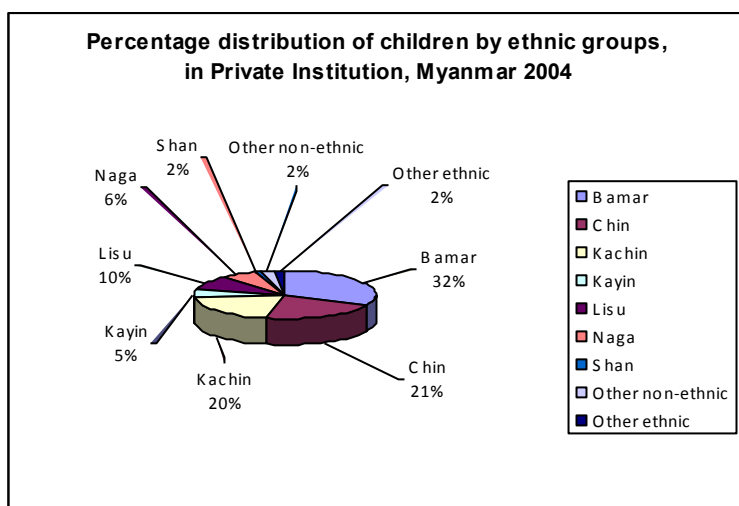


Table 8 - Number of Children by ethnicity in Private Institutions

Ethnic Groups	Number of Children
Bamar	200
Chin	129
Kachin	122
Kayin	32
Lisu	64
Naga	35
Shan	10
Other non-ethnic	14
Other ethnic	11
Total	617



The remainder of this study is categorized under the four Convention on the Rights of the Child categories: Survival Rights, Protection Rights, Development Rights, and Participation Rights.

I. Survival Rights

Campus & Buildings

The DSW and Buddhist monasteries and convent (Aye Yeik Mon Parahita) all have large compounds of 3 or more acres. However, the monasteries also have schools for poor children in the community on the campus, so the campus is quite congested during the day. Of the private ones, St. Mathew's, Naga National, and Virginia Mae share their compound with church offices or the church, so, even though the area is large enough, there are people and cars, not connected with the institution, coming and going. 6 of the other institutions have either no compound, Grace Home, or they are small with little place for the children to play. The remaining 5 have adequate compounds, which have fencing and enough play area. Even though they have space where the children can play, only Yadana Foster Home has an area specifically set up as a playground for the children. Some of the institutions, especially the monastic ones, have building supplies and other hazardous materials in the compound. Some have open drains and stagnant water. Most of them have fences.

Concerning the buildings, only the monasteries have traditional Myanmar style buildings, built with wood and tin roofing, on the campus, although the schools and dormitories are more modern, built with brick and cement. All of the others are built with brick and cement, though the floors in the dormitories are wood. It seems that, as the institutions receive money, they build with brick and cement to avoid further maintenance costs. However, what is not being considered is that all buildings need regular maintenance to assure safety and attractiveness. This is not a priority in any of the institutions (because of lack of funds), except for Yadana Foster Home, which is a Western-style institution built and funded by Total Oil Company. It not only is well-designed, built, and maintained, but has 4 family-style cottages, with one caregiver for 10-12 children over the age of 5, and a separate facility for 0-3 year olds and for 3-5 year olds. In all of the other institutions, the children are separated by age and sex into dormitories.

All of the institutions, except 4 of the private ones, own their own buildings.

All of the institutions have water-flush toilets, but those with many children, such as the DSW Malikha Girls' Training School, Kyaik Waing Boys' Training School, Girls' Training School in Mandalay, and Doepin Monastic School do not have enough for the number of children. Those that have the toilets outside do not have covered walk-ways, so that it is difficult for the children to get to them safely in the rainy season. Yadana Foster Home has only Western-style toilets.

The bathing facilities in all the institutions are adequate. In the DSW and monastic institutions, they are outside. Also St. Mathews and Naga National Orphanage have outside bathing. The remaining private ones have inside bathrooms. Yadana Foster Home is the only one with showers.

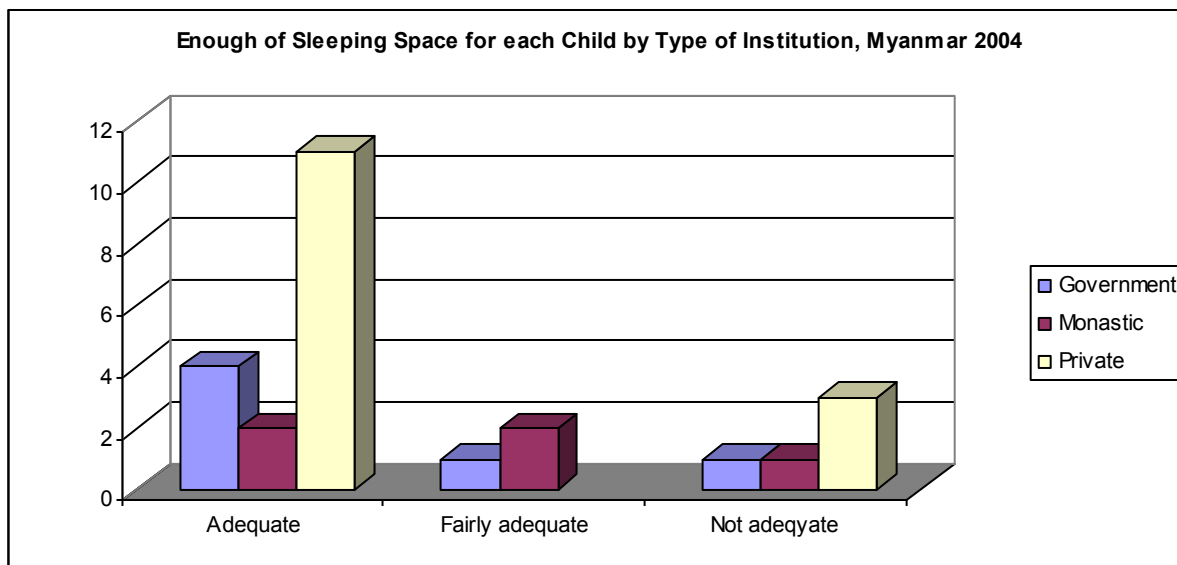
The cooking and dining facilities in all of the institutions are separate from the dormitories or bedrooms. In all the institutions, except Yadana and St. Mathews, the dining room is also the evening study room.

All the institutions have space for the children to sleep, but there is a large variation in the type of sleeping arrangement. Some of the DSW training schools have very large rooms with up to 50 to 60 children sleeping on mats on the floor in one room, but in the same institutions there are some rooms with beds. The Doepin Monastic Center has very large rooms with 50 to 100 children per room, all sleeping on mats on the floor. In contrast, there is Yadana Foster Home and Justina with 2 to 3 bunk beds per room, each with its own mattress and mosquito net. In the other monastic centers, the children sleep on the floor, but the number of children in one room is not so many. The DSW 0-5 orphanage in Mandalay

and 3-5 nursery in Yangon have individual beds and mattresses for each child. In 7 of the private institutions children sleep on the floor on mats (Table I.1).

Table I.1 - Enough Sleeping Space for each Child by type of institution

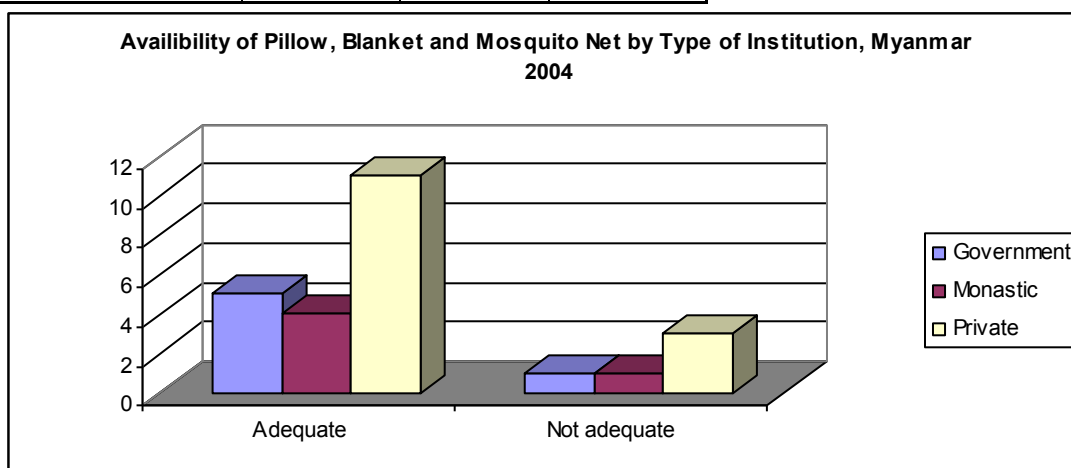
Type of Institution	Adequate	Fairly adequate	Not adequate	Total
Government	4	1	1	6
Monastic	2	2	1	5
Private	11		3	14
Grand Total	17	3	5	25



In 20 of the institutions there are adequate pillows, blankets, and mosquito nets. 5 reported that there are not enough (Table I.2)

Table I.2 - Availability of Pillow, Blanket and Mosquito net by type of institution

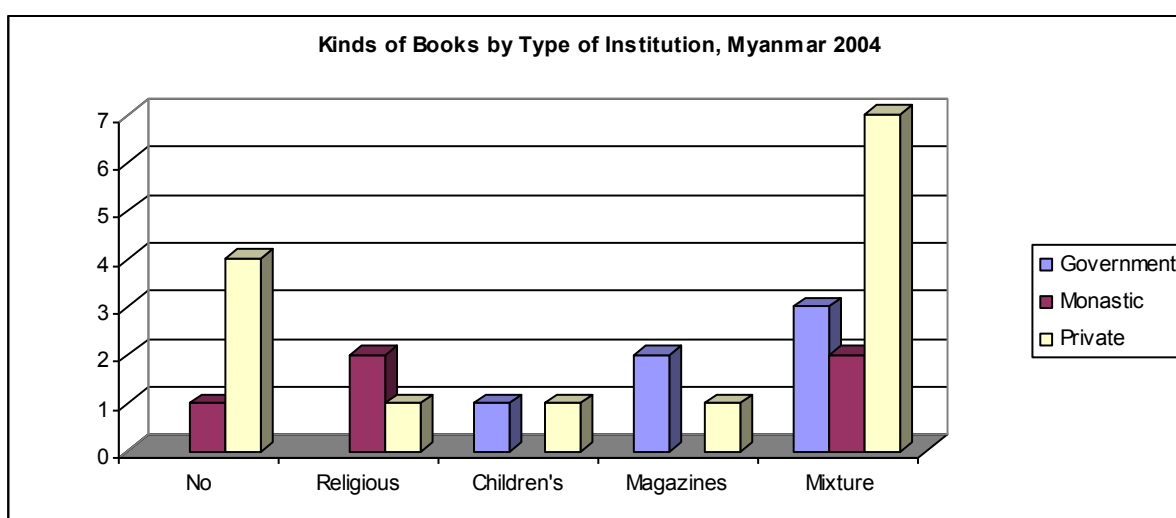
Type of Institution	Adequate	Not adequate	Total
Government	5	1	6
Monastic	4	1	5
Private	11	3	14
Grand Total	20	5	25



In only 2 government, 2 monastic, and 4 private institutions is there a place with books and magazines readily available for children to read. However, very little is in the Myanmar language (mostly English). In 2 government institutions we saw the children looking at the books – Taukyant Nursery where the children were having their preschool activities and Malikha Girls Training School where some girls were in the library room. Because they had been told that we were coming to visit, it is difficult to determine whether this is usual practice or only because of the visitors. (Table I.3)

Table I.3 – Kinds of books by type of institution

Type of Institution	No	Religious	Children's	Magazines	Mixture	Total
Government			1	2	3	6
Monastic	1	2			2	5
Private	4	1	1	1	7	14
Grand Total	5	3	2	3	12	25



In all of the institutions the director and his family sleep in their own room or quarters. In the government institutions, the caregivers also have their own quarters and only the 2 that are “on duty” stay with the children at night. In Yadana Foster Home the staff have their own quarters and their own dining room, to use when they are not on duty. The staff schedule is to work for 3 weeks and then have 1 week off. In the monasteries, the brothers (*ubezins*) do not have their own area for rest and recreation. Most of the teachers are only in the compound during school hours, though in Paung Daw Oo and Pei Pin monasteries in Mandalay, some of the teachers live in their own quarters on the monastery compound. In the convent, Aye Yeik Mon, the older girls, who grew up in the institution and have now finished 10th standard, and 2 nuns care for the younger children. There is not a separate area for the caregivers’ rest and recreation, nor do they have any time off, though occasionally they do go back to their home villages. This is also true of the Christian institutions, though the caregivers usually have their own room in the dormitories, separated by sex. In Grace Home the caregivers have one day off per month. In some of the Christian institutions, the staff are also family members or relatives of the director. In the WV Drop-In Center, none of the staff live on the premises, they have regular hours, and rotate their duty hours to care for the 50 children who sleep at the center. They have their own staff area to eat, rest, etc.

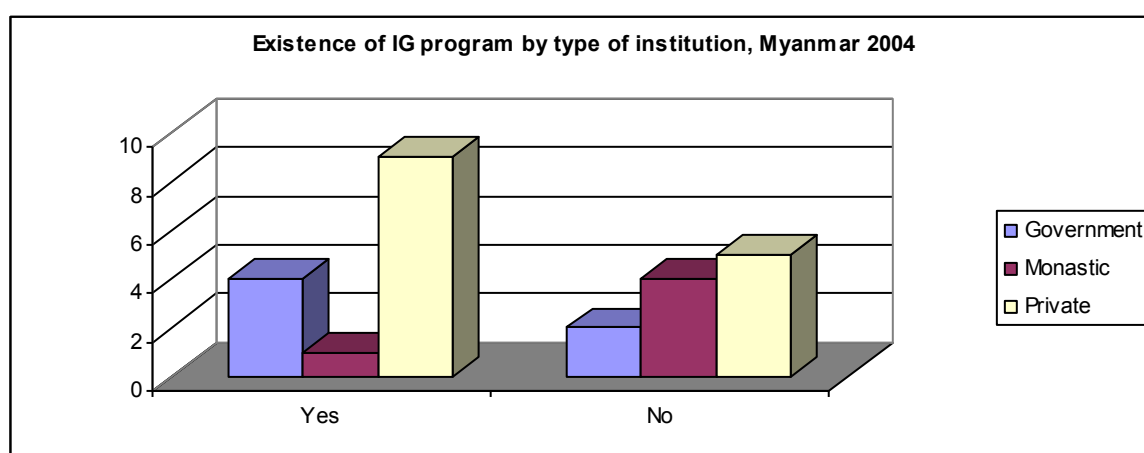
In only the monastic institutions is there a place for the children’s relatives and visitors to stay.

Income Generating Activities

In order for the children’s basic survival needs of adequate food, shelter, and adults to care for them to be met, the institutions need adequate income. All of them receive donations, but the donations are not enough, so some type of income generating activities are necessary. Table I.4 shows the existence of IG by institutions. Only the IG activities of the Agape Children's Home have very much success.

Table I.4 – Existence of IG program by type of institution

Type of Institution	Yes	No	Total
Government	4	2	6
Monastic	1	4	5
Private	9	5	14
Grand Total	14	11	25



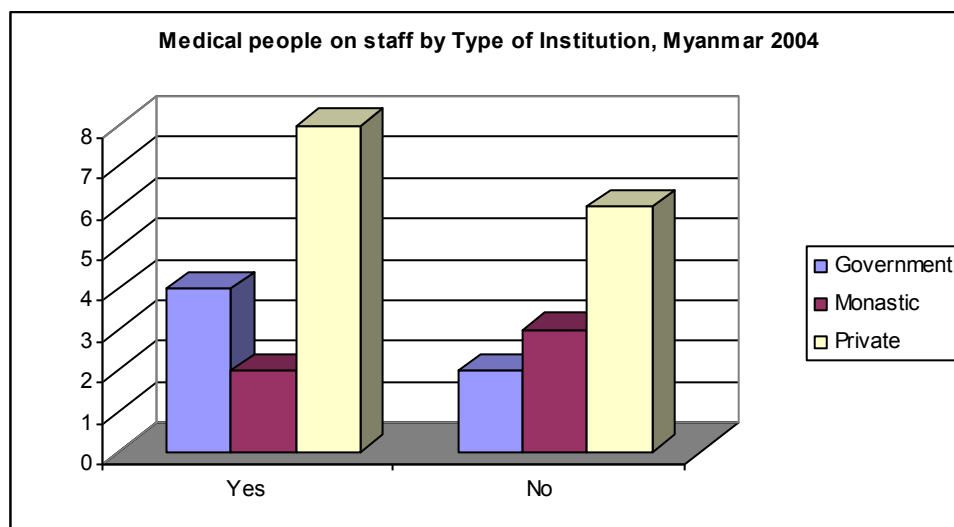
Health and Nutrition

Only in Yadana Foster Home, DSW, and Grace Home do the children have a complete health check when they arrive, although sometimes when many children arrive at the same time at a DSW institution (such as when Yangon City Development Council (YCDC) has a “clean-up” campaign), some children are missed. At the WV Drop-In Center, only children showing signs of serious illness receive a thorough health check when they arrive. In Yadana and the Drop-In Center there are separate health records for the children. Some of the others keep “clinic books” for the children who are or have been sick and go to the clinic. In the DSW institutions, there is a daily log book in which the staff on duty write any accidents, sickness, or trips to the clinic that occurred that day.

About 40% of the institutions have health personnel on their staff. The others report that they have medical personnel whom they can call on when needed and also they are near enough to a health clinic or hospital to take the children to as needed. See Table I.5

Table I.5 – Medical people on staff by type of institution

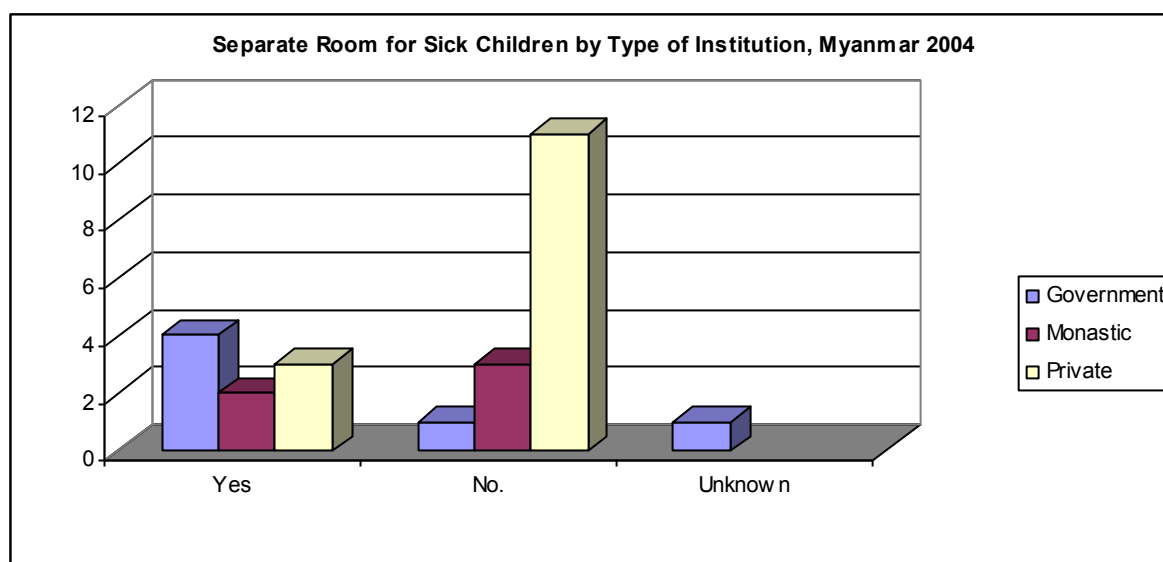
Type of Institution	Yes	No	Total
Government	4	2	6
Monastic	2	3	5
Private	8	6	14
Grand Total	14	11	25



9 out of the 25 institutions reported that they isolate children in a separate room when they are ill. See Table I.6

Table I.6 – Separate room for sick children

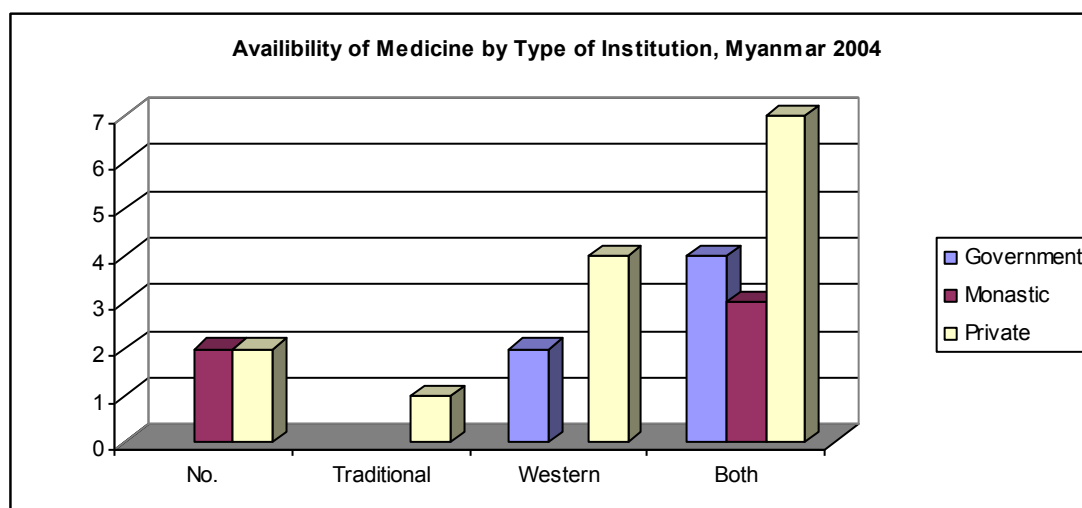
Type of Institution	Yes	No.	Unknown	Total
Government	4	1	1	6
Monastic	2	3		5
Private	3	11		14
Grand Total	9	15	1	25



For the availability of medicine in the institutions, see Table I.7

Table I.7 – Type of medicines available by type of institution

Type of Institution	No.	Traditional	Western	Both	Total
Government			2	4	6
Monastic	2			3	5
Private	2	1	4	7	14
Grand Total	4	1	6	14	25



In the majority of the institutions, the children bathe regularly and appear clean and well-groomed. However, in those institutions, such as the DSW Girls' & Boys' Training Schools in Yangon and the Monastic schools where there are too many children, the children have skin diseases such as scabies and ring worm. It is interesting to note that the convent institution, Aye Yeik Mon in Mandalay, where the girls are cared for by nuns and older girls rather than by monks, hygiene and cleanliness is not such a big issue. Another difficulty in the monasteries, however, is that the robes which the novices wear are very long and heavy so are difficult to wash and then to dry, especially in the rainy season. This may be another reason that there are more problems with skin diseases in the monastic institution. When the training team visited the DSW Boys' Training School in Mandalay, the children appeared quite clean and well-groomed. We were told by outsiders who had seen the children before the caregiver training, that this was quite a noticeable change that happened after both the caregivers and the principal attended the caregiver training. The caregivers became more interested in the children and so began paying more attention to their needs.

In all the institutions, the grounds, toilets, dormitories and other rooms are cleaned by the children, following a roster of responsibilities and under supervision of the staff. They appear clean and well-kept. However, when entering the bedrooms of the institutions, the team noticed a strong smell of urine as some of the children in every institution are bed-wetters and it is difficult to wash and dry the blankets and mattresses every day. In most of the institutions, both the inside and outside walls of the buildings are dirty and in need of new paint, so are not attractive. Only in Yadana Foster Home, Justina Home, and Garuna Orphanage is there an effort to make the grounds attractive with trees and flowering plants.

In most of the institutions, the children receive 2 main rice meals per day, and a lighter meal such as fried rice or snack food for breakfast. In the monasteries, however, the novices' last meal for the day is at 11 a.m. The Naga National Orphanage and Living Children's Home serve only 2 meals per day because of lack of funds. The rice is served with beans (pulses) and some vegetables. If there is enough money, the children eat meat twice a week, mixed with vegetables. They sometimes serve afternoon snacks to the younger children, when there is a donation. Fruit is not seen as a priority. In those private institutions which depend completely on donations, when there is not enough money for food, the children eat rice soup. In none of the institutions, not even Yadana Foster Home, do the staff eat together with the children.

In all of the institutions the children rise at 4:30 (monastic & convent), 5, or 5:30 a.m. The younger ones go to bed at 8:30 p.m. and, in some institutions, the lights (generator) go

off at 10 p.m. The high school children, however, may stay up as late as they wish, if they are studying.

Clothing

In all of the institutions, the children appear to have adequate clothes, with a school uniform and 2 to 4 changes of clothes. In the DSW training schools and monasteries/convent, where there are more children than the capacity of the institutions, when the team visited, many of the younger children were wearing strange styles of clothes that were too large for them. They were obviously clothes that had been donated to the institutions, without any thought as to how the children wearing them would feel. We were told that “good clothes” were locked away to be worn only on special occasions.

II. Protection Rights

Governance

The DSW institutions, as they are all operated by a government ministry, are registered. Also, the monastic and convent institutions are registered as Buddhist institutions with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Of the private institutions, only Yadana Foster Home, WV Drop-In Center, Grace Home, Agape Home in Hlegu, St. Matthews’ in Pyin Oo Lwin, and the National Naga Orphanage in Mandalay are registered with the government.

The DSW institutions are managed by DSW, the monasteries & convent are managed by the abbot in charge, the WV Drop-In Center is managed by World Vision. The only other private institutions with a management board or committee are Yadana Foster Home, Grace Home, National Naga Orphanage, and St. Matthews. The others are all operated by individual Christians or families.

Only those institutions operated by the government, registered, or with a management board have an appropriate/transparent financial system in place, with a regular audit. Those are the only ones, as well, where there is any evaluation or monitoring of the institution. All of the institutions pay their staff, but mostly they are volunteer wages, except for Yadana Foster Home. The staff all eat and sleep at the institutions, so this is one form of compensation. They also receive occasional donations of clothes, etc. For the religious institutions, whether Buddhist or Christian, the staff feel a personal commitment or dedication to caring for the children. However, there is a large turn-over of staff, unless the staff are also family members, which is the case in some of the private Christian institutions.

Admissions, Reunification, and Reintegration

Only the DSW institutions, Yadana Foster Home, and the WV Drop-In Center have intake forms for each child, which includes a case history. The religious institutions, both Buddhist and Christian, have an intake book and record information regarding the child at the time the child enters the institutions. However, in many cases, groups of children are brought by an evangelist or by a monk from the remote ethnic areas, and little is recorded about the child other than his name, sometimes his birth date, and his village, although even that is not always known. The DSW institutions and WV Drop-In Center specifically target abandoned and street children. Their policy is to reunite these children with their families. However, due to the nature of the children, this is rather difficult. Yadana Foster Home also targets babies that are abandoned by their mother in the hospital, but they only accept healthy babies and their policy is to provide a safe and healthy environment, with educational opportunities

for these children, not to reunite these children with their families. For the older children in their care, who originally came from a Buddhist monastery and thus some of them have relatives, they have rules for family visits. See Table II.1 The religious institutions, both Buddhist and Christian, are targeting children from disadvantaged remote ethnic areas where there is little educational opportunity for the children, therefore the children are mostly school-aged children. See Table II.2 for their ages. (In only 3 religious institutions did the team observe any abandoned children under the age of 5, Agape, Aye Yeik Mon, and Gurkha.)

Table II.1 – Policy for visits from relatives or others

Type of Institution	Any Time	Limited	Overnight Stay	Other	Total
Government	1	5			6
Monastic	1	2	1	1	5
Private	1	11		2	14
Grand Total	3	18	1	3	25

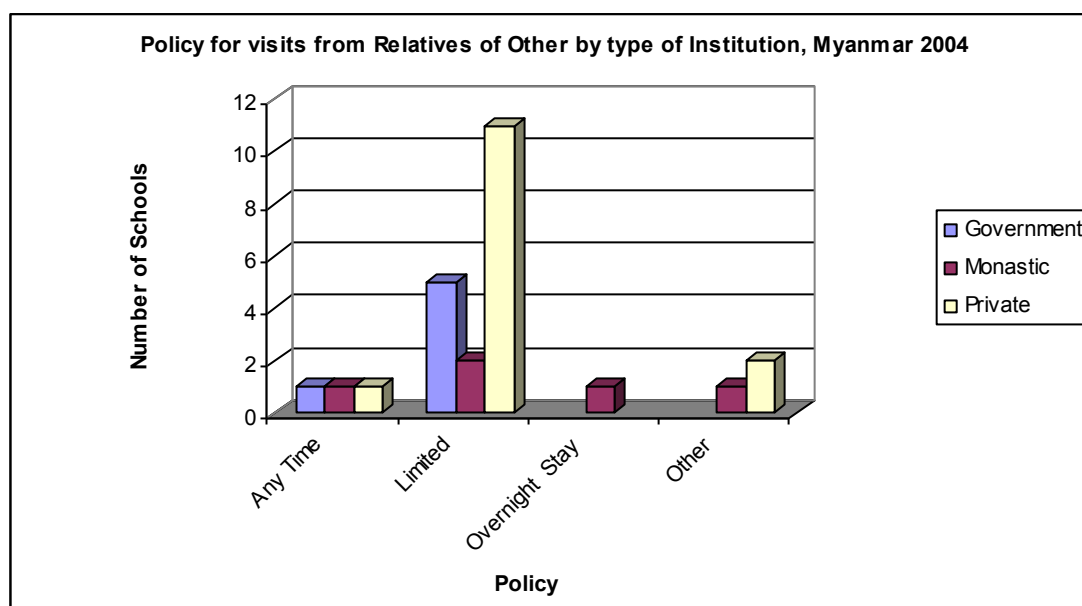
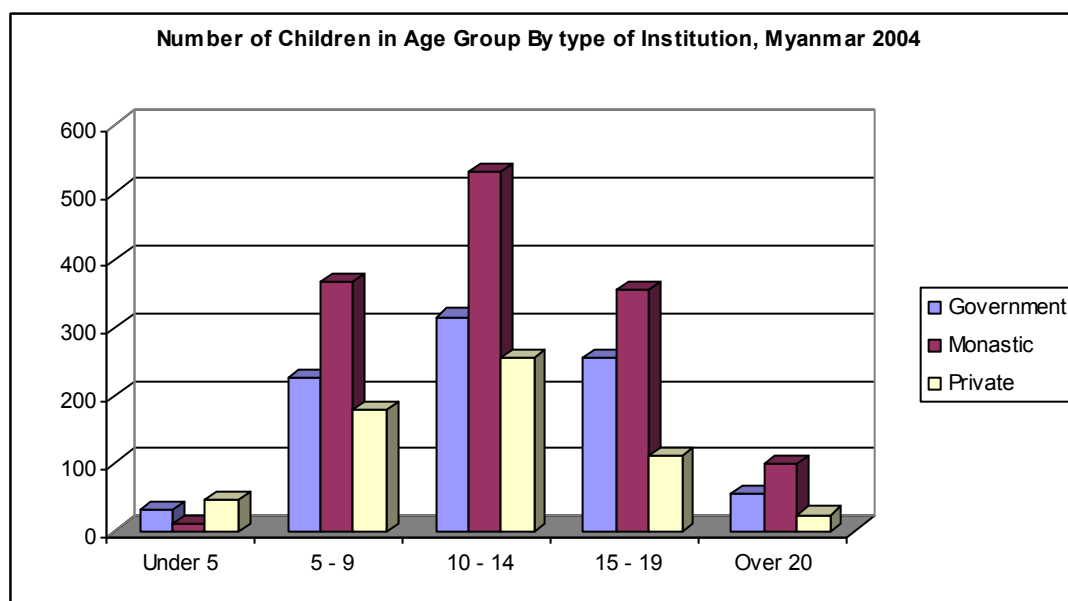


Table II.2 – Number of Children in Age Groups by type of institution

Type of Institution	Under 5	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 19	Over 20	Total
Government	31	226	316	256	55	884
Monastic	10	368	530	356	100	1364
Private	46	179	256	112	24	617
Grand Total	87	773	1102	724	179	2865



In all of the institutions, children are allowed to write to and receive letters from their family and relatives. However, the staff read the letters. Very few of the family or relatives are able to visit, because of the distance and their poverty. For the institutions' reunification plan, see Table II.3. As can be seen, the institutions reported very little in the way of a plan. This is consistent with what the team discovered in the trainings. The participants had not given any thought to this. Their perception was that institutions are the best environment for children.

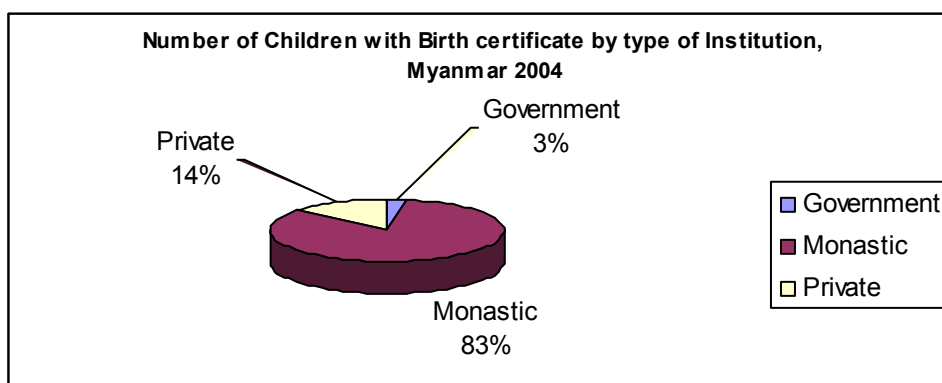
Table II.3 – Reunification plan by type of institution

Type of Institution	After ten standard	Given Completely to Institute	Any time family wants	After finishing occupational training	Whenever They can trace the Family	Not Stated	Grand Total
Government					6		6
Monastic			1			4	5
Private	2	2		1	3	6	14
Grand Total	2	2	1	1	9	10	25

Having birth certificates is a big issue in the institutions, as, without a birth certificate, the children cannot obtain a National Identity card, which proves Myanmar citizenship and gives legal rights. It is also necessary for attending school. See Table II.4 for the number of children with birth certificates by type of institution. The government institutions have the fewest, but, they are able to issue a legal document. It is very difficult for the private institutions to obtain a legal document as there are many steps to follow.

Table II.4 – Number of children with Birth Certificates

Type of Institution	Total
Government	34
Monastic	1004
Private	166
Grand Total	1204



Protection from Abuse

In most of the institutions, there are rules concerning the children leaving the institutions on their own and there is a curfew time in place. This is both to protect the children and to ensure that they do not run away, which only seems to be a problem in the DSW institutions. On the other hand, since most of the religious ones do not have a management committee nor anyone that they are accountable to, there is no protection in those institutions against child abuse. Also, in those large institutions, such as the DSW training schools and the monastic ones, where there are few caregivers for the number of children and, in fact, older children are responsible for younger ones, there are cases of child-to-child abuse, though these are unreported. This concern was discussed by the participants during the trainings. Although, the number of caregivers reported on staff is quite high, so the ratio of caregivers to children seems adequate, in fact, in many of the institutions, the numbers which appear on the list is not the same as the number that are actually regularly in contact with the children. In the DSW institutions the staff often go to other institutions or the head office, as necessary, and they also work after hours by shifts – 2 at a time. In the monasteries, the school teachers are also included, though most of them do not sleep in the monastery at night. It is unclear how many of the younger monks (*ubezins*) are actually, in fact, responsible for caring for the young novices, or, in Doepin, the boys. (See Annex #4 for ratio of reported staff per children for each institution)

Only the caregivers from the DSW institutions and the WV Drop-In Center have learned about the CRC and Myanmar’s Child Law. Those caregivers from the private and monastic institutions, who attended the caregivers’ trainings, were not aware that such documents exist. None of the caregivers have been trained to identify abuse, nor does a staff code of conduct exist. Children are not aware of their rights and responsibilities. They only know that they are to obey and to be good (*leimade*).

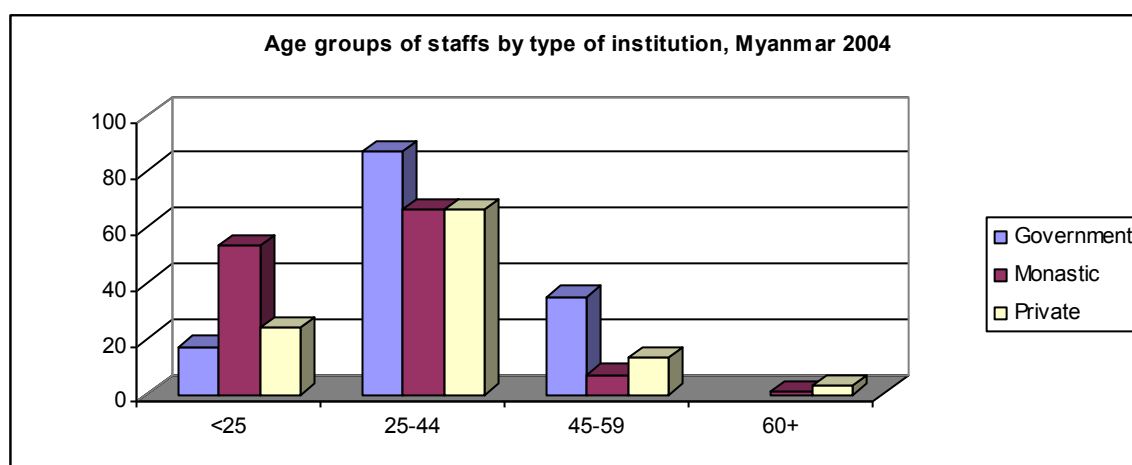
III. Development Rights

Staff

The caregivers in the institutions are male in the monasteries and DSW boys’ training school, except for the one in Yangon, female. in the convent and girls’ training schools, and mostly women in the institutions that care for children of both sexes.(see Annex #4). The average age of the staff is between 25 and 35. (Table III.1)

Table III.1 – Age groups of staff by type of institution

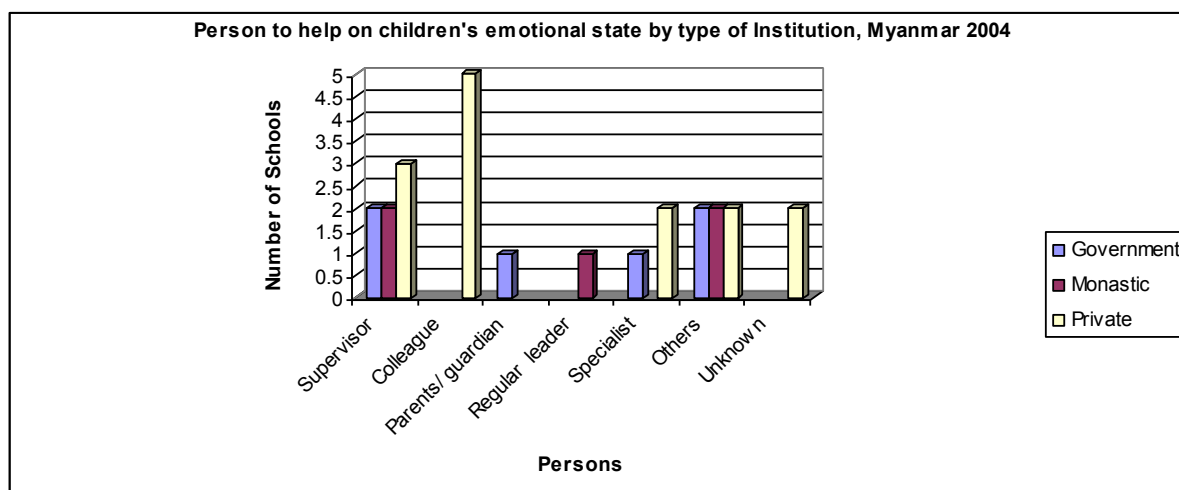
Type of Institution	<25	25-44	45-59	60+	Total
Government	17	87	35		139
Monastic	53	66	7	1	127
Private	24	66	13	3	106
Grand Total	94	219	55	4	372



The majority of the staff are genuinely committed to caring for children in difficult circumstances. However, because the institutions focus on discipline, religion, education, and caring for the children's physical needs, there is little awareness of children's psycho/social needs and especially their need for love. In the caregiver trainings, as we asked those participants who spent all or part of their childhood in an institution (orphanage or hostel), or in a home not their own, what good and what bad things they remembered, in 6 out of the 10 trainings the participants from institutions started to cry as they discussed their bad memories. Only a few mentioned the good things. This helped them realize how much a child's feelings about their experiences impact them for life. Then as we discussed children's needs, play, stages of development and discipline which is appropriate for the stage, communication skills, how children learn and different learning styles, the CRC, etc., they said that no one had ever discussed these issues with them before, nor had they thought about them. They wished that all caregivers could attend such a training. The caregivers did mention that sometimes they have concerns about individual children's emotional state. Who they ask for help in such cases is shown in Table III.2.

Table III.2 – Advice seeking for children's emotional state by type of institution

Type of Institution	Supervisor	Colleague	Parents/guardian	Regular leader	Specialist	Others	Unknown	Total
Government	2		1		1	2		6
Monastic	2			1		2		5
Private	3	5			2	2	2	14
Grand Total	7	5	1	1	3	6	2	25



Because the majority of the children are school-aged children, the caregivers reported that they interacted most with the children before and after school time - during morning prayers or assembly, during evening study time, and at bedtime. When asked what kind of interaction, they said that it was mostly telling them what and what not to do. In FGDs with early adolescent girls in 3 institutions (2 private and 1 DSW), the girls said to the members of the team meeting with them, "Thank you for meeting with us, asking us about our situation, and listening to us. No one has ever asked our opinion and listened to us before."

Only in the WV Drop-In Center and in the DSW institutions does each child have a personal file with information on the child’s development and their behavior change. Besides these forms, the DSW institutions have ledger type books in which they keep a daily record of anything that happened with any of the children on their shift, which is then used to report to the staff on the next shift. In Yadana Foster Home, the “mother” for each family unit keeps the same kind of daily record for all of the children in her unit, as do the caregivers in the 0-3 unit and 3-5 unit. At the end of the day they report to the director. In the WV Drop-In Center, each staff has a time management form with the list of the names of the children he/she is responsible for in the week. The staff use it to record the interactions they have each day with the children in their group. Yadana, the Drop-In Center, and the DSW institutions have regular staff meetings. The monastic/convent institutions do not. In the Christian institutions the staff may discuss concerns about the children during their evening staff devotions, or as needed. There is not a regular time.

Unless both the children and the caregivers belong to the same language group, as is true in some of the private Christian institutions such as St. Matthews and Justina Home (Kachin), Karuna Orphanage (Lisu), Phileo Teaching Center, Bouser Orphanage, Living Children’s Home (Chin), Myanmar is the language used. In the case where children are from different language groups from the caregivers, or the majority of the children in the institution, they are forgetting their own language.

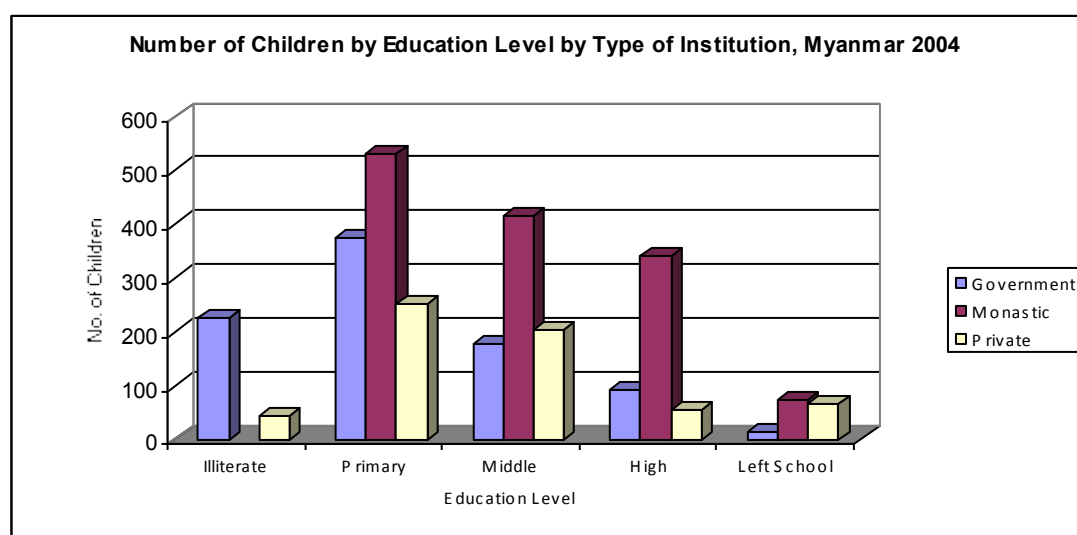
Education

Because the purpose of most of the private and monastic institutions is to provide educational opportunities for disadvantaged children and those from remote areas, all of the children are attending school, unless they are too young. In the government institutions, the children in those for under 5 year olds are, of course, not attending school. In the girls’ and boys’ training schools, those children who are in conflict with the law and also the disabled children do not attend school, nor are there presently educational activities for them. The

girls' training school in Yangon has 18 children in conflict with the law. They also have NFE & vocational training for 96 girls who do not attend school (excluding the above 18). The Kyaik Waing Boys' Training School has 13 disabled children and 6 boys who do not attend school. There are no NFE classes. In the Mandalay Girls' Training School there is 1 girl in conflict with the law and 5 disabled, but 2 of those are able to attend school. 15 girls attend NFE classes in the compound as well as go out for vocational training. The Mandalay Boys' Training School has 37 in conflict with the law and 2 disabled. They have NGE classes for 15 boys in the compound and they also go out for vocational training, other than 2 who are trained at the car mechanic workshop in the compound. The children at the WV Drop-In Center attend NFE classes. See Table III.3 for the educational level of the children.

Table III.3 – Number of Children by Education Level by type of institution

Type of Institution	Illiterate	Primary	Middle	High	Left School	Total
Government	226	376	176	92	14	884
Monastic		532	416	342	74	1364
Private	42	253	202	56	64	617
Grand Total	268	1161	794	490	152	2865



All of the institutions do have a “study room” (often also the dining room) for the children. If the institution has a generator or it has constant government electricity, it has adequate lighting. Otherwise they use candles at night. Many of the institutions have tutoring teachers who come to teach the children after school, or, if there is enough money, they are sent to "tuition" classes. They also have daily supervised study time. However, none of the tutoring teachers or the staff supervisors have been trained in child-centered methodology or in child psychology, so they are only taught to memorize the lessons taught at school so that they can pass the exams.

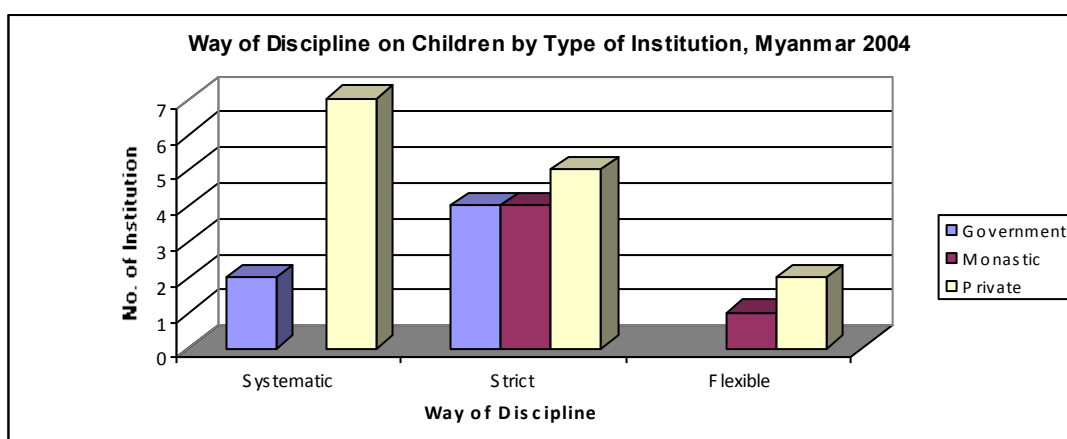
Discipline

The staff of the institutions were asked to assess their discipline methods. See Table III.4 for the results. In the trainings and then later in the follow-up trip, it became apparent that all of the institutions use beating with a stick, pulling ears, pinching/squeezing the stomach, etc. as a means of discipline when children do not obey or if they fight, or if they sleep or talk during study time, or do things which annoy the staff. They also give the

children extra chores, such as cleaning the toilets for a week, as a punishment, or deprive them of certain privileges, such as going out or watching TV. The children in some FGDs reported that they also have to skip a meal as a punishment. When the caregivers and principals were asked about this, they said that, for some children, this is the only way to control their behavior. In one institution the children reported that if they fight, they are forced to strip from the waist down and run to the corner market and back. Only in Pinnya Theik Pan monastery did the staff report a more moderate form of punishment, which is that they send a child who disobeys to the monk in charge, who then uses a rolled-up newspaper to beat the children in order to make a loud sound so as to scare the children, but not to hurt them. When the abbot was interviewed, he confirmed that method of disciplining the children. There does not seem to be a very good understanding of the difference between discipline and punishment. As the staff discussed discipline, the emphasis was on making children behave (*leimade*). The only understanding they have of doing this is to instill fear in them. Some of the trainers had attended the Unicef/World Vision training on psycho-social support for children living with HIV/AIDS, but even they did not make the connection between that and how to discipline children appropriately. Of the staff who participated in the Yinthway Foundation organized caregiver trainings, only the World Vision staff had attended any training on child psychology.

Table III.4 – Way of Discipline of children by type of institution

Type of Institution	Systematic	Strict	Flexible	Total
Government	2	4		6
Monastic		4	1	5
Private	7	5	2	14
Grand Total	9	13	3	25



Play and Recreation

Only one of the institutions the team visited before the training, Pyinnya Teik Pan, had a regular policy and a time marked daily for children's play. When we asked children, *ubezins* (brothers), teachers, and the abbot at that monastery, they all told us that the children played daily from 5 to 6 p.m. The other institutions said that the children maybe played 2 or 3 times a week, or on weekends, or when they had free time. As we observed the institutions during the follow-up trip, we often saw the children playing on their own with such things as marbles, skipping ropes, balls, if they were available, and old slippers in an eye-hand coordination game. We were told that this was a result of the training. In fact the caregivers

also started joining in with the play as they had come to understand the importance of play for children's development. In Mandalay and Pyin Oo Lwin, some of the institutions also have sports competitions among themselves.

Only at Yadana Foster Home and at the DSW 3-5 Nursery School did we observe paper and crayons for the children to use. However, at the time we were visiting, no children were using the material. In some of the private Christian institutions, such as Grace Home and St. Matthews, there were musical instruments and teachers to give lessons. In the DSW Mandalay Girls' Training School some of the children also took organ lessons. The DSW institutions also have traditional Myanmar dance and music lessons.

All of the institutions try to take the children for an outing to a place of interest at least once a year. The staff from Grace Home used to travel with the children in the summer to different parts of Myanmar, but that has become too expensive, so now they take all the children to Bago where there is more place for the children to play and many kinds of instruments to play as well as computer lessons and various kinds of vocational training for the older children.

Almost all of the institutions have a TV and also either a VCR or a VCD player. In some institutions they all watch the 7 to 8 p.m. soap opera on TV, but mostly the children are only allowed to watch TV or movies on the weekend. The staff, and sometimes the older children rent any kind of movie they like from the local video shop and all of the children, with no regard to age or appropriateness, watch the videos together. If the staff are interested, they also watch. Often the younger children fall asleep while watching.

IV. Participation

There is very little understanding of child participation in the institutions. Mostly they understand it as allowing the children to participate in sports or in dances or devotions, etc. Only the staff in the WV Drop-In Center understand and are actively practicing including children in decision making and choices which affect them. For instance, they call the children together for regular meetings to make decisions about running the center, they have individual sessions with children to plan together their life goals. The children have even painted together a mural on one of the walls of the buildings. The children in many of the institutions do receive pocket money, but it is mostly for them to buy snacks at school, not for toiletries and clothes, etc. so that they learn the skill of buying necessities for themselves.

However, after the training, one of the staff in the DSW Mandalay Girls' Training School, wrote up, together with the girls in one of the dormitories, a set of rules, with the girls in one of the dormitories, for personal hygiene, which is posted on the wall. The girls who follow all of the rules in the week are given pocket money and allowed to go out to one of the festivals. In the DSW girls' training school in Yangon, 350 trunks with locks, enough for each girl to have her own, were donated to the institution and also 350 bags with shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc. The staff reported that before the training, they would have kept the toiletries in a cupboard and given them out as needed. However, because of the training and the suggestion that children need to have a sense of personal ownership and responsibility, they decided to try giving one each to the girls. They said, "We have been quite amazed by the results. It has cut down on stealing and also fights among the girls, as they now each have their own. Also, the girls are taking pride in being clean. We do not have to remind them to take baths and wash their hair."

Recommendations

A. To improve the well-being of children in institutions.

1. This study has been written using, as a guideline, the outline and indicators of a draft document called, *Quality Indicators for Institutions Caring for Children Deprived of Parental Care*, which has been developed with 11 of the 12 caregiver trainers (the trainer from Aye Yeik Mon Orphanage in Mandalay had to drop out near the beginning) of this project. It is in English and Myanmar, with corresponding photos for some of the indicators. Presently Myanmar has no minimum standard document or even guidelines for institutions caring for children. There is only a DSW document on *Operating Procedures and Policies for DSW Institutions*. This document includes the procedure for accepting children into DSW institutions and transferring them from their native place to the institution, who to report to, forms, such as Intake Forms, Personal File, Progress Record, using the registration book, rules for how the children are to be housed, eat, sleep, go to school, etc. There are also copies of letters to be written requesting permission for temporary or emergency leave for the children (to visit their relatives, etc.) However, it is too specifically for the government institutions, so is not a document that all institutions can follow, it is not holistic, and is not related to the CRC. The result of this is that, as the study shows, most of the institutions are not good environments for children. People or organizations of goodwill are caring for children with no idea as to what is needed, resulting, in many cases, in psychological and sometimes physical harm, for many children. When the above document is finalized, it needs to be distributed to all institutions. It can also be used to raise awareness among decision makers, whether at the community, township, or national level, as a basis for training, and for advocacy.
2. The caregivers and principals of most of these institutions are not aware of either the CRC or Myanmar's Child Law. The caregivers in all institutions across the country should be trained. However, simply training on the CRC is not enough, as those who have had the training are not aware as to how the "4 categories", which they have memorized, relate to actual practice. This training needs to be integrated with child development, psycho-social needs, discipline, the importance of the family and reintegration, social work, child-centered learning, etc. Seven of the 11 trainers and the project assistant, who were a part of this project, are capable and available to continue using the 5-day module which has been developed. However, it should be adapted, adding another module, or extending the time, or both, as both the caregivers and the principals who attended the training said that the five days was not enough. It gave them awareness and understanding, and, during the follow-up/monitoring trip changes such as the children being given regular time to play, the caregivers playing with the children, lessening of beating of children, allowing children to visit their relatives during school breaks, actively looking for ways and funding so children can return to their remote villages during the summer holiday, explaining the lessons carefully to the children during study time instead of just being a "supervisor or guard" and punishing the children if they talked or fell asleep. However, it was not enough to give them the practical tools needed to support continued behavior change.

"We want you to thank the trainers from us for including you in this training. Now we have a chance to play and our orphanage has become a happy place. You should attend many more trainings like this!"

The director of an institution in Yangon reported that his children instructed him to say this to the trainers on the last day of the training.

3. Child Focused Network (CFN), as the only organization in Myanmar with the specific aim to network with and encourage "best practices" in organizations and institutions caring for children in difficult circumstances, is the obvious focal point for training, awareness raising, and advocacy. What CFN is already doing in regards to networking and encouraging/supporting "best practices" among their partners could then be expanded to all the institutions that have participated in the training. Unicef and other INGOs concerned about Child Protection issues should give priority to building capacity in CFN.
4. A mapping exercise should be done to identify all of the many faith based organizations operating "orphanages" for disadvantaged children all over Myanmar. This includes Christian, Buddhist (mostly monasteries and convents), Moslem, and Hindu. There has been a proliferation of private institutions begun by individual Christians or churches in the last 5 to 10 years. Even during the 5 months of this project, we heard of new orphanages opening. They are not registered and are afraid to be identified, so the mapping needs to be done sensitively. This is an urgent need and Unicef should give priority to this as the directors of these orphanages as well as the community and religious leaders have no awareness of the long-term consequence for these children. Most of them are boys, entering the monasteries as novices and continuing through the Buddhist religious education to become monks, or else going through the government education system as far as they are able to, with the hope of finding a good job in whatever city the monastery or orphanage is in. Those who do not reach a high educational level plan to join the military. The same is true with the Christian orphanages. There are more boys than girls. They too plan to enter the religious life, stay on at the orphanages as staff, or try to find work in the city they are in. Very few of them plan to go back to their remote villages to help their own people, though that is often the expressed aim of the directors of the orphanages.
5. Presently CRC awareness training in selected communities is being implemented by DSW and funded by UNICEF. An important component of any CRC training should be an emphasis on the Child's Right to family care. The CRC emphasizes the family as the foundational group in any society and the natural environment for the growth and nurturing of children - see especially the preamble, article 5, article 10 and article 18. Since the majority of the institutions are religious, it is the religious leaders at all levels, national, divisional, township, and community, that should be especially targeted for training.

"The *ubezins* (brothers), who do mission work, sometimes bring in 20 to 30 young boys from different villages in Shan state. They don't always remember what the names of the boys' parents are and sometimes the boys don't know how to say their parents' names or what their birthday is as they don't speak a word of Myanmar and cannot read or write. Their communities are very poor."
The abbot at a monastery in Yangon (not one included in the study)

"I was visiting different villages in the remote parts of Naga state. I didn't see very many children. When I asked about it, they told me that all of the children had been sent to orphanages in Yangon and Mandalay because there is no school here and we are very poor".
A Christian evangelist

"An evangelist with 5 Naga boys came to our orphanage one night. They were between the ages of 8 and 14. He begged us to please take these children as he had already taken them to 5 different orphanages in Mandalay & Pyin Oo Lwin and no one would accept them. He said it would be very difficult on the children to have to travel all the way back to Naga state. We took pity on them and allowed them to stay even though we didn't have much space. It has been quite difficult as they do not understand Myanmar, so we can't communicate with them very well or control them and they do not do well at school. They are old for their classes so it is also shameful for them. Also, they are used to always being outside and being very active, so they cannot sit still very long. The 14 year old boy is very good with traditional medicine and now is curing the other children in the orphanage of things like scabies, diarrhea, fever, and coughs. He looks at the child and then runs behind our orphanage where there are bushes and picks the leaves and other things and then mixes and cooks them together. He can't tell me what he wants, but I just let him do it. He said he learned it from his grandmother. He is always wanting to go back to his village as he misses his grandmother very much. We are thinking we will let him do that this summer because he is failing in school anyway.

The director of an orphanage in Pyin Oo Lwin

"A group of young children with 1 adult came from the area in the hills, where there is much fighting among the Karen, to our church. The adult begged us to take care of these children. We had no place or no way to do that so he finally took the children to the local monastery. I am wondering if I should open an orphanage because he said there are more children in those villages and it is not safe for them.

An ECD trainer in Hinthada

"Some of the children in our Kachin orphanages come from villages in Shan state which are controlled by drug lords and all members of the community are forced to be involved in the opium growing and selling. Many young people have become drug addicts. The villages are not safe places for their children, so the parents send them to the orphanages."

The director of an orphanage in Pyin Oo Lwin

"Some of the villages in Chin state are so poor that the children are being sent to India for work. They become child laborers. Some parents do not want their children to do that, so they send their children to orphanages to protect them."

The director of an orphanage in Kalay Myo

B. To look at the feasibility to promote alternative family environments in Myanmar for children deprived of parental care.

Tables 2 and 3 show the percentage of true orphans or abandoned children and the children with one living parent, by type of institution. The government ones have the highest percentage, with 60% true orphans or abandoned and 25% with one parent living. The monastic institutions have 21% and 31% respectively, and the private ones have 19% and 44%. However, the study team discovered that the record keeping in the monasteries is not very reliable, and, among the private ones, Yadana Foster Home and WV Drop-In center specifically target orphaned and abandoned children, which elevates the overall percentage.

Most of the private institutions and the monastic ones are targeting disadvantaged children, who don't have access to school, so they do not accept children unless they are at

least 5 years old. The obvious solution for these children is not to find alternative family environments for them, but to find ways to bring education to their communities, and, in some situations, security. Even if there is not the capacity in MOE to build schools and provide teachers for every community, non-formal education is a possibility. Another solution that many Christian communities have is to build hostels in towns where there are schools. Parents from communities without schools then send their children to these hostels. For very poor families, however, hostels are not an option because the parents have to pay the boarding fee. Also, not all of the hostels provide very good environments for children as there are not enough adults, there is not a nurturing atmosphere as the staff are not trained, and sometimes there is not enough food. The advantage is that the hostels are closer to the children's communities, the children go home during the summer, and the families can visit at any time. Unicef should find ways to strengthen this initiative.

Another solution among Christians is for relatives or church members in a town with schools to open their homes to children from disadvantaged communities. If parents are able to, they pay for this service or they donate rice, vegetables, etc. Unicef could also strengthen this initiative.

In Buddhist communities, the monasteries or convents (depending on the type) provide the “safety net” for the disadvantaged families. However, since they depend completely on donations, if the community is very poor, their resources may not be adequate. Again, as in all the institutions, the caregivers need basic training.

The more difficult issue is the solution for the large number of orphaned and abandoned children in the DSW institutions. In discussing this question with DSW staff, including caregivers, principals, and divisional officers, the consensus of opinion is that a foster-care system is not feasible in the large cities in Myanmar. There is not the capacity in DSW to organize and monitor such a system. Traditionally, in Myanmar, the extended family cares for orphaned children, but not necessarily for the children of strangers. Another study, however, on “the community-based capacity for the protection and care of orphans and vulnerable children” is presently being conducted, which will clarify this point so that recommendations based on data rather than on assumptions can be made. For the present, more “family-type” environments can be encouraged within the institutions. DSW already has plans, depending on funding, to build “family homes” in some of their institutions – following the Yadana Foster Home style. However, this requires a great deal of funds and, as the training team discovered, the building structure does not necessarily mean a nurturing environment. The training team’s recommendation is that, with more awareness, training, and advocacy at all levels as to children’s psycho-social needs for nurturing and “belonging”, the principals and caregivers together of selected institutions, those that show an interest and understanding of the issues, can be supported to discuss and plan together with their children how to make their institution more like a home, using their present structures, with some modifications. Not only the buildings, however, but also the whole environment would be supported to become more nurturing, the staff following the “best practices” they learned in their training. These institutions would then be supported to become models for other institutions seeking to change their environments.

Conclusion

Quite a number of studies on the institutions caring for children, both DSW and non-DSW, in Myanmar have been conducted since 1999 for Unicef (see Bibliography). I have read 7 reports of studies plus 2 training designs for direct care-providers. Most recently, in 2004, a study for CFN, of 22 institutions was also conducted. The findings of all of them are quite similar to this one: the institutions are overcrowded with not enough caregivers, they

are under-funded, and, other than the government ones, there is no basic understanding of management or re-unification and re-integration issues. Even in the government ones, though there is the understanding, there is not the capacity to put this understanding into practice. There is a serious lack of basic understanding among the caregivers as to children's psycho/social needs, the CRC, and how to practically use this understanding in caring for the children. The institutions are not good environments for children. Since the first analysis of the situation, written in August, 1999, many more institutions have been opened. Now is the time for Unicef and the NGO community to act on the recommendations to bring training to all care providers in these institutions, to bring awareness as to the needs of children to remain with their families, especially to the leaders of faith-based organizations, and to strengthen caregiving initiatives in the communities.