

LOCAL GOVERNANCE MAPPING

Mapping Highlights in Bago Region



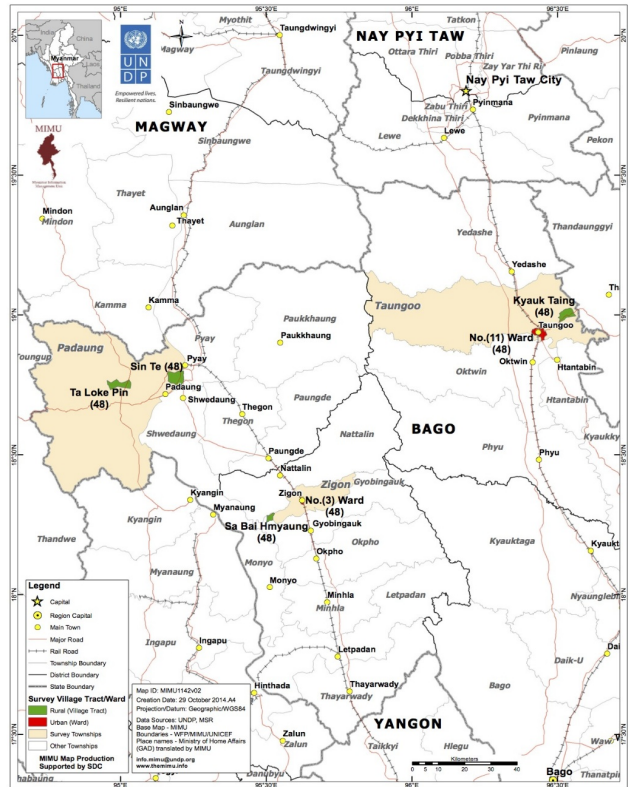
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Background

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

In Bago, the mapping covered Taungoo, Padaung and Zigon townships, where citizens, service providers, committee members, civil society representatives and local administrators were interviewed about local governance and service delivery.

Approximately 300 citizens and 100 service providers and local administrators shared their experiences and impressions of **development planning and participation** **access to services** (specifically primary education, primary health care and drinking water), and **information transparency and accountability**. This brief provides an overview of some of the key findings in Bago.



Source: MIMU



Historical and socioeconomic context

Bago Region is home to 4.9 million people or about 10% of the population of Myanmar. Historically, Bago has been part of the heartland of all ancient kingdoms of Myanmar.

The population of Bago is predominantly Bamar, but with significant minority populations of Kayin, Mons, Shans and Pa-Os. Although the majority of Bago is free from conflicts, the eastern part of the region still suffers from instability due to armed conflict.

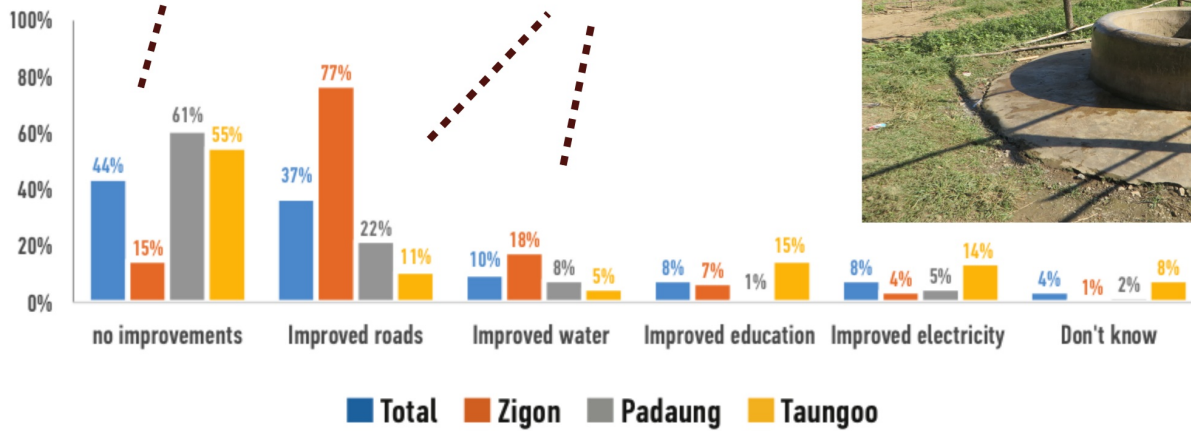
Economically, Bago is famous for its teak production in the mountains and rice in the floodplains, besides other agricultural products and its processed items. The social indicators of the region are in general more or less the same as the national average of Myanmar.



Improvements seen at the community level

More than half of the citizen respondents perceive improvements made by the government

Most visible improvements seen by people are roads and access to safe water



Development Funds

2 development funds in Bago at township level.

Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) per township - 40,000 USD (Taungoo); 32,500 USD (Padaung and Zigon)

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



PRF

The township committees have led to a new process of deliberation on allocation of the PRF. Small projects (2000-3000 USD) are funded and implemented under the supervision of the VTA. Approved projects are announced during the combined monthly TDSC/TDAC/VTAs meetings and the GAD finance officer informs each village tract/ward.

CDF

In Padaung and Taungoo, towards the end of 2013/2014, a 'Regional Development Fund Advisory Board (RDFSB) was formed with the exclusive mandate over the CDF. It consists of one elected Hluttaw member as chairperson, three other Hluttaw members, the executive officers of the DAO, the Departments of Construction and of Rural Development, the TA, and the TDSC and TMAC chairpersons as members. The purpose of the board is to ensure that villages which have never benefited from other sources of development funds are given priority and to avoid duplication of projects.

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



TDSC

The Township Development Support Committees (TDSCs) play an active role in the identification and progress monitoring of projects in Bago Region. For the identification and later on monitoring of projects for the various development funds the TDSCs in Bago Region split themselves up in sub-committees of two members each.

TMAC

In Bago, the Township Municipal Affairs Committee (TMAC), being new, plays more of an advisory role rather than an oversight role. The Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA) noted that with citizen representation in the TMAC the work has become easier as they act as an intermediary between the municipality and citizens.

Citizen participation in meetings

In Bago, 38% of the citizen respondents regularly participates in a meeting on new development projects or problems in the village organised by the VTA and 10/100 Household Heads. Fewer women participate. Few men and women are actively invited to such meetings.

Citizens participating and being invited to meetings



99% of the people interviewed had never heard of either the TDSC or TMAC.

Access to basic services: primary health, education and water

The majority of people perceive improvements in the quality of health care provision (55%) and quality of primary education (52%). 29% felt that the availability of drinking water had improved.

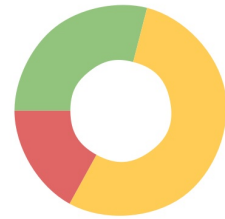
Perceived improvements in healthcare



Perceived improvements in primary education



Perceived improvements in water provision



Improved (55%) Stayed more or less the same (38%)
Worsened (1%) Don't know (6%)

Improved (51%) Stayed more or less the same (36%)
Worsened (9%) Don't know (4%)

Improved (29%) Stayed more or less the same (54%)
Worsened (17%)

Consultation on health care



In all three townships the TDSC and TMAC had regular meetings with the Township Medical Officer (TMOs) to discuss health related issues. But without resources and real influence on planning, the TMO and health facility managers cannot address issues adequately.

Improvements in education



The three Township Education Officers (TEOs), the six headmasters and 14 teachers interviewed perceived improvements in the quality of education over the last three years, due to improved quality of teaching and improved infrastructure.

The TEO drafts a recurrent budget, submits it to the District Education Officer (DEO), and submits requests for education facilities, but is not involved in its planning.

More attention for water provision

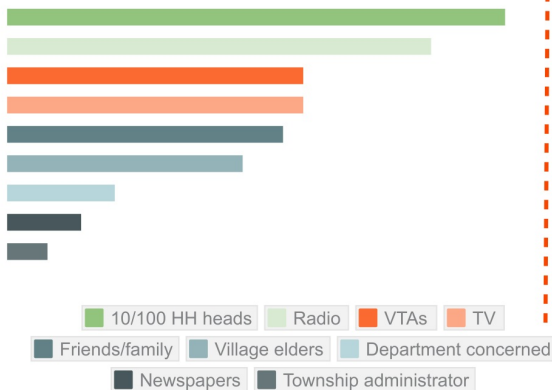


Administrations at the township level are becoming more responsive to the need for access to safe drinking water. More and more resources over which the local committees have some say (the PRF, the CDF and revenues from DMA) will be allocated to improve access to drinking water.

Information, transparency & accountability

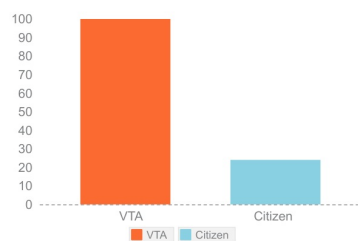
In Bago, the 10/100 Household Heads function as the primary source of government-related information for 74% of all respondents. VTAs and village elders are also important sources of information

Key sources of information



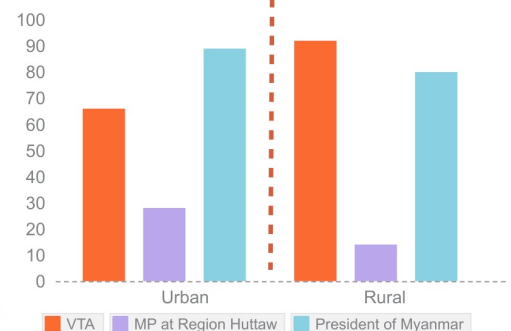
Almost all VTAs, but very few citizens feel the Township administration is providing them with sufficient information about development projects. CSOs also think that the information flow should be improved.

Perception gap on information provision



The VTA is a central player in local governance. 92% of rural residents could name their elected VTA as could 66% of urban respondents name their Ward Administrator (WA). Representatives on the regional level are less known.

Awareness of representatives



Most of the farmers had received information on land registration and the modalities of doing so either from the VTA/WA or from the agricultural extension workers. This indicates that information flow for the benefit of ordinary citizens works reasonably well.



For most citizens the VTA/WA is the first person to approach to resolve civil cases like domestic issues or land disputes.

Community Dialogue



In the community dialogues, different groups from the community such as women, youth and elders, as well as local service providers and the village tract/ward administrator, discussed key issues of and possible improvements for local governance and service delivery.

Some ideas related to development planning and participation being discussed in Bago include organising meetings with communities when new projects are planned, and involving citizens more in implementation and monitoring.

Region level recommendations



In the region level workshop in Bago where interim findings from the mapping were presented, government and civil society from the Region, township and village tract/ward level made recommendations. These include:



To improve information flow from the township administration and committees, operational support should be provided.



To address the lack of clarity in rules for payment for essential drugs, put up signboards with information on prices for different drugs and treatments, and establish a complaint mechanism in health centers.

Conclusions

- 1 In Bago Region, the TDSCs and TMACs seem to function as intended by the Presidential Notification and the Municipal Law. However, the composition of members should reflect the diversity of the society and include representatives from rural areas and women.
- 2 While more resources are being invested in water supply, a more target oriented, transparent and participatory approach to drinking water provision is required.
- 3 Clarification of the regulations regarding complaint handling and dispute resolution would help to create more transparency and limit the space for arbitrary rulings and possible mismanagement.
- 4 A space for engagement between CSOs and township administration is important for dialogue on development in townships.



For a more detailed report on Bago please visit: www.mm.undp.org

UNDP Myanmar
No. 6, Natmauk Road,
Tamwe Township
Yangon 11211,
Myanmar
E-mail:
communications.mm@undp.org
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