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Local
Governance
Mapping

THE STATE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE: TRENDS IN TANINTHARYI



Photo credits

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UNDP MYANMAR

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	I
Acronyms	III
Executive summary	1-12
1. Introduction	13
2. Tanintharyi Region	15
2.1 Socio-economic background	17
2.2 Demographics	18
2.3 Brief historical background and Tanintharyi Region's government and institutions	20
3. Methodology	28
3.1 Objectives	28
3.2 Mapping tools	29
3.3 Selection of townships in Tanintharyi Region	31
4. Governance at the frontline: Participation in planning, responsiveness for local service provision and accountability in Tanintharyi townships	33
4.1 Introduction to the selected townships	34
4.2 Current development challenges as identified by local residents	39
4.3 Development planning and participation	42
4.3.1 Township development planning	42
4.3.2 Urban development planning	47
4.3.3 People's participation in planning	47
4.4 Access to basic services	50
4.4.1 Basic service delivery	50
4.4.2 People's perceptions on access to local services	57
4.5 Information, transparency and accountability	64
4.5.1 Access to information by people from formal and informal channels	66
4.5.2 People's awareness of local governance reforms and their rights	69
4.5.3 Grievances and complaints	73
4.5.4 Social accountability	74
5. Conclusions	78
5.1 Development planning and participation	79
5.2 Basic service delivery	80
5.3 Information, transparency and accountability	80
5.4 Charting a path for continued local governance reform in Tanintharyi Region	81
6. Annexes	83
Annex 1: Composition of township committees	83
Annex 2: Ratings from focus group discussions, members of township support committees	83
Annex 3: Ratings from focus group discussion, representatives of Civil Society Organisations	85
Annex 4: Community survey, respondents' profile	86
Annex 5: Community dialogues, respondents	88
Annex 6: Community Dialogues: Action Plans	99
Annex 7: Proposed action plans from Village Tract/Ward, Township and State level stakeholders to address some of the identified governance issues in Tanintharyi Region	90



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Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CD	Community Dialogue
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAO	Development Affairs Organisation
DMA	Department of Municipal Affairs
DoH	Department of Health
DoP	Department of Planning
DRD	Department of Rural Development
DTA	Deputy Township Administrator
FSP	Frontline Service Provider
GAD	General Administration Department
GoM	Government of Myanmar
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
KNU	Karen National Union
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoNPED	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLD	National League for Democracy
NMSP	New Mon State Party
NUP	National Unity Party
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PRF	Poverty Reduction Fund
RHC	Rural Health Centre
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SLRD	Settlements and Land Records Department
SRHC	Sub-Rural Health Centre
TA	Township Administrator
TDSC	Township Development Support Committee
TEO	Township Education Officer
TLMC	Township (Farm) Land Management Committee
TLUC	Township Land Utilisation Committee
TDAC	Township Development Affairs Committee
TMC	Township Management Committee
TMO	Township Medical Officer
TPIC	Township Planning and Implementation Committee
TPO	Township Planning Officer
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USDA	Union Solidarity and Development Association
USDP	Union Solidarity and Development Party
VC	Village Clerk
VHC	Village Health Committees
VT	Village Tract
VTA	Village Tract Administrator
VT/WDSC	Village Tract / Ward Development Support Committee
WA	Ward Administrator



Executive Summary

This report outlines the results of the Local Governance Mapping (LGM) conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Tanintharyi Region in June of 2014. Based on the perceptions of local people and local governance actors, the mapping has captured the current dynamics of governance at the frontline of state-society interaction and enables an analysis of participation in planning, access to basic services and accountability for local governance that is specific to the Region.

The results are drawn from three townships, which were selected for the study to reflect the diversity of Tanintharyi's ten townships in terms of size and accessibility. Located at the southern-most tip of Myanmar, Bokpyin has a population of just over 45,000, and shares a land border with Thailand. Much of its population is dispersed throughout islands in the scenic and largely unspoiled Myeik archipelago. At the other end of the spectrum, Myeik is the commercial hub of the Region with an active trading port and a large population of over 280,000. Thayetchaung is in the north of the Region, with easy access to the administrative capital of Dawei, and a population of over 100,000 people.

The report finds that the history of commercial investment in the Region has imparted Tanintharyi with both the experience and capacity that is often lacking in other States/Regions to support public service delivery. The challenge for local governance will be to manage this process with the few institutional and social accountability mechanisms available to ensure equitable and sustainable development for the people of Tanintharyi. The Region's history of low-level conflict and displacement, although less severe than in some of the ethnic States, further complicates this task.

Tanintharyi Region

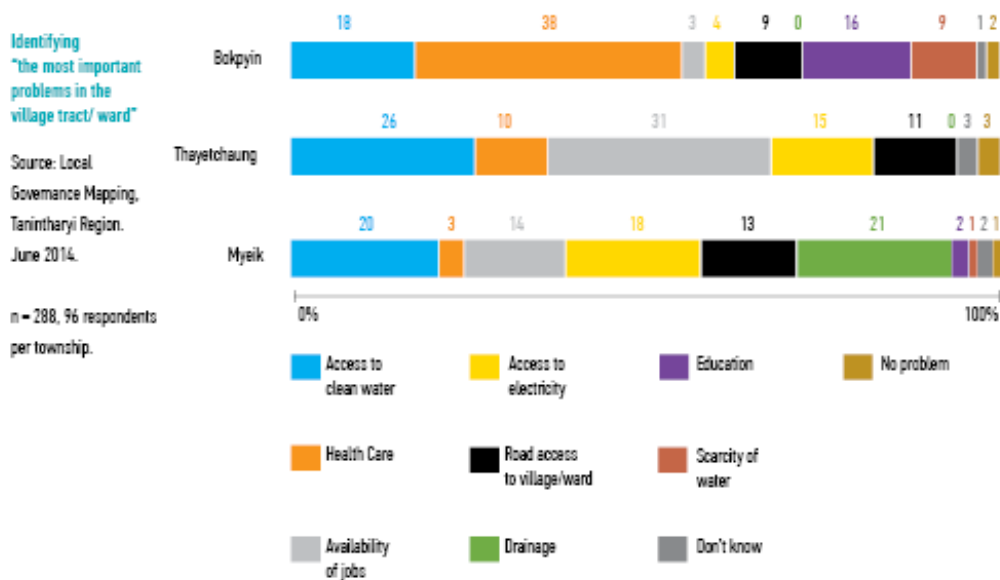
Home to around 1.4 million inhabitants, Tanintharyi Region is among the least populous Regions/States in Myanmar. Rich in natural resources, the Region's economy is today driven by agriculture, forestry, mining, fisheries and to some extent tourism. Tanintharyi has been affected relatively less by ethnic armed conflict which has remained at relatively low levels since 1948. Non-state armed groups have operated and continue to have a presence in northern and eastern parts, particularly those more remote areas in the Region, but the state has retained control over most of the more populated coastal areas of the Region. Some parts of the Region which continue to feel the repercussions of the conflict have Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and people living in neighbouring Thailand as refugees.

The relative absence of conflict from the more populated coastal areas has allowed for the agriculture, fisheries and natural resources industries to develop. The rubber and palm oil plantations have been a prominent employer in the Region, but have also been the cause of deforestation, displacement and land grabbing. The pending Dawei Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and deep-sea port has been one of the largest and most high profile of infrastructure projects in Myanmar, and is anticipated to transform the Region's economy. But it has also attracted widespread criticism from civil society and local communities whose land has been appropriated and who argue that a focus on promoting tourism and protecting local biodiversity is more sustainable than establishing a large industrial zone. Access to electricity and bad road infrastructure continues to be major challenges.

Current development challenges in selected townships

Geography presents a major challenge for local governance and the delivery of public services in Tanintharyi Region. Accessibility is a critical development priority particularly for the Region's islands. In the community-level survey, people were asked to reflect upon the biggest developmental challenges in their respective townships. Overall, urban respondents were most concerned with access to clean water (33%), while rural people cited healthcare (23%) as the most important problem in their village tract/ward at that point in time.

Across townships, access to clean water (20%) alongside drainage (21%) were top development concerns for Myeik, while some 38 percent of respondents in rural Bokpyin cited healthcare. In Thayetchaung, which is located close to the Dawei deep-sea port development, people thought that the most important issue was a lack of jobs and the economic situation (31%). Dialogues held at the community level confirmed the extent to which these priorities were contingent on local conditions and needs. However, a few issues were common during these discussions, namely: a need for improvements in basic healthcare (cited in discussions at four of the six village tracts/wards) and availability and affordability of clean water and electricity (noted in three community dialogues).



Development planning and participation

Similar to other States and Regions, "planning" activities at the township level in Tanintharyi continue to be very limited in scope and more about collecting data and information for decision-making at the Union level, and increasingly at the Regional level. Unlike other key township committees, for which there are more specific rules, the composition of the Township Planning and Implementation Committees (TPIC) under the Ministry for National Planning and Economic Development (MoNPED) is very flexible across the three townships in Tanintharyi, and contingent on the needs of each particular one.

Recently, development funds have been made available for spending on local infrastructure development in townships, with the Region Government, parliamentarians and township actors now able to directly influence decisions on disbursements. In 2014-15, Tanintharyi was allocated 1 billion Kyats (1 million USD), which was then distributed by equal shares among townships with each of Tanintharyi's townships therefore receiving approximately Kyats 100 million (100,000 USD). With just ten townships in Tanintharyi, funds allocated to townships through the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) are substantial on a per township basis. The investment impact of the PRF is more diluted for large townships such as Myeik (with a per capita rate of 352 Kyats; 0.3 USD), and more significant in less-populated Bokpyin (where the per capita rate was 2,138 Kyats; 2.1 USD). For the three townships in this study, this has meant that per capita spending was relatively high, and that there are significant discrepancies across townships in the Region, that are apparently not based on any formula and equity-based criteria.

In 2013-14, a Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was established by the Union parliament whereby each township was allocated an additional 100 million Kyats (100,000 USD) for development projects, selected in consultation with Members of the Hluttaws. For 2014-15 the amount remained the same, 100 million Kyats per township (100,000 USD). In some Tanintharyi townships—particularly those with smaller populations—the CDF is a significant injection of capital, matching PRF funding in the case of Bokpyin. According to Tanintharyi Region officials, the CDF is well-administered with a number of checks and balances to ensure that spending is co-ordinated. This process of consultation with both executive and legislative actors indicates that there is some degree of co-ordination and oversight in the disbursement of CDF funds, even if informally administered.

With the (limited and gradual) decentralisation of funds for discretionary spending at the sub-national level, new mechanisms and practices have also been established with the purpose of better reflecting the needs of communities for township development. One such mechanism is the Township Management Committee (TMC), an executive body of township head of departments from key ministries with a responsibility to collate project priorities. In practice, the TMCs in Tanintharyi townships have taken on this role—though the extent to which it is seeking advice from township committees (Township Development Supportive Committee—TDSC; and Township Development Affairs Committee—TDAC) and other stakeholders varies. This “coordinative” aspect of the Township Administrator’s (who chairs the TMC) responsibilities is apparently changing the dynamics of decision-making in Tanintharyi Region.

Despite new form of consultation and co-ordination, the extent to which women are participating and able to influence development planning appears to be limited. Women make up the minority of township managers, some of whom would attend informational meetings and participate in the various development committees. Women are even less represented in the supposedly representative support committees established at the township and village tract/ward level.

Participatory planning

The 2013 Presidential Notification¹ on the establishment of different committees to enhance participation of local people and local organizations at township and village tract/ward level has been implemented in Tanintharyi in early 2013. As instructed, the Region established Township Development Support Committees (TDSC). At the village tract and ward level, Village Tract/

1. Notification No 27/2013, 'Assignment of duties for formation of township and ward/village tract development support

Ward Development Support Committees (VTDSC) have also been established as of 2013. Emerging from discussions with committee members and government staff alike is a lack of clarity on the *de jure* functions of the TDSC, whose formal role is limited to an advisory one, intended to support the TMC. This pertains in part to the absence of clear operating guidelines for the committees, particularly for the TDSC. While there are responsibilities and assigned tasks, no detailed procedures or terms of reference exist.

Urban development planning

The Township Development Affairs Committee (TDAC) was established under the Municipal Law passed by the Tanintharyi Region Parliament in 2013. The passing of municipal laws in state/regions across the country was part prompted by the 2008 Constitution which places municipal affairs under the State/Region governments, and part due to the Presidential Notification (mentioned above) which states that in the case of the Municipal Committee it must comprise “persons popularly elected from among local people and social and economic organisations.” In practice, the TDAC has direct oversight and executive power over the municipal office, which manages municipal service delivery and collects local taxes from which it funds its entire budget. The TDAC reports directly to the Region Minister for Development Affairs. Myeik municipal officials highlighted examples of the TDAC facilitating collaboration with urban residents in the development of the municipal road networks in the township. They provide technical support and materials for projects where they can, working through the TDAC to co-ordinate with various Road Construction Committees at the ward level. Typically, residents agree to provide labour to upgrade lower priority roads, while the Development Affairs Organisation (DAO)² may provide technical assistance and some materials.

People's participation in planning

Clarity on the role of the TDSC as consultative body and a credible election process is critical to the committee's legitimacy. But the procedures according to which such members have been selected differ significantly from one township to another across the country, and even within Tanintharyi Region there were significant differences in the approach chosen. In Thayetchaung Township, members could be said to have been “popularly elected” whereas the process was less consultative in Myeik. In addition, the needs and perspectives of women are not evidently reflected through this process and there is no example across the three townships of women having been selected or elected to any of the township committees.

In considering opportunities to interact with local leaders or for people's priorities to be taken into consideration, some people have done so through active involvement in development works at the community level. For others, village-level meetings with the Village Tract Administrator (VTA), the Village Clerk (VC) or the 10 Household Heads are mechanisms for participation in rural Myanmar. In total, nearly two-thirds of the respondents (63%) reported that they sometimes participated in a community meeting. This suggests potential for wider inclusion of the community in consultations related to local development projects. As observed by Tanintharyi township-level actors: “Despite that fact that half of the community population comprises women, they are underrepresented at local meetings. More women should be invited by the local authorities.”

2. It is important to clarify that Development Affairs Organization (DAO) is meant to only denote the Office (Municipal) here although some sources have indicated that it should be used to include both the Office and the TDAC

Basic service delivery

As is the case across for township administrations across the country, the task of effective and efficient delivery of public services is a particularly challenging one in a resource-constrained environment. Within government structures, the township sector departments remain the most significant actors in the administration of basic local services. The private sector plays an “unusually strong role” in public service delivery in Tanintharyi, having taken over a number of state functions. This countrywide trend appears to be so particularly strong in Tanintharyi, where the private sector is substantively involved in the provision of public services especially for healthcare, electricity and the provision of household water. This is indicated through examples in basic healthcare and primary education to support service delivery, and in the delivery of drinking water, where private-sector players are major providers.

As a corollary, civil society in Tanintharyi appears to be underdeveloped in its capacity to support local service delivery. There are around 10-15 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Myeik Township, most of whom are focused on social work (i.e. the provision of funeral services), and there are a handful of CSOs in Thayetchaung and Bokpyin. However, it may be important to note that in some places such as Dawei, civil society has been active in bringing attention to issues regarding SEZ.

In a context where the majority of people remain underserved for basic infrastructure and local services, respondents were asked about their perceptions of improvements. Responses indicated that there was high awareness of increased socioeconomic investment by government, though the impact was more apparent in some townships than others. Nearly half of the 288 respondents (47%) observed improved education facilities and services, while improved roads were noted by 31 percent. Important improvements to local health and water facilities were only observed by 8 percent of respondents respectively, mirroring spending priorities at the national level.

Primary healthcare

Since the start of reforms, there has been a proliferation of private clinics in urban areas, providing residents with an alternative to public facilities—as appears to have been the case in urban areas of Tanintharyi. Perceived improvements must be considered in the context of growing choice, which may also reflect on people’s perceptions of government performance.

Overall, half of the respondents (52%) considered that health services had improved in the past three years though the impact of investments is not equally felt across the townships. Only 25 percent of Bokpyin respondents noted improvements, while 66 percent reported that healthcare services stayed “more or less the same”. At the same time, in Myeik, 70 percent of respondents observed improvements. Such divergence of opinion is likely related to the development of specific facilities at the local level—42 percent of Tanintharyi respondents attributed improvements to new facilities built, expanded or upgraded, while 38 percent attributed this to lower cost of services for consultation and drugs.

Primary education

In a context of stipends to families to support primary education, and where national investment in basic education has nearly doubled in that period, the majority of Tanintharyi respondents—80 percent (230) — perceived education services to have improved in their township in the past

three years. Progress was more pronounced among respondents in the rural townships of Bokpyin (85%) and Thayetchaung (84%) compared to the urban township of Myeik (70%). Perceived improvements are primarily attributed to the building or upgrading of schools (82%) followed by an observation that there were more teachers at primary schools (45 %).

Drinking water

Most respondents (53%) agreed that the provision of clean drinking water has stayed more or less the same, in the past three years. Just 11 percent of Bokpyin respondents perceived improvements in this area, while 45 percent thought that provision of clean drinking water in that township had worsened in the last three years. Again, such perceptions are likely related to local area investments in water supply—or lack thereof. 72 percent of respondents who observed improvements attributed this to the installation of taps and pumps. Those who observed a worsening in the supply of clean drinking water observed that the main source is further away (62%) or that the main source became polluted (49%).

Perceptions from the community indicates that there is recognition of socio-economic investments trickling down to the village level—primarily in education, followed by healthcare and drinking water. Yet, despite the involvement of commercial businesses in service delivery, there appears to be relatively few mechanisms that govern their participation. Procurement quality committees are sometimes formed for projects. And while township officials in Myeik observe that competitive tenders are issued in the local newspapers for some projects, an overriding policy or cohesive set of guidelines for selection of private-sector vendors is apparently lacking.

Information, transparency and accountability

Access to information by people

Critical to the ability of people to be able to navigate the disputes among themselves and with state authorities, and to seek some form of “answerability” (or responsiveness to complaints, queries and requests) through formal or informal channels, is their access to information on local governance arrangements.

Various instruments being used by the General Administration Department (GAD) for sharing information include the regular co-ordination meetings, dedicated committee meetings, public meetings at the village level and public display of written notices to communicate government policies. Regular meetings with VTAs appear to be the primary channel for sharing news on new directives from township administration. The VTA would typically disseminate information through village meetings and the 10 Household Heads at the village level. In Tanintharyi, the 10 Household Head remains the primary source of such information for 95 percent of all respondents.

Rural respondents do not generally rely on the media for information: just 4 percent received information on laws and directives from the government by newspaper, 17 percent by television and 35 percent by radio, suggesting that they remain underserved by transport of goods and communications networks. This has implications on information flow from township administration to communities, in that the link between the VTA and the 10 Household Head becomes critical. “I hope that the VTA is sharing this kind of information with the 10 Household heads,” noted one township official. Indeed, township-level governance actors highlighted potential capacity gaps on the part of 10 Household heads to perform this function, citing the unregulated nature of the role and the absence of a code of conduct as inhibiting factors.



If there are new laws or directives from the government, how would you usually learn about them?

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.



● Urban ● Rural

Contrary perceptions of the VTA and community respondents indicate that the existing formal communication channels may be a potential bottleneck related to access to information. Whereas all six VTAs thought that the Township Administration was informing them enough about plans for new development projects (such as schools, roads, health facilities) in their ward/village tract, 57 percent of (288) community survey respondents did not think they were receiving enough information of this nature.

People's awareness of local governance reforms and their rights

In a context where access to information can be challenging, to what extent are people in Tanintharyi also cognisant of the current status of local governance reforms, and the implications for their rights and livelihoods? The reforms with the most immediate implications for communities relate to potential expectations inferred on the VTA as an elected representative, and the creation of new village tract/ward and township-level committees with "persons popularly elected from among local people and social and economic organisations," to create a consultative body for the township management in the setting of local development priorities.

Familiarity among local populations with their VTA is extremely high 93 percent of rural respondents could name their VTA in rural areas as could 83 percent of urban residents (with regard to their WAs), indicating that exposure to their VTA is likely to be good, despite relying much more on the 10 HH Heads for day-to-day information. A requirement to provide villagers with information and directives from the government (8%) is not a high priority for respondents in Tanintharyi. Half (50%) highlighted the law and order and public security role of the VTA as among the most important functions, while 44 percent perceived the task of conflict mediation to be important. Given the historical function of VTAs over the past century, as well as the legal mandate enshrined in the 2012 Ward and Village Tract Law, it does not come as a surprise that expectations related to the "law and order" role of the VTA are more embedded among communities in Tanintharyi townships compared with the still tenuous and uncertain "representative" role of the VTA, following their election. Accordingly, bringing village problems to the township administrator (30%) and consulting and involving villagers in decision-making (18%) are perceived to be important by fewer people.

The VTAs' own perceptions on the importance of the various functions they play provide some insight. All six of the VTAs interviewed cited ensuring peace and security in the village as an important function of their role (which broadly reflects the traditional role of the VTA and the description of the role of the VTA as outlined in in the ward and village tract administration law) may have some context in the long-standing conflict in Tanintharyi. Five emphasised 'conflict mediation' indicating that their executive responsibilities related to "keeping the peace" locally remain on top of their minds. But none of the VTAs considered involving villagers in decision-making processes at village level as being an important, suggesting that the "consultative" function of the VTA is less pronounced at this stage.

To what extent are people aware of new consultative entities which have large public representation among its members such as the TDSC, TDAC? Across the three townships, only 3 percent of respondents were aware of the new consultative support committees at the village and township level. While this is related to how recently these entities were established - 2013 in Tanintharyi - this is also indicative of

low awareness as to the new mechanisms emerging for interest groups to represent their interests and influence local decision-making. In Tanintharyi Region, this is pertinent given the potential for such committees to serve a possible sounding board for the variety of interest groups that are active in the Region, including ethnic groups, social or economic sector groups and grassroots interests.

Grievances and complaints

The volume of grievances expressed through formal complaints filed in at the township GAD at Tanintharyi Region varies by township, though they are for most part related to land disputes, for which a distinct mechanism exists as regulated in the recently adopted land laws. Yet, discussions with township staff and committee members indicated that there exists a lack of clarity on the complaints process itself and the criteria for handling or elevating grievances. Land confiscation has been an issue in Tanintharyi in the past, though incidents have reduced since the handover to civilian authorities in 2011 and since the ceasefire was agreed in 2012. However, it remains a critical development issue as ongoing disputes on access to land remain a major barrier to the return and resettlement of IDPs and refugees. In Tanintharyi, the legacy of land grabbing for commercial investment also lingers, with recent incidents of protests by farmers recorded in the local media.

Social and political accountability

Formal institutions for social accountability between the state and the public are less developed in Myanmar than those of political accountability (which indeed is also new), in a context where people did not rely much on government authorities in the way of basic public services, and where the relationship between civil society and the military government was often contentious. In particular at the local level many informal, traditional mechanism for social accountability such as village elders, conforming to expected norms, dispute resolutions etc. exists. What is lacking is a formal, institutionalised mechanism. In a peripheral and largely rural region like Tanintharyi, this absence is even more pronounced, with the possible exception of increasing social mobilization and media interest in the context of the Dawei SEZ development project.

This perception colours the way in which respondents attribute responsibility to duty bearers for resolving local development challenges. In considering who held the main responsibility for resolving these challenges, the opinions of respondents varied, with around one-third (33%) assigning this to the VTA or the Region or Union Government (31%). Only 16 percent conferred responsibility for resolving local development challenges to the Township Administration, which is not the apparent “interface” of local public service delivery for most Tanintharyi respondents. Moreover, the level of confidence in government (at any level) to be responsive to the issue was relatively low. It was felt by over half of respondents (53%) that the township administration or other government bodies were doing nothing to address their problems.

Influencing the delivery of local services

Composed of members from both government staff and members of the community, both Village Health Committees (VHC) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) could be described as hybrid organizations that transverse civil society and public sector.

VHCs were initially established by Union Ministry of Health to “involve relevant sectors /.../ and to mobilize the community more effectively in health activities,” with the inclusion of the relevant health authority and representatives from social organizations as members. PTAs exist for every primary school in each of the village tracts/wards where the six VTAs were interviewed. Regional education officials noted the role of some PTAs working with principals to provide inputs to the township education office for planning and prioritization. As noted by one observer, the PTAs already practice “deliberative forms of decision making”, in the guise of voting for their own chairpersons and managing small funds.

Civil society as advocates

Based on observations in the three townships, civil society in Tanintharyi is generally relatively small in scale, weakly networked and limited in its capacity to play a role in public service delivery: this function has been subsumed, to some extent, by commercial businesses. Overall the capacity of CSOs to have a voice in township development is hampered by an apparently tentative relationship with the authorities. Limited awareness of the institutions, processes and procedures of township governance, and how they can most effectively serve the interests of the local community emerged as a concern for CSO representatives in Myeik, with few of them seeking formal registration.

Against this background, Thayetchaung and Dawei, civil society has recently emerged with a stronger role to protect the interests of communities vulnerable to the developments associated with commercial development. Cases of major environmental degradation as a result of mining projects have occurred, with one CSO helping local villagers to file a civil case at the Dawei District Court against a mining firm for damage caused by wastewater. The development of the Dawei SEZ is also catalysing activism from CSOs concerned with the impact of the project on the environment and livelihoods the Dawei Development Association, a coalition of CSOs, has called on the Myanmar and Thai governments to discontinue efforts on the project unless local concerns related to environmental and social protections involuntary resettlement, information disclosure and potential malfeasance are allayed. As these cases show, there is a potential for CSOs to bolster social accountability in the future, should they be imparted with the capacity and space to do so.

Conclusions

In establishing local development priorities, the extent to which communities are being consulted varies across the township in Tanintharyi. Not all are making full use of the opportunity presented by these new mechanisms for the voices of various interest groups, CSOs and citizens to be reflected. Institutional shortcomings related to information sharing, co-ordination and communication will take time to overcome, and require a focussed effort to address these, and to move beyond the mere issuance of rules and objectives to one of engagement between stakeholders.

Capacity shortfalls are another impediment for officials and committee members in particular, some of whom are not familiar with their role and mandate. This is in part attributable to the absence of clear operating guidelines for the committees, particularly for those that are consultative. Efforts to review and identify capacity needs, and for capacity development as part of a longer-term strategy to develop these new mechanisms and institutions would impart confidence to stakeholders, many of whom are grappling with concepts of participation for the first time. But, it should be noted that it is very much an issue of political space, attitudes and processes.

The absence of women as local governance actors is a key finding from the mapping. Of the three townships in the study, women make up the minority of township administrations, and there were no female representatives in the Township Committees and one female VTA was elected in the 2012 by elections in Myeik Township and one in Dawei. Promisingly, township actors in Tanintharyi have recognised this as a shortfall, and suggested the development of leadership opportunities for women at the community level, and to deepen efforts to address gender inequality as it pertains to socio-cultural attitudes of women, work and leadership. Lower participation by women (as opposed to men) at village-level meetings indicates that there is also room for the wider inclusion of women citizens in setting local priorities. Gender inequality in local governance is a priority issue in Tanintharyi, where as things stand, the needs and priorities of women are not likely to be meaningfully reflected.

In Tanintharyi, private commercial businesses play a substantial role in supporting public service delivery, particularly in the provision of drinking water. While this has helped to address shortfalls in public-sector capacity to date, this also presents a potential challenge to “good governance” in Tanintharyi, given that there are few checks and balances or systems in place to govern public-private interactions, or ways by which to hold private vendors to account. Dynamics in the drinking water sector are telling: the cost of private-sector services to consumers is high in some townships, and officials are recognising a need to address this as a longer-term development issue.

A more consultative approach to service delivery has been undertaken by service providers of late—for instance in the primary education sector—with officials gathering more input from teachers, school principals and parents to inform the planning process. At the same time, the Region Government has sought to reflect the priorities and needs of the minority Kayin population of 2013 by allowing the teaching of Karen literature and language in the classroom. Both are promising for the Region in the (new) emphasis on listening to the needs of local communities and minority groups to inform service delivery. However, such initiatives remain adhoc, and there is a need to institutionalise such “feedback loops” to improve responsiveness. The Village Health Committees and the Parent Teacher Associations may offer a channel for the basic health and primary education sectors to consult the communities in more consistent manner.

The fact that the VTAs have been appointed following an election (where only 10 household leaders could cast votes) does not amount to the democratisation of local governance although it is step in the right direction. The mapping finds that in Tanintharyi expectations among VTAs and citizens themselves of the law and order and public security functions of the VTA remains strong in Tanintharyi. Whether the representative mandate inferred on the VTA as an elected leader eventually translates demand for more responsiveness is contingent on the perceptions of the role, community expectations and level of personal initiative. In this context, the role and capacity of both the VTA, and the 10 Household Head, merit a closer look.

In this early stage of the reforms, formal consultative bodies are not yet widely known, are not broadly representative and sometimes may therefore suffer from a lack of legitimacy. In particular, questions remain as to the election processes in place, which vary significantly by location in Tanintharyi, and for particular institutions. Credibility of these institutions among citizens would be enhanced by improved accountability mechanisms, which also account for transparency and wider representation. There is a specific need to consider conflicts of interest, given the participation of the private sector in providing some public services, and the role of

consultative committees as a “sounding board” in setting development priorities and for the spending of public funds.

Grievance redressal mechanisms are not always effective, particularly in areas of Tanintharyi where there is a high volume of land disputes. Some are a direct legacy of the commercial development of mines and plantations have driven economic migration, of which the repercussions are still being felt today by Tanintharyi’s IDPs and affected communities. The capacity of civil society to support public service delivery remains underdeveloped, but some organisations are emerging as keen advocates of land rights, and of the implications of large infrastructure projects, such as the Dawei SEZ, on local communities. In this, there is potential to foster new forms of social accountability.

At this early stage of decentralisation in Myanmar, the Region is already forging its own path. Belying the composition of the Region Government and Hluttaw, Tanintharyi is already showing a predilection towards advancing its interests and identity as a Region vis-à-vis the central government. Several factors might be at play. A seemingly accommodative relationship between the Region Government and the Karen National Union (KNU) may account for ethnic dynamics being less decisive on development priorities than in other States and Regions affected by conflict. The local economy, and the centrality of the private sector, may also have some bearing. The potential importance of the high-profile Dawei SEZ in the longer-term development of the Region’s – and Myanmar’s – economic development provides a focus for legislators and Region officials in planning for Tanintharyi’s medium and long-term prospects.

A number of risks come with the opportunities that distinguish Tanintharyi from other States and Regions. The prevalence of the commercial businesses within the local economy—and also for the provision of essential services—demands closer attention to the risk of “elite capture”. To avoid this, a clear delimitation of roles and a definition of responsibilities between local administrators and civil servants on one side, and political or interest groups representatives (including those from the commercial sector) on the other side, will be required. In particular, services should be provided on the basis of equal rights and equity, rather than on the basis of political favours and personal loyalties. In a region where commercial interests contributed to large-scale economic displacement, economic growth cannot come at the expense of local communities. Fledgling civil society actors are already stepping up to play a role in advocating for them. A local economy that develops along lines that are less exploitative and elite-driven, but more inclusive, as well as socially and environmentally sustainable will also have a decisive effect on the way in which local governance can be reformed into a more people-centred and participatory form of administration.



1. Introduction

Located in the deep south of Myanmar, Tanintharyi Region is flanked by the Andaman Sea on the west, the Thai border to the east and southeast, and by Mon State to the north. This largely rural region covers an area of over 43,328 square kilometres (km²) (see Table 1) and is home to the Myeik (Mergui) Archipelago, comprising some 800 islands (see Figure 1).

Compared to Mon and Kayah States to the north of the Region, Tanintharyi has been affected relatively less by ethnic armed conflict which has remained at relatively low levels since independence from the British Empire in 1948. Non-state armed groups such as the Karen National Union (KNU) and New Mon State Party (NMSP) have both operated in the Region,³ especially in the areas east of the main highway and the remote jungles along the Myanmar-Thailand border, but the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) has retained control over most of the more populated coastal areas of the Region. The relative absence of conflict from the more populated coastal areas has allowed for the agriculture, fisheries and natural resources industries to flourish—at least more so than in neighbouring Mon, Kayah and Kayin States, whose socio-economic dynamics have been shaped by protracted instability. In Tanintharyi, the conflict further eased with the signing of a 2012 ceasefire agreement between the KNU and the government.

Given its strategic location on the Malayan peninsula and proximity to the Isthmus of Kra and South-East Asia's trading networks, Tanintharyi is anticipated to become an engine for Myanmar's industrial and infrastructure transformation. Large industrial projects, such as the high-profile Dawei deep seaport and Special Economic Zone (SEZ) development are likely to have a transformative impact on Tanintharyi's economy in the medium to long term. However, the employment and economic benefits brought by this may come at a cost to the people of Tanintharyi, if the Region's recent experience of commercial development is anything to go by. The development of mines and plantations has resulted in environmental degradation, while land grabbing and commercial investment in the 1970s and 1980s drove a large-scale displacement of people. Access to land remains a complex and pertinent issue in Tanintharyi today, as is also evident in the high number of land disputes being filed with some Township Administrations. Furthermore, the local private sector view the ASEAN 2015 free trade agreement largely as a threat rather than an opportunity with goods from Thailand already out-competing locally-made products.

This report outlines the results of the Local Governance Mapping (LGM) conducted by the UNDP in Tanintharyi Region in June 2014. Drawing on the perceptions of the people and local governance actors, the mapping has captured the current dynamics of governance at the frontline and enables an analysis of participation, responsiveness and accountability for local governance and basic service provision. This report examines processes, mechanisms and the way in which they are functioning for developmental planning and participation; people's access to basic services and institutional and social accountability in the context of three townships: Bokpyin, Myeik and Thayetchaung. While the focus of the study is on the local level of governance, the roles of the Regional and Union government authorities and their relationships with the lower levels in a broader governance context are also relevant, and to some extent, reflected upon in this analysis.

The report finds that the history of commercial investment in the Region has imparted Tanintharyi with both experience and capacity that is often lacking among other States/Regions to support public service delivery. The challenge for local governance will be to manage this process with few institutional and social accountability mechanisms available to ensure equitable and sustainable development for the people of Tanintharyi. The Region's history of conflict and displacement, although less severe than in some of the ethnic States, further complicates this task.

3. Unlike Mon, Kayah and Kayin in south-east Myanmar, the majority population in Tanintharyi are of Bamar ethnicity as opposed to an ethnic minority group. It is therefore classified as a Region. As a result of fighting in the 1990s, four refugee camps were set up on the Thai side of the border, three for Mons and one for Karens.



2. Tanintharyi Region

Table 1: Tanintharyi Region at a glance



Figure 1: Map of Tanintharyi Region



2.1 Socioeconomic background

Rich in natural resources—primarily metals and natural gas, the Region's economy is today driven by agriculture, forestry, mining (coal and tungsten, tin and iron), hydrology and fisheries and hydrology and to some minor but growing extent, tourism, in particular due to the natural beauty of the archipelago and the Maungmagan beach near Dawei. Some trade also takes place with neighbouring Thailand and along the sea routes. A gas pipeline from the Yadana and Yetagun offshore gas-fields to Thailand passes through the Region. Pearls are also harvested. The development of rubber and palm oil plantations have been a prominent employer in the Region, but have also been the cause of deforestation, displacement and land grabbing. The pending Dawei SEZ and deep-sea port has been the largest and most high profile of infrastructure projects in Myanmar, and are anticipated to transform the region's economy but comes with the risk of local opposition to the project due to concerns over the environmental protection and displacement of people. But access to electricity is perceived by the Region's administrators to be a major challenge for both industrial and socioeconomic development. Tanintharyi had an electrification rate of only 9 percent of households in 2013, versus a national average of 31 percent, according of the Ministry of Electric Power. It is likely to be even worse in rural areas: one estimate suggests that just 4 percent of rural villages in southeast Myanmar have access to the power grid.⁴ Private companies provide the majority of electricity in Tanintharyi Region, which typically costs between 400 and 600 Kyats (0.4 to 0.6 USD) per unit (compared to Ks 35 in Yangon; 0.035 USD) though prices will fall if the Region is connected to the national grid, as is planned for December 2014.

The Region's capital of Dawei is a 1-2 hour flight and at least a day's travel (685 km) by road from Yangon. The administrative centre of Bokpyin, (the most remote included in this study), is located a further day's travel by road from Dawei (445 km), and a number of village tracts are only accessible by water transport. Most towns and villages are located along the coast, and coastal transportation is an important means of communication. The great Tanintharyi River is navigable throughout the year up to Tanintharyi Town. Dawei is also connected with the Myanmar railroad network, and a new highway to Kanchanaburi Province in Thailand is under construction.

Tanintharyi's coastal position presents an opportunity for the Region to build on its historical tradition as a strategic trading hub. There is one industrial zone in the Region (Myeik), while the Maunttang Region Economic Zone is under development. Alongside its deep sea port, the development of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is underway in Dawei:⁵ following delays with the original concession, development of the SEZ is now moving ahead under a joint venture arrangement between Thailand and Myanmar but progress is slow due to limited investor interest.

4. "Poverty displacement and local governance in South-east Myanmar." The Border Consortium, November, 2013.

5. Abe, Masato. "Growing Through Manufacturing: Myanmar's Industrial Transformation." ARTNeT Working Paper Series No. 145. UNESCAP Bangkok, July 2014.



Some parts of the Region continue to feel the repercussions of protracted conflict and land grabbing: some 70,000 of people live as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and around 6,000 are living in neighbouring Thailand as refugees.⁶ Economic opportunities have also driven a significant proportion of Tanintharyi's working-age population across the border to Thailand. It is hoped that the development of the Dawei SEZ and other industrial projects will generate local jobs, but households remain dependent on remittances from migrant workers: in 2010, Tanintharyi households received two times the national average (186,000 Kyats per annum; 186 USD).⁷

2.2 Demographics

Home to around 1.4 million inhabitants (slightly more than Estonia or Bahrain), Tanintharyi Region is among the least populous Regions/States in Myanmar making up only 2.7 percent of the country's population, ranking only above Chin (0.9%), Kayah (0.6%) and Nay Pyi Taw (2.3%).⁸ With a population density of 32 persons per km², the Region is among the most sparsely populated of Myanmar's 14 States/Regions, for which the average is 76 persons per km² (see Table 1). Tanintharyi is primarily rural, with an urban population of 337,513 (24%) versus a rural population of 1,068,921 people (76%). For every 100 females there are 99 males in Tanintharyi (against a national ratio of 93) with 700,403 (49.8%) men and 706,031 (50.2%) women (see Figure 2). There are 283,066 households in Tanintharyi comprising just 2.6 percent of the country's total. These are among the largest in the country at 4.8 persons per household (the national average is 4.4). Township population size in Tanintharyi is varied: the Region's least populous township of Bokpyin comprises 46,772 people, while its most populous, Myeik, has a population of 284,037.⁹

Despite an abundance of natural resources, the most recent poverty incidence estimate for Tanintharyi (33%) is higher than the national average of 26 percent.¹⁰ The situation improved in the Region's urban

6. Tanintharyi Region Profile. UNHCR South-east Myanmar Information Management Unit, June 2014.

7. Schmitt-Degenhardt, Stephan. 'A regional perspective on poverty in Myanmar'. UNDP, August 2013.

8. Its territory is 43,328 km² (roughly the size of Denmark, and slightly bigger than the Netherlands or Switzerland in Europe).

9. Summary of the Provisional Results. Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014. August 2014.

10. Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment (IHLCA), 2010.

areas from 20.8 percent in 2005 to 16.7 percent in 2010, but poverty incidence for rural households remained static at around 37 percent in the same period. The large number of islands in Tanintharyi means that access to basic services is challenging in many of the remote areas.

The majority of the estimated population of 1.41 million¹¹ is of Bamar ethnicity. While the majority of residents in Tanintharyi are considered members of the Bamar ethnic group, some self-identify as members of sub-groups such as the Dawei/Tavoyan people. Likewise, while almost all in Tanintharyi speak Myanmar language, there are various local dialects, including some which differ quite dramatically from those elsewhere in the country. Several defined ethnic minorities are also present in Tanintharyi, including the Karen/Kayin, Mon, Shan and Rakhine.¹² Pa-O are also found and Moken/Salon people inhabit some of the islands.

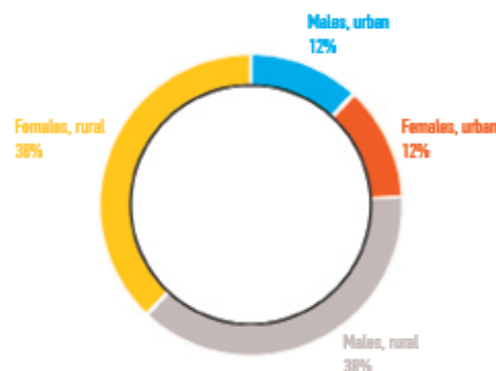
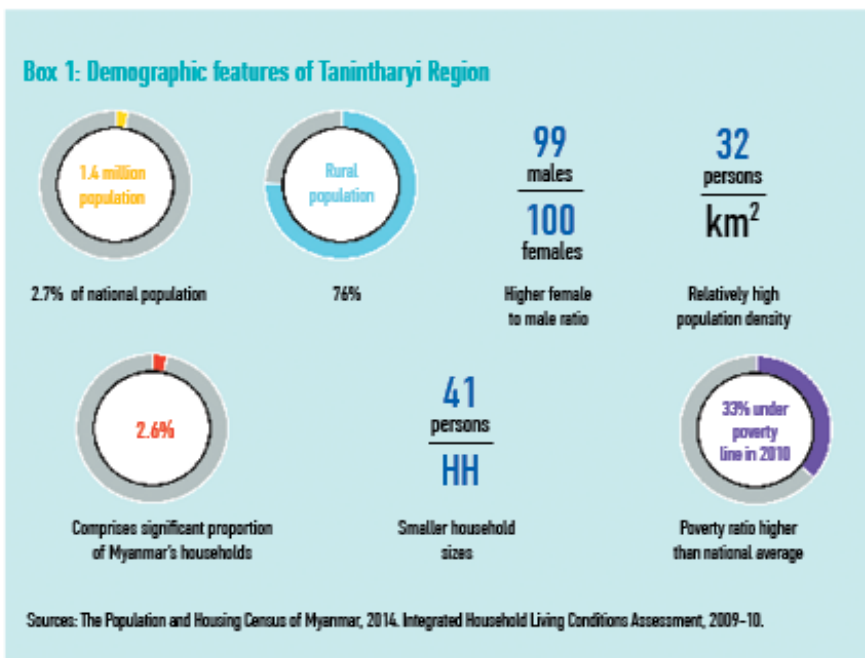


Figure 2: Tanintharyi Region, population breakdown by sex and urban-rural

Source: Summary of the Provisional Results. Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014. August 2014.

11. Summary of the Provisional Results. Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014. August 2014.
12. Source: UNHCR Tanintharyi Region Profile, Updated: June 2014

2.3 Brief historical background and Tanintharyi Region's government and institutions

At the southern-most tip of Myanmar and reaching far into the Malay peninsula, Tanintharyi has been at the frontline of an ongoing struggle for control between historical Burmese and Siamese kingdoms for centuries. A thousand years ago, Myeik was known to be the southernmost area under the influence of the Bagan Empire. When Bagan fell in the 13th Century, the area came under the control of the Siamese Sukothai Kingdom, and subsequently the Ayutthaya Kingdom. Myeik became a trading hub along the major Europe-Asia route. Right up until the 19th Century, Tenasserim, as the area was then known, was a theatre for frequent battles between various Siamese and Burmese rulers, with both seeking to control the strategically located access to the peninsula.

This changed following the first Anglo-British war (1824-36), when the Burmese ceded the Tenasserim Region, which it had just reconquered in the late 18th century, to the British, who signed a boundary demarcation treaty with Siam (now Thailand). Tenasserim thus became the first part of Burma to fall under British control, together with Arakan (now Rakhine State). Its main town was Mawlamyaing (Moulmein), at the same time the capital of British Burma until it was moved to Rangoon in 1852. The Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852 resulted in the British seizing control of the entire area of lower Burma, from which point Tenasserim Division comprised what is now Tanintharyi Region, Mon State and Kayin State, as well as Taungoo district in what is now Bago Region.¹³ The British directly administered Tenasserim Division as part of Ministerial Burma, as opposed to the Frontier Areas which retained a large degree of local autonomy (Shan, Kachin and Chin).

In 1947, with the foundation of independent Burma, the area became part of the centrally administered Division of Tenasserim, as a part of 'Burma-proper'. Following the creation of Karen State in 1954, the north-eastern districts of Tenasserim Division were separated. The colonial government had already set up basic territorial subdivisions and administrative units in the form of village tracts/wards, townships, and districts, as in the rest of the areas under its control. These were largely retained by the new independent Burma authorities. Parliamentary elections took place between 1947 and 1961, with the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) playing a dominant role both at the national level and as a mass organisation dispensing patronage and serving villagers and townspeople at the local level, thus often constituting the key link between people and the central government. The Democratization of Local Administration Act of 1953 was not fully implemented in Tenasserim Division and did not alter the fundamental set-up of local government during the 1950s.¹⁴ Following the 1962 military coup Security and Administration Committees (SACs) were set up at the local level, which were chaired by the regional military commander, and by the (military) Minister of Home Affairs at the centre.

The 1950s and 1960s were dominated by the armed conflict between the Burmese central government and military and numerous ethnic armed groups in the areas predominantly populated by non-Burmans, as well as in areas of Communist insurgency, but Tenasserim was largely spared by such tensions and conflicts. The KNU Brigade No. 4 operated throughout Tanintharyi, historically controlling border areas where they still have a presence till this date and the New Mon State Party (NMSP) continues to operate in Yebyu Township.¹⁵ However, the level of armed conflict has been relatively low since independence, with only a few armed clashes since the 1980s. The Myanmar army has been in control of most of the Region but has less of a presence in the more remote areas bordering Thailand and Mon State. Although a minority of the population is Karen/Kayin, KNU leaders saw Tanintharyi as part of a Karen free state, prior to shifting their demands towards federalism.¹⁶ A ceasefire agreement was

13. Originally, the Andaman and Nicobar islands were also part of this administrative unit. They are now part of India.

14. For more detail on these attempts, see Furnivall, *Governance of Modern Burma*.

15. Source: UNHCR Tanintharyi Region Profile, Updated: June 2014. Both groups are now actively involved in peace negotiations with the central government. The NMSP has had a ceasefire since 1995, and the KNU recently opened a liaison office in Dawei.

16. *Ibid.*

signed between the government and the KNU in 2012. In 1974, however, with implementation of a new constitution based on principles of “Burmese socialism” the Division (alongside the other six) was further divided and a separate Mon State was created. At the same time, the capital was moved from Mawlamyaing to Dawei (formerly Tavoy), when the northern part of the Division was carved out as Mon State. As one of the seven Divisions, Tenasserim was conferred equal status with the seven States, albeit in the absence of any meaningful ability to exercise self-governance. Tenasserim thus became one of the ‘constituent units’ of the ‘Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma’, made up by 14 States and Divisions. People’s Councils were introduced at all levels of government administration.

The basic units of villages/village tracts and wards, towns and townships were essentially retained as they were set up in the 1920s, only leaving aside districts which had earlier played a more central role but were abolished as a level of administration in 1972. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) was built up as a mass organisation following the same territorial structure as the state itself, while all other parties were banned. From 1974 onwards, the BSPP’s role in state administration was firmly entrenched in the Constitution itself. In the mid-1980s, the party claimed that over 2.3 million people were involved in fortnightly party cell meetings and other Party activities.¹⁷ In Tenasserim Division, this new structure was established throughout its territory.

The new structure also foresaw the holding of elections to the various administrative bodies at different levels. For these elections, however, only candidates pre-screened and approved by the BSPP were allowed. While it was not mandatory that a candidate must be a member of the BSPP, in practice most of them were. Across Tenasserim Division, such People’s Councils were thus set up at the level of Village Tract/Ward, township, and Division level. At the central level of government, the Pyithu Hluttaw served as the country’s legislature, with each of Tenasserim Division’s townships represented by at least one elected member. The participatory elements of the structure were essentially abolished with the suspension of the 1974 Constitution in 1988, when Tenasserim Division, as all other parts of the country, were again placed under direct military control and administration. In 1989, its English name was officially changed to Tanintharyi Division. The territorial organisation remained the same, the dominant role played earlier by the BSPP was essentially substituted by the military in the form of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). The 27 May 1990 elections for seats in a new national parliament resulted in the National League for Democracy (NLD) winning all of the 13 seats available in Tanintharyi. All of the elected NLD candidates were men. However, the 1990 elections were not implemented and did not lead to the formation of a national legislature, nor did they have any effect on governance arrangements in Tanintharyi Region. Many of the candidates who had won seats in Tanintharyi Region were either arrested or left the country.

In 1993, the military regime began to rebuild direct links with the population and established the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA). It gradually became the largest state-sponsored mass organisation (claiming in 2005 that it had grown to 23 million members). USDA branches were set up in every township across Tanintharyi Region, as in village tracts and wards. Membership was “essentially compulsory for civil servants and those who sought to do business with or receive services from the state.”¹⁸ Division officers of the USDA were often prominent regional businessmen as well as military personnel and civil servants. In 1997, the SLORC was reorganized into the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), which set up a pyramidal structure of similar committees down to the village tract/ward level.

In May 2008, the national referendum on the new Constitution was held. The new Constitution upgraded all Divisions to Regions, and made Tanintharyi Region a constituent unit of the new

17. Taylor, Robert H. *The State in Myanmar*, 2009.

18. *Ibid.*

Union of the Republic of Myanmar. The 2008 Constitution afforded Regions, equal to the States, with limited legislative, executive and judicial powers. Accordingly, its institutions were set up following the 2010 elections. The 2010 elections simultaneously elected representatives to the two Houses of the Union legislature and to the State legislature (Hluttaw). They resulted in a victory of the Union Solidarity Development Party (USDP), which had emerged from the USDA a few months before the elections and had inherited its assets, leadership and networks, and gained a majority of the seats in all elected bodies including in Tanintharyi Region. As there were two vacant seats in Pyithu Hluttaw constituencies in Tanintharyi Region, by-elections for two seats were held on 1 April 2012.

The 2010 elections for the members of the Tanintharyi Region Hluttaw were contested on the basis of townships, which were each divided in two separate constituencies. As the Region has 10 townships, 20 territorial constituencies were formed. In addition, one non-territorial constituency was set up for the Karen/Kayin ethnic community of the Region (see Table 2).¹⁹

Table 2:
2010 Region Hluttaw
election results for
Tanintharyi Region

Party	Constituencies contested	Votes	Percent	Seats
Union Solidarity and Development Party	21	301,498	64%	20
National Unity Party	17	160,903	34%	1
All Mon Region Democracy Party	1	7,618	2%	-
Kayin People's Party	1	763	<1%	-

Table 3:
2010 Tanintharyi
Region Hluttaw
election results
(Selected townships)

Constituency	Party	Candidate	Votes
Bokpyin-1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Tun Aye	10,150
	National Unity Party	Than Pae	4,625
Bokpyin-2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Aung Kyaw Kyaw Oo	10,820
	National Unity Party	Thain Nyan	5,765
Myeik-1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Khin aw	41,775
	National Unity Party	Kan Tun	19,283
Myeik-2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Kyaw Hsan	28,926
	National Unity Party	Maung Maung Naing	21,407
Thayetchaung-1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Ngwe Win	14,784
	National Unity Party	Ngwe Lwin	7,554
Thayetchaung-2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Soe Htway	10,907
	National Unity Party	Kyi Soe	9,107

19. The majority of residents in Tanintharyi are believed to be members of the Bamar ethnic group, although some self-identify as members of sub-groups such as the Dawei/Tavoyan people. Likewise, while almost all in Tanintharyi speak Myanmar language, there are various local dialects, including some which differ quite dramatically from those elsewhere in the country. Several defined ethnic minorities are also present in Tanintharyi, including the Karen, Mon, Shan and Rakhine. Source: UNHCR Tanintharyi Region Profile, Updated June 2014.

The Region Hluttaw is formed by (1) two representatives elected from each township in the Region (see Table 3 for the selected Townships); (2) representatives elected from each national race determined by the authorities concerned as having a population which constitutes 0.1 percent and above of the population of the Union; and (3) representatives who are the Defence Services personnel nominated by the Commander-in-Chief for an equal number of one-third of the total number of Hluttaw representatives elected under (1) and (2), i.e. one quarter of the total number of members.

In the Tanintharyi Region Hluttaw, the USDP holds 20 seats, the National Unit Party (NUP) one seat. The military occupies 7 seats. The National Unity Party, despite garnering a third of the votes cast, won only in one constituency and therefore only got one seat (see Figure 3). The USDP won four of its seats unopposed (Tanintharyi 1 and 2, and Kyunsu 1 and 2). The term of the Region or State Hluttaws is the same as the term of the Pyithu Hluttaw, i.e. five years. All Hluttaw members are men.

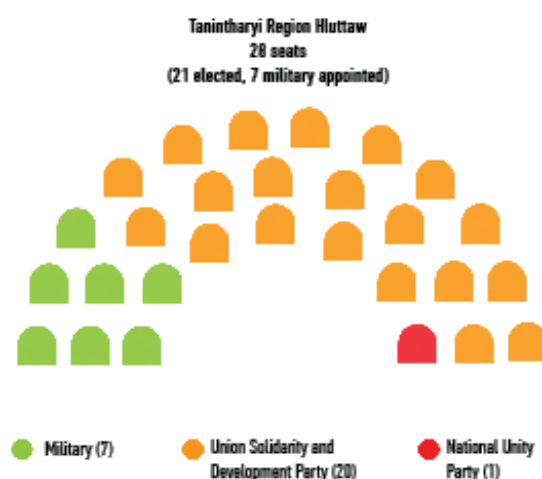


Figure 3:
Tanintharyi Region
Hluttaw composition

The institutional framework for Tanintharyi Region follows that of another States and Regions and is prescribed in detail in the 2008 Constitution. The head of executive branch of the Region is the Chief Minister of the Region. Members of the Region Government are Ministers of the Region. The Region Government was established on 31 January 2011. KhinZaw, USDP and a retired Lt. Gen. and Commander from the Bureau of Special Operations, was appointed as Chief Minister, but replaced in January 2012 by Myat Ko, USDP, who had been Region Minister of Finance and Revenue.²⁰ Htin Aung Kyaw, USDP serves as Speaker and Kyi Win, USDP, as Deputy Speaker of the Region Hluttaw. In addition to the Chief Minister, the Region Government also comprises of 11 Ministers and the Advocate General of Tanintharyi Region.²¹ The NUP, as the only other party represented in the Region Hluttaw, was not given a ministerial portfolio, in contrary to a more inclusive approach followed in other States and Regions. The Minister of Security and Border Affairs is by constitution held by a representative of the military. The representative elected for the ethnic minority constituency in the State, i.e. Karen community, is automatically member of the Region Government. All members of the Tanintharyi Region Government are men (see Table 4).

20. As reported by MDRI-CESD, this was the first removal of a high civilian official for corruption under the new government. Reportedly the Chief Minister (the former military commander of Mandalay Division) was fired after Region Hluttaw members raised concerns to the President about corruption in rice distribution contracts. In the MDRI-CESD's view this case demonstrated the potential for the new structures to provide oversight, while showing that Chief Ministers remain accountable and beholden to the President for their position. Source: Nixon, Hamish et al., State and Region Governments in Myanmar. Myanmar Development Resource Institute - Centre for Economic and Social Development (MDRI-CESD) and the Asia Foundation, September 2013

21. As of August 2014.

Table 4:
Members of
Ayeyarwady Region
Government Cabinet

Name	Function	Party
U Myat Ko	Chief Minister	USDP
Col. Zaw Lwin	Ministry of Security and Border Affairs	Military-appointed
U Than Aung	Ministry of Finance	USDP
Dr. Win Aung	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Breeding	USDP
U Tin Soe	Ministry of Forestry and Mines	USDP
U Thein Lwin	Ministry of Planning and Economics	USDP
Dr. Kyaw Hsan	Ministry of Transport	USDP
U Win Swe	Ministry of Electric Power and Industry	USDP
U Aung Kyaw Kyaw Co	Ministry of Development Affairs	USDP
Dr. Win Aung	Ministry of Social Affairs	USDP
U Saw Hla Bi	Ministry of National Races Affairs (Karen)	USDP

The legislative activity of the Tanintharyi Region Hluttaw has been comparatively dynamic, and extended to a number of areas important for the local economy that go beyond what was required as an absolute minimum. In 2012 and 2013, beyond the basic required Region laws essential for budgetary and planning purposes (Regional Development Plan and Budget Allocation Law) those pertaining to Private Rental Vehicles, Transportation, Stevedoring (loading or unloading of ships) and a Fishery Law were also adopted. As instructed by the central government, in 2013 a Municipal Law was also passed.²²

In addition to its legislative work, the Tanintharyi Region Hluttaw has served as a platform for public debate which made it stand out in comparison with other less active State or Region Hluttaws. The Region Hluttaw has often debated issues of regional importance, and questions that had been brought before the Hluttaw following local demands and initiatives. The Speaker of the Tanintharyi Hluttaw has allocated observer seats to CSOs and political parties not represented in the Hluttaw such as the NLD.

In the Tanintharyi Region Hluttaw, an obvious focus of the political debate has been the quest for more regional influence over the Dawei SEZ project. One of the areas of focus was the exploitation of land compensation arrangements for the Dawei SEZ project by brokers and middlemen, to the detriment of local communities. Another example resulted from the presence in local grounds in Tanintharyi of large offshore fishing vessels which was raised to Hluttaw members by fishermen. As Tanintharyi Region has a private local television channel, available on subscription, called 'Pho the cho' that broadcasts the Tanintharyi Hluttaw sessions, such debates and issues were able to carry wider traction in the political debate in the Region, therefore contributing to the expansion of democratic space in Tanintharyi to some extent.

The establishment of State and Region hluttaws has opened up a significant potential avenue for the expression and representation of ethnic and regional aspirations and grievances, one of the most important theoretical benefits of decentralization processes for divided societies.²³ Tanintharyi may be one of the best examples that this effect is not limited to ethnic identity related grievances and demands, but may well be a form of expressing regional identities and preferences for a degree of autonomy and self-governance that transcends ethnic divisions.

²² These laws essentially comprised of the State Development Plans and the Budget Allocation Law. The Municipal Act was passed in February 2013. Source: Nixon, Hamish et al., Myanmar's State and Region Governments, September 2013; Myanmar Development Resource Institute - Centre for Economic and Social Development (MDRI-CESD) and The Asia Foundation

²³ Ibid

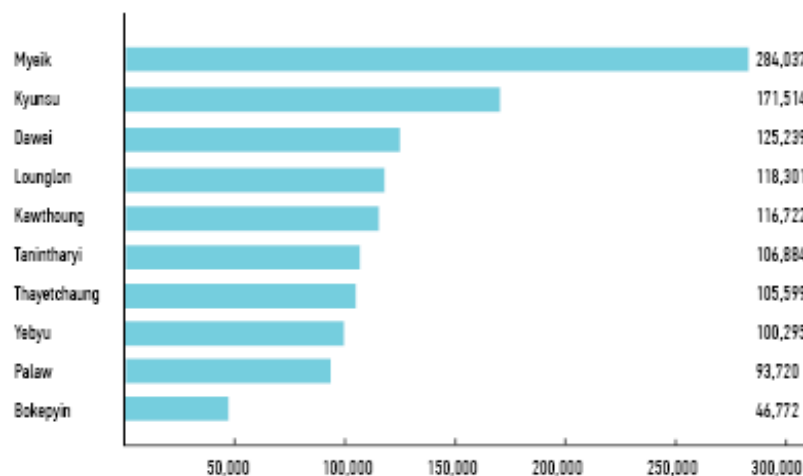


Figure 4:
Township population
size in Tanintharyi
Region

Source: Summary of the Provisional Results, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, The Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014, August 2014. Note: Excludes sub-township populations.

For the Union legislature, the Pyithu Hluttaw and the Amyotha Hluttaw, 10 and 12 representatives were elected for Tanintharyi Region respectively. As one of the smaller Regions, Tanintharyi is one of the few States/Regions that have a higher number of representatives in the Amyotha Hluttaw than in the Pyithu Hluttaw, where it is neither over- nor underrepresented, as its relatively smaller number of townships corresponds to its low population size.²⁴ Of all Regions, Tanintharyi has the smallest number of townships (10, see Figure 4).²⁵

For the seats in the Pyithu Hluttaw, each township served as a single constituency. Hence, altogether 10 members were elected from Tanintharyi Region to the larger one of the two Houses of the Union legislature. Of these, all 10 were won by the USDP in the 2010 elections (see Table 5), including one unopposed (Kyunsu). The NUP won about a third of the vote but did not get any seats. In the 1 April 2012 by-elections, the NLD was able to win two of these seats which had become vacant.²⁶ One of the seats was won by a woman. Therefore the present representatives from Tanintharyi in the Pyithu Hluttaw consist of 8 USDP members and 2 from the NLD.

Party	Constituencies contested	Votes	Percent	Seats
Union Solidarity and Development Party	10	285,429	64%	10
National Unity Party	9	134,844	30%	-
National Democratic Force	2	25,627	6%	-

Table 5:
2010 Pyithu Hluttaw
election results for
Tanintharyi Region

24 In six States and Regions, the average number of people per township is lower, while it is higher in 8 States and Regions.

25 Kayin and Kayah have 7 townships each, Chin has 9 townships, and Tanintharyi and Mon have 10 each.

26 Launglon Township was won by Aung Soe, and Kyunsu Township by Tin Tin Yi.

For the Amyotha Hluttaw, each Region and State is assigned 12 seats. These are elected on the basis of groups of townships. As there are only 10 townships in Tanintharyi Region, Dawei and Myeik townships were divided in two constituencies each, whereas the other eight townships counted as a single constituency. The USDP won all of the 12 available seats in Tanintharyi Region (see Table 6). Although the NUP received about a quarter of the votes, it did not secure a seat.

Table 6:
2010 Amyotha
Hluttaw election
results for
Tanintharyi Region

Party	Constituencies contested	Votes	Percent	Seats
Union Solidarity and Development Party	12	231,566	64%	10
National Unity Party	10	139,585	30%	-
National Democratic Force	2	14,199	6%	-
Democratic Party (Myanmar)	1	10,848	3%	-
Independent	1	943	<1%	-

This brief summary of the political and administrative institutions of Tanintharyi Region shows that the Region has followed a slightly different path of developments compared with the Regions of central Myanmar. The relatively small size of the Hluttaw, and the fact that all except one Hluttaw members are military or USDP representatives means that there is not a significant difference between the Hluttaw as the legislative and oversight body, and the Region Government as the executive branch. Given that there is no 'opposition' party, the political dynamics in Tanintharyi Region are rather characterized by executive action and one-party dominance, with the main 'opposition' to the State government coming from those groups and parties which have so far remained outside the formal state structures.

Looking at the composition of both the Region Hluttaw and the Region government, one may not expect too much regionalism or opposition to the central government emanating from the Region. However, perhaps related to Tanintharyi's relative (pen-)insularity and distance from the capital, or the fact that the local economy and internal political dynamics are quite different from other parts of the country, the Region has been able to use the existing institutional framework pro-actively to the benefit of its own interests: for example, through relatively high levels of early legislative activity in the Hluttaw to address locally-relevant interests.

The NLD did not participate in the 2010 elections and no by-elections were held for the Region Hluttaw in 2012, so it is not represented at the Region level in Tanintharyi. The Region institutions formed after the 2010 elections do not reflect the diversity of political groups operating there, with only one other party representative and the USDP/military enjoying a dominant position compared to all other States and Regions. And still, the relatively assertive approach taken by the Region Hluttaw vis-à-vis the central government and the central party leadership indicates that Region interests and a degree of political accountability to the people in the Region may have a chance of emerging.

This relative self-confidence of the Region Hluttaw and the Region Government also informs and shapes the efforts, undertaken since 2012, of reintroducing some forms of popular participation at the local level, in particular the townships and the village tracts and wards. Understandably, voices critical of the prevailing power structures have not yet fully come to the fore in the State in the past three years, at least not within the institutional framework set up by the Constitution and subsidiary legislation. The elections to the Village Tract and Ward Administrators took place outside the scope of the wider political party spectrum, and returned many individuals who had already served in the system earlier. The process was tightly controlled by the General Administration Department (GAD), and likely excluded individuals considered to have affinities with the ethnic armed insurgency.

Questions related to accountability and public participation in local decision-making processes cannot be considered entirely disconnected from the political dynamics in any given locality. While neither this summary nor the mapping undertaken by UNDP as a whole focuses on the political dimension of transition in Myanmar, or in any given State or Region, without taking into account the overall context of political reform would not do justice to a comprehensive mapping of the local governance situation on the ground. Increasingly, questions such as: the spending of public funds for development projects and the accountability of office holders for their administrative actions will gain a political dimension, as Myanmar gradually moves closer to a genuine multi-party environment.

Such questions will also play a key role in the further development of Myanmar's quasi-federal system overall, and the terms of settlement in the peace process, specifically. The support for the Region Government in this regard will depend largely on the progress made in building local governance institutions and processes that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of the local population.





3. Methodology

3.1 Objectives

The Local Governance Mapping seeks to examine local governance and governance issues related to basic local service delivery across Myanmar's States/Regions, with the view of better understanding the processes, mechanisms and dynamics of governance at the township level and below. It was designed to predominantly make use of qualitative data, related to experiences and perceptions of citizens, government staff and other stakeholders with these questions in mind:

- To what extent have reforms so far enabled local governance actors and institutions to be more responsive to the needs of people?
- What are prevailing attitudes on access to basic services in the community, and what dynamics underpin the relationship between the state and people with regards to service delivery (i.e. primary healthcare, primary education, drinking water)?
- What new spaces have been created, or are emerging, for the people of Myanmar to participate in community decision-making and have a voice?
- Despite the local governance reforms being applied on a fairly uniform basis across Myanmar's States, what differences are emerging as a result of unique local conditions?

As such, it is not an assessment but an effort to understand the state of play for local governance today, and highlight some of the best practices that are emerging across the country.

3.2 Mapping tools

In Tanintharyi Region, a number of mapping tools (see Table 7) were deployed to understand the operating environment at the Region and township level, and related to the above questions, people's and service provider's perceptions on three key aspects of local governance –

- i) Development planning and participation;
- ii) Access to basic services; and
- iii) Information, transparency and accountability;

Community survey (Citizen Report Card, CRC): The number of townships selected varied according to the size and population of each State or Region: In Tanintharyi, three townships were selected and a survey conducted in June 2014 comprising 96 residents in each township (288 people in total). The questionnaire focused on the core principles of local governance, and the satisfaction and experiences of people using basic services provided by government (such as basic healthcare and primary education).

Frontline service provider interviews: In addition to the service users, Frontline Service Providers (FSP) including school principals, teachers, healthcare facility managers, healthcare staff and the Village Tract Administrators (VTA) in these wards/villages were also interviewed, focusing on the service delivery process and their interaction with citizens using the services.

Township background studies: Additionally, to deepen the understanding of the functioning of township governance in each State/Region, a background study was also conducted in these townships. Semi-structured interviews held with key government staff and CSO representatives were focused on the manner in which governance actors in different townships had interpreted and implemented the recent reforms related to good governance at the local level.

Dialogues in the community: Similar issues were discussed collectively in a Community Dialogue (CD), which was held in each of the wards/village tracts where surveys were conducted, where different groups present in the community (including women, youth and elders) participated alongside frontline service providers and the Village Tract/Ward Administrator (VTA)²⁷—now an elected ‘representative’ of the ward/ village tract.²⁸ The objective of this exercise was to collectively identify issues of good governance emerging in relation to service delivery and local administration, and to agree on improvements that could be implemented at the community level.

Interviews, focus group discussions and validation of interim findings with Region actors: Discussions were held with government officials at the Regional level using open interviews and focus group discussions, with an objective to understand their perceptions and experiences regarding the functioning of administration at the township level, and to reflect on their own role in providing support to lower level government institutions. During a one-day workshop held at the Region level in August 2014, representatives of the various townships (both government and non-government) and Region-level officials participated in a presentation of the interim findings, to engage in a discussion of the most pressing priorities from a local governance perspective and to identify potential actions for improvement.

Box 2: Background to the Local Governance Mapping in Myanmar’s 14 States and Regions

A gradual shift in responsibilities from the Union level to the Region and State-level government is taking place, while at same time, the importance of good local governance is being acknowledged. Both the constitution as well as the Framework for Economic and Social Reforms (FESR) 2012-15 are explicit regarding a gradual transfer of political, administrative and fiscal responsibilities to the newly established State and Region governments, but do not extend to the transfer of responsibilities to local-level institutions and the establishment of a local government as a third tier of government in Myanmar. Village tracts, wards and townships are recognized as administrative structures under the jurisdiction of State and Region Governments, which in turn remain dominated by central government structures and resources. At this level, an incremental strategy has been adopted by the Government of Myanmar in the guise of legal reforms and the establishment of new mechanisms and practices to create space for people to participate in setting local development priorities, and improve the ability of government to be more responsive to the “voice” and needs of the people.²⁹

Within this context, the UNDP has been working together with the General Administration Department (GAD) within the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) to “map” the dynamics of local governance at the township level and below, with an emphasis on those aspects where government interacts with the people. The more systemic aspects of this analysis that relate equally to all States and Regions are summarised in a general synthesis report, ‘Mapping the State of Local Governance in Myanmar’, with this report focused more specifically on Tanintharyi Region as such. For a deeper analysis of the contextual background, constitutional and legal parameters and operational constraints of local governance in Myanmar, readers are advised to read this Region-specific report in conjunction with the general report.

27. Throughout the report, “VTAs” is used as a short form for Village Tract/Ward Administrators (“VT/WAs”), as the functions and mandate are essentially identical as per the 2012 Ward and Village Tract Law. Except where a difference is explicitly mentioned, VTAs should therefore be read as for both Village Tract and Ward Administrators.

28. As per the Ward or Village Tract Administration Act of 2012.

29. See the background document on Local Governance Mapping in Myanmar: Background and Methodology.

3.3 Selection of townships in Tanintharyi Region

In consultation with the Tanintharyi Region government, Bokpyin, Myeik and Thayetchaung townships were selected to participate in the local governance mapping, as they can be considered representative of the socio-economic and geographic diversity that characterizes the Region's ten townships. Within each township, one ward (urban) and one village tract (rural) were included in the exercise, drawn from a shortlist submitted by the Township Administrator. In Bokpyin, two village tracts were selected in light of the rural geography of the township (see Figure 5 and Table 8).

Mapping level	Activity	Participants	Geographical scope	Outputs
Community	Citizen Report Card (CRC), Community Survey	288 citizen respondents	6 village tracts/ wards in 3 townships	Dataset and reporting on key findings
	Frontline Service Provider interviews	4 Village Tract Administrators 2 Ward Administrators 6 primary school principals 13 primary school teachers 6 heads of healthcare facilities 6 healthcare staff	6 village tracts/ wards in 3 townships	
	Community Dialogues (CD)	179 service users 99 service providers	6 village tracts/ wards in 3 townships	Data from scoring exercise and summary for each village tract/ ward
Township	Interviews and secondary data analysis	Government staff from relevant departments.	Three townships	Background research to inform community findings
	Focus group discussions	Government staff, committee members and civil society representatives	Three townships	Qualitative data to inform integrated analysis
Region	Focus-group discussions and interviews	Government staff from relevant departments.	Dawei (State Capital)	Qualitative data to inform integrated analysis
	Workshop to share interim findings	Government staff and committee members from township level, State level government and civil society representatives	Three townships and Region	Validation of interim findings, suggestions and ideas from local governance actors

Table 7: Local Governance Mapping participants, coverage and outputs for Tanintharyi Region

Notably, the choice of locations selected for interviews did not include areas that have been under the control of non-state armed groups for extended periods in the past, which are located in the eastern and more inaccessible parts of Tanintharyi Region.

Township	Township characteristics	Village tracts/ wards selected
Bokpyin	Remote, rural	Sa Tein Village Tract
		Ma They Village Tract (Karathuri Sub-township)
Myeik	Accessible, urban	Tone Byaw Village Tract
		Ah Leikyun Ward
Thayetchaung	Accessible, rural	Thea Chaung Gyi Village Tract
		Sin Hpyu Pyin Ward

Table 8: Selected townships and village tracts and wards, Local Governance Mapping in Tanintharyi Region

Figure 5: Tanintharyi Region townships and wards/village tracts included in the field study



Through the selection of a small representative sample of locations from within the Region this study derives a number of general observations that are valid for local governance in the Region as a whole. One of the purposes of publishing this report is to verify these assumptions and contribute to a Region-wide debate and further analysis around local governance participation and voice based on the evidence collated. The intended approach is to present and discuss the findings in the Region itself, and further deepen and expand the understanding of the state of local governance in Tanintharyi. This should also allow comparison with a baseline, across the country and over time, as and when future local governance reforms will be implemented.

It is important to mention that this report does not cover governance structures in the more remote areas where EAGs has a stronger presence – and an administrative system with different township boundaries as well as their own village and township administrations (although skeletal in most of Tanintharyi). In many areas of Tanintharyi these are quite rudimentary but they do exist. The fact that the KNU is now using their own land designation and registration system for registering land in the area is just one example.



4. Governance at the frontline: Participation in planning, responsiveness for local service provision and accountability in Tanintharyi townships

While the structures for sub-national governance and local public service delivery are similar to those that exist in other Regions, and the same nationally-mandated reforms are being applied in Tanintharyi, reform is placed in a socioeconomic context that is markedly distinct. Both domestic and international investors have operated in the Region for some time, and the relative isolation from the rest of the country and a history of low-level ethnic conflict have affected the context for local governance. In this elongated, sparsely populated Region, low electrification rates and poor intra-region accessibility also have bearing for local development priorities. As noted by one Region Government official: "There is little difference in terms of governance structures across townships, but there are major variations in transportation infrastructure."

4.1. Introduction to the selected townships

The three townships selected for the study reflect the diversity of Tanintharyi's ten townships in terms of size and accessibility. Located at the southern-most tip of Myanmar, Bokpyin has a population of just over 45,000, and shares a land border with Thailand. Much of its population is dispersed throughout islands in the scenic and largely unspoiled Myeik archipelago. At the other end of the spectrum, Myeik is the commercial hub of the Region with an active trading port and a large population of over 280,000. Thayetchaung is in the north of the Region, with easy access to the administrative capital of Dawei, and a population of over 100,000 people (see Table 9).

Table 8: Selected townships and village tracts and wards, Local Governance Mapping in Tanintharyi Region

Source: Township General Administration Department, Socioeconomic profiles 2014.

Township	Geographic	Access	District	Population size	Municipal wards	Village tracts	Villages
Bokpyin	Southern, eastern border with Thailand	Highway connection to Myeik, (225km) and Kawthaung airport (135km)	Kawthaung	46,772 *	9	21	102
Myeik	Central, west coast	Highway and air connection from Yangon and Dawei (240km)	Myeik	284,037	12	22	140
Thayetchaung	Northern, west coast	Highway connection from Dawei (28km)	Dawei	105,599	5	39	91

* The Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014. Provisional results, August 2014. Bokpyin population excludes the sub-townships of Khamaukgyi, Pyigyimandasing and Karathuri.

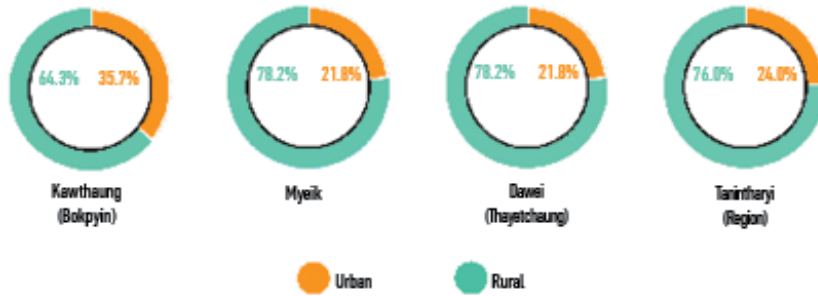


Figure 6: District-level population breakdown, urban-rural *

Source: The Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014. Provisional results, August 2014.

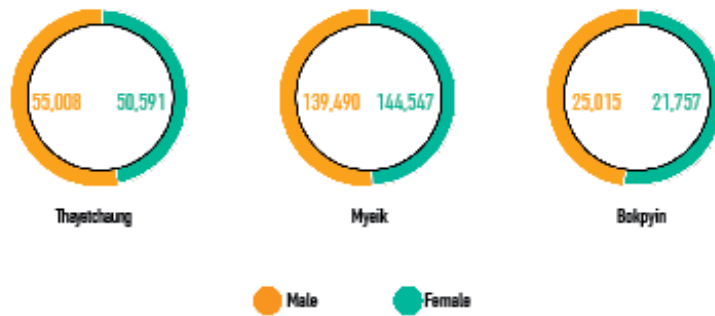


Figure 7: Township population breakdown, by sex

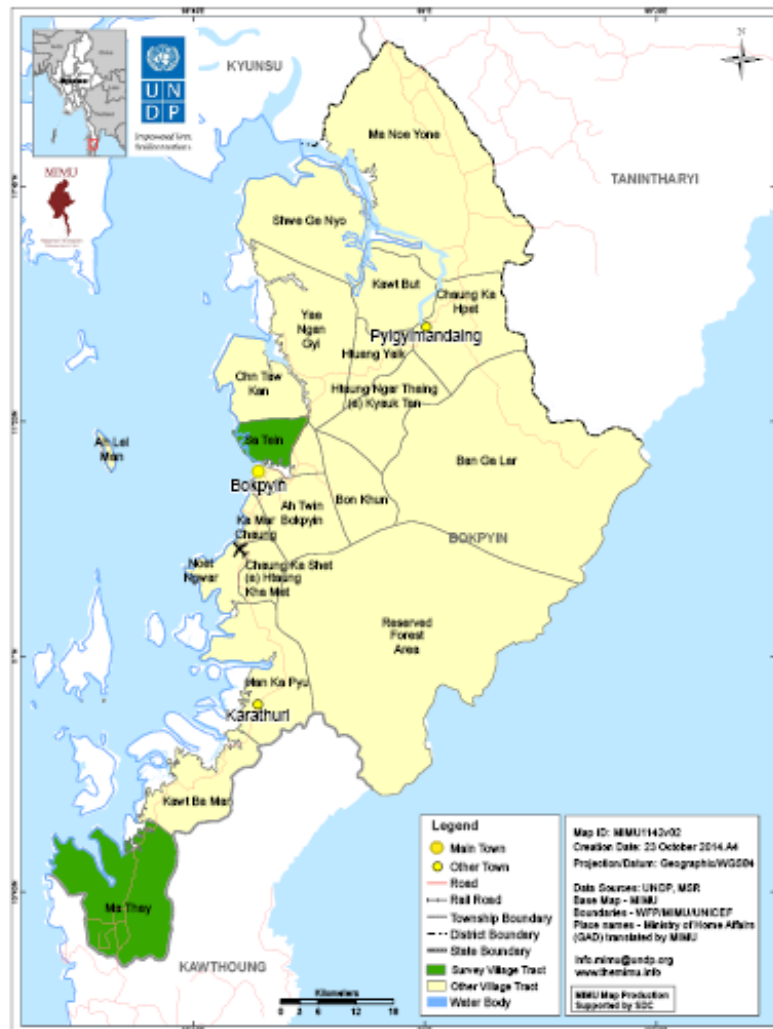
Source: The Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014. Provisional results, August 2014. Bokpyin population excludes the sub-township of Khamaukgyi, Pyigyimandaing and Karathuri.

*The urban population is defined as those people living in "wards" that are provisioned by municipal services. The rural population lives in "village tracts".

Bokpyin: Remote, rural

Acknowledged by Regional government representatives as the poorest and most remote of the Region's townships, Bokpyin (see Figure 8) is home to a relatively small population of just 46,772 people (for a urban/rural breakdown see Figure 6). Agriculture and lead mining drive the economy. Communications in Bokpyin Township are largely underdeveloped: although cellular coverage has improved in recent years, internet access is not widely available. Bokpyin has its own airport and is connected by road to the cities of Myeik and Kawthaung, though the quality of the network hampers accessibility. Previously at times under the purview of the KNU, the township has reverted to government control. But according to township officials, many IDPs have yet to return despite improvements in the security situation. The migrant population presents a particular challenge for health authorities. With a continuous movement of plantation workers across the Thai border; the *defacto* population of Bokpyin fluctuates wildly: local health officials suggest that it may multiply by three times at peak season. Bokpyin Township has 31 sector departments. The sex ratio is highly favourable to men, with 115 males for every 100 females (see Figure 7).

Figure 8: Map of Bokpyin Township, Village Tracts



Myeik: Accessible, urban

From the 16th century on (when it was under Siamese rule), Myeik (then known as Mergui) has been important international sea and trading port (see Figure 9). With a large population of 284,037 (most of whom live in the municipal area) (see Figure 6), and much of the labour force engaged in fisheries. It serves as the administrative hub for the district, with 63 departments represented at that level. With a long seafaring tradition, the township is now beginning to attract attention from investors for development of the industrial and tourism sectors, such as a proposal recently submitted to the Region government for a Myeik Economic Zone.³⁰ There are 39 departments in the township administration. The sex ratio is favourable to women, with 96.5 males for every 100 females (see Figure 7).



Figure 9: Map of Myeik Township, Village Tracts

³⁰ Submitted to the Ministry of Electric Power and Industry in July 2014. Consult Myanmar, accessed 26 August 2014.

Thayetchaung: Accessible, rural

Thayetchaung is a large township (see Figure 10) with a population of 105,599, of whom the vast majority live and work in rural areas (see Figure 6). The Township Administrator estimates that approximately 20 percent of the workers are employed in rubber plantations. Rich in coal and lead resources, there is exploration activity by both Myanmar and international companies in the township. Previously, some of the township was occupied by the KNU, though the security situation has stabilised since the 2012 ceasefire. There are 31 departments in the township administration, structured into three main branches with five sub-branches of departments for purposes of reporting to the township administrator. Of the three townships in this study, the sex ratio is most favourable to women, with 92 males for every 100 females (see Figure 7).

Figure 10: Map of Thayetchaung Township, village tracts/wards



4.2 Current development challenges as identified by local residents

Geography presents a major challenge for local governance and the delivery of public services in Tanintharyi Region. Accessibility is a critical development priority—particularly for the Region’s islands, which can be cut off during the rainy season from July to October. A perceived shortfall of promised funding from development agencies³¹ for transportation infrastructure has made it more difficult to plan and budget for, according to Regional officials.

In the community-level survey, people were asked to reflect upon the biggest developmental challenges in their respective townships. Food security is a concern at least sometimes for about one-third of the 288 respondents, of which 65 percent always had enough food in the last year. 42 percent of people sometimes, often or always felt that they could not buy enough food for their household in the fast-growing commercial township of Myeik. Overall, urban respondents were most concerned with access to clean water (33%), while rural people cited healthcare (23%) as the most important problem in their village tract/ward at that point in time. Across townships, access to water was the top development concern for Myeik (20%) while some 38 percent of respondents in rural Bokpyin cited healthcare. In Thayetchaung—which sits close to the Dawei deep-sea port development—people thought that the most important issue was a lack of jobs and the economic situation (31%). Dialogues held at the community level confirmed the extent to which these priorities were contingent on local conditions and needs. However, a few issues were common during these discussions, namely: a need for improvements in basic healthcare (cited in discussions at four of the six village tracts/wards) and availability and affordability of clean water and electricity (noted in three community dialogues).

Geography presents a major challenge for local governance and the delivery of public services in Tanintharyi Region. Accessibility is a critical development priority particularly for the Region’s islands.

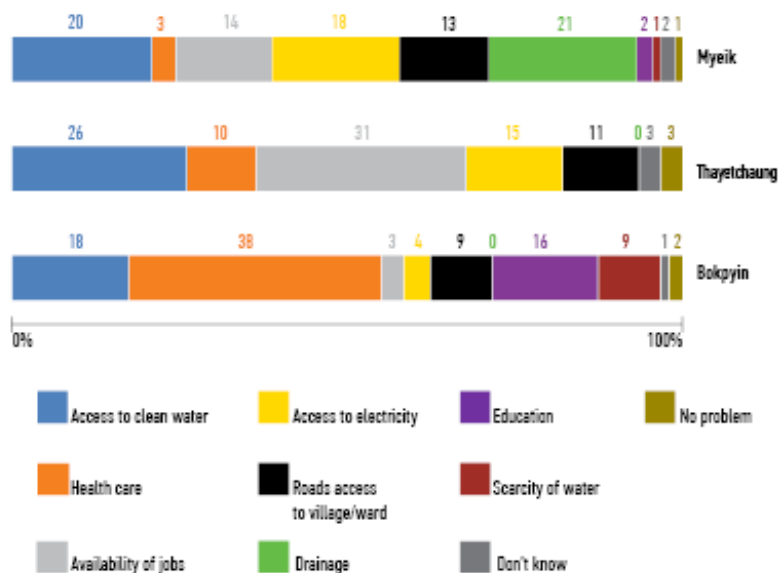


Figure 11 Identifying “the most important problems in the village tract/ward”

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.

n = 288, 96 respondents per township.

³¹ Specific references were made by a region government official to discussions with a bilateral development agency for funding of transport infrastructure.

Box 3: After the ceasefire perceptions of local safety

Brigade 4 of the KNU has been the most prominent non-state actor in Tanintharyi in post-colonial times. The importance of areas under Brigade 4's control pertaining to the Dawei deep-sea port development were critical drivers to the negotiations for a ceasefire agreement, which was signed by the government and KNU in Hpa-an, Kayin State, in January 2012.³²

Research by The Border Consortium, a Thailand-based Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), indicates that human rights abuses such as forced labour and forced portering have significantly decreased in the Region. Community dialogues held as part of the mapping in June 2014 corroborated this. Of the townships surveyed, some village tracts/wards in Bokpyin and Thayetchaung had been under KNU control, and have since reverted to the civilian government. In Ma Thay Village Tract in Bokpyin, participants noted that they were no longer obliged to work as porters in the army, and that naval skirmishes between the KNU and the army had ceased. Yet, while people have generally welcomed the ceasefire and reforms, observers have noted that mistrust of both government and non-state armed groups remain at the community level.³³

In a context of improved stability, do people feel safe in their own communities? When asked if they felt safe in their village tracts/wards at the moment, 97 percent of respondents responded that they felt safe, attributing this to less crime in the community (38%), improved law enforcement (35%) and peace in their areas (29%). Comparing the situation to that of three years ago, safety has improved for 57 percent of rural people as opposed to 28 percent of urban dwellers. When discussing measures to maintain peace and security, residents of Sin Hpyu Pyin Ward in Thayetchaung Township raised a concern that increasing the numbers of government law enforcement officers might induce the KNU to ratchet up its own numbers of armed fighters. As per the terms of the ceasefire agreement they continue to hold weapons for self-protection.



³² Tanintharyi Region Profile. UNHCR South-east Myanmar Information Management Unit, June 2014.

³³ Changing Realities, Poverty and Displacement in South East Burma/Myanmar. The Border Consortium, October 2012.



People's expectations for the future were consistent with the top developmental challenges as perceived today: of 288 respondents, 47 percent sought improvements in road infrastructure while 47 percent also hoped to see improvements in the electricity supply. Improved water supply (41%) and health facilities (37%) were also awaited. At the village tract/ward level, priorities for community development were very much localised, though both Tone Byaw Village Tract and Ah Lel Kyun Wards in Myeik also sought more affordable and accessible electricity.

In a number of key policy speeches made by President Thein Sein since his assumption of office in 2011, he has laid out detailed goals, principles, and priorities of his administration in a variety of sectors. These include decentralisation and 'bottom-up' planning. The new approach to governance and development, as declared by the President and reiterated by the entire senior level of government, including at Regional and State level, is to transform the incumbent system, to promote a people-centred, "bottom-up approach" to development and decision-making through new processes and mechanisms in the strategic planning process. Respondents in Tanintharyi Region are keenly aware of the development challenges faced by their townships, and had a clear idea of the needs they wanted to be met in the coming years. But to what extent do the processes and institutions in place allow for their suggestions and ideas to be factored into the development planning for their local area?

Forty-seven percent sought improvements in road infrastructure while 47 percent also hoped to see improvements in the electricity supply. Improved water supply (41%) and health facilities (37%) were also awaited.

4.3 Development planning and participation

4.3.1 Township development planning

At the sub-national level in Myanmar, there are now opportunities for local actors to participate in the planning process and in decision-making for public-sector investments. New practices for “participatory planning,” such as the consultation of local communities and interest groups for their suggestions and priorities have been encouraged. This is supposed to be happening at the township level through institutions such as the Township Planning and Implementation Committee (TPIC), under the MoNPED, which should function as a technical line ministry committee for collection of information and data to inform the strategic planning at union level. With the (limited and gradual) decentralisation of funds for discretionary spending at the sub-national level, new mechanisms and practices have also been established with the purpose of better reflecting the needs of communities for township development. Two such mechanisms include the Township Management Committee (TMC), an executive body of township head of departments with a responsibility to collate project priorities; and the Township Development Support Committee (TDSC), a consultative committee with members “popularly elected” from sector interest groups to act as a “sounding board” for the TMC on development priorities.

Strategic planning activities

Similar to other States/Regions across the country, “planning” activities at the township level in Tanintharyi continue to be very limited in scope and reduced to information gathering for decision-making at the Union level, and increasingly at the Regional level (see Figure 12). National short-term (five year) and long-term (10-20 year) strategic planning is facilitated by the Department of Planning, whose local officers are tasked to gather information and provide input to prepare priorities for development activities, under the MoNPED. Such information is then elevated to higher levels to inform development planning and annual budget allocations at the Region and Union level, where the majority of decision-making and planning for the township continues to take place *per se*.

Township Planning and Implementation Committee (TPIC) functioning varies across selected townships and does not even exist in Bokpyin where there has only been one staff member running the Department of Planning.

The Township Planning and Implementation Committee (TPIC) was conceived by the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development (MoNPED) as a channel for improving “bottom-up planning” in the development of national plans and budget allocation.³⁴ Its formal role is to collate, review and discuss proposed development plans and activities from village and village tract/ward level for the purposes of strategic budgeting and planning. Aside from compiling and elevating data to inform the overall strategic plan, it also has a role to play in monitoring the implementation of various development projects. Unlike other key township committees, for which there are more specific rules, the composition of TPIC is very flexible across the three townships in Tanintharyi, and contingent on the needs of each particular one, though key departments important to economic activity such as agriculture, the Settlements and Land Records Department (SLRD), the GAD, livestock, breeding, electric power and the municipal affairs are typically represented. In Thaye tchaung, members are drawn from each of the 31 departments, meeting once a month to discuss prioritisation of projects and land management issues. In Myeik, the TPIC convenes once a month with representatives from 37 departments and ten members of the public, which have been nominated by the GAD to serve as a “sounding board.” The TPIC does not exist in the small township of Bokpyin, where there has only been one member of staff running the Department of Planning for the past five years.

34. Van Landt, Gerhard and Steffensen, Jesper. Local Development Background Study: Inventory of Planning and Financing Practices at the Sub-national Level in Myanmar. Draft Report. UNCDF/ UNDP, June 2012 (unpublished).

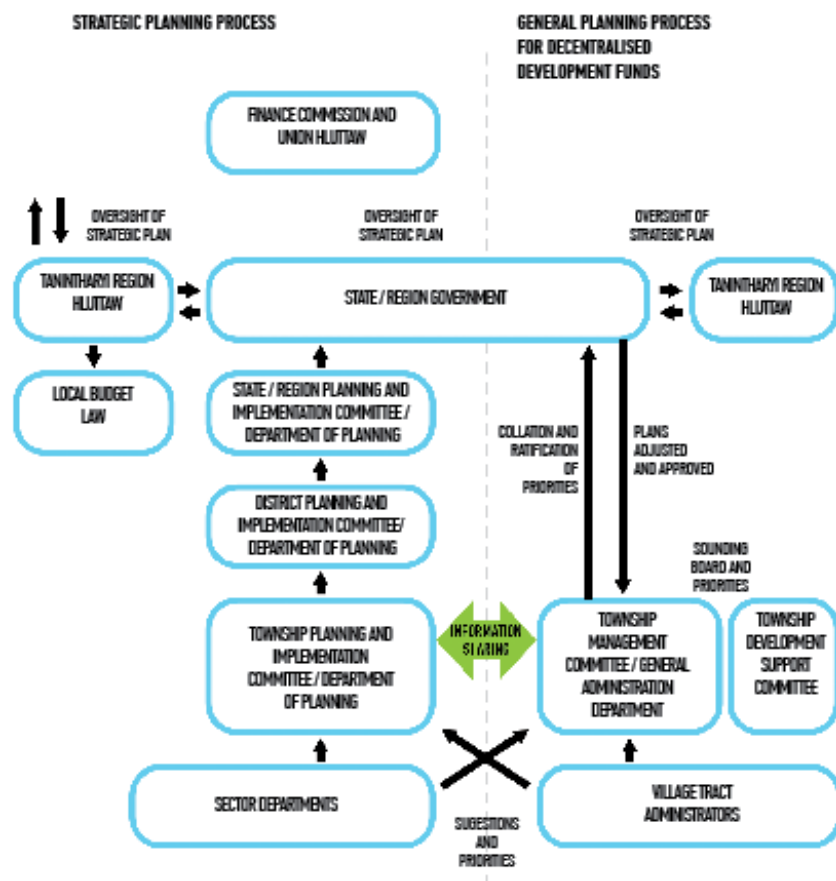


Figure 12 Township developmental planning processes, Tanintharyi Region

Source: Adapted from GAD, 2013.

Setting priorities for development funds

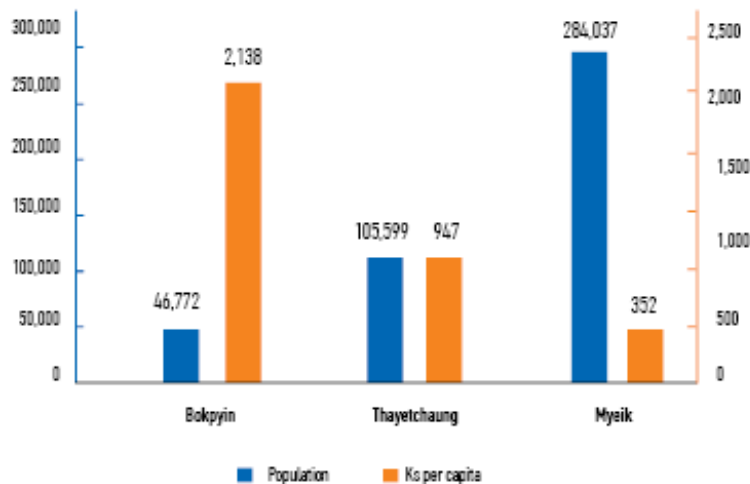
As is the case with all States / Regions in Myanmar, planning, budgeting and decision-making in Tanintharyi Region has historically taken place at higher levels within the vertical structures of sector ministries, while the lower levels of administration have been focused more on the actual implementation of services and functions. This continues to be the case for the departments that are responsible for the bulk of non-military government expenditures, including the education and health ministries. The landscape is now gradually changing as fiscal resources are beginning to stream down from the Union to the Region level through other streams of funding. Grants and loans are being made available to support specific departments³⁵ under the purview of the Region government with their incomes sometimes supplemented by taxes and other revenues collected locally. Separately funds have been made available for spending on local infrastructure development in townships, with the Region Government, parliamentarians and township actors now able to directly influence decisions on disbursements.

35. These State/Region budgets are intended to finance the following departments: Law, Livestock and Fisheries, Immigration, Revenue, Forestry, Electricity Distribution, Information, Communications and Postal Services, Cooperative Affairs, Firefighting, Municipal Affairs and the Planning Department.

Since 2012-13, States /Regions have been receiving funds from the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF), a presidential initiative that was budgeted and executed under the GAD in the early days of its inception.³⁶ There is some variation across States/Regions and townships in the country as to the availability of funds for township development outside of sector-specific budgets. Each State/Region was initially allocated 1 million USD but from the fiscal year 2014-15, the amount varies significantly across States and Regions. The allocation for Tanintharyi remained at 1 billion Kyats (1 million USD) and was distributed through equal shares among townships with each of Tanintharyi's townships therefore receiving approximately 100 million Kyats (100,000 USD). With just ten townships in Tanintharyi, funds allocated to townships through the PRF are substantive on a per township basis. The investment impact of the PRF is more diluted for large townships such as Myeik (with a per capita rate of 352 Kyats; 0.352 USD), and more significant in less-populated Bokpyin (where the per capita rate was 2,138 Kyats; 2.138 USD) (see Figure 13). For the three townships in this study together, this has meant that per capita spending was relatively high, and that there are significant discrepancies across townships in the Region, that are apparently not based on any justifiable and equity-based criteria.

Figure 13:
Approximate per
capita allocation of the
Poverty Reduction Fund
in Tanintharyi
townships, 2013-14

Source: Tanintharyi Region
Government.



In 2013-14, a Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was established by the Union parliament whereby each township was allocated an additional 100 million Kyats (100,000 USD) for development projects (each with a maximum cap of 5 million Kyats; 5,000 USD), selected in consultation with Members of Parliament.³⁷ In Myeik, this pool was divided into 20 separate projects for water supply, education, transportation and healthcare. In some Tanintharyi townships—particularly those with smaller populations—the CDF is a substantial injection of capital, matching PRF funding in the case of Bokpyin. The establishment of these funds, which have had a history of being captured by political interests in other countries, has been controversial in Myanmar. Focussed on rural development projects and implemented in consultation with the township's four elected Hluttaw Members (one each for the two Houses of the Union legislature, and two per township in the Region Hluttaw), critics have noted that these funds sit outside of township planning envelope held by township management, and that that parliamentarians could be prone approve projects based on votes, rather than local development priorities.

36. This grant of Ks 1 billion per State/Region was the first non-ex-marketed transfer from the Union to State/Region government that was discretionary. In 2013-14, the State/Region had direct drawing rights to the PRF, which sat in the State/Region administration budget, though the GAD retained secretarial responsibility for its execution. In 2014-15, the rules for "equal share" allocation have changed, and each State/Region will have the autonomy to decide on the distribution of the PRF among townships.

37. See Vote-buying fears over MP funds plan, Myanmar Times, 15 December 2013.

However, according to Tanintharyi Region officials, the CDF is well-administered with a number of checks and balances to ensure that spending is co-ordinated. “MPs, ministries and the TDSC are all involved in this process. Sometimes, CDF proposals are even reviewed at the Region Hluttaw,” conveys one senior official from the GAD. This process of consultation with both executive and legislative actors indicates that there is some degree of co-ordination and oversight in the disbursement of CDF funds, even if informally administered. “MPs and government officials generally have a complementary relationship in this sense.” In the case of Tanintharyi, this may of course be facilitated by the fact that both the Region Government and most of the elected seats in various Hluttaws are in control by the same political party, the USDP.

The Constituency Development Fund is administered with a number of checks and balances to ensure that spending is coordinated. “MPs, ministries and the TDSC are all involved in this process. Sometimes, CDF proposals are even reviewed at the Region Hluttaw”.

In addition to the PRF and the CDF, a number of other such discretionary funds exist, where needs-based proposals are prepared at the township level for submission to and approval by the Region government. For instance, local development projects in Thayetchaung Township in 2012-13 were financed by a variety of sources: CDF funds totalling 100 million Kyats (100,000 USD) were disbursed for 48 projects, while the PRF contributed to 99.2 million Kyats (99,200 USD) for 36 projects. In addition, officials referred to development funding from the newly-established Department of Rural Development, and from the Ministry of Border Affairs, but no specific details were made available.

Formally, discussions on the disbursement of decentralised funds should be led and executed by the Township Management Committee (TMC), a meeting of township managers which was established to co-ordinate stakeholders and make decisions on township development needs. Chaired by the Township Administrator and with members drawn from a set composition of key departments, the TMC is obliged to seek advice from the consultative support committees in the township (namely the Township Development Support Committee (TDSC) and the Township Development Affairs Committee (TDAC) at least once a month, incorporating their perspectives when setting the township’s socio-economic investment priorities. The formation of these committees was mandated country-wide by the Presidential Notification 27/2013.

In practice, the TMC in Tanintharyi townships have taken to the role of “township management” in priority setting for local development funds—though the extent to which it is seeking advice from the consultative committees (TDSC and TDAC) varies. In Bokpyin, the TMC meets regularly, though without the knowledge of the consultative committees. In Myeik, the TMC consists of five members and does not hold regular or exclusive meetings, but its agenda and the participation of the advisory committees is subsumed into the weekly interdepartmental meeting convened by the district GAD. In Thayetchaung, the TMC meets regularly, along with the consultative committees, to discuss matters related to development funds.

In practice, the TMC in Tanintharyi townships have taken to the role of “township management” in priority setting for local development funds though the extent to which it is seeking advice from the consultative committees (TDSC and TDAC) varies.

As chair of the TMC, the Township Administrator plays a key co-ordination role, which is reflective of an overall shift in his responsibilities. As the “backbone” of government administration in Myanmar, the township GAD administers all government activities at every level of government down to the level of the village tract/ward.³⁸ More recently, township co-ordination and developmental responsibilities have become more pronounced, given the central role of the GAD in co-ordinating priorities for township development funding. One challenge is related to the sharing of information and co-ordinating activities across township sector departments, who are a source of valuable information on community priorities and at the same time, responsible for executing and monitoring development projects at the direction of their line ministries.

38. A Village Clerk who receives a salary from the GAD provides administrative support to the elected Village Tract Administrator.

“Previously the Township Administrator made autonomous decisions, however, now he has to coordinate with various committees and reach a consensus before township development decisions are finalised.”

This appears to be happening in practice in Tanintharyi: “Each department is busy with (its own) duties, so the GAD facilitates most of the co-ordination (between departments),” says one Myeik official. This “coordinative” aspect of the Township Administrator’s responsibilities is apparently changing the dynamics of decision-making in Tanintharyi Region, as noted by one official from a township. “Previously the Township Administrator made autonomous decisions, however, now he has to coordinate with various committees and reach a consensus before township development decisions are finalised.” Weekly meetings are the primary mechanism for the GAD to share and collect information with other sector departments. Notably the weekly inter-departmental meeting for Myeik is convened and managed by the district-level GAD, to which the district representatives and the VTAs are also invited on average, around 100 people would attend each of these meetings. Despite these emerging mechanisms for consultation and co-ordination, the extent to which women are participating and able to influence development planning appears to be limited. Women make up the minority of township managers, some of whom would attend informational meetings and participate in the various development committees. In both Bokpyin and Thayetchaung, just 6 of the 31 heads of department (19%) are women.³⁹

Small but distinct opportunities are now emerging for discretionary funding even at the township level one example being discretionary use of a commission or rebate on motor vehicle licenses collected by the GAD, which is likely to be substantial in a large and busy township such as Myeik.⁴⁰ Notably, the World Bank is also piloting a National Community Driven Development (NCDD) Project in Kyunsu Township, where decision-making spending for small infrastructure projects takes place right down at the village tract level via the involvement of the Village Tract Development Support Committee (VTWSC).⁴¹

Processes for participatory planning

The consultative committees such as the TDSC also play a “representative” function: members have been (or should have been) elected to represent the interests of their sector (i.e. business, social, economic), and their ability to be effective is contingent on wider consultation with their constituents, and communicate those with township management. Yet, emerging from discussions with committee members and government staff alike is a lack of clarity on the *de jure* functions of the TDSC, whose formal role is limited to an advisory one, intended to support the TMC.⁴² “The TDSC has a role to play in supporting township development,” said one Myeik township official. “But the elected members do not have much time to attend (meetings), and they don’t know how to participate.”

The committee members too, were also “worried” that they did not have the capacity or time to fulfil their function. Some members interpreted their function to extend to executive duties, beyond their advisory remit, speaking of lacking a budget to be implement projects independently. Others were not fully acquainted with their function as being a consultative group and a sounding board for the township administration: “We don’t really have roles and responsibilities, but we operate under the supervision of the Township Administrator, said one member.” This pertains to the absence of clear operating guidelines for the committees, particularly for the TDSC. While there are responsibilities and assigned tasks, no detailed procedures or terms of reference exist.

39. As of June 2014.

40. Nixon, Hannah and Joeline. *Cindy Fiscal Decentralization in Myanmar: Towards a Roadmap for Reform*. Myanmar Development Resource Institute - Centre for Economic and Social Development (MDRI-CESD) and the Asia Foundation, July 2014.

41. Myanmar National Community Driven Development Project: Government selects first three townships following consultations. World Bank, May 2013.

42. Notification No 27/2013. Assignment of duties for formation of township and ward/ village tract development support committee. The President’s Office, 26 February 2013.

4.3.2 Urban development planning

Also referenced as city or township development committees, the Development Affairs Organisation (DAO) in every township falls directly under the responsibility of the Region Minister for Development Affairs, and is responsible for delivering a range of urban services (including water and sanitation). Urban residents interact directly with the DAOs, who are in charge of municipal service delivery. It is a decentralised, revenue-generating department, which receives funds from the Region government budget and is accountable to the Chief Minister of the Region Government. There is no corresponding Union-level entity.⁴³

The Township Development Affairs Committee (TDAC) was established under the same Presidential Notification as the TDSC to provide advisory support to the DAO, and also comprises “persons popularly elected from among local people and social and economic organisations.” In practice, however, the TDAC is a hybrid committee that plays both a technical, consultative and executive role in municipal service delivery. The operations of the TDAC are framed by the Municipal Law for which each State or Region was constitutionally mandated to adapt for its own circumstances. The TDAC was established in each of the three Tanintharyi townships in 2013, and comprises of 4-5 elected members representing different groups from the community alongside key government officials. Yet, it was felt by some elected members of the TDAC that their roles are far from clear. One Bokpyin member commented that “[...] we are not sure about what the DAO should be doing and what we should be doing in terms of project implementation.” In the populous township of Myeik, the TDAC takes on a distinctly “executive” character, with members conducting quarterly check for municipal projects, and co-ordinating the clearing up of debris from a storm, for instance.

Myeik municipal officials highlighted examples of the TDAC facilitating collaboration with urban residents in the development of the municipal road networks in the township. They provide technical support and materials for projects where they can, working through the TDAC to co-ordinate with various Road Construction Committees at the ward level. Typically, residents agree to provide labour to upgrade lower priority roads, while the DAO may provide technical assistance and some materials.

4.3.3 People's participation in planning

Measures to include the ideas and suggestions of communities have been integrated into the strategic planning process and via the allocation of decentralised funds, as outlined above. Most apparently, this is reflected in the participation of elders, who have been elected or nominated, and representatives of social and economic sector groups in the new consultative committees—despite concerns as to the extent to which these can be broadly representative of their constituents’ interests. TDSC members in Thayetchaung perceived a clear duty to gather information from citizens about their needs and requirements and present this information to the Township Administration (who they met on a monthly basis) to inform development priorities.

The procedures according to which such members have been selected differs significantly from one township to another across the country, and even with States and Regions there were significant differences in the approach chosen. Clarity on the role of the TDSC as a consultative body and a

Some members of the TDAC note that their roles are far from clear. One Bokpyin member commented that “[...] we are not sure about what the DAO should be doing and what we should be doing in terms of project implementation.” In the populous township of Myeik, the TDAC takes on a distinctly “executive” character, with members conducting quarterly check for municipal projects, and coordinating the clearing up of debris from a storm, for instance.

43. Bisasinger, Jared and MaungMaung, Linn. Subnational Government and Business in Myanmar. Subnational governance in Myanmar Discussion Papers. Centre for Economic and Social Development (MDRI-CESD), December 2013.



credible election process is critical to the committee's legitimacy and proper functioning. In Thayetchaung Township, members could be said to have been "popularly elected" in a process where the village tracts/wards elected ten short-listed representatives through a public vote, from which the Township Administrator and VTAs selected members. The process was less consultative in Myeik, where the committee was appointed the Township Administrator, with advice from township management. In addition, the needs and perspectives of women are not evidently reflected through this process and there is no example across the three townships of women having been elected to any of the township committees.

In their function to garner information and feedback from the sectors that they represent, one common perception among committee members is that they were not imparted with the time or capacity to carry out their roles. On development issues, it was observed by one Myeik township official there that the representative members of the consultative committees are "busy and don't have a lot of time to make decisions." Other tools being utilised for "bottom-up" planning are proposals outlining development priorities from the village tract/ward level and attendance at regular meetings attended by the VTA.

As observed by Tanintharyi township-level actors: "Despite that fact that half of the community population comprises women, they are underrepresented at local meetings. More women should be invited by the local authorities."

In considering opportunities to interact with local leaders or for people's priorities to be taken into consideration, some people have done so through active involvement in development works at the community level. In Sa Tein Village Tract, Bokpyin Township, residents have participated in the construction of dams, roads and bridges as members of committees for project implementation. This was also the case in Thea Chaung Gyi Village Tract, Thayetchaung Township, where a budget committee with members nominated from the area was involved in monitoring and implementing funds for building roads and bridges. For others, village-level meetings with the VTA, the Village Clerk or the 10 Household Heads are mechanisms for participation in rural Myanmar. In total, nearly two-thirds of the respondents (63%) reported that they sometimes participated in a community meeting. More male respondents (67%) participate in community meetings compared to female respondents (58%). Fewer respondents have been invited to meetings specifically related to new development projects or problems in the village: Only 25 percent overall (see Figure 14) and 22 percent of women (against 29 percent of men). This suggests potential for wider inclusion of the community in consultations related to local development projects. As observed by Tanintharyi township-level actors: "Despite that fact that half of the community population comprises women, they are underrepresented at local meetings. More women should be invited by the local authorities."

One suggestion for improving participation was to create leadership opportunities for women in community development, building upon their pre-existing skills and experiences.⁴⁴ For example, the socially-assigned role of many women in Myanmar to care for dependents indicates that latent capacity is likely to have been developed in information sharing and community organisation. At the same time, township actors also observed that attitudinal changes related to the role of women in work would be required to improve equality of opportunity.

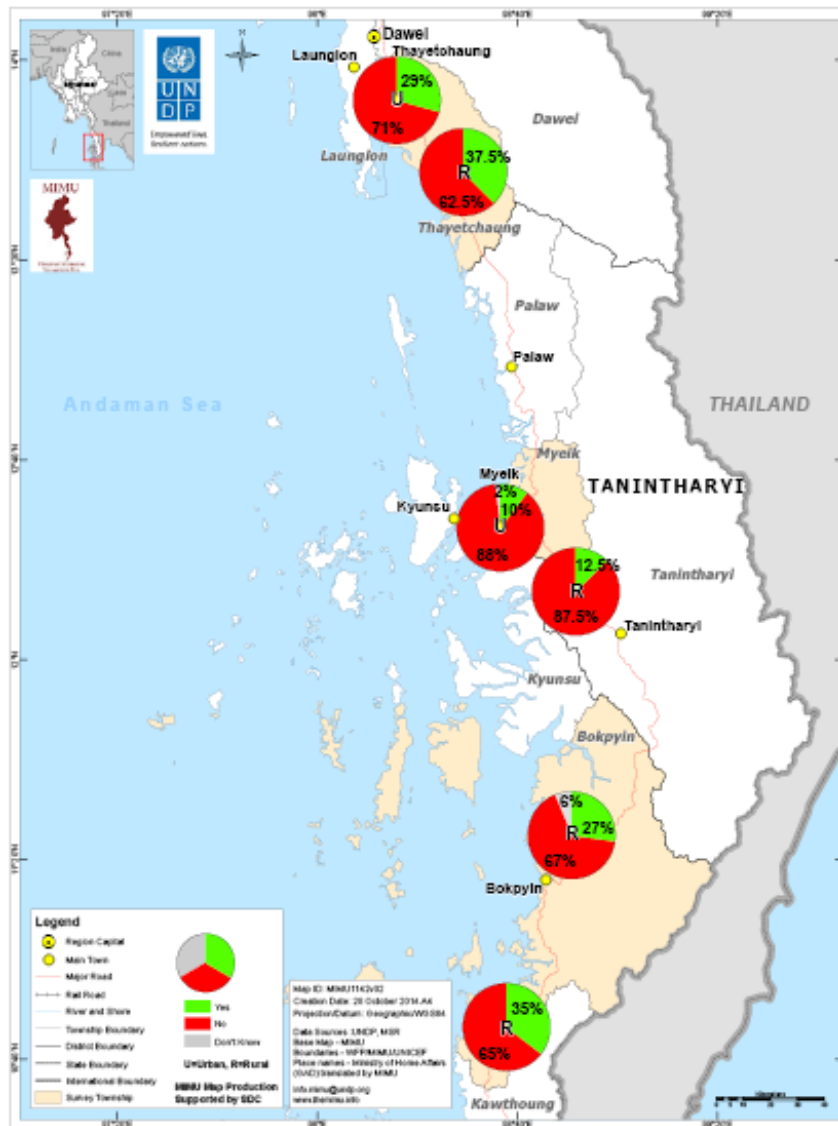


Figure 14: Citizens being invited to village-level meetings about new project or problem in the village/ward

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.

⁴⁴ Participants at a Workshop to share interim findings on Local Governance Mapping in Tanintharyi Region, 13th August, 2014.

4.4 Access to basic services

4.4.1 Basic service delivery

Service delivery is not a core function traditionally associated with local government in Myanmar, in the rural areas in particular. During the long periods of military rule and authoritarian government, the state was mainly perceived, and understood its role, as one of controlling the population and defending the state against threats. The public security roles of local administration staff are deeply entrenched. Changing deeply ingrained roles and perceptions and altering the nature of the relationship between the state and citizens to one of democratic accountability and service delivery will take time, and is one of the key long-term challenges of the reform process.

In Tanintharyi, the private sector is substantively involved in the provision of public services especially for healthcare, electricity and the provision of household water.

As is the case across for township administrations across the country, the task of effective and efficient delivery of public services is a particularly challenging one in a resource-constrained environment. For one observer, the private sector plays an “unusually strong role” in public service delivery in Myanmar, having taken over a number of state functions.⁴⁵ This appears to be the case in particular in Tanintharyi, where the private sector is substantively involved in the provision of public services especially for healthcare, electricity and the provision of household water. This is indicated through examples in basic healthcare and primary education to support service delivery, and in the delivery of drinking water, where private-sector players are major providers.

As a corollary, civil society in Tanintharyi appears to be underdeveloped in its capacity to support local service delivery. There are around 10-15 CSOs in Myeik Township, most of whom are focused on social work (i.e. the provision of funeral services), and there are a handful of CSOs in Thagetchaung and Bokpyin, but for the most part it is the government-affiliated social organisations such as the Red Cross and Maternal and Child Welfare Association that provide support for public service delivery. In Dawei civil society is relatively stronger in relation to advocacy on issues such as land confiscation, environmental protection and large-scale infrastructure development, particularly the planned SEZ near Dawei.

Basic service delivery through the region

As is the case across the country, within government structures, the township sector departments are the most significant actors in the administration of basic local services. In what follows, three areas of state service delivery at the local level are analysed. Notably, these are not necessarily local-level government services, but central government functions delivered and implemented in a deconcentrated manner, and at the local level. This also implies that the government staff involved in delivering these services are central government staff located at the local level, but report to and follow the instructions of central government ministries, albeit increasingly with the intermediary level of the Regional Government departments playing a coordinating role. Region health officials spoke of a dotted line to the Minister for Social Welfare, Win Aung, who they reported to for information-sharing purposes. Quarterly meetings are held between the Region Ministry of Social Affairs and healthcare sector officials to this end, and to convey information to the Minister on the Region's health priorities. Region education officials spoke of the same obligations, but that with the minister being a medical doctor, “[...] it is something difficult to co-ordinate [between the sector department and region ministry], and we need to offer more guidance [on technical matters].”

45. Dahm, Henrich. “A new approach to services”. February 16 2014, *The Myanmar Times*.

Primary healthcare

Relative stability has meant easier access to primary healthcare services for much of the population in Tanintharyi in recent years (for a summary of the healthcare data, regarding the 3 selected Townships, see Table 10 and 11). But one of the major challenges in the delivery of basic healthcare in the Region is a geographical one: the remote location of some communities, particularly in the archipelago islands, makes the transportation of basic supplies and vaccines a challenging and costly task. In spite of this, officially reported child immunisation rates in the Region (100%) in 2010 were comparable to the national average (97.8%) which may be an overestimate.⁴⁶

Box 4: Private-sector participation in managing malaria

Malaria was previously a major concern for the Tanintharyi Region health authorities, and this remains the case in pockets. More recently, tuberculosis and HIV have overtaken malaria as the major communicable diseases. Still, malaria incidence remains very high in Bokpyin, though the number of cases is falling as a result of targeted programmes by NGOs in the border areas.⁴⁷ In some cases, they have worked closely with the large agriculture and infrastructure firms operating in the area to target migrant workers. For example NGO CAP-Malaria is working with the firms Dawei Development and Yuzanafor prevention and treatment: Both firms have brought more than 50,000 workers into the Region to work on their respective projects and plantations.⁴⁸

Despite such large flows of workers moving in and out of Myanmar at the Region's borders, there are no formal systems for managing immigration and disease control, which places enormous pressure on the public health system. With migrant workers travelling to the area for seasonal work, the official population of Bokpyin fluctuates wildly. Regional health authorities estimate that Bokpyin may have up to 150,000 people at peak times during the year—around three times the official population. Labour migration is probably also the explanation for the high male/female imbalance in the township.

	Bokpyin	Myeik	Thayetchaung
Population (GAD, 2014)	49,372	251,179	No data
No. of hospitals	3	1 (200-bed)	
Maternal Child Health Centres	1	1	
Rural Health Centres (RHC)	2	6	
Sub-rural health centres	11	25	
Private clinics	1	-	
No. of healthcare staff	-	-	
Children under 5 moderately underweight (%)	-	3.4	
Children under 5 severely underweight (%)	-	0.1	

Table 10:
Key healthcare data,
Tanintharyi Region
townships⁴⁹

Source: Township
Healthcare and GAD
offices, Tanintharyi
Region, 2013

46. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2009-2010.

47. In Bokpyin, these include: Populations Services International, Myanmar Artemisinin Resistance Containment Initiative Projects, and Myanmar Medical Association.

48. CAP-Malaria Project Engages Private Sector in Malaria Control in Burma. URC, May 1, 2013. <http://www.unc.org/news/newsstory.asp?nid=325>

49. Data from Thayetchaung Township was not made available.

Table 11: Basic healthcare indicators, Tanintharyi Region townships⁵⁰

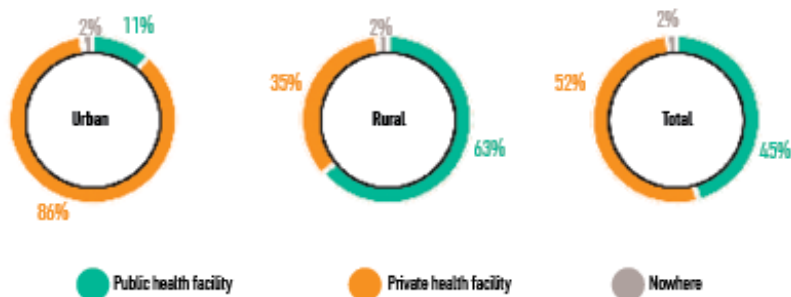
Source: Township Healthcare Profiles, 2013.

	2011			2012			2013		
	Bahyin	Myeik	Tanintharyi	Bahyin	Myeik	Tanintharyi	Bahyin	Myeik	Tanintharyi
Home deliveries by health staff (%)	56	50.3		52.66	90.2		49.61	45.9	
Deliveries in RHC delivery room (%)	29.3			28.9			20.56		
Antenatal care coverage (%)	70.1	100		76.25	100	81.25	93.4		
Infant mortality rate/ 1000	6.2			6.7			5.2		
Under 5 years mortality rate/ 1000 live births	9.0			10.7			7.9		
Maternal mortality rate/ 1000 live births	0.63			0.67			0.6		
No. of out-patients	983	13,837		1,607	14,244		1,191	11,613	
No. of in-patients	608	7,819		457	8,971		810	11,024	

Where the option is available to them, 52 percent of respondents from the community survey rely on private health facilities, versus 45 percent who use public healthcare services. Proximity appears to determine user choice of healthcare facilities. The vast majority of urban respondents (86%) use private health facilities, as opposed to just 35 percent of rural dwellers (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: If you or any of your household members is sick and requires medical attention, which health service/facility do you usually go to?

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.



Budgeting and planning responsibilities in the public health sector remain at the Union level, with the township compiling and submitting data on outputs, basic health indicators and township health priorities upwards to the line ministry. This is where decisions on capital spending still take place, as do the vast majority of those on human resources.⁵¹ As is the case across most townships in the country, the Township Medical Officer (TMO) currently plays both a medical and administrative role in most Tanintharyi townships.

50. Ibid.

51. Subnational Governance in Myanmar and its Implication for Child Rights, UNICEF January 2014.

Yet in Tanintharyi, Region health officials spoke of plans pending to divide the treatment and administrative role of senior public health officials at the township level. This would represent a significant break from the past, and require a restructuring of the health administration across all townships in the country. Myeik Township gives some indication of how this might look. Distinctive among the three townships as a district hub, in addition to the TMO, there is a Township Health Officer (THO), who is only responsible for curative care and does not perform much of an administrative function. For Thayetchaung and Bokpyin, primary healthcare “micro plans” are developed by the TMO based on population data, health centre statistics and major disease incidence data. No form of direct consultation with the community (with patients or CSOs) appears to have taken place, with the exception of some input from the Red Cross.

Four of six healthcare facility managers at the village tract/ward level experienced problems related to the poor condition of buildings and sanitation facilities but only one lacked drugs or medical supplies. Since 2013, essential drugs and medical supplies have been made free of charge to users of public health services, as observed by all six facilities managers. However, 46 percent of community survey respondents who use public health facilities (131) reported that they always had to pay for medicines, and 25 percent sometimes do (see Figure 16). Of those who paid for medicines and given an explanation (25), all were told by healthcare staff that the government supplies some (essential) medicines while specialist medicines had to be paid for. With no evident supply issues reported at the facility level, this indicates, at the very least, that rules related to the distribution of drugs and medical supplies are not being clearly articulated at the community level.

Forty-six percent of community survey respondents who use public health facilities (131) reported that they always had to pay for medicines.

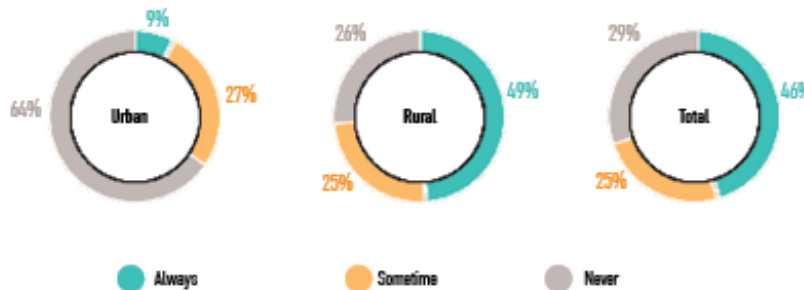


Figure 16: Do you always, sometimes or never have to pay for the medicines that the nurse or doctor gives to you or a household member, at the public health facility?

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.

Primary education

Like public health, education is a core central government function and responsibility. It has not been devolved to the State or Region level, let alone decentralised to the local or community level. In the past, the education sector has operated as a large centralised organisation controlled by the Ministry of Education, obviously with a presence throughout the country through education officials and teachers, most of whom are also employed directly by the Ministry. With the reforms under way, there have been attempts to seek more of a functional disaggregation between different tiers of government in this sector.

Access remains a challenge in the delivery of primary education for the country as a whole where issues of quality are prevalent, with the rural and border regions remaining underserved. Around half of children in Myanmar do not finish primary school.⁵² 2010 data indicates that the primary school enrolment rate in Tanintharyi at 85 percent is comparable to the national average of 88 percent. And across all States/ Regions, Tanintharyi had the highest primary school completion rate with 72 percent per cent of students completing primary school on time.⁵³ This varies between townships: Enrolment rates are low in the remote and township of Bokpyin, with only 51 percent of eligible children enrolled in primary school (see Table 12 for relevant key education data of the three selected Townships).

Box 5: Involvement of non-state actors in the provision of primary education

Unlike the neighbouring States of Mon, Kayah and Kayah, there is no legacy of widespread non-state service provision in education.⁵⁴ However, there has been an accommodation reached between the KNU and the Region Government on the teaching of Karen literature and language in the classroom. In 2013, Tanintharyi Region's Chief Minister Myat Ko confirmed that this was possible, as long as activities did not contravene the government curriculum.⁵⁵ It is notable also that the Mon National Education Committee and Department, which is linked with the New Mon State Party, run a number of Mon National schools in Tanintharyi.⁵⁶

CSOs do provide some limited support for non-formal primary education, as do private benefactors in Tanintharyi. Fisheries company Annawa Hwan is supporting a programme in three townships for about 100-150 students taught by volunteer teachers, with the objective of lowering dropout rates between primary and middle school.



52. Zobrix, Brooke and McCormick, Patrick. A Preliminary Assessment of Decentralisation in Education: Experiences in Mon State and Yangon. Subnational governance in Myanmar Discussion Papers, Centre for Economic and Social Development (MDRI-CESD), December 2013.

53. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2009-10. UNICEF.

54. Tanintharyi Region Profile. June 2014. UNHCR.

55. "Teaching Karen Gets Govt Green Light". Karen News, November 12, 2013.

56. Joliffe, Kim. "Ethnic Conflict and Social Services in Myanmar's Contested Regions". Subnational governance in Myanmar Discussion Papers, Centre for Economic and Social Development (MDRI-CESD), 2014.

	Bokpyin	Myeik	Thayetchaung
Post-primary schools	4	22	19
Primary schools	23	88	83
Primary school students	5,994	32,309	16,304
Primary school teacher: student ratio	1:64	1:63	1:53
Primary school teachers appointed	95	917	305

Table 12: Key education data, Tanintharyi Region townships

Source: Tanintharyi Region Township and Region, Department of Education.

Coordinating all education activities at the township level, the Township Education Officer (TEO) pays the salaries of all education staff via the headmasters; is involved in the selection, recruitment and training of daily salary teachers, keeps an overview of staff flow and advises the higher levels offices on vacancies and staff planning. In addition, township education officials carry out school inspections and deal with serious complaints that cannot be handled by the headmasters. “School cluster families” are also active in Tanintharyi Region. Comprising of 5-10 schools, these clusters are led by a principal (selected by peers in the group) who is responsible for sharing information communicated by township education officials, helping to mitigate communication issues related to access and bandwidth.

Township education staff in Tanintharyi observe that a more consultative approach has been recently been deployed in the planning process. Regional education officials conveyed that the TEO is now expected to provide more inputs into education planning and costing, and to this end, principals and Parent Teacher Associations are being consulted for their ideas and suggestions in some townships, acting as “a board of trustees” of sorts. Meanwhile the TDSC is also expected to participate in understanding local needs and setting development priorities for education. A major challenge for service delivery is a dearth of housing facilities for teachers in rural areas. Teacher shortages are a challenge for the three townships, and staffing requests must be submitted to higher levels for most part. However, this is changing, and TEOs will have some discretion to hire and transfer assistant primary teachers this year, according to Regional education officials. If there is an ad hoc vacancy during the year, a township can find an interim replacement in one of two ways – a teacher from within the same ‘family cluster’ of schools can step in temporarily if there is capacity to do so, or there is an option for township elders to hire a replacement independently.

Township education staff in Tanintharyi observe that a more consultative approach has been recently been deployed in the planning process - the TEO is now expected to provide more inputs into education planning and costing, and to this end, principals and Parent Teacher Associations are being consulted for their ideas and suggestions in some townships, acting as “a board of trustees” of sorts.

Drinking water

While annual rainfall in the area is high, existing data indicates that access to clean water is a developmental challenge for some townships in Tanintharyi (see Table 13). In 2011, around 27 percent of households in the Region were not using improved water sources, which was higher than the national average of 18 percent.⁵⁷ There is a high prevalence of water-borne diseases such as cholera and typhoid, related to poor access to clean water and sanitation systems.⁵⁸ Lack of access to safe drinking water is a major contributor to child diarrhoea prevalence, which increased in Tanintharyi from 3 percent in 2003 to 9 percent in 2009-10 against the national average of 4 percent in 2003 to 7 percent in 2009-10.⁵⁹

57. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2009-10. UNICEF.

58. “Changing realities, poverty and displacement in South-East Myanmar.” The Border Consortium, 2012.

59. Ibid.

Most respondents in the community survey (48% of 137 people) use shallow wells as the main source of drinking water, with 26 percent (74) using a private water supply connection. When asked about the main water facilities in their village tracts/wards, five of six VTAs thought that the condition of the main water facilities was good or acceptable, though only two had been involved in or been invited to for a meeting with government officials to talk about the water services in their village tract/ward.

With the restructuring of the rural development portfolio in late 2013, rural water supply is now the responsibility of the Department of Rural Development (DRD) while the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA), under which a Development Affairs Organisation (DAO) has been set up in every township retains oversight for urban water supply. Water supply is not a key focus for the DAO in Tanintharyi, where clean drinking water remains a lower priority relative to other development needs, such as transportation infrastructure. For example in Thayetchaung, 5 percent of the budget is allocated to water supply, 45 percent is allocated to roads and 50 percent is allocated to other development projects.

Of particular note in Tanintharyi Region is the significance of private water suppliers, who are a primary supplier of drinking water in urban areas. In Thayetchaung, private vendors collect water from streams and lakes and transport it in trucks to the relevant wards, supplying 18 percent of municipal water. In Myeik municipality, 75 percent of the water supply is covered by private sources. Meanwhile, in Bokpyin's municipal areas, 80 percent of the urban population is covered by these eight tube wells that are owned or managed by a private company. Municipal water supply is almost entirely supported by taxes collected at the township level, though the DAO in Thayetchaung also appeals to external donors to secure funds for future water projects.

The extent to which private-sector players compete with the state for provision of drinking water is unclear, though local providers appear to be stepping in to "fill gaps" that the public-sector cannot provide for or are expected to. As observed by officials in Bokpyin, the cost of water remains high due to limited availability a worry for administrators there is the long-term availability of drinking water supply at a reasonable cost to consumers. Interestingly, local vendors appear to be more concerned as to the potential effects of development organisations entering the market, as opposed to state competition. In Bokpyin, administrators were hesitant to seek funding from development partners so not to detract business away from local contractors.

Table 13: Basic information on water supply, Tanintharyi

Source: Township Department of Municipal Affairs and Department of Rural Development, Tanintharyi Region.

	Bokpyin	Myeik	Thayetchaung
Municipal	Coverage: 80% / 27,280 gallons per day	Coverage by DAO: 3.5% / 140,000 gallons per day Coverage by private (percent): 75% / 2,760,000 (private)	Coverage: by DAO 34% / 78,000 gallons per day Coverage by private sector: 18% / 41,500 gallons per day
Rural	Water is collected from streams and distributed to villages by the Department of Rural Development (DRD) and VTAs.	Of 43 projects from the DRD for 2013-14, 5 for water supply. 80% of villages have difficulty access drinking water in the dry season.	Some villages have central tanks but these are dry in summer. Some private suppliers.

4.4.2 People's perceptions on access to local services

People in Myanmar, especially in rural areas, still expect rather little from their government in terms of service delivery. Myanmar for a long time has had one of the lowest government expenditures for the social sector anywhere in the world (as measured in terms of expenditure to GDP ratio, as well as the percentage of expenditures allocated for these sectors). As a regional comparison, the country spends the least on the education sector and the third least on healthcare among the ASEAN countries, according to a study by ActionAid Myanmar. National-level spending into the social sectors has risen in the past few years. The government allocated 7.5 percent of the Union-level budget for education in the 2013-14, up from 5.2 percent in 2011-12.⁶⁰ It was just 0.8 percent of the country's GDP in 2011.⁶¹ And 3.8 percent of the national budget was allocated to healthcare in the 2013-14 fiscal year, up from 1.3 percent in the 2011-12,⁶² The proportion of spending for this sector was 1.8 percent of Myanmar's GDP in 2012.⁶³

This has resulted in more socio-economic investment and improved service delivery at the township level through increased sector spending and "poverty-reducing" projects which have been prioritised and implemented through more recently available funds for township development (though the magnitude of this funding remains limited). In a context where the majority of people remain underserved for basic infrastructure and local services, respondents were asked about their perceptions of improvements and whether they felt to be receiving equal treatment to other service users. These observations are naturally subjective, but are interesting for two reasons. Firstly, the data provides some insight on the extent to which investments and related local governance are being felt at the level of the village tract and ward. Secondly, it may help identify areas for possible attention in the future, and highlight where progress is less evident to people in the community.

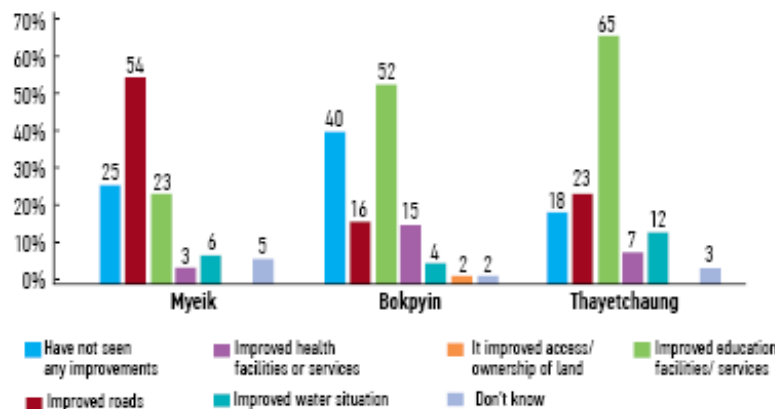


Figure 17: What are the most important improvements your government have made to the situation in your village tract/ward over the last three years?

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.

Perceived improvements

Tanintharyi residents were also asked questions on changes in their communities, and specifically, of their perceptions of the most important improvements affected by the government in their village tract/ward in the past three years. Responses indicated that there was high awareness of increased socioeconomic investment by government, though the impact was more apparent in some townships than others. Nearly half of the 288 respondents (47%) observed improved education facilities and services, while improved roads were noted by 31 percent. Important improvements to local health and water facilities were only observed by 8 percent of respondents respectively, mirroring spending priorities at the national level (see Figure 17).

60. ActionAid Myanmar, March 2014.
 61. The World Factbook, CIA.
 62. ActionAid Myanmar, March 2014.
 63. World Development Indicators, The World Bank.

People noted a number of improvements in the past three years, the most common of which was upgraded education facilities or services and improved roads and bridges.

During community dialogues at the village tract/ward level, participants noted a number of improvements in the past three years, the most common of which was upgraded education facilities or services and improved roads and bridges.⁶⁴ These responses indicate that people are aware and appreciative of infrastructure development at the community level, and that the benefits are quickly noticed. The perception that “nothing has been done” (27% overall) (see Figure 17) could be a result of the most important of community needs not having recognised or met.

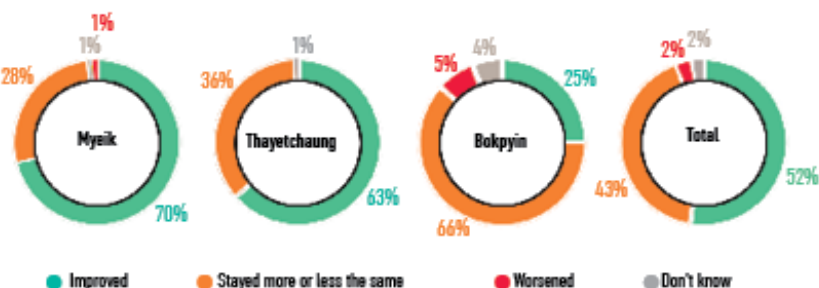
Improvements in primary healthcare

A proliferation of private clinics in urban areas is noted, providing residents with an alternative to public facilities as appears to have been the case in urban areas of Tanintharyi. Perceived improvements must be considered in the context of growing choice, which may also reflect on people’s perceptions of government performance.

Overall, half of the respondents (52%) considered that health services had improved in the past three years though the impact of investments is not equally felt across the townships. Only 25 percent of Bokpyin respondents noted improvements, while 66 percent reported that healthcare services stayed “more or less the same”. At the same time, in Myeik 70 percent of respondents observed improvements (see Figure 18). Such divergence of opinion is likely related to the development of specific facilities at the local level 42 percent of Tanintharyi respondents attributed improvements to new facilities built, expanded or upgraded, while 38 percent attributed this to lower cost of services for consultation and drugs.

Figure 18: Have the health services in your village tract/ward improved over the last three years?

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.



Only two of six health facility managers agreed that the concerns and needs of men and women are taken into account at their health facility

Only 4 percent of respondents have ever been invited or involved in a meeting with government officials to talk about local health services, indicating that there has been little direct engagement between communities and healthcare officials on village-level priorities to date. But when asked about their ideas for how to improve health services further, the majority of the respondents (73%) suggested the construction of a new facility, upgrading existing facilities or investing in more equipment, followed by the hiring of more frontline healthcare staff (57%).

Forty-five percent of respondents are satisfied with health services at their village tract and ward, as opposed to 28 percent who are not. As might be expected in light of perceived improvements, satisfaction rates are highest in Myeik (85%) (see Figure 19). Most respondents (95%) thought

64. See Annex 5 for profile of respondents at the six dialogues held at the village tract/ward level in Tanintharyi Region.



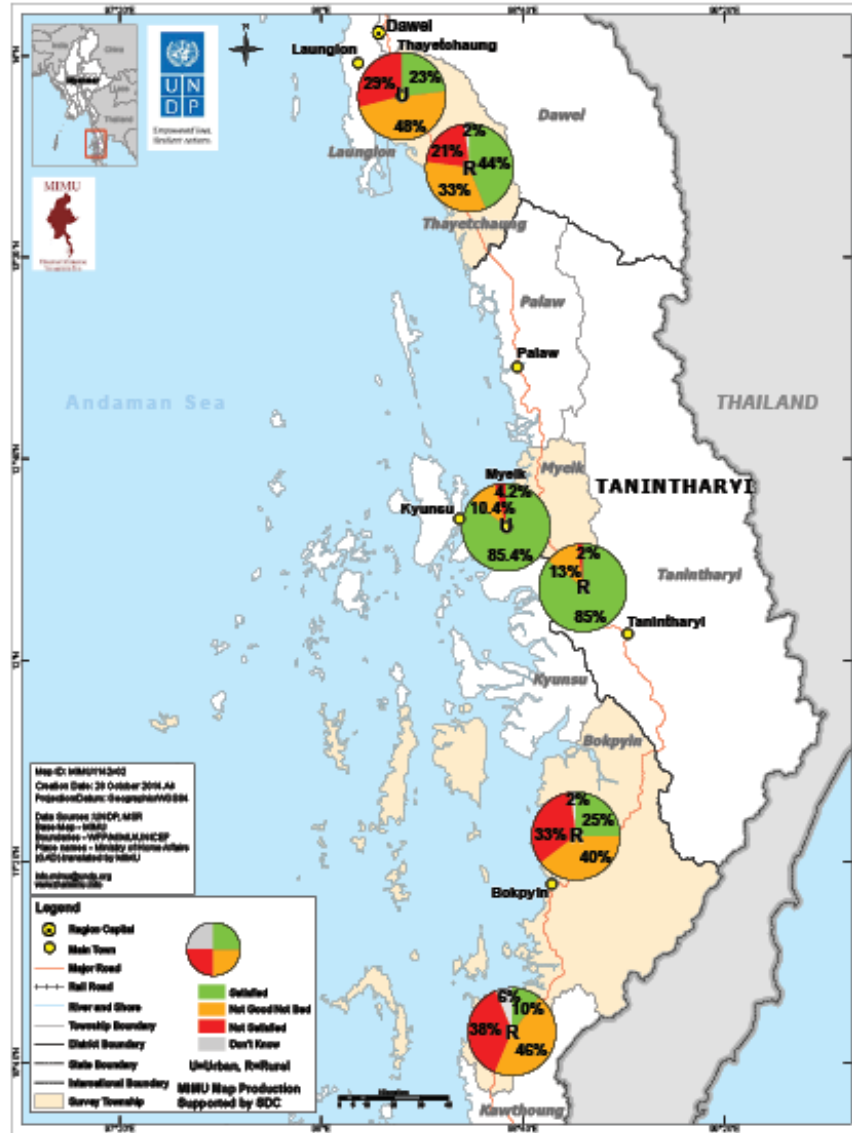
that they and their family members receive the same treatment as everyone else in the town/village. However, those (10) who thought that they were treated worse than other patients attributed this to discrimination against poor people, who could not afford to pay for gifts for healthcare staff. Another access issue that may have bearing on the experience of patients is the extent to which facilities are gender-sensitive (i.e. have separate toilets and changing areas for men and women). Only two of six health facility managers agreed that the concerns and needs of men and women are taken into account at their health facility.

Members of the community and service providers in six village tracts/wards were asked to discuss the quality of public healthcare, and the quality of treatment at the local level. Issues of access and affordability emerged from the discussions. Access is perceived to be a challenge for services users in Ma Thay Village Tract, Bokpyin Township, who indicated that there is no health facility that meets minimum standards, little in the way of health education for the community, and that it remains difficult to register new-borns. In addition, the cost of transport renders it challenging to access the nearest Rural Health Centre (RHC) in case of an emergency. Issues of access also emerge in Sin Hpyu Pyin Ward, Thayetchaung Township, where there is no rural health centre for that community, due to its small population size. Respondents in Tone Byaw Village Tract, Myeik Township, acknowledged efforts by healthcare staff to mitigate access problems: they were increasingly travelling to visit villages to share health information (i.e. raising awareness on tuberculosis), and now make emergency home visits and accompany patients that need to be taken to hospital.

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Figure 19: User satisfaction with health services

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.



Improvements in primary education

In 2012-13, budgeted spending for national education was 11 percent of total government expenditure and 1.46 percent of GDP. The education budget has increased significantly between 2011-12 (310 billion Kyats; 310 million USD)⁶⁵ and 2012-13 (Ks 639 billion Kyats; 639 million USD), of which around 90 percent is spent on basic education. In addition, the central government has introduced grants to overcome financial barriers to access, and enable all families to send their children to primary school. In a context of these stipends, and where national investment in basic education has nearly doubled in that period, the majority of Tanintharyi respondents 80 percent (230) perceived education services to have improved in their township in the past three years. Progress was more pronounced among respondents in the rural townships of Bokpyin (85%) and Thayetchaung (84%) compared to the urban township of Myeik (70%) (see Figure 20). Perceived improvements are primarily attributed to the building or upgrading of schools (82%) followed by an observation that there were more teachers at primary schools (45%).

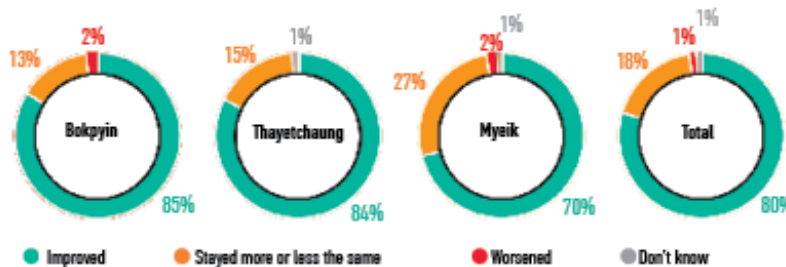


Figure 20: Has primary education in the nearest primary school in your village tract/ward improved, worsened or stayed more or less the same over the last three years?

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region. June 2014.

28 percent of respondents (essentially all of those who are parents of school-aged children) have been invited or involved in a meeting with government officials to talk about primary education, indicating that parents have some engagement with education officials to share their suggestions. When asked about their ideas for how to improve primary education services, 45 percent suggested the construction of more schools and classrooms, followed by the hiring of more teachers (32%). The majority of parents — 78 percent (of 157) — are satisfied with primary education services at their village tract whereas 6 percent are not (see Figure 21).

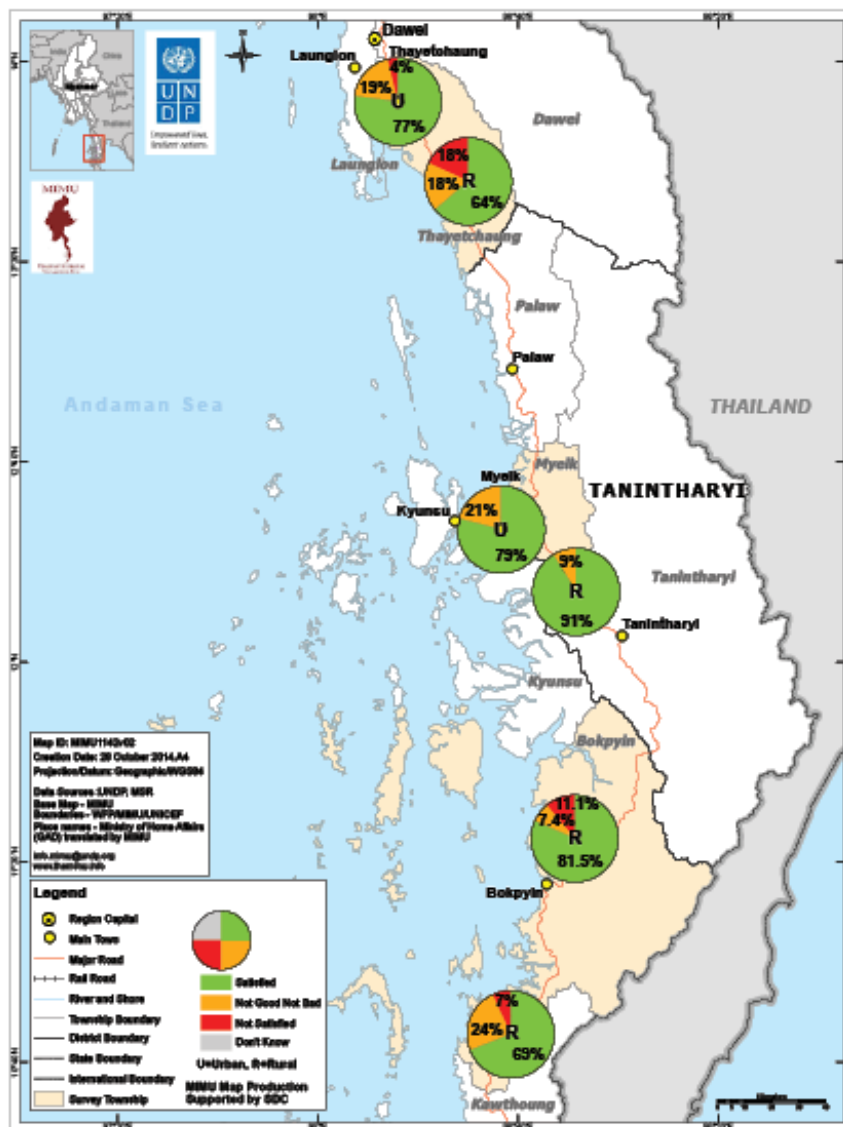
Nearly all those who responded to the community survey (93%) perceived their children to be receiving equal treatment to other primary school students, but the handful who perceived unfair treatment attributed this primarily to discrimination against poor people who couldn't afford to pay for gifts and donation. Parents mostly agreed that the gender-specific needs of their children were taken into account (70%), though when twelve teachers were asked the same question about their facilities, five disagreed (see Figure 22).

Nearly all those who responded to the community survey (93%) perceived their children to be receiving equal treatment to other primary school students, but the handful who perceived unfair treatment attributed this primarily to discrimination against poor people who couldn't afford to pay for gifts and donation.

65. Ibid.

Figure 21: Parents' satisfaction with primary education

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.



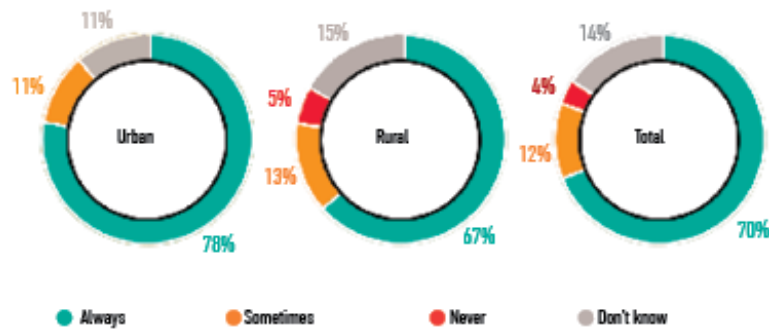


Figure 22: Are boys and girls' concerns and needs (like separate toilets) never, sometimes or always taken into account in this school?

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.

Drinking water improvements

Most respondents (53%) agreed that the provision of clean drinking water has stayed more or less the same, in the past three years. Just 11 percent of Bokpyin respondents perceived improvements in this area, while 45 percent thought that provision of clean drinking water in that township had worsened in the last three years (see Figure 23). Again, such perceptions are likely related to local area investments in water supply or lack thereof: 72 percent of respondents who observed improvements attributed this to the installation of taps and pumps. Those who observed a worsening in the supply of clean drinking water observed that the main source is further away (62%) or that the main source became polluted (49%).

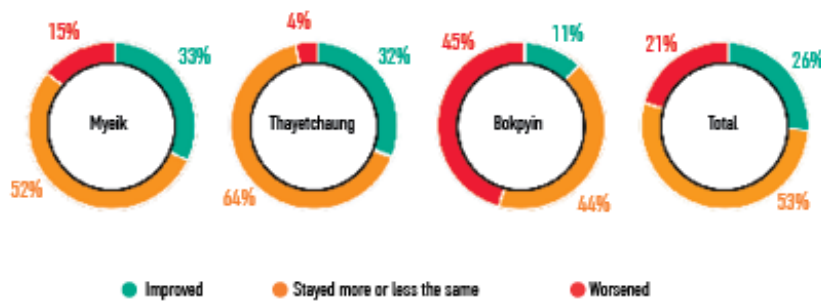


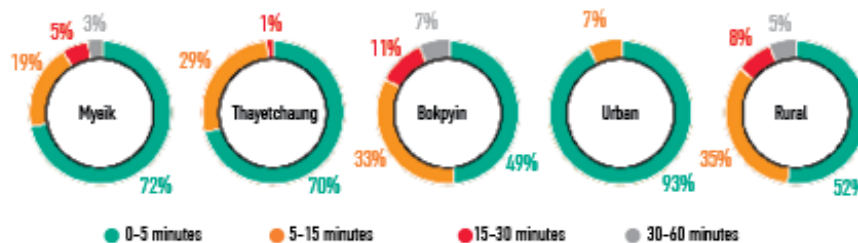
Figure 23: Has the provision of clean drinking water in your village tract/ward improved, worsened or stayed more or less the same over the last three years?

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.

Just 5 percent of respondents have been invited or involved in a meeting with government officials to talk about drinking water, indicating that there has been very limited direct consultation with the community on this issue. Issues related to access emerge from the community survey related to access to drinking water that are reflective of local infrastructure gaps between urban and rural areas. Nearly half of rural respondents (48%) must travel for more than five minutes to get to the main drinking water source for their household, compared to 7 percent of urban dwellers (see Figure 24).

Figure 24: How long does it take to get to the main source of drinking water for your household?

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.



Perceptions from the community indicates that there is recognition of socio-economic investments trickling down to the village level— primarily in education, followed by healthcare and drinking water. People have not historically relied on government assistance, and are used to addressing problems and everyday challenges by themselves at the community level. Their attitudes to and expectations of basic services are understandably shaped by these experiences. These are however, undergoing change of which the outcome is as yet unpredictable. This is also the case when considering accountability, which too is relatively new concept for Myanmar vis-à-vis local governance.

Despite the involvement of commercial organisations in service delivery, there appears to be relatively few mechanisms that govern their participation. Procurement quality committees are sometimes formed for projects. And while township officials in Myeik observe that competitive tenders are issued in the local newspapers for some projects, an overriding policy or cohesive set of guidelines for selection of private-sector vendors is apparently lacking.

4.5 Information, transparency and accountability

The decentralisation of fiscal and administrative accountability below the State/Region remains limited in Myanmar at this stage in the reform process. Decision-making on township development funding remains for most part with the Union government with small exceptions given to the State/Region government, while most township departments continue to be function largely as “service delivery units” at the directive of their line ministries. With respect to the public-sector investments and service delivery, Regional government departments are for most part subordinate to the Union level counterpart, with their influence exerted for the most part in relation to the growing pool of decentralised funds. For the most part, upward accountability from the township, to the district, State/Region and then Union-level line ministry is very well established, with clearly established reporting mechanisms in place. But there is, as of yet, little formal space for the public to seek accountability from below, with the VTA, despite the recent introduction of elections, forming no exception.

As the newly elected representative of the village tract/ward, the VTA can be considered as having an implicit mandate to be responsive to the needs and grievances of local residents, though they have a somewhat limited institutional obligation to do so. This is most evident in the VTAs duty to carry out important works to the benefit of the local people (with the approval of the Township Administrator).⁶⁶ Other formal mechanisms available to the people are the dispute resolution and grievance mechanisms at the level of the village tract/ward and township, the most well-established of these are in place for the resolution of land disputes. However, there is no formal administrative recourse mechanism and access to the courts is largely impossible, or considered futile. Critical to the ability of people to be able to navigate the disputes among themselves and with state authorities, and to seek some form

66. 19(cc), Functions and duties of the Ward or Village Tract Administrator. As per the Ward or Village Tract Administration Act of 2012.



of answerability (or responsiveness to complaints, queries and requests) through formal or informal channels, is their access to information on local governance arrangements.

Even less developed are formal and institutionalised mechanisms for social accountability, for which CSOs have played and still play a very constrained role in Myanmar to date, which is also the case in Tanintharyi Region. As observed in a recent study on democratic governance undertaken by UNDP: "As a result of the often bitter and acrimonious relations in the past, especially in areas related to the legal sector, human rights, community relations, transparency and accountability it is understandable that attitudes on both sides are still characterised by caution and mistrust".⁶⁷ After decades of exclusion, the space for CSOs to participate in these activities continues to be limited. After decades of exclusion, the space for CSOs to participate in these activities continues to be limited also for Tanintharyi, given an environment of lack of trust between local actors, unfamiliarity with and suspicion of CSOs among government staff, limited formalized mechanism, lingering conflict and overall limited space for civil society groups to develop. That said, due mainly to the attitudes among key figures of the current Region Government and Region Parliament as well as mobilising among CSOs, the space for civil society in Tanintharyi Region has been expanding over the last few years.

Also of interest is people's ability to choose their political representatives at the various levels of governance. The 2010 Union and State/Region parliament elections provided the first taste of electoral participation for the people of Myanmar. While there is no equivalent political representation below the State/Region level (except in Self-Administered Areas of which there are none in Tanintharyi) there are a handful of mechanisms (such as the new election of the VTA) and other additional avenues that could represent further opportunities to claim space and express their voices in matters of local governance.

67. Brand, Marcus: Democratic Governance in Myanmar: Situation Analysis. UNDP September 2013. Page 121.

4.5.1 Access to information by people from formal and informal channels

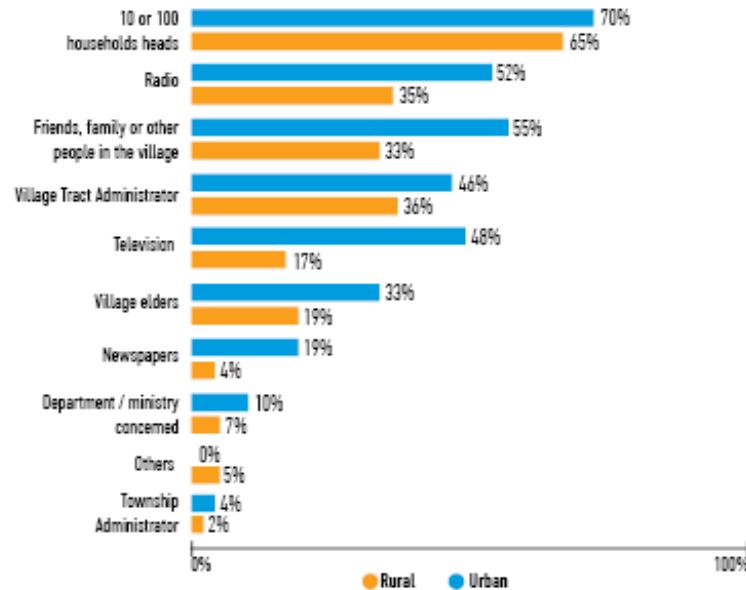
The 10 Household Head remains the primary way in which 95% of all respondents learn about public meetings at the village level.

Various instruments being used by the GAD for sharing information include the regular co-ordination meetings, dedicated committee meetings, public meetings at the village level and public display of written notices to communicate government policies. Regular meetings with VTAs appear to be the primary channel for sharing news on new directives from township administration. The VTA would typically disseminate information through village meetings and the 10 Household Heads at the village level. The 10 Household Head remains the primary way in which 95% of all respondents learned of village level public meetings in which they can participate. This may be a function of the low population density and poor accessibility of some villages, meaning that households are not always in close proximity to the VTA: only 36 percent of rural respondents relied on him as an information source, and 46 percent of urban dwellers. In some areas, the threat of low-level conflict may have had implications for mobility in the past. In addition, the prevalence of island villages combined with poor communications infrastructure and electricity shortages means that accessibility can be a challenge in conveying information to the public residing in the archipelago.

There was little mention of using the media to share information with the public, and communications continue to be problematic in remote townships such as Bokpyin. Rural respondents do not generally rely on the media for information: just 4 percent received information on laws and directives from the government by newspaper, 17 percent by television and 35 percent by radio, suggesting that they remain underserved by transport of goods and communications networks. This has implications on information flow from township administration to communities, in that the link between the VTA and the 10 Household Head becomes critical. "I hope that the VTA is sharing this kind of information with the 10 Household heads," noted one township official. Indeed, township-level governance actors highlighted potential capacity gaps on the part of 10 Household heads to perform this function, citing the voluntary nature of the role and the absence of a code of conduct as inhibiting factors.⁶⁸

Figure 25: If there are new laws or directives from the government, how would you usually learn about them?

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.



68. Participants at a Workshop to share interim findings on Local Governance Mapping in Tanintharyi Region, 19th August, 2014.

Contrary perceptions of the VTA and community respondents indicate that the existing formal communication channels may be a potential bottleneck related to access to information. Whereas all six VTAs thought that the Township Administration was informing them enough about plans for new development projects (such as schools, roads, health facilities) in their ward/village tract, 57 percent of (288) community survey respondents did not think they were receiving enough information of this nature. This varies by ward/village tract, rising to 74 percent in Myeik and 61 percent in Bokpyin, and is indicative of a potential “information disconnect” at the critical link between the VTA and the 10 Household Head (see Figure 26)

Whereas all six VTAs (interviewed) thought that the Township Administration was informing them enough about plans for new development projects (such as schools, roads, health facilities) in their ward/village tract, 57 percent of community survey respondents did not think they were receiving enough information of this nature.

At a community level dialogue held in Bokpyin, rural discussants also raised concerns: “No meetings have been called and only people who have close relationships with the VTA know about them. There was no clear instruction or information about the census, nor transparency in the lottery for mobile phone SIM card.” Focus group discussions with civil society indicated that the flow of information from government to the people in Bokpyin was perceived to be poor. “Information is conveyed from the township administration on to VTAs; but this does not necessarily get passed on to the community,” says one representative. In contrast, 59 percent of respondents from Thayetchaung thought they received enough such information.

It should be noted that throughout its periods of military and authoritarian rule, the state in Myanmar always disposed of a functioning mass-communication system of the socialist type. However, the top-down nature of this communication and the reluctance to provide public access to information that can possibly indicate problems or make the state or public officials appear in a negative light, are still legacies from past practice.

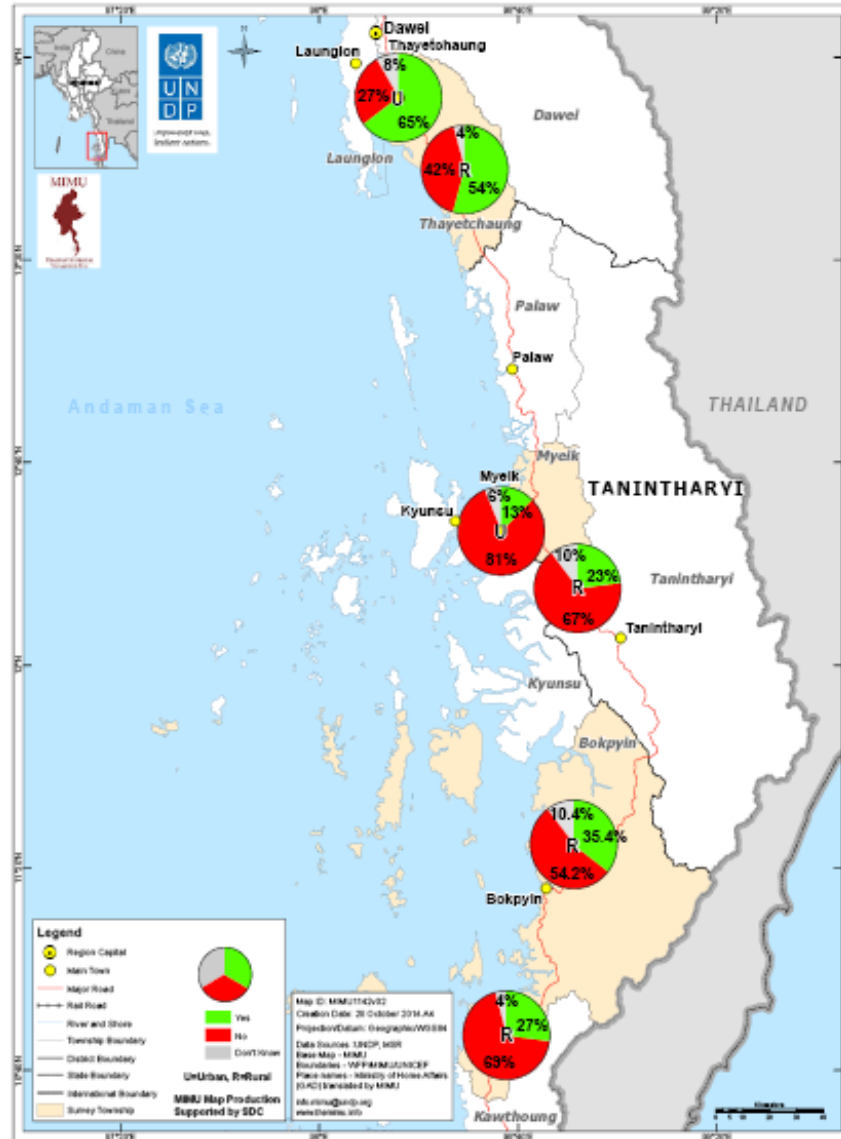
Box 6: Community Dialogues: Methods for information sharing

VTAs across Tanintharyi have deployed a number of strategies for dissemination of information on development projects and plans to constituents. Traditional methods remain prevalent: Meetings remain a primary method for information sharing, as does dissemination of information through word of mouth. In Ah Lel Kyun Ward, Myeik Township, elders and 10 Household Heads are called for meetings to share the information on development projects (roads, sanitation), according to participants at a community dialogue. In addition, the VTA is beginning to deploy information by use of pamphlets.

Participants in community dialogues highlighted examples of more inclusive methods in use related to basic service delivery. In Thea Chaung Gyi Village Tract, Thayetchaung Township, the VTA and the teachers called for a meeting to convey information on school registration. And according to participants at a community dialogue, one person from each household was called to attend the meeting to share information on the finances when a new healthcare facility was built.

Figure 26:
Satisfaction of
information
sharing by
government on
new projects and
initiatives

Source: Local
Governance
Mapping,
Tanintharyi Region,
June 2014.



4.5.2 People's awareness of local governance reforms and their rights

In a context where access to information can be challenging, to what extent are people in Tanintharyi also cognisant of the current status of local governance reforms, and the implications for their rights and livelihoods? The reforms with the most immediate implications for communities relate to potential expectations inferred on the VTA as an elected representative, and the creation of new village tract/ward and township-level committees with “persons popularly elected from among local people and social and economic organisations,”⁶⁹ to create a consultative body for the township management in the setting of local development priorities.

Role of Village Tract Administrator

In Myanmar, administration at the local level is mentioned in the Constitution, which stipulates that “administration of district and township level shall be assigned to the Civil Services personnel” (Article 288) and that the “administration of ward or village-tract shall be assigned in accord with the law to a person whose integrity is respected by the community” (Article 289). Although this notably does not explicitly foresee or exclude that WAs and VTAs can be elected, this is what was agreed on by the legislature when it amended the 1907 Ward and Village Tract Administration Act in early 2012. The elections held in late 2012 were not under the authority of the Union Election Commission and the election laws, but was entirely administered by the GAD under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The VTA was previously selected and recruited by the Township Administrator, but following the enactment of the 2012 Ward and Village Tract Law the VTA is now an elected ‘representative’ of the communities they serve.⁷⁰ This represents a break from the past, when the VTA served purely as an extension of the township GAD working under the directive of the Township Administrator. The now-elected VTAs can be considered as holding at least an informal mandate to represent the interests of their constituents, most apparently through regular meetings with the GAD and the township administration.

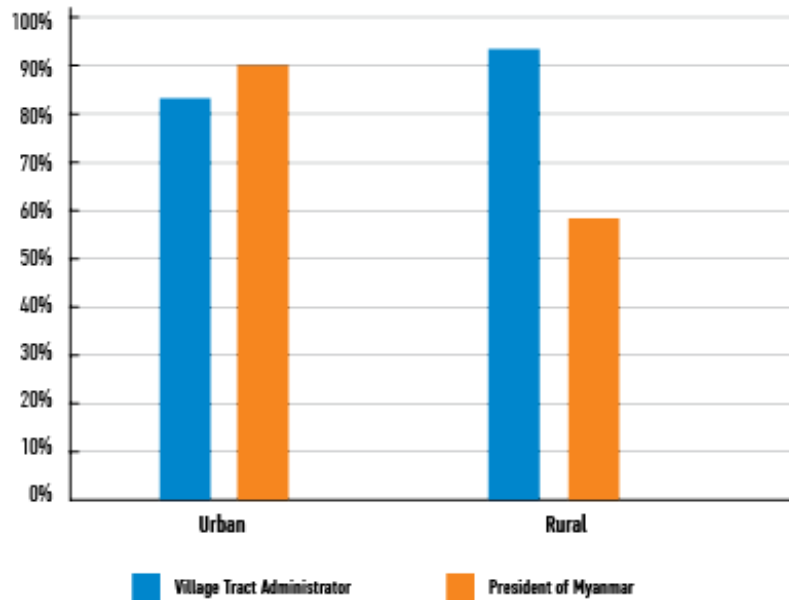
Three of six VTAs interviewed in Tanintharyi had education attainment to the level of middle school, while there is an even split between those who have held their position within their particular village tract/ward for between 1 – 3 years (3), and the rest between 6-10 years (3), and have thus served as VTAs already before the elections. All six had been appointed following an election process: two were elected by village elders and four by adult (male and female) villagers by ballot. Notwithstanding the elections, the formal responsibilities of the VTA still retain most of the features traditionally associated with this post, essentially with regard to maintenance of security and administrative control at the local level. The duties and responsibilities of the VTA are listed in detail in the 2012 VTA Law. They include ensuring the security of residents, to prevent crime and supervise ward and village social affairs, alongside a number of punitive measures (such as arrest and fines), as well as policing functions.

69. Notification No 27/2013, Assignment of duties for formation of township and ward/village tract development support committee. The President's Office, 26 February 2013.

70. According to the 2012 Ward and Village Tract law, the VTA is elected by secret ballot of 10 Household Heads, following a screening of the qualifications of interested candidates. The 10 Household Heads were elected as representatives of their areas by heads of households. Administrators are to be selected through two rounds of secret voting. The procedure to be followed has been included in the amended Ward and Village Tract Act: (1) Township level administrators (i.e. the GAD) appoint a supervisory body of five respected residents to oversee the voting process in each ward and village tract. The body has to combine all households in the ward or village tract into groups of 10, with each group holding a secret ballot to select a nominee. (2) From the leaders of each group of 10 households, an administrator for each ward and village tract will be selected through secret ballot. Administrators must also be aged 18 or over and be residents of the ward or village tract. There has not been an official report on these elections, which were also not observed by any independent observer groups. Political parties generally did not mobilize or campaign for these elections. It is not known whether any women were elected as Ward or Village Tract Administrators.

Figure 27: Knowledge of names of elected representatives, urban-rural breakdown

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Tanintharyi Region, June 2014.



Awareness among local populations of their VTA is extremely high—93 percent of rural respondents could name their VTA in rural areas as could 83 percent of urban residents (with regard to their WAs), indicating that exposure to their VTA is likely to be good, despite relying much more on the ro HH Heads for day-to-day information (see Figure 27). A requirement to provide villagers with information and directives from the government (8%) is not a high priority for respondents in Tanintharyi. Half (50%) highlighted the peace and security role of the VTA as among the most important functions, while 44 percent perceived the task of conflict mediation to be important. Given the historical function of VTAs over the past century, as well as the legal mandate enshrined in the Ward and Village Tract Act, it does not come as a surprise that expectations related to the ‘law and order’ role of the VTA are more embedded among communities in Tanintharyi townships compared with the still tenuous and uncertain ‘representative’ role of the VTA, following their election. Accordingly, Bringing village problems to the township administrator (30%) and consulting and involving villagers in decision-making (18%) are perceived to be important by fewer people.

The VTAs’ own perceptions on the importance of the various functions they play provide some insight. All six of the VTAs interviewed cited ensuring peace and security in the village as an important function of their role—which may have some context in the long-standing conflict in Tanintharyi. Five emphasised ‘conflict mediation’ indicating that their executive responsibilities related to ‘keeping the peace’ locally remain on top of their minds. Notably, five VTAs also emphasized the responsibility of bringing village problems to the township administration. But none of the VTAs considered involving villagers in decision-making processes at village level as being an important, suggesting that the ‘consultative’ function of the VTA is less pronounced at this stage. When asked about the biggest challenges faced in fulfilling their responsibilities, most cited community organisation to be difficult.

Awareness of consultative committees at the township level

The 2013 Notification also provisions for the establishment of a Village Tract/Ward Development Support Committee (VTDSC), a popularly-elected body with a remit to discuss the socio-economic needs of residents, to advise the VTA and to elevate matters that cannot be resolved up to township management. At that level, a Township Development Support Committee (TDSC) has also been established as of 2013, “to advise and support township authority and departments without disturbing their duties, prevailing laws and regulations,”⁷¹ and also to serve as a sounding board for the TMC (and possibly for elected VTAs) (see Figure 28).⁷² (See above for more details on the composition and the functioning of TDSCs in Tanintharyi Region.)

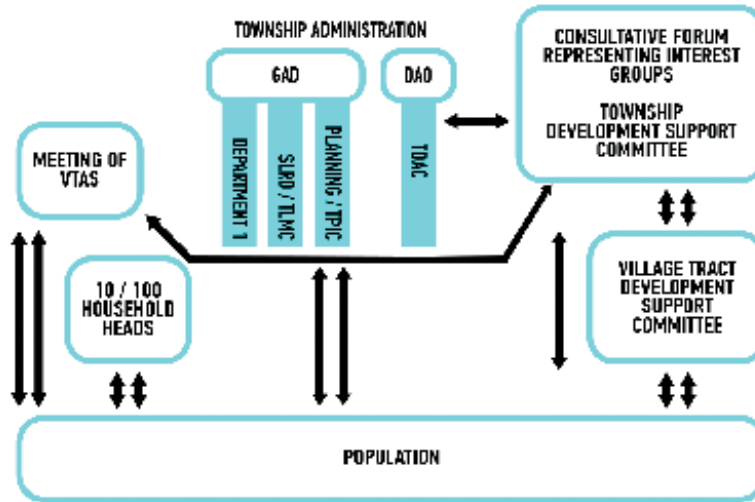


Figure 28: Consultative mechanisms/committees in Tanintharyi Region

Source: Adapted from UNDP 2014.

To what extent are people aware of these new consultative entities? Across the three townships, only 3 percent of respondents were aware of new consultative committees at the village and township level (see Figure 29). While this is related to how recently these entities were established - 2013 in Tanintharyi - this is also indicative of low awareness as to the new mechanisms emerging for interest groups to represent their interests and influence local decision-making. In Tanintharyi Region, this is pertinent given the potential for such committees to serve a possible sounding board for the variety of interest groups that are active in the Region, including ethnic groups, social or economic sector groups and grassroots interests.

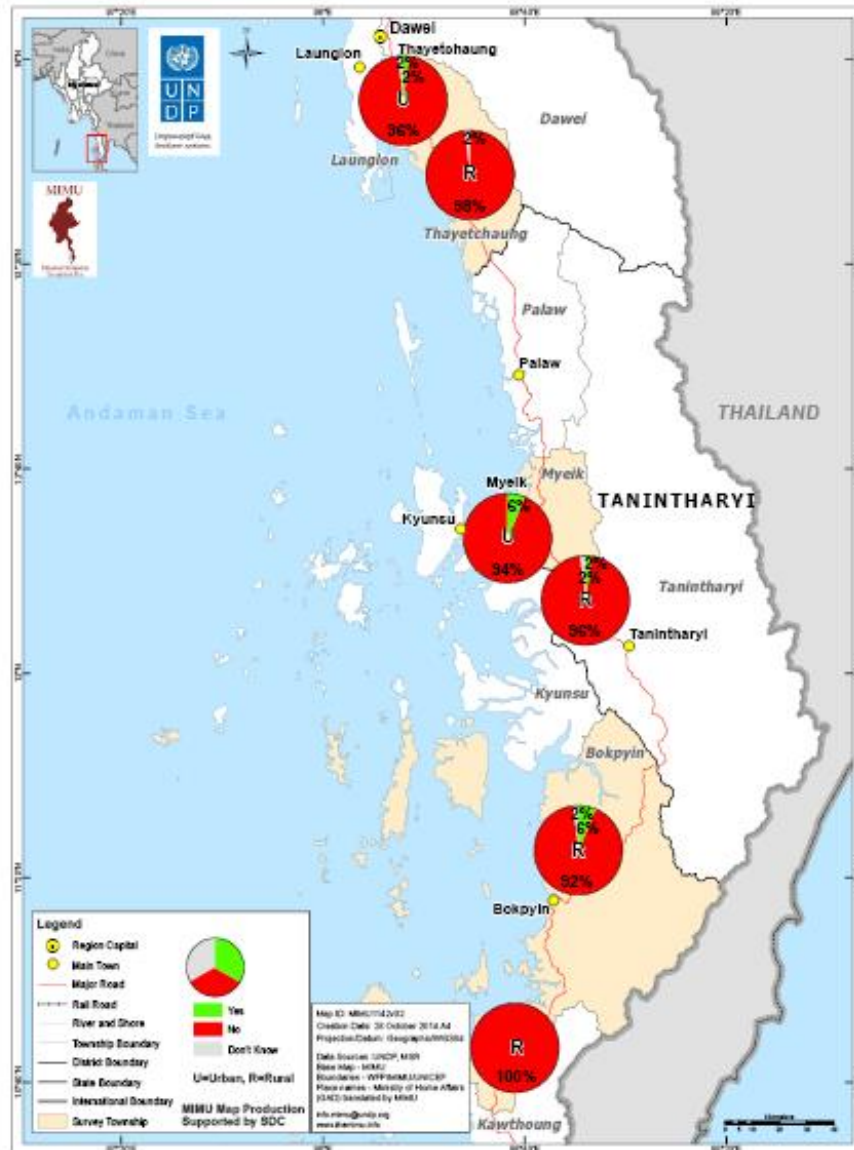
Across the three townships, only 3 percent of respondents were aware of new consultative committees at the village and township level.

71. Notification No 27/2013, 'Assignment of duties for formation of township and ward/ village tract development support committee. The President's Office, 26 February 2013. A Township Development Affairs Committee (TDAC) also plays a similar role for the Development Affairs Organisations (DAO) in the municipal wards, though theirs is more of a hybrid consultative-executive unit, and influenced by the Municipal Act of each of the State/Region governments.

72. The Township Development Affairs Committee (TDAC) also plays a similar role for the Development Affairs Organisations (DAO) in the municipal wards, though theirs is more of a hybrid consultative-executive unit, and influenced by the Municipal Act of each of the State/Region governments.

Figure 29:
People's
awareness of
consultative
township
committees

Source: Local
Governance
Mapping,
Tanintharyi Region,
June 2014.



4.5.3 Grievances and complaints

The volume of grievances expressed through formal complaints filed in at the township GAD at Tanintharyi Region varies by township, though they are for most part related to land disputes, for which a distinct mechanism exists. In Myeik Township, 3-4 complaints are received per month. In Bokpyin, there is an average of 10 complaints per year. Though this varies across GAD township offices in Tanintharyi, some spend a significant proportion of time filing and handling complaints and managing grievances. This is particularly the case in the large, urban township of Myeik, where one official observed that the “[...] the GAD is the focal point.” Yet, discussions with township staff and committee members indicated that there exists a lack of clarity on the complaints process itself and the criteria for handling or elevating grievances.

Box 7: A “one-stop” township committee for complaints?

Thayetchaung Township has established a dedicated committee to specifically deal with social, economic and criminal complaints that cannot be resolved at the village tract/ward level. The composition of the committee includes representation from the core social sectors (health, education, development affairs) and enforcement agencies (police, law, immigration, land records). Complaints mostly take the form of, family conflicts and disputes over inheritance, which sometime blend into land disputes.

Land disputes

The procedures for land-related disputes are more clearly defined and have a legal basis in the 2012 Farmland Law. The two laws related to the management of land, the Farmland Law and the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Management Law, were approved by the Union Legislature on 30 March 2012 (2012 Land Laws). They regulate procedures for registering various types of land and foresee recourse to higher instances within the administrative structure, but at the expense of the possibility to take a land-related case to court. Land confiscation has been an issue in Tanintharyi in the past and remains so though incidents have all significantly decreased since the handover to civilian authorities in 2011 and since the ceasefire was agreed in 2012. However, it remains a critical development issue as ongoing disputes on access to land remain a major barrier to the return and resettlement of IDPs and refugees.⁷³ In Tanintharyi, the legacy of land grabbing for commercial investment it is also prominent, with recent incidences of protests by farmers recorded in the local media. Also of interest is the accommodation reached by the Region Government and the KNU leadership on land use. In 2013, an agreement was reached to recognising customary land rights in Kayin/Karen villages, the KNU’s allocation and measurement of land in these villages, and for freedom to establish reserves for forestland and wildlife sanctuaries.⁷⁴

While disputes related to the inheritance of farmland may be decided by a court, there is no mechanism in the 2012 Land Laws that allows for disputes involving the allocation or use of farmland to be heard in a court of law. For these, farmers must bring their grievance to a “Farmland Management Body”, which is also the village tract level decision-making body chaired by the VTA. Complainants dissatisfied with the decision at the village tract level can appeal to corresponding bodies at the township, district, and finally the Region level.⁷⁵ At the township level, it is also known as the

73. Tanintharyi Region Profile. UNHCR South-east Myanmar Information Management Unit, June 2014.

74. “KNU And Government Agree To Work Together On Land Issues.” Karen News, November 12 2013.

75. Farmland Law 2012 Notification No 62/2012. The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, August 2012.

Four of the six VTAs cite land issues as the most common problem that they are asked to mediate or resolve

Township (Farm-)Land Management Committee (TLMC), which is chaired by the Township Administrator, with the head of the Settlement and Land Records Department (SLRD) as secretary.⁷⁶ In accordance with this, respondents to the community survey tended to channel land-related disputes to the VTA (57%) or to Household Head (40%), before approaching the Township Administrator (38%) or the VTA (37%) if they were not happy with the outcome in the first instance. Four of the six VTAs cite land issues as the most common problem that they are asked to mediate or resolve. Related to this, registration for land use certificates is comparatively low, in contrast to other States and Regions. Of those 66 respondents who own farm land, only 38 percent have successfully registered it; 33 percent have not; and 26 percent are waiting for approval.

The TLMCs at all levels lack popular participation and transparency, and unlike the TMC, have no “sounding board” to inform their decision-making. However, in an apparent innovative step aiming to address this, township officials in Myeik have referred to the recent formation of a Township Land Utilisation Committee (TLUC), with the aim returning confiscated farmland to its rightful owners. The TLUC was borne from a union-level initiative a Land Utilisation Management Central Committee,⁷⁷ which seeks to settle complaints related to land seizures.⁷⁸ Under this central body, sub-committees are to be formed in every State/ Region at the district, township and ward levels. As observed by the Township Administrator, while there are low incidences compared to the likes of Yangon and Sagaing Regions, land disputes in Myeik has transpired the formation of the TLUC established there, with the elected chair of the TDSC as chair. The committee, however, is fairly inactive in practice. According to the Township Administrator, it has met two times since formation (early 2014) and is perceived by him to be more of a mediation forum than a decision-making one.

4.5.4 Social accountability

In a democratic system, Parliament typically holds the executive politically accountable, while the judiciary provides legal oversight on the activities of public officials. As outlined above, institutions for political accountability remain limited at the township level and below, though the TDSC, the VTDSC and the VTA could in the future serve as potential entry points for examining horizontal accountability at the township level, in particular if their own electoral legitimacy is strengthened alongside.

Elections remain the principal means by which citizens can hold the state to account, though as observed by the World Bank, they remain a “... very weak and blunt instrument”.⁷⁹ Social accountability represents a range of mechanisms beyond voting that people can deploy to seek responsiveness from public officials, through advocacy campaigns, investigative journalism, public interest lawsuits, and more recently, opportunities for direct dialogue with the government through participatory planning and performance tracking. Institutions for social accountability are even less developed in Myanmar than those of political accountability, in a context where people did not rely much on authorities in the way of basic public services, and where the relationship between civil society and the military government was often contentious. In a peripheral and largely rural Region like Tanintharyi, this absence is even more pronounced, with the possible exception of social mobilization and media interest in the context of the Dawei SEZ development project.

76. The Township Planning Officer and head(s) of the Department of Agriculture and Department of Livestock Breeding are also members.

77. Formed in September 2013 under a Union Government Office Notification and led by Vice-president U Nyan Tun.

78. Notification No. 59/2013 of the Union Government Office, September 16, 2013.

79. “Social Accountability: What Does It Mean for the World Bank?” Chapter 2, Social Accountability Sourcebook World Bank, 2006.

This perception colours the way in which respondents attribute responsibility for resolving local development challenges. In considering who held the main responsibility for resolving these challenges, the opinions of respondents varied, with around one-third (33%) assigning this to the VTA or the Region or Union Government (31%). Only 16 percent conferred responsibility for resolving local development challenges to the Township Administration, which is not the apparent “interface” of local public service delivery for most Tanintharyi respondents. Moreover, the level of confidence in government (at any level) to be responsive to the issue was relatively low. It was felt by over half of respondents (53%) that the township administration or other government bodies were doing nothing to address their problems.

Four of the six VTAs cite land issues as the most common problem that they are asked to mediate or resolve

“Answerability” at the level of local health and education institutions

Insights from managers of health facilities indicate that “Answerability” or responsiveness to complaints and requests from the level of the village or town community is not particularly pronounced across the three townships. While all of the six managers had elevated people’s complaints and requests to the TMO, none of them had been resolved successfully. As the only person who could be considered an elected ‘representative’ of residents in village tract/ward, the VTA, through participation in discussions with government officials on health services, could in the future constitute another potential channel for driving responsiveness to community complaints and requests. As it currently stands, this is not the case within the current legal framework and is not stipulated as a core function of the VTA. Yet, only three of six VTAs interviewed had ever been involved in or invited for a meeting with health officials to discuss health services in their respective village tracts/wards. Promisingly, five of six VTAs have been involved or invited for a meeting with government officials to talk about primary education in their community, indicating a potential future entry point for the community to seek responsiveness to their concerns and issues. Currently, it remains outside the scope of the VTA’s formal responsibilities.

Promisingly, five of six VTAs have been involved or invited for a meeting with government officials to talk about primary education in their community, indicating a potential future entry point for the community to seek responsiveness to their concerns and issues.



Respondents with children at a primary school were asked whether complaints by parents are taken seriously by the school management. Around a quarter (24%) of rural parents was not able to answer this question, and of all parents, only one respondent (of 154) has ever made a complaint. This may well indicate that complaint mechanisms are not always well understood, or that information is not made available on citizens, in particular in rural areas. It may however also indicate a culture and relationships that do not encourage or allow citizens to express complaints openly.

Electoral participation

One of the key means of participation for people in the process of governance is through elections. As provided in the 2008 Constitution, since 2010, the people of Myanmar have had the opportunity to directly elect Members of Parliament at the union (for the two Houses of the legislature the Pyithu Hluttaw and the Amyotha Hluttaw) and State/Region level hluttaws.⁸⁰ The revision of the 1907 Village Tract/Ward Act in 2012 additionally introduced the indirect election of VTAs, for whom elections took place across Myanmar in late 2012 and early 2013. 83 percent of the 288 respondents from the community survey claimed to have voted in the 2010 elections for the Union-level parliament, indicating a high propensity for participation in elections. The actual turnout figures were estimated to be much lower; however. This raises the question what other channels for access do people have to access “space” at the level of the community, where they can influence local decision-making and have a voice? The establishment of the State/Region Governments in Myanmar were a significant step in that direction, consolidating local political parties that offer one such vehicle. And do any alternative forums exist at the community level where such space can be claimed? The six VTAs indicated a number of social groups were active in their communities including: Socio-religious youth groups, the pagoda board and village “Elderly and Respected Persons”. Also mentioned by VTAs were Parent Teacher Associations (three) and Village Health Committees (two).

Influencing the delivery of local services

Village Health Committees (VHC) were initially established by Union Ministry of Health to “involve relevant sectors [...] and to mobilize the community more effectively in health activities,” with the inclusion of the relevant health authority and representatives from social organizations as members.⁸¹ Four of six facility managers in Tanintharyi reported the presence of a VHC, whose main form of support is the provision of labour for small repairs for health centres. Of interest for local governance is that VTA members are sometimes appointed (two of four) but sometimes elected (two of four). This presents a possible entry point through which to drive responsiveness to local healthcare needs of the community and to influence decision making on local health priorities.⁸²

Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) exist for every primary school in each of the village tracts/wards where the six VTAs were interviewed. These bodies became active under the military government, working to fill shortfalls for basic educational facilities and materials by collecting donations for textbooks and handling the basic maintenance of schools buildings. This remains their primary role today, as confirmed by the six VTAs and six principals interviewed. Regional education officials noted the role of some PTAs working with principals to provide inputs to the township education office for planning and prioritization. These PTAs meet yearly or bi-yearly, and three of

80. In the country's six Self-Administered Areas (i.e. in Sagaing Region and Shan State) voters also elect members of the assemblies of these areas.

81. Country Health Profile, Myanmar, World Health Organisation, 2004.

82. Through the Myanmar Essential Health Services Access project, the World Bank is planning to support the Ministry of Health in developing a Community Engagement Planning framework to enhance community engagement and address issues pertaining to ethnic minorities—through existing mechanisms such as the health committees.

the six principals report that most members are elected or selected. As noted by one observer, the PTAs already practice “deliberative forms of decision making”, in the guise of voting for their own chairpersons and managing small funds.

Composed of members from both government staff and members of the community, both PTAs and VHCs could be described as hybrid organizations that transverse civil society and public sector. It is essential that state bodies and non-governmental groups interact in a cooperative manner for information sharing, and to identify scope for joint collaborative action. For this reason, such hybrid bodies could be well placed for revitalization as village-level mechanisms for people to participate in and influence the delivery of public services.

Civil society as advocates

Based on observations in the three townships, civil society in Tanintharyi is relatively small in scale, weakly networked and limited in its capacity to play a role in public service delivery: this function has been subsumed, to some extent, by commercial businesses. In addition, the capacity of CSOs to have a voice in township development is hampered by an apparently tentative relationship with the authorities. Limited awareness of the institutions, processes and procedures of township governance, and how they can most effectively serve the interests of the local community emerged as a concern for CSO representatives in Myeik, with few of them seeking formal registration.

But this is less the case in Thayetchaung and Dawei, where civil society has emerged with a stronger role to protect the interests of communities vulnerable to the developments associated with commercial development. Cases of major environmental degradation as a result of mining projects have emerged, with one CSO helping local villagers to file a civil case at the Dawei District Court against a mining firm for damage caused by waste water.⁸³ The development of the Dawei SEZ is also catalysing activism from CSOs concerned with the impact of the project on the environment and livelihoods—the Dawei Development Association, a coalition of CSOs, has called on the Myanmar and Thai governments to discontinue efforts on the project unless local concerns related to environmental and social protections involuntary resettlement, information disclosure and potential malfeasance are allayed.⁸⁴ In these examples, there is a glimmer of potential for CSOs to bolster social accountability in the future, should they be imparted with the capacity and space to do so.

While the voice of CSO may be limited in some areas of Tanintharyi, this is less the case in Thayetchaung and Dawei, where civil society has emerged with a stronger role to protect the interests of communities vulnerable to the developments associated with commercial development.

83. “Lawsuit Against Heinda Mine Accepted by Dawei Court,” *The Irrawaddy*, 19 May 2014.

84. “Civil Society Group Calls for Freeze on Dawei Economic Zone” *Myanmar Times*, 13 October 2014.



5. Conclusions

In this remote and sparsely populated, but strategically important region, the application of local governance reforms has led to the establishment of new institutions, mechanisms and processes aimed at improving the responsiveness of public service providers and the Township Administration to the needs of communities. These efforts have only partially succeeded so far. At the same time, Tanintharyi Region has introduced a number of innovative approaches that can serve as the basis for furthering the openness of government and public participation. Over time, more profound governance reforms at the local level have the potential to put Tanintharyi at the forefront of reform efforts in the country and serve as an example for other States and Regions. This is taking place in a context defined by over 60 years of low-level ethnic conflict, and intensive development of the agro-industry and the resources sector. While the local governance structures of Tanintharyi are similar to that of other regions, the region-specific dynamics and its socio-economic background have shaped the way in which these have been applied.

5.1 Development planning and participation

Given the low population density in Tanintharyi, the Poverty Reduction Fund and Constituency Development Funds (disbursed in 2013-14 under a principle of equal shares across States/Regions) amount to comparatively high levels per capita and can have a significant developmental impact, particularly in smaller, less populous townships. The significant discrepancies of these funds across townships in the Region highlight the fact that these allocations were not based on any equitable formula-based criteria. As State/Region Governments receive more autonomy on discretionary funds they will be the ultimate decision-makers for disbursement of the PRF from 2014-15. Considerations of equity may need to begin to factor into the planning and budgeting process for discretionary funding. It is promising that both Regional executive and legislative actors already engage in some degree of co-ordination and oversight in the disbursement of funds. They have the potential to enhance this role, with pro-poor and equity considerations in mind.

In establishing local development priorities, the extent to which communities are being consulted varies across townships in Tanintharyi. Not all are making full use of the opportunity presented by these new mechanisms for the voices of various interest groups, CSOs and citizens to be reflected. Institutional shortcomings related to information sharing, co-ordination and communication will take time to overcome, and require a focussed effort to address these, and to move beyond the issuance of rules and objectives to one of engagement between stakeholders.

Capacity shortfalls are another impediment for Tanintharyi officials and elected committee members in particular, some of who are not familiar with their role and mandate. This is in part attributable to the absence of clear operating guidelines for the committees, particularly for those that are consultative. While there are responsibilities and assigned tasks as outlined in a Presidential Notification and the Tanintharyi Municipal Law, no detailed procedures or terms of reference exist as of yet. Efforts to review and identify capacity needs, and for capacity development as part of a longer-term strategy to develop these new mechanisms and institutions would impart confidence to stakeholders, many of whom are grappling with concepts of participation for the first time.

As in other States and Regions, the absence of women as local governance actors in Tanintharyi is a key finding from the mapping. In the three townships in the study, women make up the minority of township administrators, and there were no female representatives in the Township Committees. One female VTA was elected after the 2012 by-elections in Myeik township and one in Dawei. Promisingly, township actors in Tanintharyi have recognised this as a shortfall, and suggested the development of leadership opportunities for women at the community level, and to deepen efforts to address gender inequality as it pertains to socio-cultural attitudes of women, work and leadership. Lower participation by women (as opposed to men) at village-level meetings indicates that there is also room for the wider inclusion of women citizens in setting local priorities. Gender inequality in local governance is a priority issue in Tanintharyi, where as things stand, the needs and priorities of women are not likely to be meaningfully reflected.

5.2 Basic service delivery

Commercial businesses play a substantial role in supporting public service delivery, particularly in the provision of drinking water in Tanintharyi. While this has helped to address shortfalls in public-sector capacity to date, this also presents a potential challenge to “good governance” in Tanintharyi, given that there are few checks and balances or systems in place to govern public-private interactions, or ways by which to hold private vendors to account. Dynamics in the drinking water sector are telling: the cost of private-sector services to consumers is high in some townships, and officials are recognising a need to address this as a longer-term development issue.

A more consultative approach to service delivery has been taking place of late in Tanintharyi for instance in the primary education sector with officials gathering more input from frontline service providers and parents to inform the planning process. At the same time, Region Government has sought to reflect the priorities and needs of the minority Kayin population by allowing the teaching of Karen literature and language in the classroom in 2013. Both are promising for the Region in the (new) emphasis on listening to the needs of local communities and minority groups to inform service delivery. However, such initiatives remain adhoc, and there is a need to institutionalise such “feedback loops” to improve responsiveness. The Village Health Committees and the Parent Teacher Associations may offer a channel for the basic health and primary education sectors to consult the communities in a more consistent manner.

5.3 Information, transparency and accountability

Low population density and poor accessibility of some villages present a challenge to governance-related communications, which like much of rural Myanmar remains local and often communicated through personal networks. The 10 Household Head remains the key source of information for the majority of people, meaning the role and existing capacities of these individuals merit closer attention. The VTA is not the main conduit for day-to-day information, but name recognition among citizens is very high.

The fact that the VTAs have been appointed following an election does not amount to the democratisation of local governance. The mapping finds that in Tanintharyi both VTAs and citizens primarily associate the VTAs’ role with ‘law and order’ functions, which may be even stronger in post-conflict areas of Tanintharyi. Whether the representative mandate inferred on the VTA as an elected leader will eventually translate into demands for more responsiveness is contingent on the perceptions of the role, community expectations and level of personal initiative.

In this early stage of local governance reforms, the newly-established formal consultative bodies are not yet widely known in Tanintharyi. They are not broadly representative and sometimes suffer from a lack of legitimacy. In particular, questions remain as to the election processes in place, which vary significantly by location, and for particular institutions. Credibility of these institutions among citizens would be enhanced by improved accountability mechanisms, which also account for transparency and wider representation. There is a specific need to consider conflicts of interest, given the participation of the private sector in providing some public services, and the role of consultative committees as a “sounding board” in setting development priorities and for the spending of public funds.

Grievance redressal mechanisms are not always effective, particularly in areas of Tanintharyi where there are significant problems related to land disputes. Some are a direct legacy of the commercial development of mines and plantations have driven economic migration within the Region and across its boundaries, of which the repercussions are still being felt today by Tanintharyi’s IDPs. The capacity of civil society to support public service delivery remains underdeveloped, but some organisations are emerging as keen advocates of land rights, and of the implications of large infrastructure projects, such as the Dawei SEZ, on local communities. In this, there is potential to foster new forms of social accountability.

5.4 Charting a path for continued local governance reform in Tanintharyi Region

At this early stage of decentralisation in Myanmar, Tanintharyi Region already appears to be forging its own path. Belying the composition of the Region Government and Hluttaw, Tanintharyi is already showing a predilection towards advancing its interests and identity as a Region vis-à-vis the central government, as while ethnic or other cleavages seem to be playing a lesser role. Several factors might be at play. A seemingly accommodative relationship between the Region Government and the KNU may account for ethnic dynamics being less detrimental to development priorities than in other States or Regions affected by conflict. The local economy, and the centrality of the private sector, may also have some bearing. The potential importance of the high-profile Dawei SEZ in the longer-term development of the Region’s – and Myanmar’s – economic development provides a focus for legislators and Region officials in planning for Tanintharyi’s medium and long-term prospects.

A number of risks come with this opportunity. The predominance of the private businesses within the local economy—and also for the provision of essential services—demands closer attention to the risk of “elite capture”. To avoid this, a clear delimitation of roles and a definition of responsibilities between local administrators and civil servants on one side, and political or interest groups representatives (including those from the commercial sector) on the other side, will be required.

In particular, services should be provided on the basis of equal rights and equity, rather than on the basis of political favours and personal loyalties. In a region where commercial interests contributed to large-scale economic displacement, economic growth cannot come at the expense of local communities. Fledgling civil society actors are already stepping up to play a role in advocating for them. A local economy that develops along lines that are less exploitative and elite-driven, but more inclusive, as well as socially and environmentally sustainable will also have a decisive effect on the way in which local governance can be reformed into a more people-centred and participatory form of administration.

6. Annexes

Annex 1: Composition of township committees

Role	Position	Bokpyin	Myeik	Thayetchaung
Chair	Township Administrator - GAD	Y	Y	Y
Member	Township Police Officer	Y	Y	Y
Member	Township Law Officer	Cooperatives Officer	Y	Y
Member	Township Planning Officer	Y	Y	Y (Deputy Township Planning Officer)
Member	Township Agricultural Office	No Member (only 8 members in total)		Township Medical Officer (TMO)
Member	Township Education Officer	Y		Y
Member	Township Municipal Affairs Officer	Y		Township Land Registration Officer
Secretary	Township Revenue Officer	Immigration Officer	Immigration Officer	Staff Officer of Dept. of Immigration
Joint Secretary	Deputy Township Administrator - GAD	Y		Y (Deputy Secretary)

Composition of Township Management Committee against national guidance

Y = Corresponds with national guidance

Annex 2: Ratings from focus group discussions, members of township support committees

In order to receive feedback from key stakeholders on developments in local governance, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were organised in each township with members of the supportive committees (TDAC, TDSC). To stimulate a dialogue, the committee members in each township were asked to come to agreement on the performance of the township government (GAD and other departments) on several key governance indicators. They could give each indicator a score between “very bad”, “bad”, “not good/not bad”, “good” or “very good” and were asked to justify their scores.

Ratings assigned by committee members by township in focus group discussions

	Bokpyin ⁸⁵	Myeik ⁸⁶	Thayetchaung ⁸⁷
1. How do you rate the information the township management provides to committees, non-government organisations and citizens (either directly or via the village tract administrators) about:	Good	No agreement	Very good
a. Plans and budgets for the township			
b. Progress regarding the implementation of projects	Good	No agreement	Very good
2. How do you rate the involvement of the various township level support committees in the township decision-making process? Can you give examples of how the work of the committees informs and influences policies/activities of the township management?	Good	No agreement	Very good
3. How do you rate the responsiveness of the township management to the needs of its citizens? Does it actively listen to the needs of its citizens and does it take adequate action to address these needs?	Good	No agreement	Good
4. How do you rate the interaction between the support committee members (TDSC and TDAC) and citizens in this township? Do these committee members actively engage with citizens and do they share relevant news and information about developments in the township? What can be done to improve this?	Good	Good	Very good
5. The president has at various occasions stressed the importance of clean government. How do you rate the activities implemented by the township management to prevent corruption in this township?	Good	Bad	Very good
6. How do you rate the information sharing between committees esp. TDSC/TDAC and TMC/TA	Good	Good	Very good
7. How do you rate the overall functioning of the township management (GAD and departments together) in this township?	Good	Very bad	Very good

The FGD with committee members were slightly different in composition across the townships. Government committee members attended in Bokpyin and Thayetchaung, whereas they did not join in Myeik, which may have affected the tone and substance of responses. In Myeik, respondents were not comfortable with “rating” township management on some of the questions. We have incorporated some verbal responses from the sessions below, though these should be read in context.

85. Attended by three people, two from the TDAC and one from the TDSC.

86. Attended by three people, one from the TDAC and two from the TDSC.

87. Attended by three people, two from the TDAC and one from the TDSC.

Annex 3: Ratings from focus group discussion, representatives of Civil Society Organisations

In addition to listening to the opinions of the committee members, the research team organised a similar discussion session with representatives from Civil Society Organisations in each of the three townships (both registered and non-registered organisations).⁸⁸

Question	Bokpyin ⁸⁹	Myeik ⁹⁰	Thayetchaung ⁹¹
1. How do you rate the information the township management provides to committees, non-government organisations and citizens (either directly or via the village tract administrators) about: a. Plans and budgets for the township b. Progress regarding the implementation of projects	Very bad		Very good
2. How do you rate the involvement of the various township level support committees and/or citizens in the township decision-making process? Do you think that the establishment of the committees has had a positive or negative impact on your work as CSOs/and the development of the township in general?	Very bad		Very good
3. How do you rate the responsiveness of the township management to the needs of its citizens? Does it actively listen to the needs of citizens? Does it take adequate action to address these needs?	Very bad		Good
4. How do you rate the interaction between the CSOs and citizens in this township? What can be done to improve this?	Not good / not bad	Good	Good ^a
5. The president has at various occasions stressed the importance of clean government. How do you rate the activities implemented by the township management to prevent corruption in this township?	Very bad		Good
6. How do you rate the overall functioning of the township management (SAD and key departments) in this township?	Bad		Good

Ratings assigned by CSO representatives by township in Focus Group Discussions

* The FGD with CSOs in Myeik did not bear credible ratings for a number of reasons. Due to logistical constraints, the discussion was held in the TA's office where members of the government staff were present at some points in the session. It also emerged that a representative from the Maternal Child Care government-affiliated CSO was the wife of the TA. Respondents were not comfortable with "rating" township management on some of the questions. We have verbal responses from the sessions, though these should be read in context.

a In Thayetchaung, the only CSOs in the township are the Fire Brigade and the Red Cross who attended the FGD. It is notable that the fire brigade is a government department in itself and is funded solely by the government while the Red Cross is government affiliated, and ratings should be considered in this context. There are no other CSOs in the township (either registered or unregistered).

b Two respondents of three gave an answer.

88. See Annex 1 for list of participants.

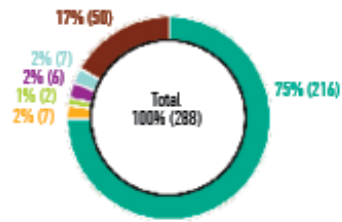
89. Attended by 6 people from the sole CSO in the township.

90. Attended by 8 people in total from two local CSOs, and the government affiliated Maternal Child Care organization.

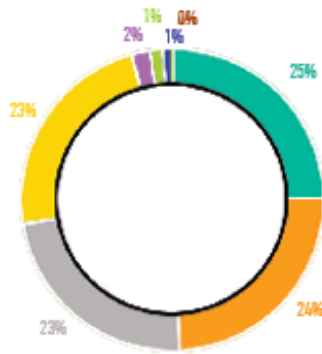
91. Attended by one representative from the Fire Brigade, and one from the Red Cross. Both are government affiliated.

Annex 4: Community survey, respondents' profile

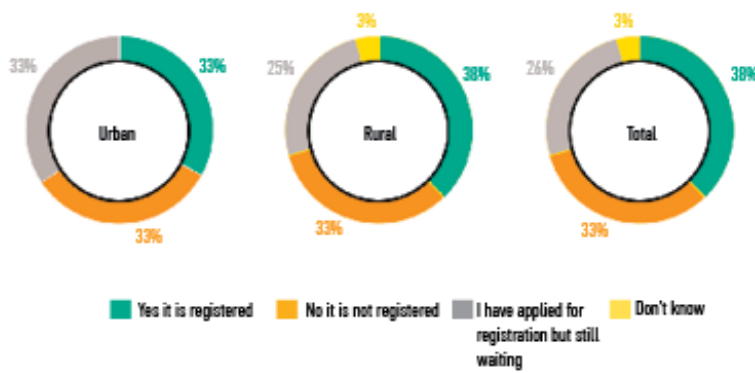




Ethnicity



What is the main activity of this household to generate an income or food?



Have you or anyone in the household registered the land on which you are farming for a land use certificate?

Annex 5: Community dialogues, respondents

Respondents by
village tract/
ward

Village Tract/ Ward	Date	Total participants	Service providers	Service users	Men	Women
Sa Tein Village Tract, Bokpyin Township	2 June 2014	46	14	32	32	14
Ma Thay Village Tract (Karathuri Sub-township) Bokpyin Township	8 June 2014	47	15	32	29	18
TheaChaunggyi Village Tract, Thayetchaung Township	4 June 2014	70	26	44	37	33
Sin HpyuPyin Ward, Thayetchaung Township	31 May 2014	43	14	29	22	21
Tone Byaw Village Tract, Myeik Township	5 June 2014	37	15	22	23	14
Ah LalKyun Ward, Myeik Township	1 June 2104	35	15	20	24	11
Total		278	99	179	167	111

Total respondents in
Tanintharyi Region

Discussion group	Representative	Male	Female	Total
Service providers	Village administration	46	4	50
	Support committee members	19	0	19
	Teachers	1	14	15
	Health staff	0	15	15
Service users	Youth	17	14	31
	CSO	18	0	18
	School committee	12	1	13
	Women's group	0	26	26
	Citizen	54	37	91
Total		167	111	278

Annex 6: Community Dialogues: Action Plans

VT/ Ward	Issue 1 (Education)	Issue 2 (Health)	Issue 3 (information flow)	Issue 4 (other issues)
Ah Lel Kyun Ward	The ward administration will report to the Township management and the Education Department to allocate more budgets for education and they will also cooperate with citizens to improve the quality of basic education. The citizens are willing to provide voluntary labor to renovate school facilities.	The ward administration will report the need of a health facility to the Health Ministry. Citizens will contribute voluntary labor to the new health facility.	The ward administration promises that a photocopy of information will be posted on the notice board in front of the ward administration office so that all the households in the ward can get the information they want to know.	The ward administrator will report a drainage/flooding problem to the Parliament since it's unlikely to be solved at ward level. Citizens can cooperate with the support committee to build new bridges.
Tone Byaw VT	The village administration will report to the Township management about the need for more school buildings and classrooms. Villagers will support village administration by cleaning the school and providing voluntary labor as well as some donations to improve the school buildings and classrooms.	The village administration will report to the Township about the requirements of primary health assistance, and to the State/Region level to allocate budget for a bigger health facility. The citizens will provide labor and donations to this new health facility.		The village administration will report to the township management about the flooding during the rainy season and solar panels that have not been distributed to the villagers as promised by the Township government.
Sin Hpyu Pyin Ward	The ward administration, school committee and teachers will call meetings to solve problems regarding the sanitation of school toilets. Health staffs will also help to check the hygiene state of the school toilets.	The ward administration promised to contact the Township management to let them know about the shortage of health staffs.	The WA promised to disseminate all the information he gets from the higher levels of administration to the public.	The WA will file a request for funding to build a water supply system and report the process of construction to the Rural Development Department.
Thea Chaung Gyi	The Headmistress and the VTA will contact the Township regarding the conditions of the school, especially water supply, and also draw volunteers and money to repair the roads. The villagers will act together to clear the surroundings of the school and also build drains to enhance the water flow.	The health staffs and VTA will inform Township administration about insufficient health infrastructures, medicines and poor water supply at the health care facility. They will also build a fence to ease the security concerns of the health facility. The villagers are willing to contribute voluntary labor in order to improve the water supply condition.	The WA promised to disseminate all the information he gets from the higher levels of administration to the public.	The village administration will report to the Township that the villagers need a high school to be built in the village. They also promised to provide a land for this high school.
Ma They VT	The village administration will cooperate with the villagers in developing the village school.	The village administration will request the Township management to permit a health facility at the village. The villagers will all work together to build a health facility at the village and those who can provide donations.	In the future, the village administration will share clear information about meetings through the PA system throughout the village. Villagers will share the information with one another so that all the villagers will receive the information.	The village tract administration will request for more field trips to the village at township meetings.
Sa Thein VT	Respected village elders and people will cooperate with each other to make school buildings better. On behalf of the community the VTA will submit a proposal to the township administration and TED to repair school buildings. Citizens will offer their labour to build schools.	The VTA will continue requesting the township for two Rural Health Centers in the village tract.	It was agreed that villagers would come to meetings held to implement project more often.	The village administration will report all the needs collected from villagers to the township level at township meetings.

Annex 7: Proposed action plans from Village Tract/Ward, Township and State level stakeholders to address some of the identified governance issues in Tanintharyi Region

Table 7.1
Group 1: Village level stakeholders.

Key issue	Action (short term)	Action (medium-term)	Actors	Capacity-building support required
Poor levels of basic education and health care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request health care staff to give trainings and lectures Appoint doctors with the community fund Appoint female teachers to the school association using the community fund Appoint those students from the community who have passed 10th grade to be teachers at their school using the community fund Instruct younger generations in the community to attend health trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit proposals one after another to relevant departments Health care departments to provide medicines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant government department NGO/NGOS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide educational and health care trainings For NGOs to conduct public talks to the community For relevant government departments to implement practical projects
Low female attendance at meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community level administration and development committee to come together and organize local citizens Habitually carry out meetings so that social services can be involved Organize for the community level to attend township level, and township level to attend district level meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create job opportunities Relevant government departments and local government administration join together with local citizens more than at present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community administration, local businessmen Relevant government departments and elected government parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expertise in management Relevant skilled individuals Investment (international experts called through the government)
Existing discrepancy between ward and village levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement projects at village level Subsidize agricultural machinery Those villagers with money purchase a generator and provide electricity to other villagers for a fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit proposals to the government electricity and communication departments Appoint skilled individuals, such as teachers and health care staff Submit proposals to relevant government ministries and companies Opening of station hospitals based on the population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community administration/elders Community development committee/citizens Reserve fire service Government departments/ companies/experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective management Support from experts in agriculture, road and bridge building Committees interested in community development Trainings in agriculture from government organizations and NGOs

Key issue	Action (short term)	Action (medium-term)	Actors	Capacity-building support required
Inefficient 10/100 HH head representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management and administrative trainings to be given to 10/100 hhs VtAs and WAs to invite people to meetings through PA system, trying not to rely to much on 10 and 100 household heads. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain financial support. Established a code of conduct and rules and regulations. Supervision on the activities of VTAs and Was by township management 	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide trainings to village tract administrators and 10/100 head household representatives
Limited engagement and participation of women in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More women invited to meetings by local authorities Assign females with roles of responsibility, such as, information sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build the general capacity of women to counter influence of traditional patriarchal society Enhance meaningful participation of women in decision making process 	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community based trainings for women
Poor forward and backward information flow from the township management to other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold more regular and ad hoc meetings Promulgate information of the activities taken by each department to township committees as well as VTAs and Was, who in turn disseminate the information to the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance active cooperation with township committees Hold more workshops so that various stakeholders can share their extensive knowledge and experiences 	Township management	Not specified

Table 7.2
Group 2: Township level stakeholders

Table 7.3
Group 3: State level stakeholders

Key issue	Action (short term)	Action (medium-term)	Actors	Capacity-building support required
Insufficient staff important government departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill remaining unassigned government staff positions with skilled local residents (don't need to provide housing/ guarantee staff availability) Increase the number of staff to those government departments that are need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for increased numbers of staff should be proposed to the Union Government through the relevant departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs/INGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give trainings to appointed staff to increase their capacity Acquire support from national and international organizations
Citizens are not directly involved in meetings'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizens will be informed about meetings so they can be involved. Will listen to the opinions of the people. Will carry out what citizens propose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will give directives to different levels of government in phases to relevant districts and townships Will financially support building the capacity of citizens and local organizations Build the capacity of organizations that work closely with citizens by providing financial support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire support for relevant local organizations
Lack of effective economic and social activities in rural areas'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize transportation and infrastructure development 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs/INGOs Relevant government departments MPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of parliament should submit proposals to the Union Government Acquire support from national and international organizations



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