



A. S. Hornby Educational Trust

REPORT ON HORNBY-FUNDED TEACHER ASSOCIATION PROJECT

Title: Strengthening Myanmar TESOL Association

Country: Myanmar

Dates: August 2019–January 2021

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Myanmar, with a long history of political complications and armed conflicts, has been lagging behind in many sectors, and education is one of the areas suffering the most severe effects. Attempts have been made for educational reform and teacher education has recently come to be realised as key to quality education. Thus, the project aimed to strengthen our association, the 'Myanmar TESOL Association' (MmTESOL) because it was envisaged that a strong professional ELT association would be able to bring all ELT teachers in the country together to work towards better English language education. The contextual factors considered were the realities of the new curriculum and the professional needs of ELT teachers to re-skill and up-skill – in order to handle challenges of 21st century education, to realise inclusive education, and to promote readiness and willingness among teachers to take part in professional development activities.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project aimed to achieve the following objectives.

- By the end of the project, MmTESOL will have been formally established and strengthened and established by:
- being registered with the Ministry of Home Affairs;
- collaborating with educational institutions across the country;
- expanding its network of English language professionals from various sectors;
- contributing to professional development for English language teachers, such as conducting workshops and seminars; and
- supporting English language teachers' associations to form TA chapters of the Myanmar TESOL Association.

3. PROJECT MEMBERS AND THEIR ROLES

There were 10 working group members (all volunteers), working in collaboration for the implementation of the project objectives. All are from the ELT field, but work in different institutions with different roles, thus representing ELT professionals from a variety of backgrounds. These members are like-minded colleagues and have worked collaboratively on previous ELT activities. Committed to ELT and education development, they work as a team though they do not have specific designated titles in the association. Once the constitution and registration process is in place, roles will be more clearly defined. They regularly hold meetings to conceptualize ideas for events and for the future of the association.



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1. May May Win (teacher and teacher trainer, British Council, Yangon, Myanmar, till 2019)
2. Aye Kyu (Office Manager, British Council, Mandalay, Myanmar)
3. Cherry Kyi-Kyi Thatun (Director of Studies, AEC English Centre)
4. Khaing Khaing Tin (Lancaster Education Centre, Founder and Principal)
5. Kyaw Thet Naing (Examiner, Cambridge Assessment, Myanmar)
6. Kathleen Thein (Founder and Principal, Oxford English Language Centre, Myanmar)
7. Professor Dr Kyaw San Win (Head of the English Department, Yangon University of Distance Education, Ministry of Education)
8. Myat Tinzar Tun (Teacher and teacher trainer, Myanmar Girl Guides)
9. Arthur Aung Kyaw Myint (Founder and Principal, Success Language Academy)
10. Nyaing Nyaing Hla (High Secondary Teacher, Diplomatic School Yangon)

4. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

As planned, the first activity was the registration of Myanmar TESOL Association (MmTESOL) with the Ministry of Home Affairs. However, for political reasons and also because of Covid-19, registration of associations was suspended; the MmTESOL registration is still in process.

Nevertheless, in December 2019, a series of workshops was successfully organised at a private international school, with 9 presenters, 10 sessions and attracting 150 participants.

Then, in 2020, the pandemic brought most activities to a standstill and the first half of the year saw no physical events. However, the crisis also brought opportunities: it was time for learning, networking and reflecting. Inspired by online events, MmTESOL decided to go virtual. The following are the virtual events successfully held in 2020–2021:

🌍 ELT virtual international conference: Opportunities and Challenges in ELT during and post-Covid Crisis (18–19 December 2020)

This was an international event of workshops and presentations, featuring 23 speakers and 18 sessions, and was attended by over 900 participants from around the world.



Poster publicising the MmTESOL Conference: ELT Opportunities and Challenges during and post-Covid Crisis



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Myanmar TESOL International Conference 2020
ELT Opportunities and Challenges during and post-COVID Crisis
 18–19 December 2020 (Friday and Saturday)
 6.15–9.15 p.m. Myanmar time
Schedule

		Day 1 (18 Dec 2020, Friday)	Day 2 (19 Dec 2020, Saturday)
Opening (18:15–18:30) Whole group		Mr Roy Cross (Principal Consultant, English for Education Systems, British Council)	
Keynote (18:30–19:00) Whole group		Dr Willy A Renandya (National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore)	Professor Dr Zaw Tun (Head of English Department Mandalay University of Foreign Languages, Ministry of Education, Retired)
Presentation (19:00–19:30) Parallel sessions	1	Wendy Coulson (British Council) <i>Lessons Learnt from the TREE (Towards Results in Education and English) Project</i>	Dr. Kalyana Chakravarthi Thirunagari (Knowledge, Attitude and Skills Services (KASS), Hyderabad, India, Founder, Visiting Professor and Life Skills Coach) <i>Teaching English Online for Myanmar Teachers: A Voluntary Initiative by HETT</i>
	2	Kyawt Thuzar (Independent Consultant) <i>Civic Education in English Language Classrooms</i>	May May Win (Myanmar TESOL) <i>Bridging the Digital Divide in the Context of Education in Myanmar: Realities and Possibilities</i>
Presentation (19:30–20:00) Parallel sessions	1	Iris Su (British Council Thailand) <i>Effective integration of music in primary classrooms</i>	Aliya Siddique (Director Lahore Branch of iTTi) <i>ELT Opportunities and Challenges during and post -Covid crisis</i>
	2	Hnin Cherry Hlaing (Myanmar Imperial University) <i>Turning threats to opportunities</i>	Yin Min Htun (English Department, Myeik University, Ministry of Education) <i>Developing a Personal Professional Development Plan</i>
Workshops (20:00 –21:00) Parallel sessions	1	Biljana Davceva (English Language Centre, University of Bahrain) <i>Stand Up, Speak, Shine!</i>	German Gomez World Learning/ School for International Training <i>Online Language Learning Programs – A Three-Layered Approach</i>
	2	Aung Myin Thu (Adhipati Education)	Kyi Tha Wai (Founder and Teacher @Eureka Online)



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	<p>Producing Future-Ready Students through ZOOM English Classes</p>	<p>Private Tutoring)</p> <p>Pictures, pictures. Help me remember! (PPHMR)</p>
3	<p>Vanessa Virgiel (Kyungnam University, South Korea)</p> <p>Using PowerPoint/Impress Creatively in the Young Learner Classroom (Online and Offline)</p>	<p>Min Paing Moe (Pyay Education Degree College, Ministry of Education)</p> <p>Practical and User-Friendly Digital Tools for ELT Teachers</p>
4	<p>Han Seth Lu Director of Communications and Programs, Noor Education and Community Center Bago</p> <p>Nurturing Creative Thinking</p>	<p>Francesca Mazzucato (Internship Robert Schumann at the EU Parliament HETT Higher Education training for teachers)</p> <p>Little Pieces. How to use improvisation activities and collage art making to motivate and encourage students during and post Covid Crisis</p>
5	<p>Myat Thinzar Tun (Myanmar TESOL)</p> <p>Digital Learning Tools for the Digital learning World</p>	<p>Kyaw Moe Aung (Mandalay International Science Academy)</p> <p>LOLALA: Assessment in Action</p>
<p>Closing (21:00 –21:15) Whole group</p>		<p>Professor Mae Kyaw Myint (Head of English Department, Yangon University of Education, Ministry of Education, Retired)</p>

Conference programme

MmTESOL Culture Night, Welcoming the New Year 2021 (27 December 2020)

This was an intercultural panel discussion event with five educators from Myanmar, the Netherlands, the UK, Uganda and South Korea, who shared cultural insights on New Year celebrations and their views on the importance of cultural values in ELT and in education. 500 participants attended the face-to-face session and many more via Zoom live streaming.



Poster publicising the Panel discussion: Culture in Language Education



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✚ 5–8 January 2021 – **Introduction to Teaching Grade 10 English New Curriculum**
This was for in-service teachers for professional development and over 400 participants attended.



Poster publicising the Introduction to Teaching Grade 10 English New Curriculum programme

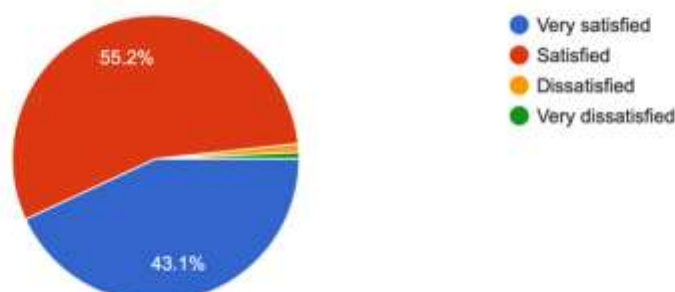
Unfortunately, since February 2021, due to the military coup followed by severe political unrest and struggles, all other planned MmTESOL activities for 2021 were forced to halt except for posting and sharing articles on Facebook. Looking back though, up to January 2021, MmTESOL successfully took advantage of technology and made huge strides to network with other institutions and reach out to a wider audience, both locally and internationally.

5. EVALUATION

We can proudly say that MmTESOL events have had a huge positive impact on the ELT community. The satisfaction rate for all events was over 90%.

7. What is your level of satisfaction for this event?

534 responses



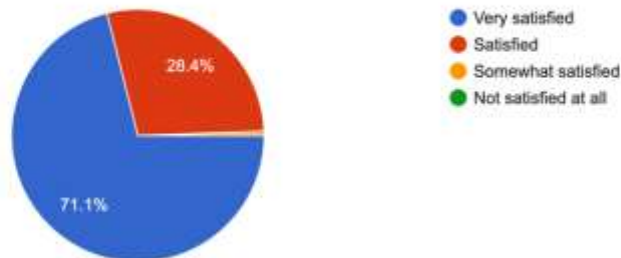
ELT virtual international conference: Opportunities and Challenges in ELT during and post-Covid (534 responses, 19 December 2020)



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1. How satisfied are you about the programme?

349 responses



Introduction to Teaching Grade 10 English New Curriculum (349 responses, 9 January 2021)

MmTESOL became better known among teachers locally and internationally for its stand for professional development. All the project objectives, except being registered as an association and forming TA chapters, have been achieved.

Through these events, MmTESOL has also expanded the network of teachers and educators from different sectors and regions.

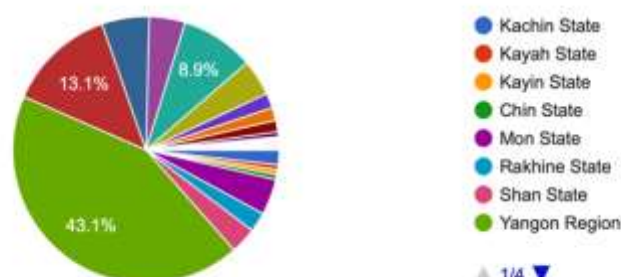
The figures in the graphs indicate not only the satisfaction level of the participants but the fact that these events were inclusive as they brought together teaching professionals, presenters and participants alike, from diverse sectors and from different localities.

With the events, too, we could customise our work to cater to the specific needs of our teachers. For example, the training 'Introduction to Teaching Grade Ten English New Curriculum' was hugely appreciated by the participants as it was offered at an opportune moment when teachers were in need of such upgrading for the new curriculum.

Demographic data: Introduction to Teaching Grade 10 English New Curriculum participants

I live in

504 responses

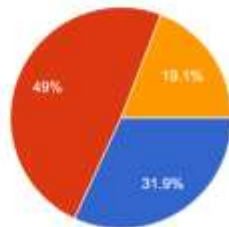




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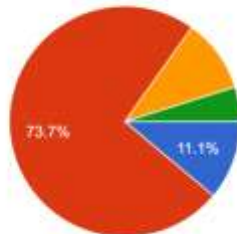
Demographic data: Conference participants

I work with
909 responses



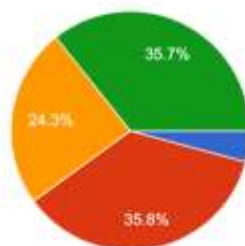
- Public sector education (i.e. Ministry of Education)
- Private sector education (i.e. international schools, private schools, freelance teaching, etc.)
- Public sector education (i.e. Ministry of Education)

I'm
910 responses



- a pre-service teacher (attending courses and learning to be a teacher)
- an in-service teacher (teaching now at a school or as a freelance)
- a teacher educator (training people to become teachers)
- an education administrator (principal, director of studies, etc.)

Age groups I teach
910 responses



- Pre-school children (under 5)
- Young learners (5 to 16)
- Young adults (16 to 18)
- Adults (18 +)

Considering the limited human and technical resources, the activities accomplished were huge milestones in the MmTESOL journey of contribution to the ELT community. If not for the current turmoil, MmTESOL would have done much more for the community.

6. EXPENDITURE

MmTESOL received a grant of 400 GBP (744,000 Myanmar Kyat) from Hornby Trust in September 2019, and this grant money has been earmarked for the registration of the association and deposited in the bank in a joint account held by three members. Currently, due to political turbulence, banks do not function well and transactions of any kind are problematic. Most activities with the ministries have been suspended, making the registration



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incomplete. As the registration is still pending, the grant money remains untouched, but hopefully we will be able to use it for registering the association and for more teacher development programmes in the future.

Regarding MmTESOL events, we are proud that they were held successfully, costing nothing at all in monetary value, thanks to team members who sponsored Zoom accounts and volunteers for their selfless hard work.

7. DISSEMINATION TO A WIDER AUDIENCE

- ✚ We share information with any interested persons and institutions whenever opportunities arise at meetings or at events.
- ✚ We did it because we wanted to promote our association, to help people realise the importance of professional organisations and professional development, and to connect with anyone who is interested in contributing.
- ✚ Most welcomed the idea of strengthening our association because there is no such association yet in the country.
- ✚ We will keep on sharing MmTESOL information more widely via media and more events and programmes.

8. OVERALL REFLECTIONS

The success and sustainable growth of a professional association depends a great deal, as in other industries, on the dedication and commitment of the association members. It was hard for MmTESOL when some members were unable to commit themselves to the activities.

Presumably, people would put in more effort only when they see that association activities yield benefits for their personal interests, such as scholarships from international institutions, achieving internationally-recognised certificates, and opportunities to attend international conferences.

More importantly, though having built trust among teachers especially from the private sector, MmTESOL needs to establish a stronger relationship with the Ministry of Education which is providing mainstream education in the country. Thus, we would look for opportunities to work more with public sector colleagues while maintaining good relationships with other sectors.

Our suggestion to colleagues looking to work/working on similar projects is always to understand the context, work for the future and aim for sustainable, effective, quality education.



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9. GOING FORWARD/ LOOKING AHEAD

MmTESOL will not stop. We will continue our mission on ELT professional development whatever hardships we face.

The next immediate project we have planned is 'Virtual Teacher Support' – producing and uploading short videos on ELT techniques on MmTESOL YouTube. It aims to help teachers, especially those teaching the state curriculum at primary and secondary levels. The presentations in these videos will be delivered bilingually to reduce language barriers and reach teachers with limited English proficiency. We hope to help teachers from grassroots levels, especially in the remote regions, to stay updated professionally amidst the Covid third wave and the political turbulence.

Once the country is back to normal, our next venture will be to offer teacher training and teacher development courses to promote quality teacher education. The rationale for this venture is that teachers will acquire good teaching practices benchmarked by renowned institutions such as Oxford and Cambridge while developing their English language proficiency according to CEFR levels. These will be certified courses to assure teacher competencies and motivate teachers to take part.

All in all, 2020–21 has been a very challenging period for MmTESOL. However, we not only survived but thrived to continue our work of strengthening the association through professional development events. Despite the constraints of human, technical and financial resources, we take pride in what we have achieved. We have made good impacts in ELT in Myanmar, and built good relationships based upon trust and mutual respect with fellow teachers nationally and internationally. With hope and optimism, we will continue our journey of learning, sharing and caring for the community towards a future with better education for the next generations to come.

To see more about events, conference sessions and conference videos, visit our FB pages:

<https://www.facebook.com/MmTESOL/>

<https://www.facebook.com/myanmar.tesol>