

LOCAL GOVERNANCE MAPPING



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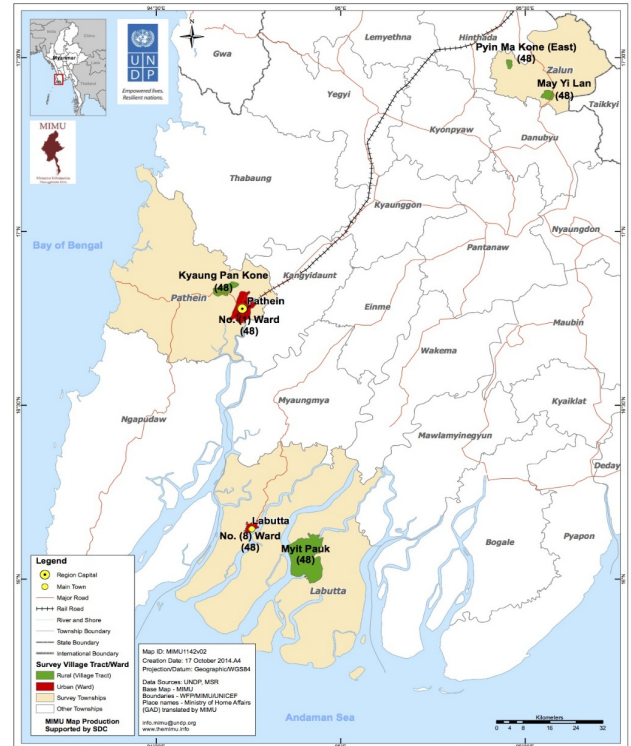
Mapping Highlights in Ayeyarwady Region

Background

In 2014 a mapping of Local Governance was carried out in Ayeyarwady Region. This mapping formed part of a nation-wide local governance mapping carried out by UNDP together with the General Administration Department, Ministry of Home Affairs. For an overview of the methodology see the Fast Facts: Local Governance Mapping in Myanmar.

In Ayeyarwady, the mapping covered Labutta, Patheingyi and Zalun townships, interviewing citizens, service providers, committee members, civil society representatives and local administrators about local governance and service delivery.

Around 300 citizens and 100 service providers and local administrators shared their experiences and impressions of **development planning and participation** **access to basic services** (specifically primary education, primary health care and drinking water), and **information transparency and accountability**. This highlight shares some of the key findings, as well as potential entry points for support activities suggested by the stakeholders in Ayeyarwady.



Source: MIMU



Historical and socio-economic context

Historically, the Irrawaddy delta area was populated by Mon people. In the 18th century, the delta was the first British foothold of Burma, and turned into a key asset as the centre of rice production. It was in this period that the territorial organisation in villages/village tracts and wards, townships and districts was established.

After independence, Ayeyarwady came under direct control of the new government in Yangon, but these basic local administrative structures remained in place until 1988. Under the 1974 Constitution Ayeyarwady became one of the Union of Burma's 7 Divisions (along with 7 States).

Ayeyarwady has been the centre of Myanmar's fisheries, rice and grain production for over a century, but in recent decades low yields and an underdeveloped transport and storage infrastructure have caused a relative decline of Ayeyarwady's position. Thirty-two percent of the region's population live below the poverty line.

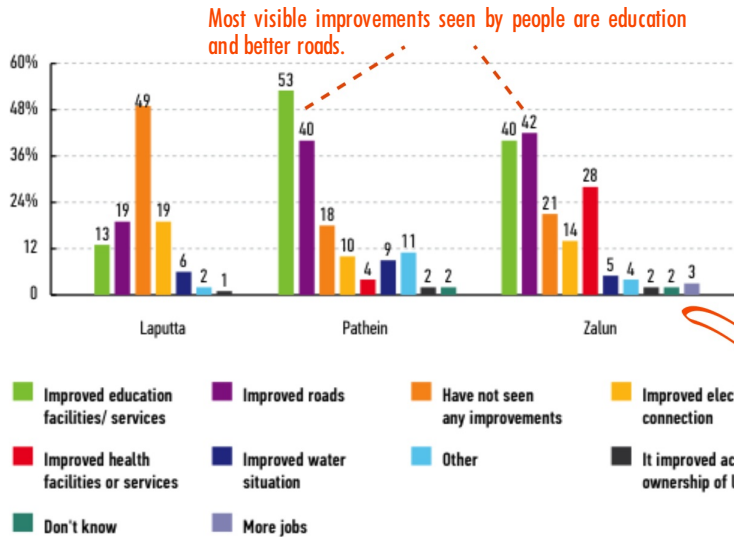
On 2 May 2008 Ayeyarwady was severely impacted by Cyclone Nargis. 138,000 lives were lost and serious damage was inflicted. However, the resilience developed from the reconstruction effort has placed the Region in a unique position, with organisational experience and capacity garnered by actors in government, civil society and interest groups.

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Improvements seen at the community level



What people wish to see improve further in urban areas are roads (41%), and in rural areas a solution to the lack of jobs (28%).

Development planning and participation

Development Funds

For the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF), village level priorities collected by the village tract administrators (VTAs) feed through township to regional GAD and typically 2-3 projects out of 10 are approved.

PRF per township - 34,000 USD

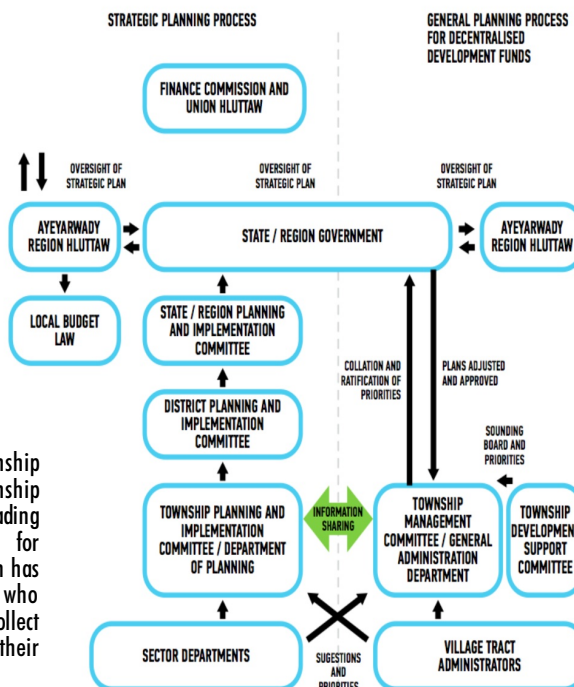
Rural Development Fund (RDF) per state/region - 10,000 USD

Constituency Development Fund (CDF) per township - 100,000 USD

TDSC

In Ayeyarwady, instead of the Township Management Committee (TMC), the Township Development Support Committee (TDSC) is leading the formulation of priorities for proposals for available development funds. The TDSC in Zalun has nominated eight VTA "cluster representatives", who have been assigned to share information and collect ideas for community development from their respective geographical area.

At the sub-national level, there are emerging opportunities for local actors, such as Support Committees, Village Tract Administrators (VTAs) and the people, to influence the planning process and decision-making for public-sector investment.



TPIC

In Ayeyarwady the Township Planning and Implementation Committees (TPIC) - mandated to strengthen bottom-up planning and budgeting – are relatively active. The TPICs are successful at gathering information and suggestions from interest groups.

TMAC

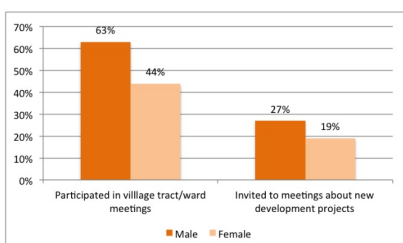
The Township Municipal Affairs Committee (TMAC) is emerging as an actor for decision-making on municipal revenues and municipal budgeting planning.

Innovative Cost-sharing Model

Municipal authorities in Ayeyarwady are experimenting with cost-sharing models, directly engaging and negotiating with citizens to drive development of the municipal road infrastructure in a bid to overcome resource constraints. Approximately 100 road-related activities have been undertaken through such a cost-sharing model.

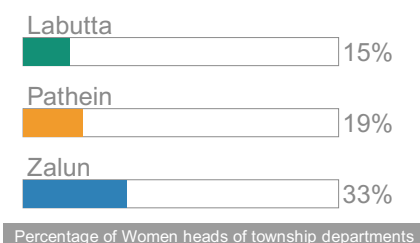
Citizen participation in meetings

53 percent of the respondents had participated in a meeting on new development projects or problems in the village organised by the VTA and 10/100 Household heads. Fewer women participate.



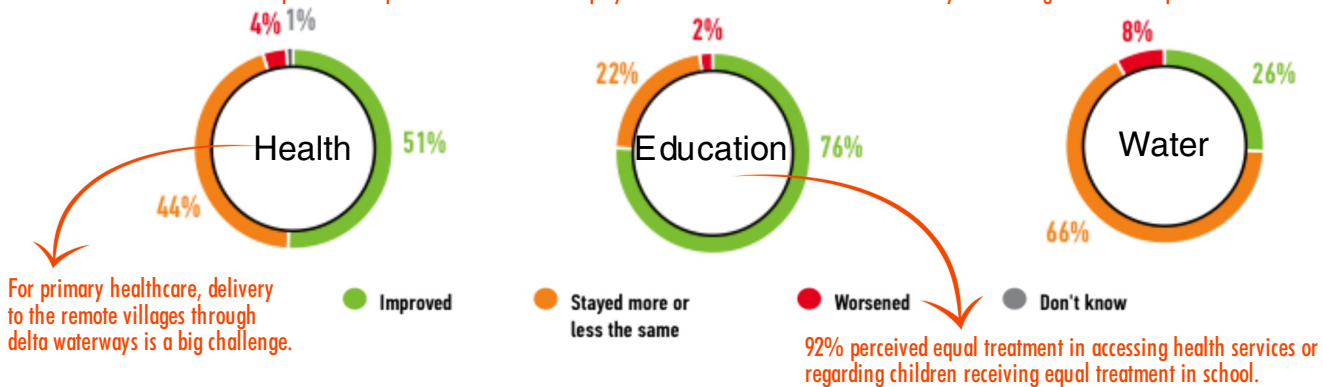
Women's representation

Women's representation in development planning is not evident. Few as head of department, and none are represented in Township Committees. There are 8 women VTAs in Ayeyarwady which is higher than most other States/Regions



Access to basic services: primary health, education and water

Majority of people perceived improvements (76%), and were satisfied (78%) with the quality of education, followed by health where 51% perceived improvements and 39% displayed satisfaction. 26% felt the availability of drinking water had improved.



Healthcare efficiency



One positive change for the planning process for healthcare is the procurement of medical supplies and equipment, which is now the responsibility of the Region-level Department of Health. Township Medical Officers (TMOs) give input on supplies needed. This new structure results in more efficient allocation.

Consulting on education



A more consultative approach has been recently deployed in education sector: For the 2014-2015 planning, township education staff were required to collate information and proposals from all school headmasters. In addition, 3-4 parents per school were invited to participate and share their opinions in seminars held at regional level.

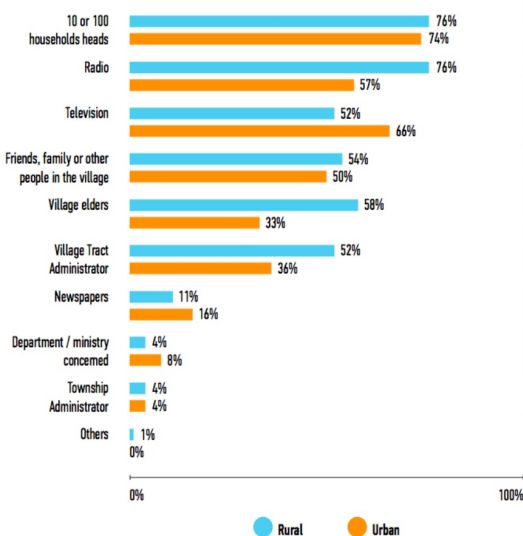
CSOs - service providers and key intermediaries



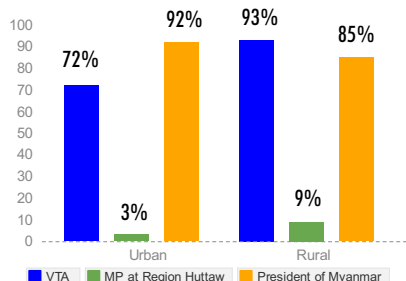
Post-cyclone Nargis, CSOs have engaged as key providers of education and health services. There are 53 organizations in Pathein, nine CSOs in Labutta and seven Zalun. In Zalun, CSOs are typically the "first destination" for community members seeking help, and in Pathein there is good interaction between citizens and the CSOs.

Information, transparency & accountability

In Ayeyarwady, the 10/100 Household Heads function as the primary source of government-related information for 75 percent of all respondents.

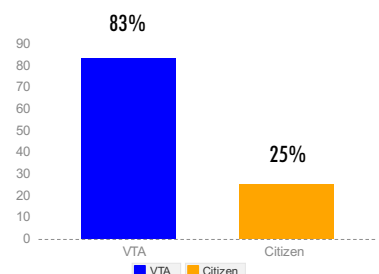


The VTA is a central player in local governance. 93 percent of rural residents could name their elected VTA as could 72 percent of urban respondents name their Ward Administrator. Representatives on the regional level are less known.



Almost all VTAs, but very few citizens feel the Township administration is providing them with sufficient information about development projects. CSOs also think that the information flow should be improved.

Perception gap on information provision



Numbers of complaints are going up. Pathein GAD registers 60-80 grievances per month and half are related to land.



65% of patients at public health facilities say that they always pay for medicines, and 8% of parents say that they always provide a gift to the teachers and school principals.

Community Dialogue



In the community dialogues, different groups from the community such as women, youth and elders, as well as local service providers and the village tract/ward administrator discussed key issues of local governance and service delivery and thought of solutions they themselves could start implementing.

Some examples of solutions discussed in Ayeyarwady include collaborations between a ward administrator, citizens and CSOs to return a public clinic that had been leased out to a private company back to public use; joint proposal writing to the Ministry of Health to tackle discrimination issues in health facilities; and a plan by a VTA, teachers and citizens to provide voluntary labour for school upgradation.

Regional level recommendations

In the region level workshops for sharing of interim findings from the mapping in Ayeyarwady, government and civil society made recommendations for change.



Address coordination challenges among administrations and departments at both the township and regional level, give more authority to local administration to facilitate inter-departmental collaboration, and give more accountabilities to committed individuals to handle disputes. Also send officials abroad to study various administrative systems and policies for better coordination and more effective executive duties.



In order to address the problem of lack of information flow between the township administration and other organisations and departments, organise more meetings at the township level and village tract/ward level, and organise capacity building for CSOs to strengthen their participation in civic affairs and information sharing.

Conclusions

1 Capacities of Township Committee members need to be improved for greater clarity on their roles and mandates.

2 With almost a complete absence of women as local governance actors, women's needs and priorities are unlikely to be reflected in a meaningful way. In addition, lower participation of women at village-level meetings suggests more attention to gender equality.

3 Local government staff need to be supported in using the media more effectively to share information with the public. Townships could have dedicated public information officers to inform the public in appropriate and innovative ways.

4 Accountability mechanisms for the recently established Township Committees may need to be devised to monitor their effectiveness and also take transparency, legitimacy and impact into account.

5 CSOs are emerging fast as local governance actors in Ayeyarwady, though a key barrier - being limited awareness of the formal institutions and processes of local governance still remains. Capacity building and the development of peer networks could raise the needed cooperations of CSOs.



For a more detailed Ayeyarwady report please visit:
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