

Chapter 6

Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Myanmar



Bin Bai and Qiuchen Wu

Myanmar is known as the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, a presidential republic¹ in Southeast Asia with a total area of 676,578 square kilometers and a population of 52.88 million (up to 2016), divided into seven regions, seven states, and one union territory. Myanmar has altogether 135 ethnic groups, more than 85% of the people in the country believe in Buddhism, and about 8% believe in Islam. Myanmar is one of the member countries of ASEAN, with a relatively underdeveloped economy and backward infrastructure. In the 2015/2016 fiscal year, Myanmar's GDP stood at US \$67 billion, with the per capita GDP being US \$1291.² Agriculture will continue to hold a significant share in Myanmar's economy; among the employed in the country, 52.2% work in agriculture, 22.8% in the service sector, and 12.5% in the industry.³

6.1 National Education System in Myanmar

Under the influence of British colonial rule in modern times, the Myanmar education system was established on the basis of the British model. The first public high school, established by the British colonial government in 1874, was elevated to Yangon University College two years later. The education system in Myanmar, under the charge of the Ministry of Education, consists of basic education (divided into primary and secondary education), higher education and vocational education. Currently, the 5-4-2 system is adopted for basic education, that is, five years of primary education, four

¹ WB: World Bank Data on Myanmar [EB/OL] (2018).

² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China: An Overview of Myanmar [EB/OL] (2018).

³ MOIP (2016).

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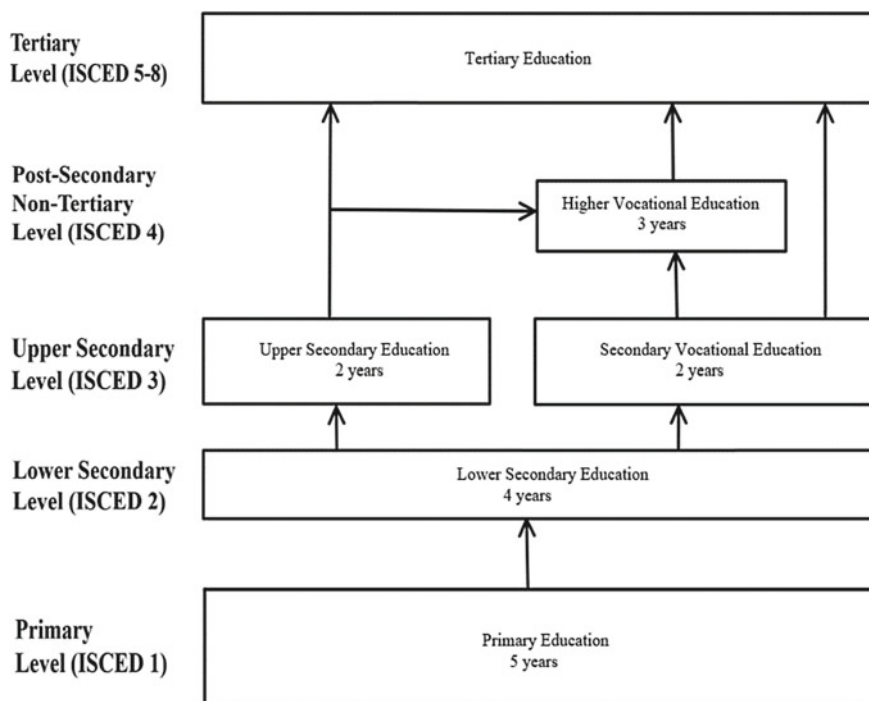


Fig. 6.1 Education system in Myanmar (TVET Country Profiles 2018)

years of junior high school education, and two years of senior high school education (Fig. 6.1).⁴

6.1.1 Primary Education

Primary education in Myanmar is compulsory, at the first stage of basic education. Primary education lasts for five years. It is divided into two parts: the lower (1st through 3rd) and higher (4th and 5th) grades. It offers courses in mathematics, English, Burmese, science, morality, life, art, history, geography, and sports. By 2016, Myanmar had 35,650 primary schools, with 158,176 teachers and 5,184,041 students.⁵

⁴MOE: Education System in Myanmar [EB/OL] (2018).

⁵MOE (2015–2016).

6.1.2 Secondary Education

Secondary education consists of Junior High School (6th through 9th) and Senior High School (10th and 11th) grades. In comparison with primary education, the junior high school stage has included public and vocational courses, such as handcraft and cooking. Upon entering senior high school, the students can opt to take courses of arts or sciences. Burmese, English, and mathematics are compulsory subjects for all students. While arts students study geography, history, and economics, the science students study chemistry, physics, and biology. At the end of the senior high school, the students from government senior high schools and general schools take the college entrance exams held in March each year, and students from private boarding schools must apply for the exams by themselves. The students from international English schools or other private schools are not eligible for college entrance exams and are not allowed to attend universities in Myanmar.⁶ Statistics show that in Myanmar during the 2015–2016 school year, there were 6224 junior high schools, with 129,945 teachers and 2,795,607 students; and 3513 senior high schools, with 34,393 teachers and 873,832 students.⁷

6.1.3 Higher Education

Higher education in Myanmar is mainly provided to the students who have completed basic education and passed college entrance examinations, and the number of higher education institutions in Myanmar increased from 32 in 1988 to 163 in 2012. They are under 13 different departments and 66 of them are under the Ministry of Education. The 3-1-2 system is adopted for higher education in Myanmar, namely 3 years of courses for the bachelor's degree, 1 year of qualification courses, and 2 years of courses for the master's degree. Starting from the 2011–2012 academic year, all institutions of higher learning under the Ministry of Education have extended the degree programs by one year, transforming the higher education system into the 4-1-3 structure. In order to ensure consistency of the new degree courses, the professional committees have developed new curricula and syllabi in line with those of the universities of ASEAN countries.⁸

6.2 Overview of Vocational Education in Myanmar

Vocational education is an important component of the Myanmar education system, which covers a wide range of areas related to architecture, electricity, electronics,

⁶Burma Considers Private Education [EB/OL] (2009).

⁷See Footnote 5.

⁸See Footnote 4.

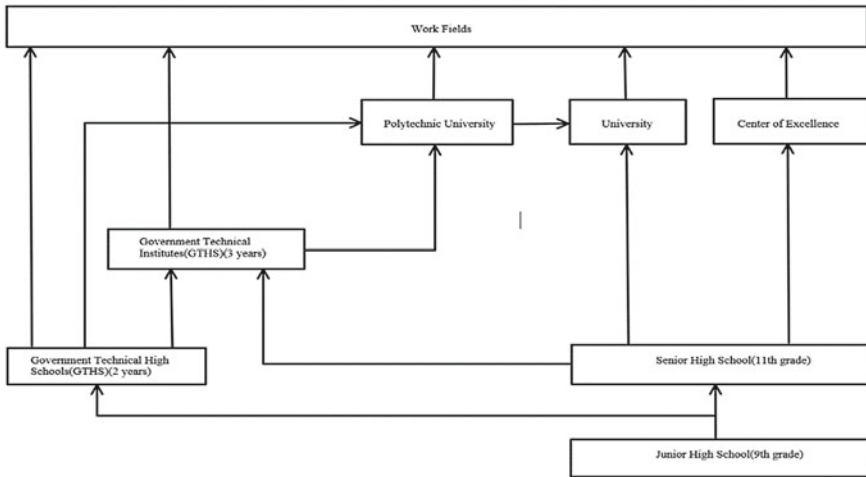


Fig. 6.2 Vocational education system in Myanmar (Planco Consulting on behalf of GIZ 2016)

machinery, hotels and tourism, development of pharmaceuticals and nursing, agriculture, and animal husbandry. The Government of Myanmar has 19 ministries involved in vocational education, and the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security, with the approval of the Cabinet, has set up the National Skill Development Authority (NSDA) to manage vocational education. The vocational education system includes the two levels of secondary vocational education and higher vocational education. At present, there are 36 secondary vocational schools, including the Government Technical High Schools (GTHS) and 22 Government Technical Institutes (GTI), all under the management of the Department of Vocational and Technical Education and Training of the Ministry of Education of Myanmar. Admission to the GTHS requires students to complete the nine-year (covering junior high school) study and to pass the entrance exams. The GTHS study lasts for two years, covering the same basic subjects as in the regular high school in addition to technical courses. After completing the two-year courses, the student will receive a state-recognized diploma (Fig. 6.2).

The GTI, with a three-year system, enrolls the graduates from regular high schools (the 11th graders) or the GTHS. The regular high school graduates are required to pass the college entrance examinations while the GTHS graduates are required to meet the requirements regarding the average score of every subject they have taken. Compared with the regular university, the GTI attaches more importance to the students' practical ability and makes a point of preparing the students for the labor market.

In addition, vocational education in Myanmar represents an important area to receive international assistance. Some countries, in cooperation with the Government of Myanmar, have established vocational education institutions to provide the young people in Myanmar with various training and to create job opportunities for them.

Table 6.1 GTHS distribution in Myanmar

Region	Number of GTHSes	Number of teachers	Number of teachers
Chin	2	48	216
Tanintharyi	3	74	577
Shan	5	147	628
Sagaing	5	210	954
Bago	2	81	706
Kayah	1	53	281
Magway	2	114	645
Mandalay	5	208	1244
Yangon	2	128	415
Rakhaine	1	35	221
Ayeyarwady	3	133	1064
Mon	1	48	248
Kachin	2	93	380
Naypyidaw	1	63	304
Kayin	1	70	309
Total	36	1505	8192

See Footnote 9

6.3 Secondary Vocational Education in Myanmar

Secondary vocational education in Myanmar is mainly offered by the GTHS. At present, Myanmar has 36 GTHS nationwide. Under the Department of Vocational and Technical Education and Training of the Ministry of Education, the GTHS have 1,505 teachers and 8,192 students.⁹ The GTHS aim to train skilled workers, engineers and technicians, who constitute the important human resources for the industrial development of Myanmar, and the industrial development is one of the key enabling factors for Myanmar to become a developed country. The GTHS provide professional training in science, technology and business, train skilled workforce meeting the market demand, and encourage the students from rural and remote areas to participate more in education, training and employment related to vocational technology. The professional study helps students to get professional skills, so as to prepare them for related production and work or for entrepreneurship (Table 6.1).

The GTHS offer two-year academic education or short-term training. In the past, the students who completed junior high school (ninth grade) may directly apply to go to the GTHS for two-year academic education. As the number of applicants keeps growing in recent years, the examination system has been introduced for the admission, with the contents of the examination covering English and mathematics

⁹GTC/GTI/THS—Department of Technical and Vocational Education (DTVE) [EB/OL] (2017).

for the 9th graders. Upon the end of the two-year study, the students may choose to enter the GTI for further study or go to work as skilled workers or assistant engineers based on their own conditions. If they cannot go to the GTI, they can apply to take college entrance exams no matter they have passed the GTHS exams or not.

The two-year academic education covers specialized and public courses. Both specialized and public courses are offered 15 h a week, and the yearly total amounts to 600 h.¹⁰ Specialized courses include architectural engineering, electrical technology, electronic technology, automotive repair technology, mechanical processing technology, refrigeration and air conditioning technology, metal processing technology, and information technology. Public courses include Burmese, English, mathematics, physics, and chemistry. The GTHS offer the same public courses as the regular senior high school. All the students must complete the study of all the public courses and certain specialized courses. The students' performance is evaluated through theoretical examination and practical operation evaluation, with the former accounting for 30% and the latter 70% of the total score. The GTHS distinguish themselves with skill training, which takes place partly in the classroom and partly in the workshop within the school. The GTHS curriculum system is composed of theoretical knowledge and practical operation. The teaching is usually conducted in the classroom for theoretical study and the workshop in the teaching building. The GTHS policy makers hope to help students change their attitudes toward vocational education and employment through diversified courses, and to help the students to make the transition from a student to a worker. The GTHS also help students choose areas appropriate for their development, depending on their interests and abilities (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Two-year education courses in GTHS

Specialized courses	Theory	Tutoring	Practice	Total
Architectural engineering	5	0	10	15
Electric technology	5	1	9	15
Electronic technology	5	0	10	15
Automotive repair technology	3	0	12	15
Processing technology	4	0	11	15
Public courses	Theory	Tutoring	Practice	Total
Burmese	2	1	0	3
English	2	1	0	3
Mathematics	2	1	0	3
Physics	2	0	1	3
Chemistry	2	0	1	3

See Footnote 10

¹⁰Theingi (2009).

6.4 Higher Vocational Education in Myanmar

The GTI offer higher vocational education in Myanmar. The country has 22 GTI nationwide, with 1330 teachers and 9453 students.¹¹ They are under the Department of Vocational and Technical Education and Training of the Ministry of Education of Myanmar. The GTI aim to train skilled workers, engineers, and technicians by imparting theoretical and practical knowledge in two forms: short-term training and three-year academic education. The short-term training covers edge masonry, basic mapping, practical small electronic circuits, sensor automatic control system, solar power generation foundation, electrical safety and base load, electrical safety and line installation, diesel engine overhaul, rewinder operation, computer fundamentals, digitization, and PLC basic training (Table 6.3).

The GTI primarily offer three-year academic education. Upon the end of the three-year study, qualified students will get diplomas and jobs in the government and the public sector. The GTI enroll students for academic education from among the graduates of regular senior high schools and the GTHS. For senior high school graduates, the admission is based on college entrance examination scores, of which the math and English scores are attached with extra importance. The GTHS graduates can also apply for admission into the GTI, and their admission is based on the average scores of all the subjects taken at the GTHS.

The GTI usually offer four or five majors, such as civil engineering, electronic engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, and information technology. In the first academic year, all students must take all public courses and one major course, including Burmese, English, mathematics, physics, and chemistry. In the second school year, the students need to take mathematics, English, and major

Table 6.3 GTI distribution in Myanmar

Region	Number of GTIs	Number of teachers	Number of students
Magway	5	373	2685
Chin	1	72	507
Kachin	1	54	190
Mandalay	4	263	1734
Ayeyarwady	3	130	1033
Sagaing	2	116	747
Rakhine	2	119	727
Yangon	2	88	698
Mon	1	62	631
Bago	1	53	501
Total	22	1330	9453

See Footnote 9

¹¹ See Footnote 9.

courses. Upon the end of the three-year study, the students can get A.G.T.I, a diploma from the GTI, and they can choose to go to a polytechnic university for further study. If they wish to go to other universities, they can continue to study by means of distance education. The GTI assessment of the students' performance includes the theory examination and the practical operation evaluation. In each school year, the GTI shall organize two theory examinations, respectively, in the first semester and the second semester; all students must sit and pass the theory examination to meet the graduation requirement. The theory examination and the practical operation evaluation, respectively, account for 30–40% and 60–70% of the total score. For some subjects that do not involve testing in practice, the students' performance in daily assignments shall be taken as the basis for the final scoring.¹²

Take the GTI Yenangyaung for example, its predecessor was GTHS Yenangyaung established on August 1, 1977. The GTHS was elevated to the GTI on December 1, 1998. It offers four majors, including Civil Engineering, Electronics and Communications Engineering, Electric Power Engineering and Mechanical Engineering, with approximately 100 teachers and 606 students at the present period. All these programs last for three years, and upon finishing the programs, the students shall be awarded the corresponding A.G.T.I degrees.¹³

6.5 Vocational Education Institutions Established Through International Cooperation

Myanmar is a less developed country. Many countries have provided assistance to Myanmar in the field of vocational education and established corresponding vocational education institutions. These vocational education institutions offer many types of vocational education and training, including academic and non-academic education, as well as long-term training and short-term training. In terms of the content and structure of the curriculum, the vocational education provided by these institutions is not directly related to the curriculum of government vocational institutions in Myanmar. Their courses are more closely related to the workplace, and the contents of the courses are more in line with the employer's requirements, which makes the trained personnel better meet the needs of the market. In addition, these vocational education institutions have established partnerships with vocational colleges, research institutions, and universities in donor countries, drawing on the latest international curriculum for vocational education. These vocational education institutions provide a training mode different from that of the government vocational education institutions, and they play a significant role in the vocational training of Myanmar.

¹²See Footnote 9.

¹³MOE: Yenangyaung Government Technical Institute [EB/OL] (2018).

6.5.1 Industrial Training Centre (ITC)

The Industrial Training Centre (ITC) is under the Industrial Cooperation Council of the Ministry of Industry of Myanmar. The Ministry of Industry aims to use modern advanced agricultural technology to develop basic agricultural industries, agricultural economy, and agricultural production, and to promote the heavy industry construction. Over recent years, in order to strengthen the country's industrial construction and management, the Ministry of Industry has, based on the 12 economic development goals of Myanmar, developed four policies and two visions, including the construction of ITC.

The ITC aims to equip the workers with core competitiveness through skills training and promoting lifelong learning throughout the country. It takes it upon itself to train excellent technical workers and arrange them in the professional fields of their interest to make them the new force of national industrial development. The ITC provides technical training to the workforce throughout the country and offers young people job opportunities in the industrial field. Additionally, the ITC promotes the up-to-date production and quality control techniques within the factory, sharpens the staff's design skills and develops innovative methods to improve products, and sends trained workers to the National Skill Standard Authority (NSSA) for tests.

The ITC currently offers one-year (1600 h) non-academic vocational training courses, which are mainly about practical operation and consist of 70% of practical courses and 30% of theoretical courses. Statistics show that the ITC has 1000 trainees each year, and the training period will be extended to two years in the future.¹⁴ The ITC requires that the trainees must be citizens of Myanmar, with a senior high school education, aged between 17 and 25, in good health and interested in vocational training (Table 6.4).

6.5.2 Center for Vocational Training (CVT)

The Centre for Vocational Training (CVT) is a non-governmental and non-profit organization, which was registered in Switzerland in 2002. In order to meet the demand of industrial development in Myanmar, it endeavors to eliminate poverty through imparting skills via vocational education and training services. The organization's funding mainly comes from the donors, sponsors, and partners. The CVT's partners in Myanmar include the Myanmar Industries Association (MIA), the Myanmar Timber Merchants Association, the Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Myanmar Engineering Society, and the Myanmar Ministry of Education. The CVT adopts the Swiss dual-system vocational education, and the experts from Switzerland provide free consultation and guidance services at the CVT in their spare time.

The CVT aims to ensure the future employment of the Myanmar youth through vocational education, and to promote national economic development and meet

¹⁴Myanmar Industry Portal: Industry Training Center [EB/OL] (2018).

Table 6.4 General situation of ITC

ITC	Time of establishment	Partner	Courses	Number of trainees
Sinde	December 1, 1979	Germany	Machine Tool Operator; Cutting And Stamping Tools; Mechanical Installer; Motorcycle Mechanic; Electrical Installer; Motor Manufacturing; Model Worker; Mechanical Drawer	There are 200 trainees at each training session; altogether 4102 people have been trained up to the 35th session
Mandalay	October 16, 2008	China	Traditional Machine Tool Operator; CAD/CAM/CNC; Electrical Installer; Welding, Electroplating and Surface Treatment	There are 140 trainees at each training session; altogether 1253 people have been trained up to the 8th session
Thagaya	August 1, 2009	ROK	Mechanics; CAD/CAM; Electrical Installer; Electronics; Foundry	There are 150 trainees at each training session; altogether 897 people have been trained up to the 7th session
Pakokku	July 15, 2010	India	Machine Tool Operator; CNC; Automobile Mechanics; Heat Treatment; Welding; Electrician; Electronic Engineering	There are 170 trainees at each training session; altogether 1078 people have been trained up to the 6th session
Magway	August 19, 2011	ROK	Automobile Maintenance; CAD/CAM	There are 150 trainees at each training session; altogether 710 people have been trained up to the 5th session
Myingyan	2014	India	Mechanical Turning/Grinding; Tool and Die Manufacturing; CNC; Industrial Electrician; Electronic Engineering; Sheet Metal and Welding Workers; Foundry	There are 180 trainees at each training session; altogether 346 people have been trained up to the 2nd session

See Footnote 14

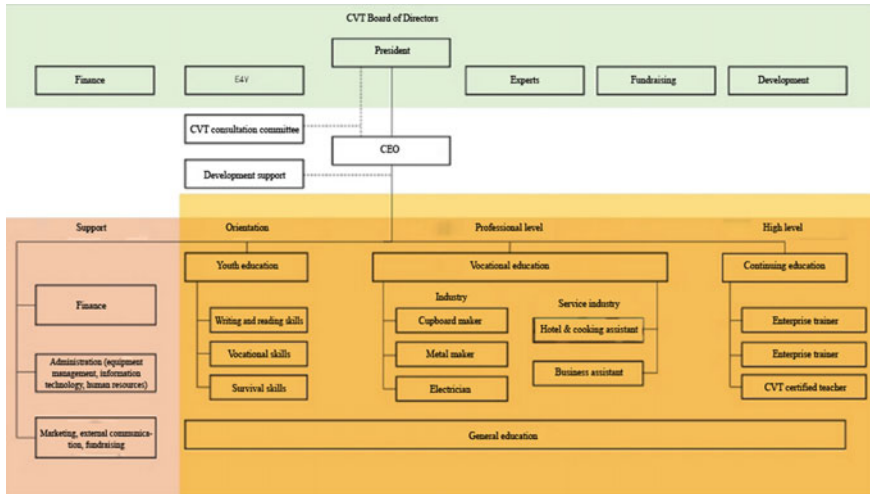


Fig. 6.3 Organizational structure of CVT (CVT: Organization [EB/OL] 2018)

industrial needs through education. The CVT curriculum is designed by the experts in relevant fields. By drawing on the Swiss dual-system vocational education, it provides high-quality vocational education and training to help Myanmar improve its vocational education and provide a path for the Myanmar youth to work or to offer them a way to start building their own careers (Fig. 6.3).

The Myanmar CVT offers three types of vocational education and training programs:

(1) Education for Youth (E4Y)

The Education for Youth (E4Y), an education program which is a career-oriented, providing the disadvantaged youth with opportunities to develop competences in the professional field. The program targets the youngsters who have no access to secondary education after graduation from primary school and the students who drop out of secondary school. The candidates for the E4Y program are required to be 13–14 years old, have the basic ability to read, write and calculate, and to pass the entrance examination for the program.

The E4Y program lasts for 4 years and the students can continue to receive vocational education as apprentices. By providing skill-oriented courses, the program aims to encourage students to engage in learning, to cultivate their creative thinking, and to provide young students with the opportunity to access the higher education system for further study. Teaching cooperation with the Swiss vocational education system is conducted to guarantee the good quality of the program. The E4Y program is composed of theory and practice courses, and aims to enhance the students’ self-confidence by encouraging lifelong learning oriented to solving problems, enhancing critical thinking, and fostering a sense of responsibility among them. Moreover,

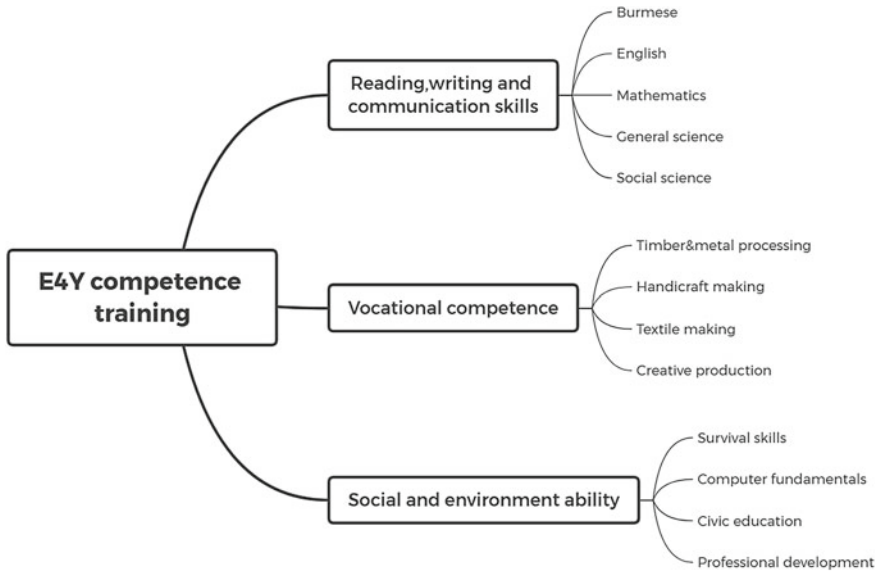


Fig. 6.4 Competence development and curriculum design of the E4Y program (CVT: E4Y [EB/OL] 2018)

diverse sports activities and competitions are held at school for team building, cooperation ability training, and bodybuilding (Fig. 6.4).

The E4Y program provides the students with additional funding, physical examinations and measures to prevent malaria, AIDS, tuberculosis, and hepatitis B. Based on the students' chosen majors, the program facilitates them to work at corresponding duty stations for approximately 3 weeks and subsidizes their short-distance travel, meals, and transportation for that purpose.

(2) Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The vocational education and training (VET) program of the CVT, drawing on the Swiss dual-system vocational education, lasts for three years and is mainly carried out in the CVT and the enterprise. The participants of the program receive training at the CVT one day a week in the public curriculum knowledge and the theoretical knowledge of the specialty provided according to the national skill standard. In the VET program, the students can not only acquire theoretical knowledge and practical skills, but also enhance their own social ability and obtain certain income. Upon completion of all the courses, the students will receive a highly recognized certificate of professional competence which is issued by the Government of Myanmar (Table 6.5).

(3) Continuing Education Program

The CVT encourages young people to start up their own businesses where they can apply the knowledge and skills learned through vocational education and training

Table 6.5 Projects and courses in VET

Project classification	Theory courses	Practice courses
Cupboard maker training	Materials Science; Production Technology; Drawing Technique; Computing Technology; English; Burmese; General Knowledge	Manual Tool Operation; Portable Tool Operation; Heavy Tool Operation; Wood Processing Operation
Metal fabricator training	Business Management; Materials Science; Production Technology; Drawing Technique; Computing Technology; English; Burmese; General Knowledge	Forging and Metal Manufacturing; Casting of Iron and Non-Iron Metals; Machinery Manufacturing and Welding
Electrician training	Electrical Engineering; Materials Science; Instrument Structure; Drawing Technique; English; Burmese; Geography; Economics	Wood & Metal Processing and Simple Electric Light Fittings; Control And Measurement Systems for Household Appliances; Diode Systems, Measuring Techniques 2, Engine Control Systems
Business assistant training	Business Management; Accounting; Political Economy; Information and Communication Technology; English; Burmese	Under the charge of the internship enterprise
Hotel & cooking assistant training	Cooking; Service; Family Affairs; Reception; Basics about Hotels; English; Burmese	Under the charge of the internship enterprise

CVT: VET [EB/OL] (2018)

and create jobs. Since 2014, the CVT has been offering three types of continuing education based on the concept of “ability acquired in learning”:

First, it is the In-company Trainers Program (ICTP), which aims to provide trainees with knowledge and skills about enterprise training to improve the training within their own enterprises. The ICTP admission requirement includes that the candidates shall be 25 years old at least, hold relevant diplomas and certificate issued by the CVT, or other equivalent certificates as well as letters of recommendation from their companies. The 10-week program is scheduled to take place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays, with a total of 80 class hours, including exams and final evaluations.¹⁵ The ICTP contents include:

The background and basis of the dual-system vocational training

¹⁵CVT: Post Graduate Programs [EB/OL] (2018).

Skill management concepts and critical competence evaluation
 Recruitment process, Myanmar labor law, and apprenticeship contract
 The how-how on preparing and implementing internal training programs
 Basic knowledge about apprenticeship and staff training, including planning and presentation of the workplace, problem solving, and communication;
 Correct and effective teaching guidance and teaching method
 Safety in production and health protection.

Second, it is the CVT Certificated Teacher Program, which aims to enable trainees to acquire knowledge and skills in education and teaching as well as other professional fields and to equip them with the competence to become excellent teachers in vocational education. Applicants of the program are required to hold diplomas and certificates issued by the CVT or other equivalent certificates, and have at least three years of working experience in the relevant industry. The program lasts for 3 months (3 days per week), including 90 class hours of teaching method and educational theory training, 250 class hours of professional curriculum training and four-week workplace practice as well as one week of assessment, certification, and graduation exams.¹⁶

Third, it is the Young Entrepreneurs for Myanmar (YE4M) program, jointly offered by the CVT and Swiss Academy for Development (SAD), targeting the young people who have yet to but plan to start a business and the young entrepreneurs who have started a business and wish to improve their management skills. The YE4M program encourages the participation of young women and gives priority to the applicants under the age of 35. The three-month program offers training in 28 units, totaling 84 class hours. It includes compulsory courses of 6 class hours, such as economic concepts and principles, overview of legal forms of enterprise ownership, basic principles of enterprise organization, and financial accounting, etc. It also includes core courses for 72 class hours, such as entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity, strategic planning, sales and marketing, human resources management, basic accounting and financial management, microeconomics, and business ethics and corporate social responsibility. At the end of the program is a 6-hour practice course, which is devoted to reporting on a business plan.¹⁷

6.5.3 Singapore–Myanmar Vocational Training Institute (SMVTI)

The Singapore–Myanmar Vocational Training Institute (SMVTI), founded in 2016 in Yangon, is a cooperation program between the governments of Singapore and Myanmar. The program utilizes the equipment and facilities from the Ministry of Education in Myanmar and it is managed by a private education institution of Singapore. The

¹⁶See Footnote 15.

¹⁷See Footnote 15.

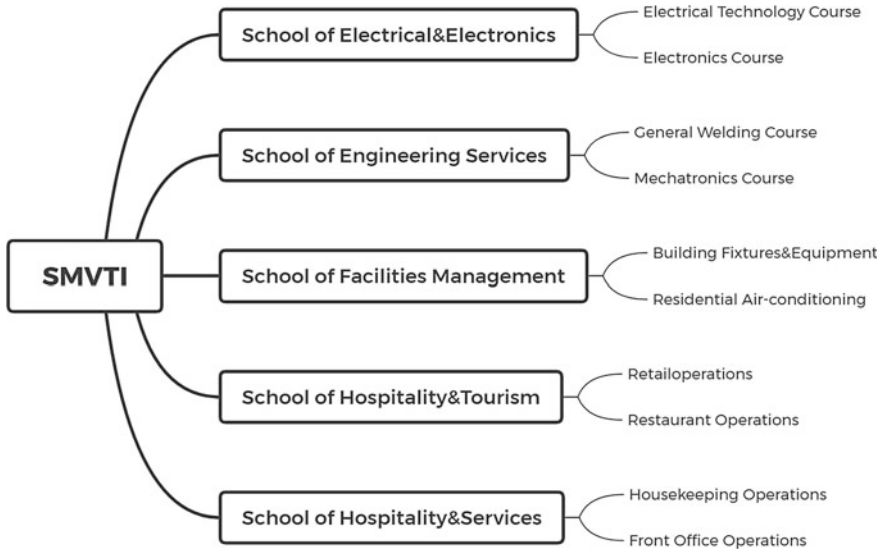


Fig. 6.5 Types of certificates offered by SMVTI

program aims to support human resource development in Myanmar, especially the vocational skill development of the Myanmar youth. The program consists of 10 training projects, each of which lasts for six months and covers such areas as engineering, technology, and services. Upon the end of the training, the trainees will receive the corresponding vocational certificates. At present, the program involves altogether 365 students and 56 teachers (Fig. 6.5).¹⁸

Take the retail service project for example. The project provides the students with knowledge and skills about working in retail stores, including the commercial management, cashier job, and communication to ensure quality service delivered to customers. The training project consists of five modules:

- Effective communication: Communication skills in the workplace, social and cross-cultural environments, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Quality of service: Establish good relationships with customers, understand their needs and ideas, deal with problems in services, and promote products.
- Professional image and etiquette: Have a good professional image and observe etiquette in the working environment.
- Office software applications: Use word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations to make office documents, manage files, and maintain the hardware.
- Store operations: Deal with a range of core retail businesses, such as order receipt, pricing, goods replenishment, and working as a cashier.

¹⁸SMVTI: HOME [EB/OL] (2018).

6.6 Management of Vocational Education in Myanmar

6.6.1 Vocational Education Policy in Myanmar

Article 366 of the Myanmar Constitution stipulates that: “Every citizen shall, in accordance with the educational policy laid down by the Union: (a) have the right to education; (b) be given basic education which the Union prescribes by law as compulsory; and (c) have the right to conduct scientific research, explore science, work with creativity and write, to develop the arts, and conduct research freely with other branches of culture.” The Myanmar education authorities approved the National Education Law (NEL) in September 2014 and passed an amendment to the NEL in 2015. The NEL and NEL amendment provide a framework for the extensive implementation of complementary reforms in the national education system.¹⁹

The NEL explains the role of vocational education: After the completion of primary education, one can go for basic vocational education; after the completion of secondary education, one can go for medium vocational education; and after the completion of high school education, one can go for higher-level vocational education. Private vocational education institutions provide various technical and vocational skill training in accordance with existing regulations/standards to promote the trainees’ skill development, which is accessible to all of any educational level and age.

The Government of Myanmar promulgated the *Technical, Agricultural and Vocational Education Act* in 1974, which was amended in 1983 (Law No. 8) and 1989 (Law No. 20/89). The law further regulates all kinds of vocational education and training. The purpose of the Act is to cultivate technical personnel and experts needed to establish the industries in Myanmar, to train outstanding personnel who can effectively utilize advanced technologies to carry out agricultural and animal husbandry activities, to expand or increase vocational education courses that fit the national political, economic, and social system, and to train technicians and intellectuals with national spirit.

In 2013, the new Employment and Skill Development Law (ESDL) was promulgated in Myanmar, the second important law on vocational education in the country. It stipulates various forms of skill development for current workers and for those who are about to work. The law also provides the establishment and functions of the National Skill Standard Authority (NSSA), as well as the skill development tax initiated by employers to finance training.

¹⁹MOE (2016a).

Table 6.6 Myanmar National Qualifications Framework (MNQF)

Field				Lifelong education
Grade	Basic education	Vocational education	Higher education	
8			Doctor's degree	Re-recognition of previous learning (evaluation and validation) Informal/informal
7			Master's degree	
			Postgraduate education	
6		Diploma	Bachelor's degree	
5		Associate degree	Associate degree	
		Graduate diploma	Graduate diploma	
4		Vocational Certificate/Skill Certificate (Level 4)		
3	Senior high school	Vocational Certificate/Skill Certificate (Level 3)		
2	Junior high school	Vocational Certificate/Skill Certificate (Level 2)		
1	Primary school	Vocational Certificate/Skill Certificate (Level 1)		

Kyi Shwin (2015b)

6.6.2 National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The Government of Myanmar, drawing on the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRf), began to develop the Myanmar National Qualifications Framework (MNQF) at the end of 2013. The Government of Myanmar organized a taskforce made up of personnel from 12 ministries to prepare a draft national qualifications framework by July 2014, and the framework was proposed at the end of 2015.²⁰

The MNQF consists of eight levels, covering basic education, vocational education, and higher education. Except for basic education, the framework provides details on the qualifications and certificates for each level (Tables 6.6 and 6.7).

²⁰Kyi Shwin (2015a).

Table 6.7 MNQF Vocational Certificate/Skill Certificate levels

Qualification certificate system		
Certificate level	Job level	Requirements
Level 1	Beginner	To understand the safety regulations in the work; have basic practical skills and operational knowledge in a specific work area; complete the day-to-day work according to clear requirements; receive, communicate, spread and, record information; bear certain responsibility
Level 2	Skilled worker	Have practical skills and operational knowledge in a number of areas; complete work with skill requirements; take responsibility for the products you produce
Level 3	Highly skilled worker	Have some theoretical knowledge and a range of high-level skills; solve daily problems; interpret a large amount of information; take responsibility for the products produced by others
Level 4	Management	Have a wide range of basic knowledge, apply theoretical knowledge to practice; identify and apply various skills; identify, analyze, and evaluate varied information; have a good understanding of and take responsibility for, quality, safety, and environmental issues

Miriam Amine (2016)

6.6.3 Quality Assurance of Vocational Education in Myanmar

In order to guarantee the quality of vocational education, the Government of Myanmar has established the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee (NAQAC), and all vocational education courses shall be subject to certification by the NAQAC and approval by the National Curriculum Committee. The National Curriculum Committee is a part of the National Education Policy Committee, mainly responsible for the development, improvement, and quality assurance of vocational education courses.

To ensure the good quality of informal vocational education, the National Skill Standard Authority (NSSA) is mandated by the Employment and Skill Development Law (ESDL) to set vocational competence standards of levels 1 through 4, develop curriculum and training materials, conduct skill evaluation, and issue national certificates, in accordance with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework. Since 2007, NSSA has developed 173 occupational competence standards of four levels

for a number of industries and occupations. Among these standards, 93 have been approved by the Cabinet.²¹

6.7 Challenges to Vocational Education in Myanmar

Although Myanmar has made some achievements in vocational education over recent years, it still faces grave challenges. The vocational education is under the management of many departments of in Myanmar, among which there is lacking in effective coordination and unified management, and the management and curriculum of vocational institutions have a lot to be improved.

Myanmar vocational education authorities have yet to set up a comprehensive and well-developed quality assurance system, and vocational education cannot meet the local labor market needs for highly competent personnel. Although some skill standards have been set, the skill standards of some industries are inadequate as they are not closely linked with practice. In addition, local enterprises in Myanmar have a low degree of participation in vocational education. Many vocational education projects have been developed and implemented without enterprise participation, with more than enough emphasis on theory but little connection with practice. In result, the skills and abilities of the graduates from vocational institutions often do not meet the needs of the labor market. In terms of training content, the types of training provided by vocational institutions at present are limited. Public vocational education institutions mainly focus on academic education and pay insufficient attention to short-term informal vocational training needed in the labor market. With regard to funding, there is still a serious shortage of funds and resources in the development of vocational education in Myanmar.

The National Education Strategic Plan (2016–2021) launched by the Ministry of Education of Myanmar in 2016 has planned vocational education in three aspects²²:

First, it is to expand access to vocational education for all groups. In order to provide more opportunities for all citizens, including disadvantages groups and persons with disabilities, to participate in vocational training, the Ministry of Education of Myanmar will implement the Comprehensive Vocational Education Project. The project will improve access to vocational education at all stages and expand subsidies and scholarships to disadvantaged students through upgrading the existing vocational courses and providing capacity-based modular short-term courses.

Second, it is to improve the quality of vocational education and make it closely connected with practice. Develop a number of skills training programs, including management, teaching and specific skills. Vocational education courses are developed based on the needs of the workplaces in different industries, and a national qualifications framework for vocational education, the national skill standard, the

²¹Government of the Republic of Myanmar: National Employment & Skill Development Website [EB/OL] (2017).

²²MOE (2016b).

quality assurance system involving capacity-based courses, and institutional and personal certification are established.

Third, it is to strengthen vocational education management, carry out vocational education management system reform in Myanmar, enhance coordination among management departments of vocational education, encourage public–private cooperation, step up the financial management and supervision, build up the monitoring system and information management system of vocational education, and take improving vocational management as the top priority.

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