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Strategic Engagement with Countries in Transition: *The Case of Myanmar*

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Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- IIE's Myanmar Higher Education Initiative
- Why Myanmar, Why Now?: A Brief Overview of Myanmar Higher Education
- Developing Institutional Partnerships with Myanmar: A Strategic Approach
- Q&A / Discussion

IIE Myanmar Higher Education Initiative

- Launched in November 2012
- Series of Bi-national Conference Calls
- International Academic Partnership Program (IAPP) included 10 U.S. universities and 5 Advisory Board members
- Delegation to Myanmar in February 2013 to 3 cities, 9 Myanmar universities, 3 ministries
- Outcomes: report, new academic relationships, multiple trips back to Myanmar, increased interest, and a number of commitments from the participating universities and IIE

USAID-funded Higher Education Program in Myanmar Launched in 2005

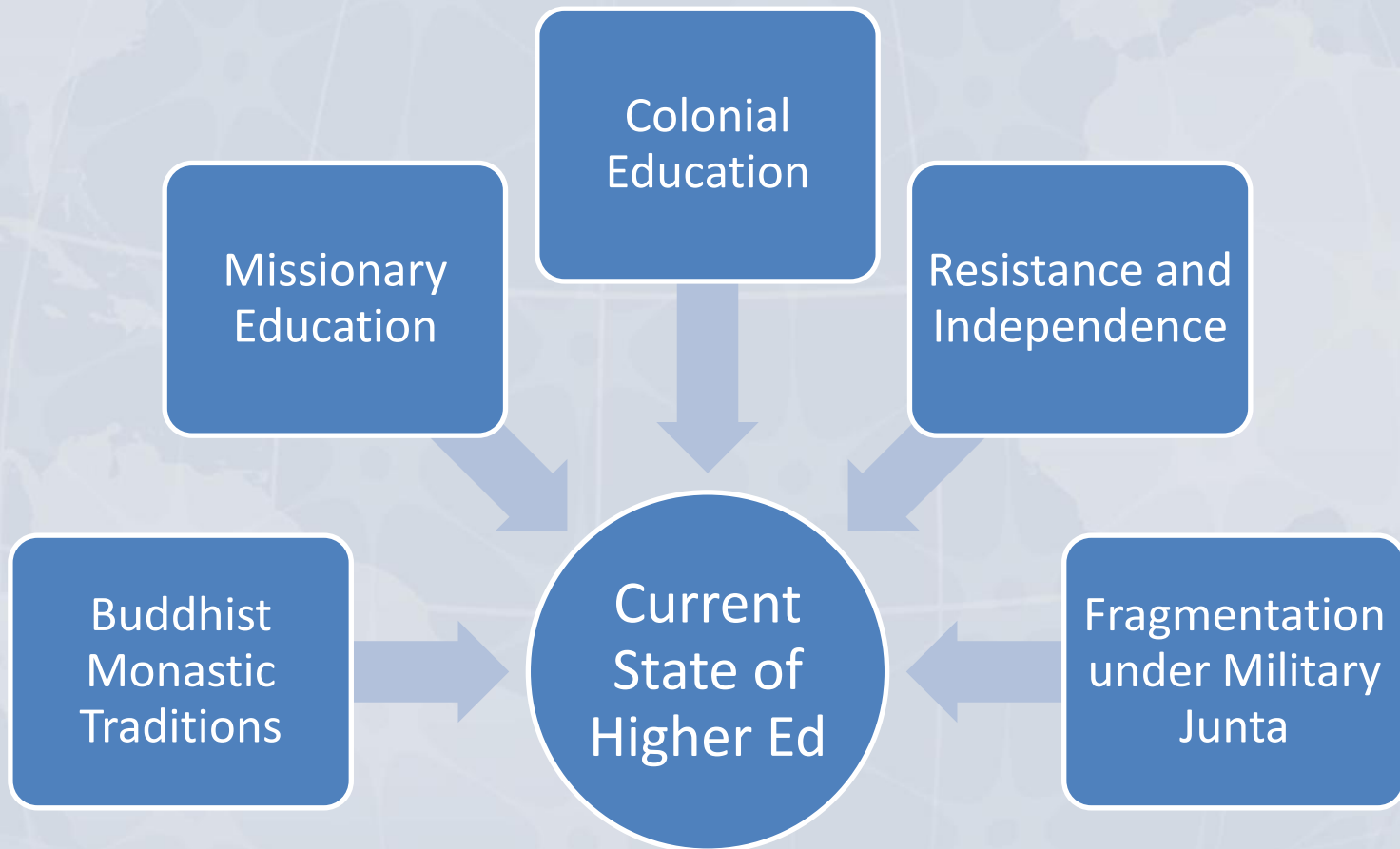
Cohort 1 Graduation



International Academic Partnership Program: Advisory Board Member

- Pose Questions
- Provide Historical Context
- Identify Opportunities and Challenges
- Facilitate Connections
- Pinpoint Synergies
- Add External Validation

Historical Context in the Case of Myanmar



Current State of Higher Education: Challenges

- Decentralized Administration
- Emphasis on Distance Education
- Poor Learning Outcomes
- Diminished Campus Culture
- Unequal Access

Current State of Higher Education: Assets/Developments

- Institutional Saga
- Calls for Reform
 - » Restoration of Rangoon University
 - » National Network for Education Reform
- International Engagement
 - » USAID
 - » British Council
 - » IIE
 - » Open Society Foundations
 - » American HEIs

Higher Education Reform Objectives

- Strengthen Autonomy and Leadership
- Increase Access and Inclusivity
- Revise Curriculum (Revitalize, Reintroduce, and Create)
- Improve Pedagogical Methods
- Increase Access to Resources
- Introduce Technology

Developing Institutional Partnerships with Myanmar: A Strategic Approach

- “Strategic” as much about your institution as the potential partner
- Allow institutions to understand what is feasible and explore short-term vs. long-term goals/expectations
- Common trends in the 10 IAPP institution’s strategic plans (e.g. playing up the SE Asia expertise on campus, pursuing previously outlawed areas, English language assistance)

NIU Institutional Context

- Public Mid-Tier Regional Research University
- Located 60 miles west of Chicago
- Approx. 21,000 students (16,000 UG, 5,000 GR); predominantly from northern Illinois & Chicago metro area
- Approx. 800 international students

NIU International Context

- Center for Southeast Asian Studies
- Center for Burma Studies
- Division of International Affairs

Southeast Asia Regional Strategy

- Maintain foundation of regional experts
- Expand academic spheres of engagement
- Promote partnerships in the region
- Expand capacity of higher education
- Use all of these to promote recruiting from the region and delivery of programs in the region

Myanmar Strategy

Myanmar strategy parallels regional strategy

- Build relationships across as many disciplines as possible
- Give particular attention to capacity-building

Be strategically opportunistic:

- Make use of existing contacts and relations
- Use the IIE processes to identify new contacts and opportunities
- Understand that flexibility is essential

Advancing Our Myanmar Strategy

- Burma Studies Conference
- Burmese language exchanges
- Fulbright specialist visit
- IAPP Myanmar
- Library capacity-building project
- NIU scholar visits
- NIU Delegation visits
- Funding proposals to USAID, Luce, Open Society, ...

Connecting with the World:

International Relations at Higher Education Institutions

- 20-week pilot program in Myanmar on how to establish and run an international office on campus
- 56 participants and 35 mentors
- Partners include: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; Northern Arizona University; Monterey Institute of International Studies; Knowledge Platform; U.S. Embassy Rangoon; AIEA; Henry Luce Foundation

Policy Documents

- Investing in the Future: Rebuilding Higher Education in Myanmar
<http://www.iie.org/~media/Files/Corporate/Publications/Rebuilding-Higher-Education-in-Myanmar.ashx>
- Policy Insights for Higher Education
<https://ihe.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/import-content/Policy%20Insights%20for%20Higher%20Education.pdf>
- Empowering Higher Education: A Vision for Myanmar's Universities
https://ihe.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/import-content/Report_Empowering_Higher_Education_Dialogue.pdf
- Asia Society's Sustaining Myanmar's Transition: Ten Critical Challenges
<http://asiasociety.org/policy/strategic-challenges/sustaining-myanmars-transition-ten-critical-challenges>
- Steinberg, David. Burma/Myanmar: What Everyone Needs to Know
- UNESCO Review on Adult Education in Myanmar
<http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/pdf/country/Myanmar.pdf>

Discussion/Q&A

- What are the challenges and opportunities you and your institution have faced in engaging with a country in transition?
- What tactics are you employing and how is this different from other international engagement?
- How do you build support on your campus for such engagement?