

LOCAL GOVERNANCE MAPPING

Mapping Highlights in Mon State



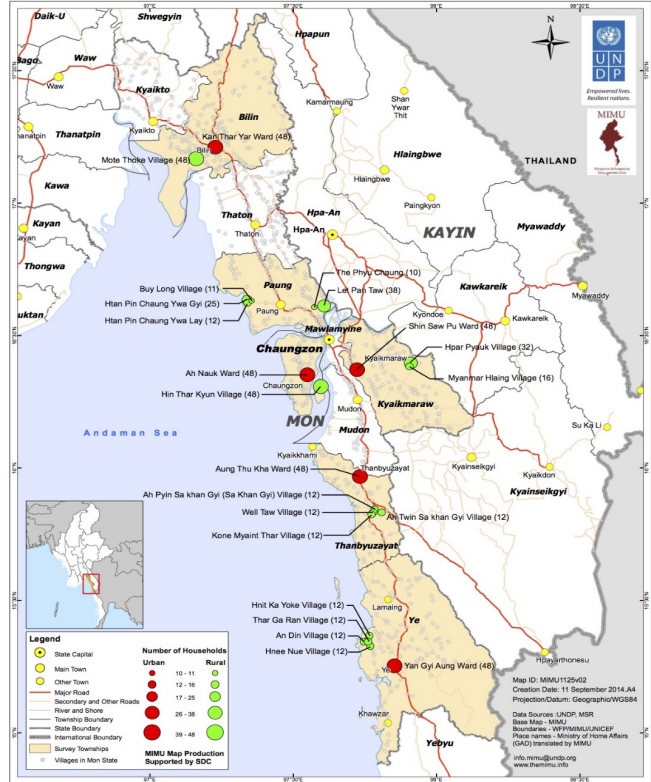
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Background

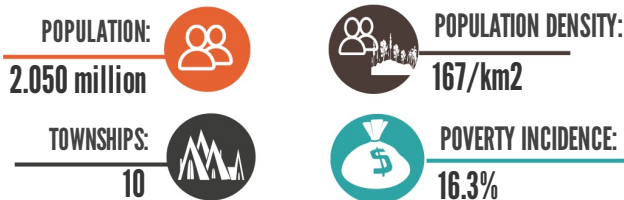
In 2013 a mapping of local governance took place in Mon State. This was part of the pilot phase of a nation-wide local governance mapping carried out by UNDP in collaboration with the General Administration Department, Ministry of Home Affairs. For an overview of the methodology see Fast Facts: Local Governance Mapping in Myanmar.

In Mon, the mapping covered Bilin, Chaungzon, Kyaikmaraw, Paung, Thanbyuzayat and Ye townships, where citizens, service providers, committee members, civil society representatives and local administrators were interviewed about local governance and service delivery.

Approximately 600 citizens and 200 service providers and local administrators shared their experiences and impressions of **development planning and participation** **access to basic services** (specifically primary education, primary health care and drinking water), and **information transparency and accountability**. This highlight shares some of the key findings in Mon.



Source: MIMU



Socio-economic context

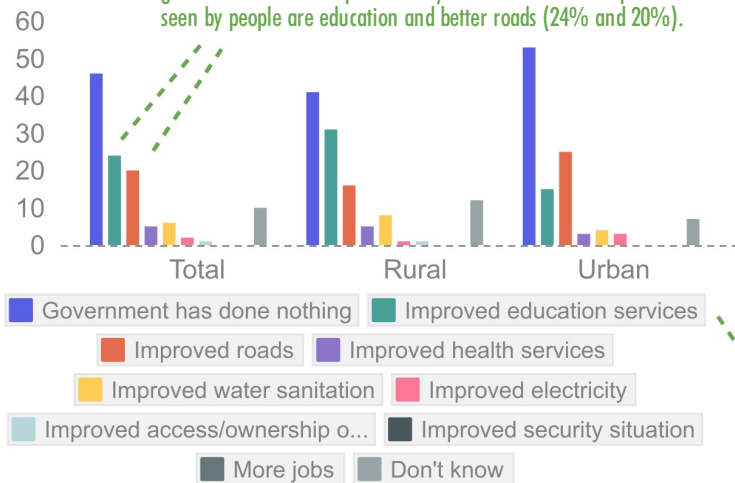
Mon State is one of Myanmar's most well-connected and prosperous states/regions. Economic activity is driven by agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining, and the state is a major producer of rice and rubber crop. Both domestic and foreign investors have shown interest in Mon given the state's strategic proximity to Thailand and its huge potential as a tourism destination.

Mon State's population of nearly 2.1 million consists of Mon, Bamar, Kayah and Pa-O people, and Myanmar and Mon languages are the most prominent.

The security situation in Mon has stabilised following the ratification of a ceasefire agreement between the Union government and the Mon National Liberation Army in 2011. Alongside the Mon State Government, the New Mon State Party (NMSP) plays a significant role in public life, notably through the establishment and administration of Mon schools. In these schools Mon language is the medium of instruction, and they operate in parallel alongside the government education system.

Improvements seen at the community level

Around half of the people perceive improvements made by the government over the past three years. Most visible improvements seen by people are education and better roads (24% and 20%).



People would like to see better roads and improved electricity.

Development planning and participation



Development Funds

At the sub-national level, there are new development funds, and emerging opportunities for local actors, such as Support Committees, Village Tract/Ward Administrators (VT/WAs) and the people, to influence the planning process and decision-making for these funds.

TA and TMC

In Mon State the Township Management Committee (TMC), chaired by the Township Administrator (TA) is the key driver for township development plans and priorities.

TAs in Mon State discussed the difficulties associated with gaining a 'horizontal' overview of township activities and understanding key gaps and priorities for basic service delivery. For example, the Township Medical Officer (TMO) is not part of the TMC, and the subsequent lack of overview may lead to waste of resources. For example, if the TMC decides to use the PRF for the construction of a new clinic but the health department does not adjust its planning and recurrent budget to run the new clinic, resources are lost.



TDSC

Although the Township Development Support Committee (TDSC) has an advisory function on paper, it appears to have some executive duties in Mon State. In Chaungzon, the TDSC has committed itself to help raise money towards building a bridge for one community.

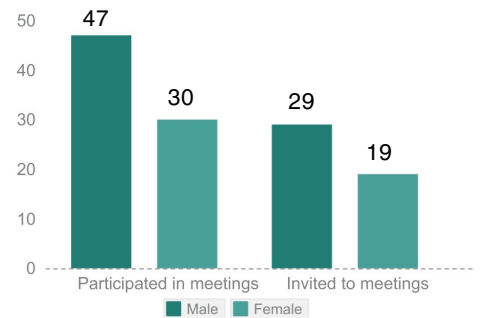
TMAC

The Township Municipal Affairs Committees (TMACs) appear to be operating as a hybrid body in Mon State townships, fulfilling both executive and consultative functions with respect to municipal affairs including i.e. the regulation of markets, licensing for meat sales and production, granting of building permissions and enforcing of municipal laws and regulations.

As one example of its work, the Bilin TMAC established holding areas at the township bus station in response to citizen complaints of aggressive touting there by taxi drivers.

Citizen participation in meetings

Less than half of the citizens of Mon State (39%) has ever participated in a meeting in their village tract or ward, and only 24% have ever been invited to a meeting about development projects or problems in their village.



Women's representation and participation

Across townships in Mon State, women feature fairly prominently among clerical support staff and held management positions in departments such as the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Planning (DoP). In the communities, fewer women participate in meetings about development projects or problems organised by the Village Tract/Ward Administrator (VT/WA).

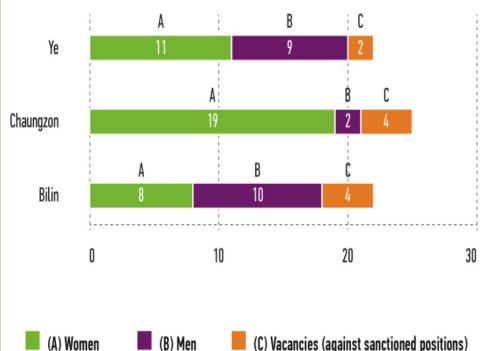


Representativeness

The lack of clarity on the mandate and role of the TDSC and TMAC emerged as a primary issue of concern.

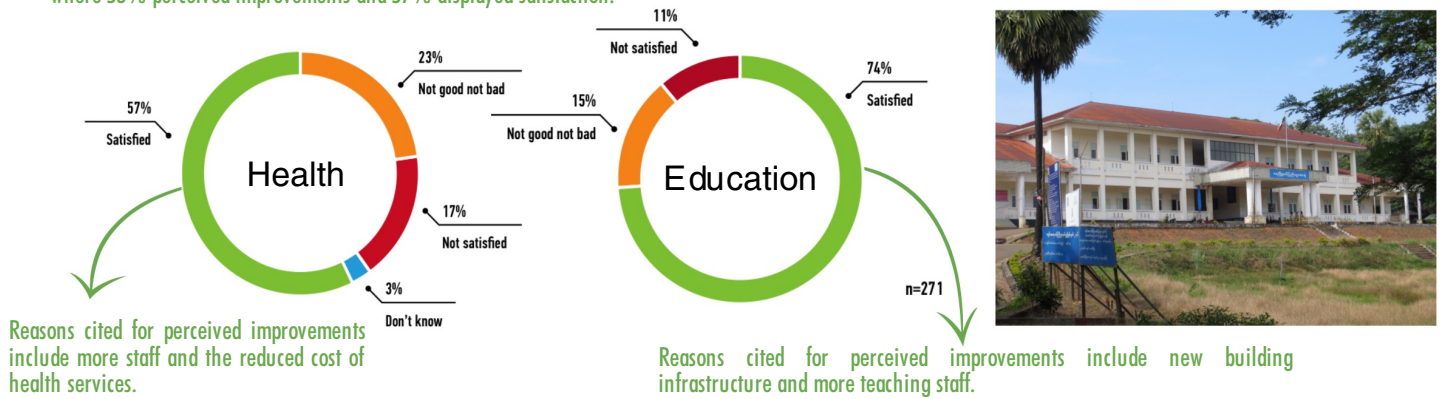
While there are citizen and interest group representatives on both committees, it remains unclear how widely the popular vote extends, and who exactly should be consulted in the selection of interest group representatives.

Vacancies and gender composition in township GRD



Access to basic services

Majority of people perceived improvements (68%), and were satisfied (74%) with the quality of education, followed by health where 53% perceived improvements and 57% displayed satisfaction.



Equity in healthcare



Equality of treatment in public health services is perceived to be fairly high. 92% of the public health service users thought that they and their family members receive the same treatment at health clinics as others in the village.

Improvements in education



75% of the teachers interviewed in Mon State (27 out of 36) also felt that the quality of education in their community had improved over the last three years. Most cited better basic infrastructure as a key reason.

Land registration



While 79% of Bamar respondents and 50% of Mon respondents had registered land used for farming, only 36% of the Kayin respondents had done so.

Information, transparency & accountability

In Mon State, the TMC is emerging as the primary grievance redressal mechanism, reviewing complaints and assigning responsibilities to other committees.

This places pressure on the capacity of township administration officers across the state. The TMC was formed to drive and coordinate township development. But given a more open environment with less fear of reprisal, and given the fact that Village Tract Development Support Committees (VTDCs) are legally obliged to submit matters that cannot be resolved at the village tract/wad level to the TMC, a large proportion of the work and time of the TA and the township administration is now dedicated to dealing with complaints.

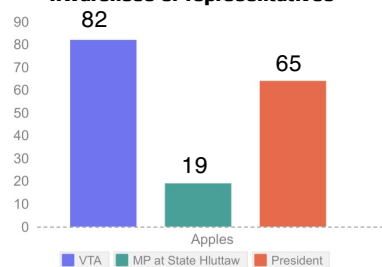
Numbers of complaints are going up, and most complaints are related to land.

"A lot of the new work of the township administration is to do with complaint letters, as we have become more open than before."

Township Administrator in Bilin

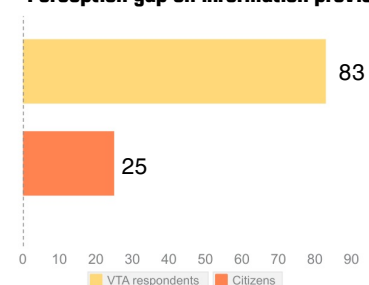
The VTA is a central player in local governance. 85% of rural residents could name their VTA as could 80% of urban respondents name their Ward Administrator. Representatives on the state level are less known. 36% of the people could not name the President.

Awareness of representatives



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 majority of healthcare staff interviewed (26 of 27) stated that they knew the Ministry of Health code of conduct, and that workers within their facility adhered to it. The majority of teachers (33 of 34) were also familiar with the civil service code of conduct, and confirmed that they adhered to it.

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.

In Htan Pin Gyaung Gyi Village Tract in Paung Township for example, the citizens expressed willingness to support construction of a hospital if the government could provide the health care staff and equipment. All groups also expressed the need for government projects in the area in order to create employment opportunities. More generally, citizens, service providers and the village tract administrator agreed to continue dialogue about future development projects.

State-level recommendations

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



The union level should restructure the composition of existing positions at the township-level to enable a more strategic focus on township development planning.



The committees should monitor and evaluate development projects to ensure they are effective and efficient.



CSOs should be encouraged to engage more with the township administration and should have more chances to participate in project selection and implementation.

Conclusions

1

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

2

Clear and transparent procedures for township planning need to be developed, with more autonomy for and better coordination between lower level agencies and officers in order for them to adequately respond to local needs.

3

Given their key role in indirect participation of citizens, information flow, and dispute resolution, Village Tract Administrators should be supported in their role.

4

The rise in public complaints is taking up a lot of time and resources of the township administration, particularly the TMC. A separate mechanism for grievance redressal should be developed.

For a more detailed report on Mon please visit:

www.mm.undp.org

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