



**Karen National Union**  
**Office of the Supreme Headquarters**  
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**Karen National Education Policy**

March 30, 2015

**Foreword**

Historically, we the Karen people have consistently maintained our literature, culture, customs and traditions. The Karen people have lived not only in the Karen State but extensively also in other states and divisions (regions). The majority of Karen people live especially in the Irrawaddy Delta Region. There are two main Karen dialect communities, known as Pow and Sgaw. During the British colonial period, the Karen national schools received authorization to establish Pow Karen schools up to the middle school level and Sgaw Karen schools up to the high school level. When Burma received independence, the Karen people no longer had the permission to establish their national schools. For learning our own national language, we had to open summer-time classes. However, in some of the KNU administered areas, in accordance with the Karen national educational system and under the supervision of the Karen Education Department, schools of kindergarten, primary, middle, high (secondary) and university (tertiary) levels are opened and education is provided. Therefore, in order for the educational system to be at the international level, for the educational standards in the ASEAN countries to be matching, for the continued maintenance and promotion of our own national literary, cultural and historical heritage and, in addition, for heading towards a Federal Union State, where all the ethnic nationalities co-exist peacefully, the basic principles of the Karen national education policy are laid down as follows.

**Basic Principles**

1. Every Karen shall learn his own literature and language.
2. Every Karen shall be acquainted with Karen history.
3. The Karen culture, customs and traditions shall be promoted.
4. Our own Karen culture, customs and traditions shall be made to be respected by the other ethnic nationalities, and the cultures, customs and traditions of the other ethnic nationalities shall mutually be recognized and respected.
5. The unity of the Karen people and coexistence peacefully with the other ethnic nationalities shall be aimed for.
6. The Karen national education schools from the primary, middle, high, vocational to the university levels shall be opened.

7. There shall be authorization to open Karen national education schools not only in the Karen State but also in other states and regions, where the Karen people reside.
8. With the aim of developing the entire Karen nation, science, technology and civic education shall be elevated.
9. At the basic education level, every person shall be able to learn, free of charge, and the primary education shall be compulsory.
10. The students shall have freedom of thought, and the learning system shall be based on personal study, experiment and research.
11. In the management of educational workers, the dignity and capability shall be raised in accordance with the qualification and criterions of entitlement.
12. In the realization of educational activities by the individual states, regions and schools, they shall have the right to freedom of management.
13. There shall be freedom to form students and teachers unions.
14. From the States and Union national (federal) revenues appropriate amounts shall be appropriated for educational expenditures.
15. Research work for the development of education shall be undertaken in cooperation with in-country, regional and international institutions.
16. At the State levels as well as at the Union (Federal) level, there shall be the right to enact laws for the ethnic national education.

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