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Local
Governance
Mapping

THE STATE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE: TRENDS IN MANDALAY



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UNDP MYANMAR

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Acronyms	iii
Executive Summary	1
1 Introduction	11
2 Methodology	14
2.1 Objectives	15
2.2 Research tools	15
3 Introduction to Mandalay region and participating townships	18
3.1 Socio-economic context	20
3.2 Demographics	22
3.3 Historical context	23
3.4 Governance institutions	26
3.5 Introduction to the three townships participating in the mapping	33
4 Governance at the frontline: Participation in planning, responsiveness for local service provision and accountability	38
4.1 Recent developments in Mandalay region from a citizen's perspective	39
4.1.1 Citizens views on improvements in their village tract or ward	39
4.1.2 Citizens views on challenges in their village tract or ward	40
4.1.3 Perceptions on safety and security in Mandalay Region	43
4.2 Development planning and citizen participation	46
4.2.1 Planning, implementation and monitoring of development fund projects	48
4.2.2 Participation of citizens in decision-making regarding the utilisation of the development funds	52
4.3 Access to services	58
4.3.1 Basic healthcare service	62
4.3.2 Primary education	74
4.3.3 Drinking water	85
4.4 Information, transparency and accountability	94
4.4.1 Aspects of institutional and social accountability	95
4.4.2 Transparency and access to information	102
4.4.3 Civil society's role in enhancing transparency and accountability	106
5 Conclusions	108
6 Annexes	114
Annex 1: Citizen report card interviews	115
Annex 2: Community action plans	117
Annex 3: Composition of management, support and coordinating and committees in the three townships in Mandalay region	119
3.1 Management committees	120
3.2 Coordination committees	121
3.3 Support committees	122



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Acronyms

CD	Community Dialogue
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DMA	Department of Municipal Affairs
DoE	Department of Education
DoH	Department of Health
DoP	Department of Planning
DRD	Department of Rural Development
DTA	Deputy Township Administrator
GAD	General Administration Department
GoM	Government of Myanmar
HoD	Head of Department
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LGM	Local Governance Mapping
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoLFRD	Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development
MoNPED	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development
MDRI-CESD	Myanmar Development Resources Institute-Centre for Economic and Social Development
MSR	Myanmar Survey Research
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
MoAI	Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
PRF	Poverty Reduction Fund
RDF	Rural Development Fund
RHC	Rural Health Centre
SLRD	Settlements and Land Records Department
SRHC	Sub-Rural Health Centre
TA	Township Administrator
TMAC	Township Municipal Affairs Committee
TDSC	Township Development Support Committee
TEO	Township Education Officer
TFMC	Township Farmland Management Committee
TLO	Township Land Record Officer (Settlements and Land Records)
TMC	Township Management Committee
TMO	Township Medical Officer
TPIC	Township Planning and Implementation Committee
TPO	Township Planning Officer
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VT	Village tract
VIA	Village Tract Administrator
VIA/WA	Village Tract or Ward Administrator
VIA/WDSC	Village Tract or Ward Development Support Committee
WA	Ward Administrator



Executive Summary

This report outlines the results of the Local Governance Mapping conducted by UNDP in Mandalay Region. Based on the perceptions of the people and local governance actors, the mapping has captured some key aspects of the current dynamics of governance at the frontline of state-citizen interaction like participation in local development planning, access to basic social services and transparency and accountability in local governance.

In consultation with the Mandalay Region government, it was agreed that the Local Governance Mapping would be conducted in three townships, namely, Meiktila, Thazi and Thabeikkyin between August and November 2014.

Mandalay Region

Mandalay City and its surrounding Region have always played an important role in the political, economic and cultural history of Myanmar. After Yangon, Mandalay is the second most important economic hub in the country, contributing substantially to its National Product. Despite being one of the economic centres, Mandalay Region's overall poverty incidence was 27 percent in 2010 (14 percent in urban and 32 percent in rural areas), which was slightly above the national average of 26 percent. This indicates that economic development is geographically rather unevenly spread over the Region with some parts benefiting more than others.

On most of the social indicators Mandalay Region as a whole fares similar to the national average of Myanmar. On access to safe drinking water and sanitation, on education and immunization Mandalay is doing slightly better than the national average, while on malnutrition it scores slightly below the national average. Also on these indicators some parts of Mandalay tend to do much better than others, with the more remote rural villages lagging behind substantially.

According to the 288 people interviewed as part of this survey, not much has changed over the last three years in the food and income situation of their households. Slightly more respondents recorded an improvement in their food security situation (27 percent) than those who recorded deterioration (13 percent), but for the majority (59 percent) not much had changed. Safety and security was not a concern for most people as 92 percent of the respondents felt safe in their village tract or ward and mentioned that this has either remained the same over the last three years or even improved. Any concerns mentioned were related to issues in the community and not to national peace and safety matters.

Another aspect of safety, which the research addressed, is the perception of freedom of expression. The researchers asked the respondents whether they feel free and safe to express their opinion about government in public. Almost half of the respondents (47 percent) mentioned that they feel free to say whatever they want about government, while more than half of the respondents (51 percent) feel in some way restricted to express themselves freely, being afraid of the possible repercussions this might have. This indicates that people still don't have full confidence in government respecting rule of law and basic human rights. Unfortunately, since this is only the first time that this mapping is conducted, no trends could be established over time, providing an indication whether this situation is improving or not.

In terms of improved services, improvements in education were noted most often by 42 percent of the respondents, followed by road improvements (27 percent) and improved access to drinking water (24 percent). Remarkably, especially if compared to other States and Regions that participated in this research, only 7 percent of the respondents mentioned an improvement in health services. Also important to note is that 27 percent of the respondents mentioned that government had not made any major improvements over the last three years in their village tract or ward. There were however significant differences between the three townships and communities that participated in the research.

Also regarding the major problems in the village tract or ward a diverse picture emerged. Overall, four important problems stood out that were mentioned by almost 20 percent of the respondents each: poor health services, poor roads, lack of jobs and no access to clean drinking water. However, the data also show that the responses need to be disaggregated to obtain a clearer understanding of local concerns as there were significant differences between the three townships. The figures presented in the report show that the needs and problems of people can differ significantly per township or even per village tract or ward and that tailor made solutions and responses are required by various government institutions if government wants to become more responsive to these needs and become more “people centred”. If so, it is critical for government to be able to assess and record these different needs on the basis of transparent and equitable criteria and have the necessary systems in place that enables it to respond to each of these issues fairly, systematically and adequately. This will require more capacity within the key service delivery sectors at the township level to access, monitor and respond to specific needs, working together with the communities. It will also require more autonomy of the township level government staff to enable them to respond to these needs as they are in the best position to evaluate and weigh the different demands from the various communities and prioritise and implement the most effective and efficient response.

Development planning and participation

The availability and use of the various local development funds at the township level and the mechanisms that have been put in place to involve people in the identification of projects act as important catalysts for reform at the township level. Even though the combined volume of these funds is still rather limited per township (every village tract can implement on average one or two small projects of 2-3 million Kyats (US\$2-3,000) each per year), they do trigger a new way of interaction between government and citizens, while they act at the same time as a positive incentive to become more responsive to the needs of the people.

In the three townships studied in Mandalay Region, the Township Development Support Committees (TDSCs), which were established in 2013, already play an active role in the identification of projects for the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF), the Rural Development Fund (RDF) and the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). Members of the committee reach out to the village tracts and discuss and assess project proposals with the Village Tract or Ward Administrators (VTA/WAs) and with formal Village Tract or Ward Development Support Committees (V T/W DSCs) or informal (like the Elderly and Respected People) groups at village tract or ward level.

No direct consultation of community members is taking place in any systematic way however, which is partly the reason why not many citizens are aware of these new consultative bodies. At the township level, the TDSCs are actively involved in the decision-making process regarding the selection of projects for these development funds which usually are prioritised collectively involving the Township Administrator (TA), the various Heads of Departments, the Village Tract or Ward Administrators (VTA/WAs) and the TDSC during their joint meetings and later on endorsed by the General Administration Department (GAD) at township and Region level.

Possibly as a result of these improved consultation processes, a larger part of the developments funds available at the township level as well as a larger part of the revenues of the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA)¹ that can be utilised at the township level are increasingly being utilised to address the shortage of drinking water in the townships.

While the TDSCs are active and play an important role that is respected by the TA, there are however important questions of representation and legitimacy. The TDSCs in Mandalay Region are mainly composed of representatives of the business sector who are primarily from the wards and not from the village tracts, thus excluding the majority of the population in the townships in the deliberations of the use of the development funds. While this was done to make it easier for the TDSCs to meet on a regular basis, it risks excluding a large part of the more rural population in the consultation process regarding the selection of development projects. In addition, there is only one female TDSC member in the three townships in Mandalay Region, meaning that generally 50 percent of the population is not represented in these committees. This can be explained by the fact that members of these committees in Mandalay Region were selected/nominated from the various groups in each of the wards that have an almost exclusive male membership. As a result however, the TDSCs do not reflect the diversity that exists in society and the different interests that different groups do have within society. This is likely to impact negatively on their legitimacy as was mentioned several times especially by people not feeling represented or involved.

Most citizen members on the TDSCs (and Townships Municipal Affairs Committee -TMACs as well) realised these limitations and pleaded for direct elections of the citizens members when elections will be held in the future (presumably in 2015). Such elections would not only enhance their legitimacy, but would at the same time increase the visibility of these committees, which is critical for their appropriate functioning, since people can only question decisions taken if they are taken in the public open sphere and somehow made known to everyone. This will subsequently create the necessary answerability and accountability link between these representatives and the citizens, which is lacking at the moment as no formal and regular feedback mechanisms exist between these members and the groups they are supposed to represent.

1. This department is sometimes also referred to as Development Affairs Organisation (DAO).

Another issue raised by the TDSC members in Mandalay Region is the fact that their advice is rather non-committal. It depends however a lot on the discretion of the TA whether or not to accept the advice of the TDSC. Several TDSC members therefore asked for an enhanced (legal) framework, similar to the one included in the Mandalay Region Municipal Law for the TMACs that define its role and mandate more precisely and making its advice more binding (e.g. requiring the TA to explain a decision in writing if he discards the advice from the TDSC). This would enhance the status of the TDSC, the quality of the deliberations as well as increase the level of transparency in decision-making. In addition, a clearer demarcation of the role and functions of the TDSC vis-à-vis those of the TMAC could be included in such framework or guidelines.

While people appreciate the efforts made by government, there is still ample space to improve the planning and implementation process of the various development funds. There are three development funds available in Mandalay at the moment that are more or less similar in terms of type of funding criteria as well as planning and implementation procedures, while at the same time the DRD and the DMA have their own sector funds to implement similar activities as well. The management of these parallel funds is confusing for the various stakeholders involved at community, township and even regional level, which hampers proper financial monitoring. Only a few people know which projects are funded by each fund, resulting in limited transparency and increased risks of mismanagement. From an effectiveness and efficiency as well as transparency perspective it would be much better if somehow all these different funds could be combined into one joint planning process of which the indicative budget ceilings for the coming year are made known to the township administrations in advance to avoid disappointment at the community level when only one of the ten requested projects is approved.

Basic service delivery

Discussions with Heads of Departments revealed that formally not much has changed in the planning processes of sector departments at the township level over the last few years. The actual planning in most departments still takes place at the Region or Union level, making it almost impossible for Heads of Departments at the township level to adjust their plans to any agreed-upon township priorities or to the plans of other departments. In practice, however, most Head of Departments found their superiors to be much more responsive to their suggestions and urgent needs, meaning that proposals are now more often included into the annual plans or justifications are provided if that is not possible. This is partly related to the extra resources being available in each of the sector ministries for enhanced service delivery at the township level, but also indicates the start of a change in attitude. Getting the necessary resources is still a slow and bureaucratic process, but at least most Heads of Department at the township level have the impression that their voices are heard and responded to.

Both citizens and front line service providers acknowledge that improvements in service delivery have been made since 2011. 55 percent of the respondents mentioned that health services in general (both public and private combined) had improved over the last three years, mainly due to improved health facilities, and the improved availability of health staff and medicines. 63 percent of the respondents mentioned that primary education had improved due to improvements in the school facilities and the availability of teachers.

Regarding the availability of safe drinking water, 42 percent of the respondents mentioned that they experienced improvements in their situation over the last three years. These findings are encouraging in the sense that people do acknowledge the result of the additional investments by government that have taken place since 2011, but they should be used with caution as well since the starting point against which people compare the present situation in service delivery in health and primary education is very low and small improvements might be seen as big steps forward.

When discussing these changes and needs directly with the government staff involved in service provision, it became clear that these improvements are mainly due to additional resources that have been made available by government for basic service delivery and are not so much a result of changes in the planning and delivery mechanisms of these services. Citizen participation in service delivery, either through consultation or through active involvement via a Village Health Committee (VHC) or Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) remains very limited. While more information is collected at the grass-roots level to feed into the planning system, the actual planning in the sectors is still done in a top-down manner.

Despite the awareness that a “coordinating” role must be played by the TA and is inherent to the formation of various coordinating committees, horizontal co-ordination between departments remains a challenge in Mandalay Region according to most Heads of Departments interviewed. Township departments continue to plan and deliver services in a “vertical” fashion, following the instructions from higher levels within their own ministries. They therefore also continue to collect their own baseline data according to their own definitions and requirements, resulting in differences in essential and basic statistics, which makes integrated planning and coordination almost impossible.

For vertical coordination, the joint VTA/WA-TMAC-TDSC-TA meetings are very important which the elected Hluttaw members often attend as well. They take important matters to the Regional or Union level Hluttaws especially for issues that require extra funding from the Union Government.

Basic healthcare: All 17 health service providers interviewed acknowledged that the provision of basic health services in the three townships has improved over the last three years mainly due to an increase in both recurrent and capital budgets. As a result, more facilities have been built (there are more (Sub-Rural Health Centers (RHC) and station hospitals have been upgraded) and more health staff is available. In addition, most of them mentioned that the health facilities are better equipped, that there is an improvement in the supply of medicines (essential drugs), that the costs of health care for citizens has gone down and that preventive health care has improved.

While the overall health provision situation has improved, according to the service providers there are several specific bottlenecks for improving public health services in these three townships. At the facility level, the basic infrastructure of the facility is often not optimal as there is often lack of water and electricity. In addition, even though improvements have been made, the regular supply of medicines and medical equipment at the health facility were cited as the most important challenges for further improvement in the quality of health services.

55 percent of the respondents mentioned that the health services in their village-tract or ward have indeed improved, while 42 percent mentioned that these services had stayed more or less the same. As a result, 61 percent of the respondents said that they were satisfied with the quality of health services in the village tract or ward, 18 percent qualified the services to be “not good, not bad” while 20 percent were not satisfied with the quality of the health care services. The levels of satisfaction were slightly lower in Thabeikkyin as compared to the other two townships.

Regarding equity in treatment, almost all respondents (96 percent) and both male and female respondents who made use of public health facilities felt that they received the same treatment as any other person in their village tract or ward, i.e. there was no discrimination against particular groups within the community. Direct participation of people in the planning of health care improvements is still very limited.

The survey noticed a big difference in statements of medical staff and patients regarding the payment for essential drugs. While the health staff mentioned that these are always for free (if available), 73 percent of the respondents said that they always had to pay for medicines in a public health facility and 23 percent sometimes, while most medicines (i.e. essential drugs, if in stock) should be provided for free. Of the respondents who mentioned that they always had to pay for medicines 84 percent stated that they did not get an explanation from the medical staff on why they had to pay for these medicines. At the very least, these results are indicative of a poor articulation and understanding on both sides on the rights of patients. This points to gaps in mutual understanding between service providers and users, which, at best, can erode the trust between citizens and people in the public sector, and at worst, lead to systematic and unchecked corruption in the delivery of basic services. In either case, and even if there is no mismanagement of drugs, such lack of clarity will lead to allegations of misuse because people are told that in general drugs at the health facility should be provided free of charge.

Primary education: 75 percent of the 28 education staff mentioned that primary education has improved over the last three years in the three townships in Mandalay Region. Most interlocutors identified the improved quality of teaching (better and more trained teachers), improved infrastructure (buildings and classrooms) and overall improvements in the education system as the main factors contributing to this improvement. Teachers believed that improvements to school accessories, teaching support materials and books for the library are the most cost-effective way to further improve the quality of teaching.

According to the Township Education Officers interviewed, not much has changed in the organisation of education over the last few years, although it has become easier for the TEO to recruit local teachers to deal with acute staff shortages, especially in the more remote townships or villages. The TEO can recruit teachers on a daily wage basis (these are unqualified teachers who are not part of the civil service; they do not receive any additional benefits like pensions, and are not paid during school holidays). The need for such daily wage teachers has however reduced substantially over the last three years in the three townships.

Almost two-thirds or 66 percent of the respondents in the three townships in Mandalay were of the opinion that primary education in their village-tract or ward had improved over the last three years, while 32 percent mentioned that the quality had stayed more or less the same. Only 5 percent mentioned that the quality had deteriorated. As a result, 72 percent of the

respondents with children attending primary school were satisfied, 17 percent qualified the situation as “not good/not bad”, and 11 percent were not satisfied. The differences between the three townships are however big with Thazi recording the highest level of satisfaction (90 percent satisfied) and Thabeikkyin the lowest (54 percent).

Drinking water: Access to safe drinking water stood at 76 percent for Mandalay Region as a whole in 2010, which is slightly above the national average of 69 percent. In most cases, however, households and communities are self-reliant, especially in rural and remote areas, and do not get any assistance for meeting their basic water needs. The responsibility for drinking water provision is shared by the Department of Rural Development (DRD) under the Union Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, which is in charge of water supply in rural areas and the TMACs together with the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA), which is part of the Region Ministry of Development Affairs. In Mandalay city, a special municipal body, the Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC) holds this responsibility.

42 percent of the respondents mentioned that the provision of safe drinking water has improved over the last few years, which is much lower than the figures for healthcare and primary education. Also, 7 percent mentioned that the situation has worsened. The provision of safe drinking water remains high on the list of needs in most village tracts and wards. Partly as a result of the citizen consultation process through the VTAs, the TDSCs and the TMACs an increasingly larger part of the development funds and the municipal revenue of the DMAs in the three townships is allocated to address bottlenecks in drinking water provision.

There is a big difference in the way in which access to drinking water is planned and implemented in the rural and municipal areas. Rural water provision is one of the responsibilities of the Department of Rural Development (DRD). As in other sector ministries of the Union Government this means that the DRD identifies projects, makes cost calculations and submits a long list of proposed projects first to the Regional office, which submits it to the Union-level Department. No indicative budget ceilings are provided beforehand so most DRDs submit enough projects that would take 10 times their actual allocated budget to implement. The disadvantage of this way of working is that a lot of energy is spent on preparing project proposals that are in the end not implemented while at the same time expectations are raised at the community level when the DRD collects proposals. If throughout the year only 10 percent of the proposed projects are actually implemented, there is a high risk that people at the community level get frustrated as they don't see any benefits from active participation which will also result in demotivation of DRD staff members who constantly have to explain that not enough money is available to implement everything.

In the municipal areas, providing citizens with access to drinking water is the joint responsibility between the Township Municipal Affairs Committee (TMAC) and the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA) and is regulated by the Mandalay Region Municipal Law. The main deviation with the former law is the inclusion of citizen representatives in the TMAC, which was necessary following the 2013 Presidential Notification.²

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

Since the Ministry of Development Affairs and the DMA fall under Schedule Two of the constitution, and are therefore matters included in the powers of the States and Regions, the revenues of the DMA are almost exclusively generated locally, while the planning and implementation process of public works and the management of municipal affairs is more or less completely delegated to the township level, i.e. the municipalities themselves. In that sense, the DMA differs completely from all other departments present at the township level, which is reflected in, for Myanmar standards, relatively high level of decisiveness, effectiveness, responsiveness and speed of implementation.

The DMA and TMAC together are the only body at the local level that generates its own income and can decide (with approval from the Regional Minister of Development Affairs) how to use that income to implement its functions. The TMAC and DMA draft an annual plan based on the estimated municipal revenues for the coming financial year that is submitted to the Regional Ministry for approval but that differs a lot per township, based on locally developed priorities and revenues. Again, Mandalay City has a special arrangement with the MCDC exercising the role of municipal committee for the entire city, with its respective townships functioning more like urban boroughs.

Knowing the estimated budget in advance makes planning and project selection at the municipal level much easier and realistic. The TMAC can meet with Ward Development Support Committees and Ward Administrators and negotiate priorities and come to agreements at their level. This makes the TMAC quite powerful but also enhances the decision-making process since people know that at least two out of the five projects they propose for their ward will indeed be implemented during the next year. In this way, consultation at the ward level has shifted more towards real participation and will motivate citizens to attend meetings and present and defend their case for a certain project. In addition giving people a say in the selection of activities and implementing them accordingly will in the end improve tax compliance as well, since people start to understand the relationship between paying (municipal) taxes/fees and the services they receive in return. Since approval procedures are much shorter than in Union sector ministries projects can be implemented much faster which also has a positive impact on the confidence people have in the newly established structures.

Information, transparency and accountability

Regarding transparency and accountability of government at the township level, the cornerstones of a sustainable democracy, only small improvements have been made in Mandalay Region according to the various stakeholders involved in the study. Formally, there have only been minor changes in the accountability structures at the township and village tract or ward level over the last few years. Although the Ward or Village Tract Administration Law of 2012 describes that the VTA/WA is elected from and by the group of 10/100 household heads, the elected VTA/WA is not formally accountable to this constituency and reports to the TA, who can assign tasks to the VTA/WA and can fire the VTA/WA in case of serious misconduct. Nevertheless, partly because the developmental role of the VTA/WA has increased over the years and the VTA/WA has become the link person between the village tract or ward and the township, most of the VTAs/WAs interviewed do feel accountable to their communities in practice.

Partly due to the emergence of the various development funds that require the involvement of communities, in Mandalay Region the VTA/WA has in practice become more of an “elected representative” of the village tract or ward, acting as the intermediate between the village tract or ward and the township (informing community members on the one hand and bringing relevant village tract or ward problems or needs to the attention of the TA) next to his/her formal role as mentioned in the 2012 Law being in charge of maintaining law and order, while also playing an important role in mediation and settling disputes which could be seen as an extension of the functions related to maintaining law and order.

While formally not much has changed at the township and regional level, informally changes are noted. The relationship between the departments at the township level and their counterparts at the regional level seems to have changed. Constructive inputs from below are appreciated and integrated into the planning and the Region is in general more responsive and predictable in behaviour.

The Region and Union-level *Hluttaw* members often participate in meetings at the township level (when the *Hluttaws* are not in session), usually in the combined VTA/WA-TA and advisory committee meetings. However, they have no formal oversight function over the township administration except in the implementation of the recently introduced Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in which they play an executive and oversight function at the same time. Nevertheless, they play an important role in bringing up issues or needs of the township to the Region and Union level, especially lobbying for additional funds that fall outside regular budget lines or ceilings. All three townships mentioned successful lobby activities of their elected representatives in the recent past.

The new Mandalay Region Municipal Law might, if implemented properly, create a precedent in establishing new relationships between citizens and local administrations. The Municipal Law establishes the TMAC, whose members include two government staff and local citizens representing various interests groups in the municipal area of the township. The Law gives the TMAC executive responsibilities and a statutory foundation in Region law, rather than Union law, which is rather innovative in the Myanmar setting. The TMAC can, on advice from the Executive Officer of the DMA, determine local taxes and levies. It can also instruct the Executive Officer to carry out certain works, and analyse draft regulations and notifications of the DMA. The Executive Officer remains directly accountable to the Minister of Development Affairs at the Region level and the Minister can overrule any decision of the TMAC. As a consequence of this new law, the Executive Officer of the DMA becomes to a certain extent also accountable to the TMAC. Since this law is still fairly new, it will be interesting to see how all parties deal with these rather complicated and multiple accountability lines in practice in future.

Access to information is critical for improving transparency and accountability. More information is flowing downward from the township administration and departments to the VTAs and to the committee members but this information is not always reliably reaching citizens at the community level yet. In addition, it is left to the discretion of the Heads of Departments and the TAs to decide what information they share with the public, making the availability of information dependent on the personality of these government staff rather than on clearly defined procedures.

With regard to complaint handling and grievance redress, the research noted the important role that the VTAs and TAs play in these processes, either as resource persons who can refer a case to the right institution or to resolve or mediate in an actual case. Most TAs mentioned that the number of cases that were logged had increased over time and that many of them were related to recent or old cases of land grabbing. The fact that the GAD is dealing with these cases and that their number is increasing, could mean that there is more confidence of the people that their cases are dealt with in a fair way by government. While the more serious cases are investigated by ad hoc committees consisting of at least three members, the TA still has a lot of discretionary power to decide. There is lack of transparency on how decisions are made, leaving too much room for arbitrariness. A further specification and clarification of the regulations regarding complaint handling and dispute resolution would help to create more clarity and limit the space for arbitrary administrative rulings and possible mismanagement.

The number and size of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Mandalay Region is still rather limited. Most organisations are active in health and education, providing direct support to people in need. Even though their outreach is limited, their work seems to be appreciated by committee members and government staff. From the discussions with the CSOs, it became clear that they are still rather ambivalent with regard to intensifying their relationship with the government at township level. On the one hand, they would like to meet more often as a group of civil society organisations and also meet with the township government to coordinate activities and to discuss issues that are of their interest such as registration, taxation, etc. On the other hand, they are also hesitant to do so as they do not know how government would respond to such initiatives. Some of the TAs mentioned however that they would appreciate such initiative from the CSOs.

Conclusions

Even though the process of change has only started recently, several early gains in terms of improved governance can already be noticed. Basic social services like public health care and primary education are improving at a higher pace compared to the period before 2011 according to the people interviewed. The W/VTAs are increasingly acting as an intermediary between the village tracts/wards and the townships. Also, some initial forms of citizens' representation at the township level are emerging to play an active role in the decision-making process with regard to the utilisation of development funds and defining the priority areas for the DMA/TMACs in the three townships to focus on.

While improvements can be noticed, it was also possible to see that other intended changes, like enhanced area-based coordination between line agency departments and improved responsiveness of government to the needs of the people are more difficult to realise and will require more fundamental systemic changes in the way the government of Myanmar operates. These more systemic blockages to change relate to existing power relations between ministries, between the Union level and the Region levels of government and administration and ultimately to the interrelations between the state and citizens in Myanmar, which can only gradually change over a longer period.



1. Introduction

Mandalay Region is one of the core regions of central Myanmar, not only because of its location in the centre of the country, but also because it is home to 12 percent of its population. Mandalay city is an important economic hub and gateway to the North and East of Myanmar and onwards to China. It has been one of the more stable Regions in Myanmar recently and has not experienced any major conflict (except the sectarian conflict and riots in Meikthila in 2013). It also has not been subject to any major natural disasters in the recent past. Together, these features qualify Mandalay Region as one of the Regions where government could relax its traditionally tight social control and implement its political and administrative reforms relatively fast and easily during the last few years.

This report intends to present a snapshot of the present situation of local governance in Mandalay Region. It does not pretend to present a systematic assessment of the quality of governance in the Region, as most of the minimum required data for such an assessment are not yet available or reliable. Using the lens of “democratic governance”, the report will therefore focus on a selected number of trends that have been chosen by the government of Myanmar as critical areas of change. They relate to the quality of interactions between state and citizens, effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery, and to ‘clean government’ and ‘people-centred development’.

Within the boundaries of the institutional and legal frameworks, historical legacies and capacity constraints, how are the different actors at local level responding to the new opportunities and challenges that result from the ongoing administrative reform process? How are relationships between citizens and the state changing and how does the small subsistence farmer benefit in the end from these changes? In this report, some of the initial changes in governance that are taking place in Mandalay Region are presented, providing hope for the future.

The innovative aspect of this mapping for Myanmar is that it approached these governance issues as much as possible both from a government as well as a citizen perspective, including where possible and relevant citizens’ experiences and perceptions on the performance of government. While this might seem difficult in a setting in which people have limited awareness about their civic rights or the way in which a democratic government ought to operate, and where many are still wary to express their opinions about government freely, their views were found to be highly relevant and to the point. They can therefore provide important information for officials and decision-makers at the township, Region and Union level as to how they could approach and shape the next steps of the reform process.

After a short description of the methodology used and an introduction to Mandalay Region and the three townships that participated in the mapping, the report focuses on three important elements of the reform process.

First, it addresses citizen participation in planning and utilisation of development funds available at the township level that are made available by the Union and Regional Government to tackle practical bottlenecks in service delivery within the communities and are intended to stimulate local development. Together with the revenues generated by the municipalities (see below), these funds represent the only budgets available at the township level over which the township has, to a certain extent, discretionary power over its utilisation. They are at the same time the only budgets in which people have some say about their allocation as to how they are utilised. How are these consultations taking place and do they help in changing the way in which government operates and relates to its citizens?

Secondly, the report looks at the process of service delivery in three key basic service sectors, primary health care, primary education and the provision of safe drinking water. These sectors (especially health care and education) have seen a substantial growth in budget over the last few years. Has this increase trickled down to the grassroots levels and has it resulted in improved service delivery in the eyes of those who provide these services to the people and those who make use of these services? Has the way in which these services are provided changed over the last few years and is there more coordination between the various service providing departments at the township level?

Lastly, the report addresses some aspects of improved access to information, transparency and accountability at the township level and below. Gradually, some form of social accountability starts to emerge which could form the germ from which more robust formal political and social accountability mechanisms at the township level could emerge in the near future. These include emerging formal and informal accountability mechanisms at the township and village tract or ward level like the Village Tract or Ward and Township Development Support Committees and the Township Municipal Affairs Committee, improved information flow from township-level institutions to citizens, the functioning of existing grievance redressal mechanisms and the enhanced space for civil society to play a more active role in governance processes at the township level.



2. Methodology

2.1 Objectives

In this governance mapping UNDP and the General Administration Department (GAD) of the Ministry of Home Affairs have worked together to present an overview of the state of affairs in governance in all 14 States and Regions in Myanmar, with the objective to:

- Provide an overview of the quality of governance in general and the quality of governance in service delivery (for a selected number of key basic services) at the township and the village tract or ward level.
- Identify related capacity needs of government and non-government stakeholders to improve their performance for good governance and effective service delivery.

2.2 Research tools

In order to obtain a holistic perspective of governance at local level, the Local Governance Mapping used a combination of relevant instruments to map the quality of local governance from a ward/village-tract, township and Region or State level perspective³ (see Table 1).

Community-level Mapping: Citizen Report Card, Service Provider interviews and Community Dialogue sessions

In Mandalay Region, a representative sample of 288 citizens equally divided over 6 village tracts/wards in 3 townships (Meiktila, Thazi and Thabeikkyin⁴) were interviewed using the Citizen Report Card (CRC) methodology. The questionnaire focused on collecting opinions and experiences of people who make use of services provided by government (such as primary healthcare and primary education) and on the way the respondents interact with government.

In addition, 45 Service Providers, including primary school principals and teachers, healthcare facility managers, healthcare staff and Village tract or Ward Administrators (VTA/WA) were interviewed in the same locations, focusing on the service delivery process and on their interaction with citizens who make use of these services. The objective was not to conduct an in-depth technical assessment of the education, health or water sectors as this was beyond the scope of this mapping.⁵ Instead, these interviews were intended to gain insights in the actual process of service delivery by describing and analysing the way in which service providers and service users interact to realise the actual delivery of basic services.

Similar issues were also discussed during the Community Dialogues (CD), which were held in the same village tracts/wards, in which 176 people from different groups present in the community (including women, youth and elders) participated alongside 92 service providers active in the health and education sector and the VTA/WAs. The objective of this was to collectively identify issues of related to service delivery, interaction and community administration, and to identify solutions for some of the problems identified that could be implemented at the community level by these actors themselves.

³ See for a more detailed description of the objectives and methodology of this governance mapping exercise: UNDP: Local Governance Mapping in Myanmar: Background and Methodology.

⁴ The English spelling of the names of the townships is based on the spelling of township names as used in the population census. See Department of Population, Ministry of Immigration and Population 2014: Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014; provisional results.

⁵ A number of these studies are currently taking place to inform capacity building initiatives and programme design in Myanmar. In the education sector, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and UNICEF have piloted a Township Education Improvement Plan (TEIP) in Mon State from 2013, and will be rolling the programme out to all 14 states/ regions in the country. A preliminary social assessment has been conducted by MSR for the Ministry of Education to inform the Myanmar Decentralizing Funding to Schools Programme, supported by the World Bank. In addition, a Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) initiated by the Ministry of Education is underway with the support of development partners.

Township-level Mapping: Background Study on Township Governance

In order to gain insights in the functioning of government representation at the township level (comprising the GAD, represented through the Township Administrators, as well as representatives of the various sector departments) and of important governance processes within Mandalay Region, a background study was conducted in each of the three townships. Secondary data were collected and key resource persons were interviewed. In addition, Focus Group Discussions were held with both government and non-government members of the newly established Township Development Support Committees and Township Municipal Affairs Committees, with a group of Village Tract and Ward Administrators as well as with a selection of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) present in the township. These discussions focused, first of all, on the role of these groups in the governance process at township level and the relationship between these groups and the GAD and the various government departments at the township level. To complete the 360-degree mapping of governance at township level, relevant Directors of Departments at the Regional level were interviewed.

Table 1: Local Governance Mapping participants, coverage and outputs for Mandalay Region

Mapping level	Activity	Participants	Geographical scope	Outputs
Community	Citizen Report Card (CRC)	288 citizen respondents	6 VTs/Wards in 3 townships	Dataset and reporting on key findings
	Service Provider interviews	6 Village Tract Administrators 6 primary school principals 19 primary school teachers 6 heads of healthcare facilities 8 health care staff	6 VTs/Wards in 3 townships	
	Community Dialogues (CD)	176 citizens 92 service providers	6 VTs/ wards in 3 townships	Reports for each village tract or ward
Township	Interviews and secondary data analysis	Government staff from GAD and relevant departments	Three townships	Background report on key findings
	Focus group discussions	VTA/WAs, TDSC and TMAC committee members and civil society representatives	Three townships	Background report on key findings
Region	Interviews	Government staff from relevant departments	Mandalay	Qualitative data to inform integrated analysis

In consultation with the Mandalay Region government Meiktila, Thazi and Thabeikkyin townships were selected to participate in the local governance mapping.⁶ Meiktila is the largest township in the Region, easily accessible and more urban in character, while Thazi is a more rural but easily accessible township of medium size. Thabeikkyin is also more rural and one of the smallest townships in the Region. Together these three townships represent almost 10 percent of the population in Mandalay Region.

Within each township, one ward and one village tract or two village tracts were included in the exercise. The TA of each township made a shortlist of potential wards and village tracts using the same criteria as for township selection, after which the research team made a final selection (see Table 2 and Figure 1).

6. For selection criteria used see UNDP: Local Governance Mapping in Myanmar; Background and Methodology.

Meiktila	Yatamar Man Aung Ward
	Shan Ma Nge Village Tract
Thazi	Ward 3
	Thar Ga Ya Village Tract
Thabeikkyin	Inn Net Village Tract
	Kyar Hnyut Village Tract

Table 2: Selected townships and village tracts and wards

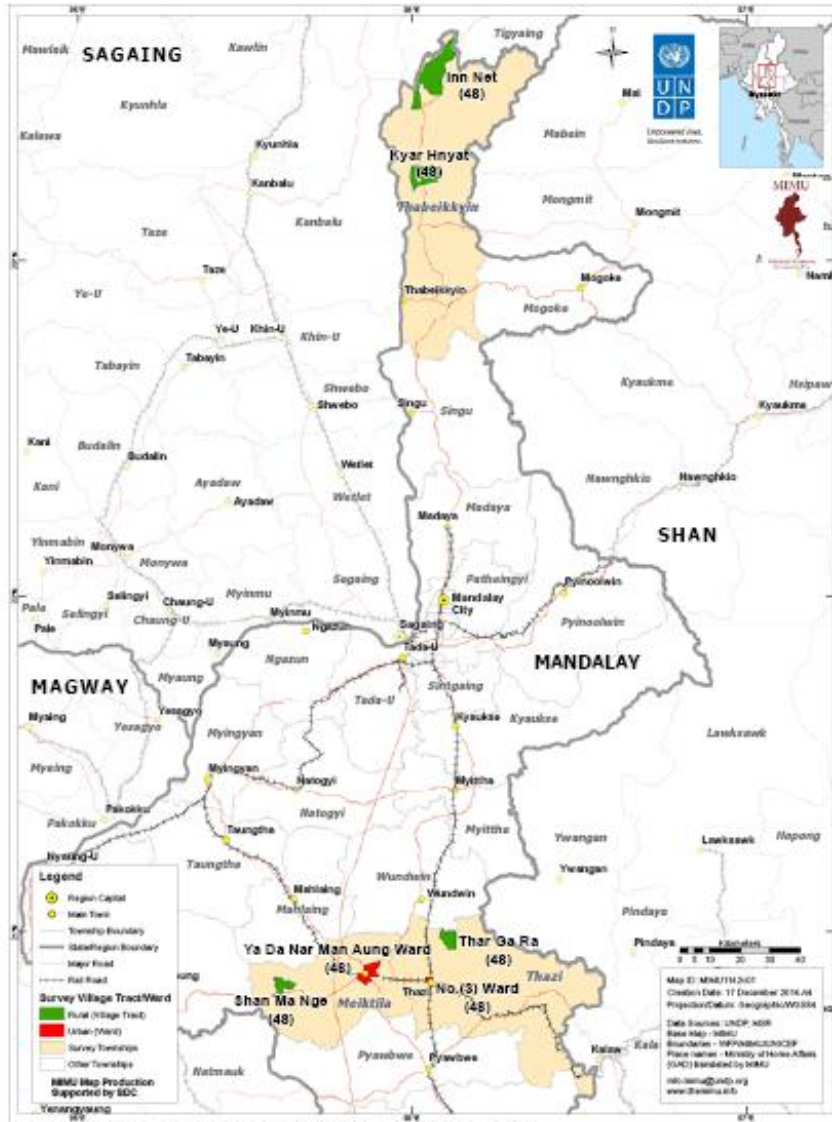


Figure 1: Mandalay Region and location of sample townships and village tracts/wards



3. Introduction to Mandalay Region and participating townships



Table 3: Mandalay Region at a glance

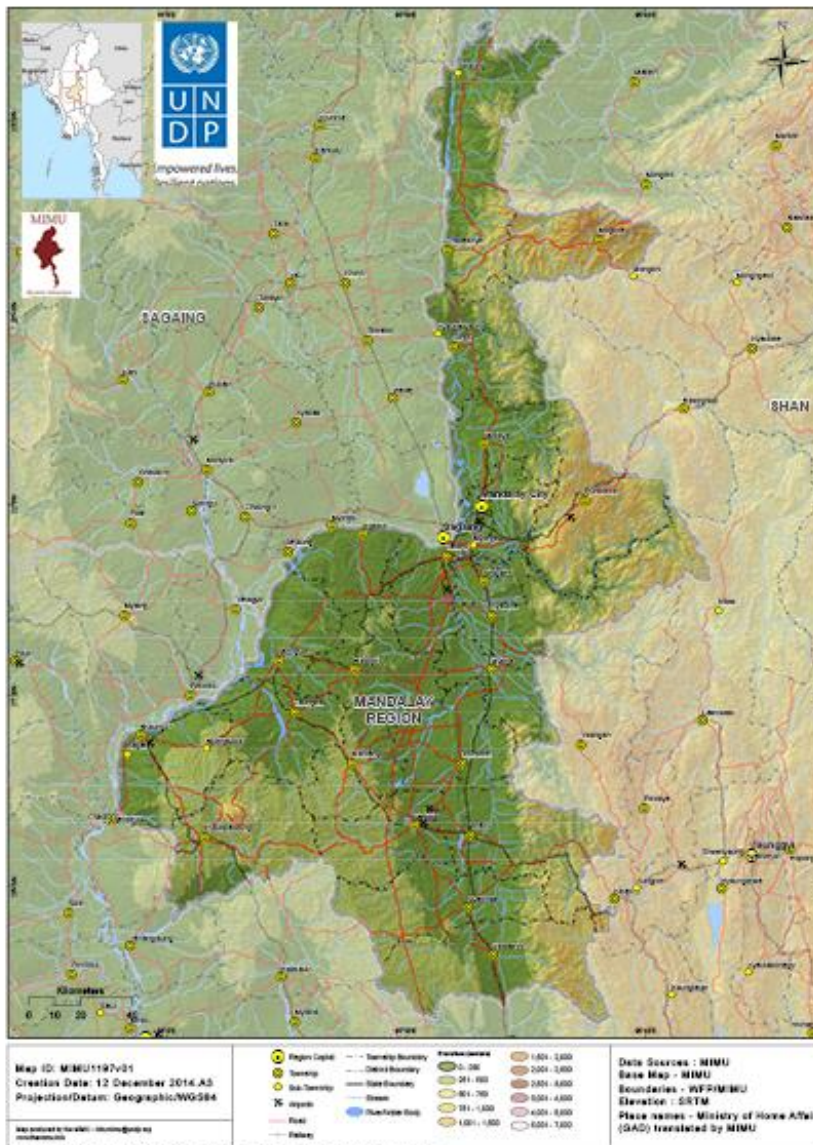


Figure 2: Map of Mandalay Region and townships

With an area of 29,967 km², Mandalay Region is the 11th largest constituent unit of Myanmar, just a little smaller than Kayah State.⁷ It is divided into seven districts and 28 townships⁸ (see Table 3). With the entry into force of the 2008 Constitution and the formal establishment of Naypyitaw Union Territory, three townships (Pyinmana, Lewe, and Tatkon) were separated from the Region, and five new townships⁹ were created in the urban areas of Naypyitaw city itself.¹⁰ Naypyitaw Union Territory, which (unlike the Self-Administered Areas in Sagaing Region and Shan State) is no longer part of Mandalay Region, has an area of 7,054 km² and a population of around 925,000.¹¹ The remaining population of Mandalay Region is 6,145,588, which makes it the second most populous of the States and Regions in Myanmar, at about 12 percent of the total.¹²

Mandalay Region lies in the geographic centre of Myanmar. It shares boundaries with Sagaing and Magway Regions, as well as Shan State and Naypyitaw Union Territory. The Region occupies the eastern parts of the central lowlands, and has only few areas of higher elevation towards its eastern boundary with Shan State. The scenic hill town Pyin Oo Lwin (also known as Maymyo) lies at an altitude of 1,070m. Also, the 1,518m scenic Mount Popa, an extinct volcano in the northern parts of Bago Yoma is well-known. The Region is dominated by the central Ayeyarwaddy (Irrawaddy) River, Myanmar's largest river and most important commercial waterway, which forms its western boundary. The river has also served as its main cultural and economic passage-way throughout history and continues to be one of its main transportation arteries. Most of Region belongs to the major Myanmar eco-region known as the "Dry Zone", due to its relatively low rainfall patterns receiving on average only 915 mm. of rain per year, which distinguishes it from the southern coastal areas which have a tropical monsoon climate (see Figure 2).

The Region's capital city Mandalay is also located on the Ayeyarwaddy River. It has more than 1.2 million inhabitants (2014 census) and is thus Myanmar's second largest city after Yangon. Like Yangon, Mandalay has formed a special administration for its municipal areas, in the form of the Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC), which includes seven urban townships.¹³ The former royal capital city is regarded as Myanmar's cultural capital and is one of its main economic and transportation hubs. It is also a centre for education and social welfare.

3.1 Socio-economic context

Mandalay Region is among the country's main centres of commerce and investment, and therefore contributes to generating employment and economic development. It has a mixed economy with agricultural production being the primary livelihood source for the majority of its population, combined with industrial production, trade and tourism. Primary crops grown within Mandalay Region are rice, wheat, maize, peanut, sesame, cotton, legumes,

7. It is about the same area as countries like Belgium, Armenia or Albania.

8. Until early 2000, Ngazun township, south of the Ayeyarwaddy River, was included in Sagaing Division, but was then transferred to Mandalay Division. Until 2000, Sagaing therefore had 38 townships.

9. The new townships were named Ottarathiri, Dekkhinathiri, Pobbathiri, Zabuthiri and Zeyarathiri.

10. The SPDC government moved government ministries from Yangon to Naypyidaw, a purpose-built city near Pyinmana town, from 2005 to 2006.

11. About one third of these live in the five urban townships of Naypyitaw city, while the remainder lives in the rural areas and smaller towns of the traditional townships.

12. This is about the same population size as Nicaragua or Libya.

13. Amapapura, Aungmyethazan, Chanayethazan (city centre), Chanayethazi, Mahlaungmye, Patheingyi and Pyigyidagon

tobacco, chilli, and vegetables. Drought and the difficulty to provide water for irrigation has been the most significant challenge to agriculture in the Region. Livestock and fresh water fisheries are also important. Teak and hardwoods are extracted from forests. Mogok is famous for its ruby mines, which are among the most significant deposits in the world. Minerals and ores are also produced in some areas. Many Chinese businessmen are involved in trading of these gemstones. The large presence of Chinese people has also had an influence on the social dynamics of this region.

More than 1,100 factories are based in the industrial area of Mandalay city and consist of both heavy and light industry. In addition, Mandalay is an important transshipment point for trade with China and India as well as for Myanmar's Northern States and Regions. There are some industries for processing agricultural products, as well as some steel mills and garment factories. As a result of all these economic activities, Mandalay is producing 15% of Myanmar's national Gross Domestic Product.

In addition, the tourist industry has served Mandalay Region well. With an explosive growth of international tourist arrivals to Myanmar in recent years, Mandalay Region has benefitted from the fact that some of its most popular tourist destinations lie in its territory, with the temples and ruins of Bagan and Amarapura being the most famous and Mandalay city itself attracting considerable numbers of visitors with its religious and historical sites.

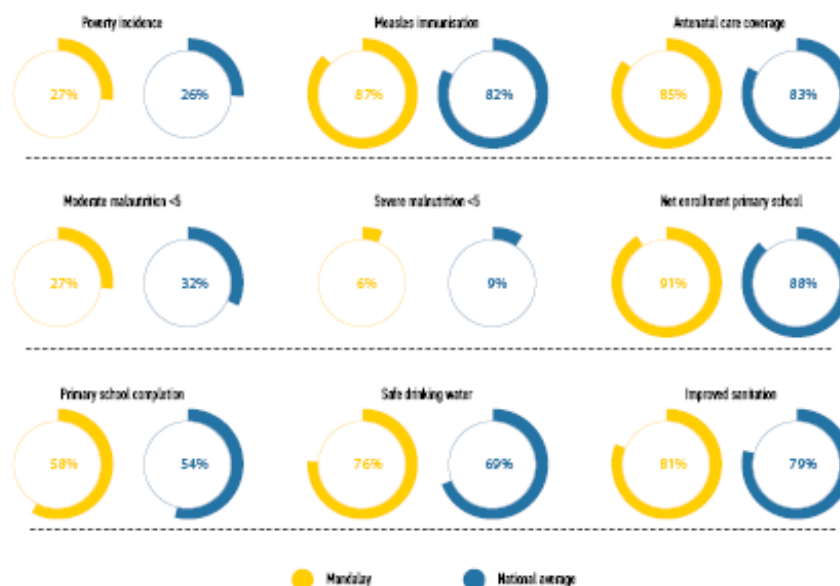
Mandalay is connected to Yangon and Naypyitaw by the Express Way and by railway, while a lot of bulk goods are transported over the Ayeyarwaddy River. It has an international airport which is expanding its services to more and more countries every year. Internal all-weather road connections with all townships exist, while the more remote villages are more difficult to reach especially during the rainy season.

Despite being one of the most advanced parts of the country, there are problems related to poverty and inequity in Mandalay Region. The 2010 Integrated Household and Living Standards Survey indicated that the food poverty, which is based on consumption expenditure required to meet basic nutritional needs, affected about 5 percent of the country's population and twice as much in rural areas than in urban areas. Mandalay, with 16 percent, was among the biggest contributors to the incidence of national food poverty. Mandalay Region's overall poverty incidence was 27 percent in 2010, 14 percent in urban and 32 percent in rural areas, slightly above the national average of 26 percent.

On most social indicators Mandalay Region fares similar to the national average for Myanmar. Figure 3 presents a few proxy indicators that give an indication of the health, education and water and sanitation situation in Mandalay. On access to safe drinking water and sanitation, on education and immunization Mandalay is doing slightly better than the national average, while on malnutrition it scores slightly below the national average.

Figure 3: Selection of social development indicators for Mandalay Region compared to the Myanmar national average

Source: UNICEF 2014; Mandalay Region Profile; a Snapshot of Child Wellbeing and Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment 2010, UNDP 2011.



3.2 Demographics

The recently held census¹⁴ revealed that Mandalay has a total population of 6.145 million people, which is 12 percent of the total population of Myanmar (which is similar to the population of a country like Nicaragua). Overall, 22 percent of Mandalay Region's population lives in urban areas, which is slightly below the national average of almost 30 percent. Compared to other States and Regions it has a medium population density of 123 inhabitants per square kilometre. Mandalay Region's sex ratio is 92, meaning that there are 92 males on every 100 females, which is very close to the national sex ratio of 93.

The large majority of its population are Buddhist Barmars, with smaller communities of Shans, Danus, Lisus and Palaungs residing in areas adjacent to Shan State. Due to considerable internal migration, people belong to all of Myanmar's nationalities can be found in Mandalay's urban areas, in particular Kachin, Kayin and Chin. A sizable community of Myanmar Indians also resides in Mandalay. There is also a significant segment of the population both in Mandalay and smaller cities, that is of Myanmar Muslim origin. Throughout the 20th century and increasingly since the 1980s, there has been a large influx of ethnic Chinese people to Mandalay as well, in particular to Mandalay city. These immigrants, in particular from Yunnan, are said to make up a significant portion of the city's population. Many of them appear to have obtained citizenship. The large influx is seen as having contributed to giving Mandalay a more cosmopolitan character and has also helped its economic revitalization in recent years.

14. Department of Population, Ministry of Immigration and Population 2014; Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014; provisional results

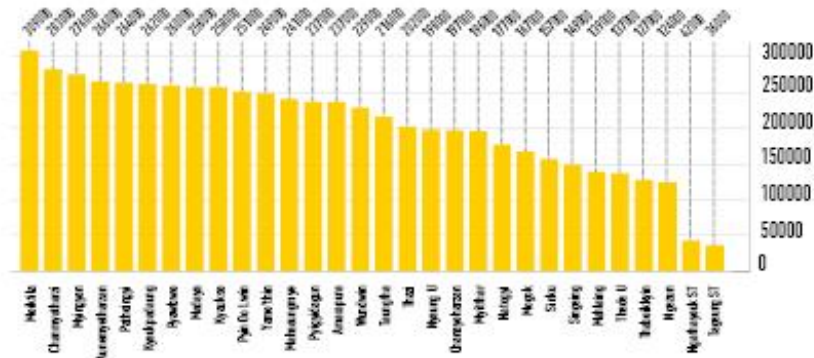


Figure 4: Presents an overview of the population distribution over the various townships in the Region

Source: Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014; provisional results. Note: the three selected townships for this study are highlighted.

3.3 Historical context

Mandalay has been the political and cultural centre of Burma/Myanmar for centuries. The Region is home to most of the former royal capitals of Burmese kingdoms - Pagan, Ava, Amarapura and Mandalay itself. In the first millennium CE, before the arrival of the Burmans into the Ayeyarwaddy plains, the region was part of Pyu kingdoms, a Tibeto-Burman speaking people that controlled much of central Myanmar until the 9th century. Pagan was founded by the Burmans in 849 and rose to become the capital of a kingdom that dominated the entire region until it was destroyed by the Mongols in 1287. The Pagan Empire became the cradle of Burmese culture and political history.

After a series of reigns by smaller kingdoms, in 1364 Ava emerged as a newly dominant force and reunified all of central Myanmar. Ava's rule lasted until 1527, after which central Myanmar passed under the control of the Taungoo kingdom from 1555 to 1752.



Finally, the Konbaung Dynasty, which had originated in Sagaing, moved their capital to Amarapura and later Mandalay, which was founded in 1857 by King Mindon as a new royal city, and ruled the region until 1885 when Britain annexed all of Upper Burma in the Third Anglo-Burmese War. The conquering British sent King Thibaw into exile and looted the palace, ending the independent statehood of Burma.

Although the British moved the capital to Yangon (then called Rangoon) and set up the main administrative bodies of British Burma there, Mandalay remained an important hub of Upper Burma and the centre of Burmese culture and learning. A railroad reached Mandalay in 1889. The British also brought many immigrants to the city, in particular from South Asia. As the last royal capital, Mandalay was regarded by the Burmese as a primary symbol of sovereignty and identity. These circumstances may have contributed to the fact that the later colonial period saw a number of protests against British rule.

As in other parts of Ministerial Burma, the directly administered parts of the country, the administrative machinery that evolved gradually under British rule was a pyramidal territorial organization comprising Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, Sub-divisional Officers, and Township Officers in charge respectively of division, districts, subdivisions, and townships.¹⁵ Already during the colonial period there was a divergence of local governance arrangements between urban and rural areas. Efforts to reform the colonial system of local governance in urban areas across British India already started in the late 19th century. Municipal Committees in larger towns like Mandalay were first constituted by law in 1874, and became partly elective in 1884. They were reorganized under the Municipal Act of 1898.¹⁶ Town committees with less extensive powers were constituted for the smaller towns.¹⁷ In 1921, first efforts were made to extend representative forms of local governance also to rural areas, when elected District Councils were created to perform the same functions as the municipal committees in the larger towns.

During World War II, most of Upper Burma was occupied by Japanese forces. In the war, Mandalay was one of the areas that suffered most. Air raids and an extensive assault in April 1942 destroyed most of the city, which also lost much of its population during the war.

Following independence, Mandalay Division, which had been administratively reorganized just before the war to include its present districts, became part of newly independent Burma as a centrally administered, regular division. The territorial subdivisions of village tracts/wards, townships, and districts were retained from the pre-independence period. Parliamentary elections for the House of Representatives took place in 1947, 1951, 1956 and 1960, as well as for the Mandalay municipal council, but no elected body existed at the Division level. Attempts to institute local self-government following the Democratization of Local Administration Act of 1953 never reached a stage of full implementation and did not alter the fundamental set-up of government at the local level during the 1950s.¹⁸ Following the 1962 military coup, Security and Administration Committees (SACs) were set up at the

15. For a detailed description of this system, see J.S. Furnivall, *The Governance of Modern Burma* (1961).

16. Burma Act III, 1898 (1 July 1898), as amended by Act LII, 1950. An online version of the Act is available at <http://displacementsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/the-municipal-act-1898.pdf>

17. J.S. Furnivall, *The governance of modern Burma*, 1961. For more details on the powers, functions and duties of municipal governments at the time see, "The Burma municipal manual: Containing the Burma Municipal Act 1898 as amended by Burma Act III of 1902 and Burma Act II of 1903, and the general rules, notifications and circulars issued there under", 1 Jan 1904.

18. For more detail on these attempts, see Furnivall, *Governance of Modern Burma* (1960).

local level in areas controlled by the Myanmar army, which were chaired by the regional military commander, and by the (military) Minister of Home Affairs at the centre.

The 1974 Constitution introduced the concept that States and Divisions had the same status. Mandalay Region thus became one of the 'constituent units' of the 'Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma', made up of 7 States and 7 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 established in Mandalay Division along the lines of how they had been set up in Ministerial Burma the 1920s. 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. The party nominally sought to embrace the country's ethnic diversity, but subordinated any desire for self-governance or even cultural autonomy under central domination. 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.¹⁹ In Mandalay 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. In Mandalay Division, such People's Councils were thus set up at Division level and at the level of village tract/wards and townships. At the central level of government, the *Pyithu Hluttaw* served as the country's legislature, with each of Mandalay 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 Mandalay Division, as all other parts of the country, were again placed under direct military control and administration. 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).

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 townships across Mandalay Division, as in village tracts and wards where the government had control. Membership was "essentially compulsory for civil servants and those who sought to do business with or receive services from the state."²⁰ 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.

19. Taylor, *The State in Myanmar* (2009)

20. Taylor, *The State in Myanmar* (2009)

In 2002, construction for the new national capital Naypyitaw began in Pyinmana Township in the far south of Mandalay Division. Government offices and staff were moved there from Yangon between 2005 and 2006. In May 2008, the national referendum on the new Constitution was held. The new Constitution made Mandalay Division, now renamed as Mandalay Region, a constituent unit of the new Union of the Republic of Myanmar, equal in status to the other States and Regions. The Constitution also created Naypyitaw Union Territory as a distinct entity with its own governance structures. Accordingly, Mandalay Region's institutions as well as the new Union territory's bodies were set up following the 2010 elections.

3.4 Governance institutions

The 2010 elections simultaneously elected representatives to the two Houses of the Union legislature (Hluttaw) and to the Region legislature (Hluttaw). They resulted in a victory of the USDP, which had emerged from the USDA a few months before the elections and had inherited its assets, networks and leadership, and gained a majority of the elected seats in all elected bodies of Mandalay Region. As there were several vacant seats in Mandalay Region, by-elections were held on 1 April 2012 (see below).

Region Hluttaw

The elections for the members of the Mandalay Region Hluttaw were contested on the basis of townships, which were each divided in two separate constituencies. As the Region has 28 townships, 56 territorial constituencies were formed. In addition, one constituency was set up for the Shan ethnic community of the Region, for whom voters registered as Shan were entitled to cast a vote in addition to their territorial constituency vote. Altogether, therefore, 57 members were elected for the Region Hluttaw. See the results of the elections for the selected townships in Table 4, and for the votes each party has received for the Mandalay Region Hluttaw Figure 5.

Table 4: 2010 Mandalay Region Hluttaw election results for selected townships

Constituency	Party	Candidate	Votes
Meiktila 1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Saw Htay	64,350
	National Unity Party	Than Than Myint	19,459
Constituency	Party	Candidate	Votes
Meiktila 2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Kyaw Aye	61,483
	National Unity Party	Paw Oo	13,507
Constituency	Party	Candidate	Votes
Thazi 1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Moe Myint Thein	38,359
	National Unity Party	Kyaw Myint	11,344
Constituency	Party	Candidate	Votes
Thazi 2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	San Tun	34,092
	National Democratic Force	Kyaw San	8,999
	National Unity Party	Than Aung	6,655

Constituency	Party	Candidate	Votes
Thabeikkyin 1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Than Aung	Unopposed
Thabeikkyin 2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Tin Tun	Unopposed

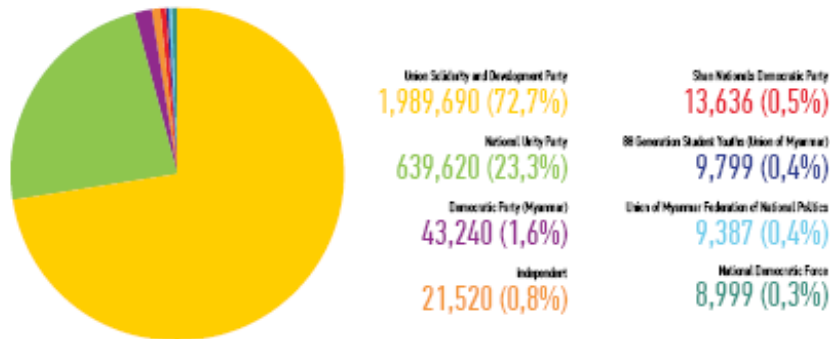


Figure 5: Votes received (number and percentage) by various parties in the Mandalay Region Hluttaw elections in 2010

The Region Hluttaw is formed by (1) two representatives elected from each township in the Region; (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 (see Figure 6).

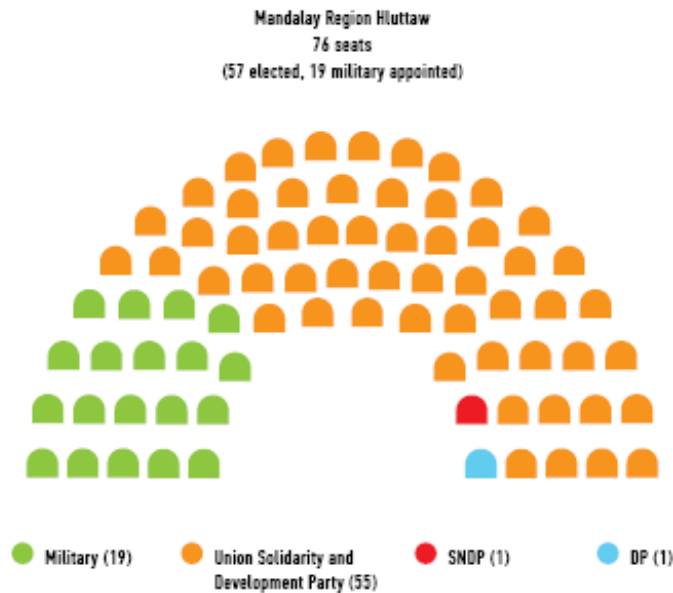


Figure 6: Composition of the Mandalay Region Hluttaw

In the Region Hluttaw, the USDP holds 55 elected seats. The Democratic Party (Myanmar) (DP) won one seat.²¹ The military occupies 19 seats. The National Unity Party (NUP), despite garnering 23 percent of the votes cast, did not get a seat. The USDP was the only party fielding candidates in all 56 territorial constituencies and the ethnic constituency, which was however won by the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP). Mandalay is among the few States or Regions Hluttaw in Myanmar where the USDP's role is entirely dominant as it holds all but two of the elected seats and in which no other party is represented in the Region Government except the SNDP's ethnic constituency representative, who is by constitutional requirement automatically a cabinet member.

The term of the Region or State *Hluttaw* is the same as the term of the *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw*, i.e. five years. All *Hluttaw* members are men. The legislative activity of the Mandalay Region *Hluttaw* has been similar to that of other States and Regions. In 2012 and 2013, the required Region laws essential for budgetary and planning purposes were adopted. As instructed by the central government, in April 2013 a Municipal Law was also passed.²²

The head of executive branch of the Region is the Chief Minister. Members of the Region Government are Ministers of the Region. The institutional framework for Mandalay Region follows that of other States and Regions and is prescribed in detail in the 2008 Constitution, as well as the respective laws adopted for the State and Region Hluttaws and Governments in 2010. The Region Government was established on 31 January 2011. Ye Myint, USDP, was appointed as Chief Minister, Aung Zan, USDP, as Hluttaw Chairperson, Win Maung, USDP, as Speaker and Aung Htay Kyaw, USDP, as Deputy Speaker of the Region Hluttaw.

In addition to the Chief Minister, the Region Government also comprises of 10 Ministers and the Advocate General of Mandalay Region. The USDP holds all ministerial portfolios except the Minister of Security and Border Affairs, which is by constitution held by a representative of the military. The single representative elected for the ethnic minority constituency in the Region, i.e. the Shan community is automatically member of the Region Government.²³ All members of the Mandalay Region Government are men (see Table 5).

Table 5: Mandalay Region Government

Name ²⁴	Function	Party
Ye Myint	Chief Minister	USDP
Col Aung Kyaw Moe	Ministry of Security and Border Affairs	Military
Myint Kyu	Ministry of Finance	USDP
Myint Than	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Breeding	USDP
Than Soe Myint	Ministry of Forestry and Mines	USDP
Aung Zan	Ministry of Planning and Economics	USDP
Kyaw Hsan	Ministry of Transport	USDP
Kyaw Myint	Ministry of Electric Power and Industry	USDP
Aung Maung	Ministry of Development Affairs	USDP
Win Hlaing	Ministry of Social Affairs	USDP
Maung Hla	Ministry of National Races Affairs (Shan)	SNDP

21. In constituency Chan Aye Thazan 2

22. These laws essentially comprised of the State Development Plans and the Budget Allocation Law. The Municipal Act was passed in 2013.

23. The representative was declared elected as he was an unopposed candidate.

24. August 2014

The fact that both the Government and the Hluttaw are dominated by the USDP and the military means that there is no 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 Mandalay Region are rather characterized by collective action and consensus, with the main 'opposition' to the Region government coming from those groups and parties which have so far remained outside the formal state structures.

Mandalay City

Mandalay, the second largest city in Myanmar, is governed on the basis of municipal laws that date back decades, in part to the colonial era. A Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC) has similar functions and structural features to the ones in Yangon, the only other incorporated city in Myanmar. A Mandalay City Development Law (1992) and the general Development Committee Law (1993) served as the main legal basis until recently. These laws established the present form of the MCDC, delegating wide responsibilities to this body, including city planning, land administration, tax collection, and urban development. However, the MCDC is also still responsible for duties stipulated in the previous Municipal Acts. The MCDC raises its own revenues through tax collection, fees, licenses and property development.²⁵ The committee's chairman also acts as the city's mayor. The present chairman is the Municipal Minister in the Regional Government. With the adoption of the Mandalay Region Municipal Law these arrangements have been revised.²⁶



25. The MCDC is organized as follows: Chairman (Mayor), Vice-Chairman (Vice-Mayor), Secretary, Joint-Secretary, Committee Members. The MCDC is responsible for waste management (including collection and treatment), business licenses and registries, water supply, roads and bridges, environmental regulations, maintenance of public property (including parks, heritage sites), street lighting and firefighting.

26. The details on local governance arrangements in Mandalay will be dealt with in chapter 4.4

The MCDC therefore existed prior to the coming into effect of the 2008 Constitution. The MCDC is the responsible agency for the enforcement of the Mandalay Region Municipal Law, and MCDC municipal by-laws and regulations. Essentially, these are arrangements of delegated administrative authority, under the direction and supervision of the executive branch of Union Government, rather than bodies of self-governance and local representation. Within the Mandalay city area, the 7 townships function more like urban boroughs, but otherwise follow the same laws, institutions and mechanisms as other townships around the country, including those of participatory planning and development funding described further below.

Naypyitaw Union Territory

Naypyitaw Union Territory has its own distinct governance system as per the 2008 Constitution, which states that it shall be under the direct administration of the President. It is no longer part of Mandalay Region.²⁷ While there is no representation of these townships in the Mandalay Region Hluttaw²⁸ Naypyitaw's eight townships are still included in Mandalay Region constituencies for the Union legislature. Two of the 12 Mandalay Region Amyotha Hluttaw seats are therefore elected in the Union territory.²⁹ Accordingly, 10 representatives are elected from Naypyitaw Union Territory, namely eight for the Pyithu Hluttaw and two for the Amyotha Hluttaw, but none of them have any role in the administration of the Naypyitaw Union Territory as a whole. They are however involved in the decision-making process regarding the Constituency Development Fund, which is allocated per township.

Naypyitaw Union Territory is governed by an appointed Naypyitaw Union Territory Council, which was selected on 30 March 2011 by President Thein Sein.³⁰ It also includes members nominated by the military Commander-in-Chief. The Council is the legislative and executive subnational authority for all of the territory included in the 8 townships, rather than only the city area of Naypyitaw itself. Otherwise, townships follow the same patterns and institutional structures as other townships, wards and village tracts in other parts of the country. The Head of General Administration Department (GAD) of Naypyitaw is ex-officio the secretary of the Naypyitaw Council. The GAD of Naypyitaw is the office of the Naypyitaw Council. The Union Budget includes the expenditure of the Union territory.

The Naypyitaw Council Chairperson does not have a similar position to that of a Chief Minister of the States and Regions except being a member of the Financial Commission. The term of the Chairperson and members of the Council is the same as that of the President. The Chairperson or a member of the Council shall not take part in any political party activities during their term. The Chairperson of the Naypyitaw Council is responsible to the President and the members are responsible to the Chairperson of the Council and the President through the Chairperson. The President may direct the Chairperson and any member of the Council to resign if they cannot discharge his duties efficiently.

27. Section 49 of the Constitution states that "The Union is delineated and constituted by seven Regions, seven States and the Union territories."

28. This is one of the significant differences between the Naypyitaw Union Territory and the six self-administered areas also established by the 2008 Constitution, which remain firmly integrated into their respective State or Region administrative and political structures. Section 394 of the Constitution explicitly recognizes that "the electorate residing in the Union Territory (has) the right to elect the Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw representatives only."

29. Section 141 (c) of the Constitution

30. Thein Nyunt was appointed as Chairman of the Naypyitaw Council, along with 9 members: Than Htay, Colonel Myint Aung Than, Kan Chan, Paing Soe, Saw Hla, Myint Swe, Myint Shwe and Myo Nyunt. All of its members are men.

For the purpose of judicial administration, the High Court of Mandalay Region is the High Court of the Courts situated in Naypyitaw, which includes a District Courts and Township Courts.

Union legislature

For the Union legislature, the *Pyithu Hluttaw* and the *Amyotha Hluttaw*, 36 and 12 representatives were elected for Mandalay Region respectively, with the particularity that for this purpose, the 8 townships of Naypyitaw Union Territory were included in Mandalay Region's constituencies. As one of the largest Regions, Mandalay is one of the States/Regions that are relatively 'underrepresented' in the *Amyotha Hluttaw*. In the *Pyithu Hluttaw* it is also rather 'underrepresented', simply due to its relatively large population townships.

For the seats in the *Pyithu Hluttaw*, each township served as a constituency. Hence, altogether 28 members were elected from Mandalay Region proper to the larger one of the two Houses of the Union legislature. Moreover, the 8 townships of Naypyitaw Union Territory were also counted as a part of Mandalay for the *Pyithu Hluttaw* elections. All of these 36 seats were won by the USDP (see Table 6).

Party	Constituencies contested	Votes	Percent	Seats
Union Solidarity and Development Party	36	2,388,906	71%	36
National Unity Party	36	483,043	14%	-
National Democratic Force	22	370,519	11%	-
Independent	4	31,372	1%	-
88 Generation Student Youths (Union Of Myanmar)	4	24,533	1%	-
National Political Alliances League	2	23,011	1%	-
Democratic Party (Myanmar)	3	16,463	<1%	-
Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics	1	9,759	<1%	-
Wunthanu NLD	3	9,637	<1%	-
United Democratic Party	1	1,750	<1%	-

Table 6: 2010 Pyithu Hluttaw election results for Mandalay Region

The 1 April 2012 by-elections had a significant effect on the political dynamics in the Region, since Mandalay was the Region with the highest number of vacant seats. Six constituencies were contested in Mandalay proper, and four in Naypyitaw Union Territory. The NLD won all of these electoral contests (Kyaukpadaung, Maha Aungmye, Meiktila, Natogyi, Pyinoolwin and Tada-U Townships, as well as the Naypyidaw townships of Dekkhinathiri, Ottarathiri, Pobbathiri and Zabuthiri).

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 28 townships in Mandalay Region, and as the 8 townships of Naypyitaw Union Territory were also added to Mandalay for this election, most townships were grouped into clusters of 2-6 to form *Amyotha Hluttaw* constituencies,

31. Ohn Kyaw won in this constituency with 87,598 votes, or 89.5%.

32. Pyinmana and Lewe formed one constituency (No. 9), and the townships Zeyathiri, Pobbathiri, Ottarathiri, Zabuthiri, Dekkhinathiri, and Tatkon another (No.10). For Mandalay Region proper, therefore, only 10 seats were available.

whereas Nyaung U counted as a single constituency. The USDP won all of the 12 available seats in Mandalay Region and Naypyitaw Union Territory. The NUP received about 16 percent of the votes, and the National Democratic Force (NDF) 10 percent, but neither won any seats (see Table 7).

Table 7: 2010 Amyotha Hluttaw election results for Mandalay Region

Party	Constituencies contested	Votes	Percent	Seats
Union Solidarity and Development Party	12	2,356,707	71%	12
National Unity Party	12	537,794	16%	-
National Democratic Force	7	341,431	10%	-
Democratic Party (Myanmar)	3	47,993	1%	-
Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics	2	31,749	1%	-
88 Generation Student Youths (Union of Myanmar)	1	26,805	1%	-

Being one of the most populous, central regions of Myanmar, and as one of its cultural and economic hubs, the importance of what happens in Mandalay Region for the rest of the country cannot be overstated. The trends prevalent in Mandalay are likely to affect other States and Regions as well, and changes that cannot be implemented in this Region are unlikely to be successful elsewhere. The population of Mandalay is more urbanized, educated and economically active than in other parts of Myanmar. Its expectations in terms of governance and participation may therefore also be greater.

The institutions that have been established on the basis of the 2008 Constitution in Mandalay Region, both at Region level and at the local level constituted by townships, wards and village tracts, have already gained a number of experiences and have been able to innovate and progress within the legal and political space available. This includes the election of Ward and Village Tract Administrators in 2012, and the formation of Township, Ward and Village Tract level Development Support Committees, as well as Municipal Affairs Committees in towns. Mandalay City can already look back at a formidable history as an incorporated city with more than a century of municipal governance. And yet, all these changes have so far been gradual and controlled steps that have not yet challenged the prevailing power structures or established networks of loyalty and allegiance. Many of the local level committees have built organically on older forms of local elite arrangements, and have not yet had to pass any tests of democratic accountability.

The dominating role of the incumbent elite and the absence of any major challenges to the status quo have informed and shaped the efforts, undertaken since 2012, of reintroducing some forms of popular participation at the local level, in particular the townships, the village tracts and wards. Understandably, voices critical of the prevailing power structures have not yet fully come to the fore in the Region in the past three years, at least not within the institutional framework of the Region Government or at the local level set up by the Constitution and subsidiary legislation. The elections to the Village Tract and Ward Administrators, a process managed by the General Administration Department, took place outside the scope of the wider political party spectrum, and returned many individuals who had already served in the system earlier.

Questions such as 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 research undertaken by UNDP as a whole focuses on the political dimension of transition in Myanmar, or in any given State or Region, not 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.

In an important and self-confident Region like Mandalay, which is also one of Myanmar's wealthiest, such questions will also play a key role in the further development of Myanmar's quasi-federal system overall, the relationships between the Union and the Region level of government, and the terms of settlement in the peace process in other States and Regions specifically. 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 on the other side, will be required. In particular, services should be provided on the basis of equal rights and equity, and transparently, rather than on the basis of political favours and personal loyalties. The degree to which Mandalay Region will be successful in meeting its governance challenges while both reflecting its own diversity and at the same time delivering basic services in an equitable and effective manner 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.

3.5 Introduction to the three townships participating in the mapping

The three townships participating in the mapping can together be considered to be representative for Mandalay Region, with one township being more urban and the other two more rural in character (see Table 8).

Township	Location	District	Population size	Urban	Rural	Wards	Village tracts	Villages
Labutta	In the centre of the Region along the Mandalay-Yangon express way	Meiktila	309,000	102,000	207,000	14	58	379
Patheingyi	Central-eastern part of the Region along the north-south railway	Meiktila	202,000	20,000	182,000	7	80	249
Zalun	Northern part of the Region, 120 km north of Mandalay	Pyin Oo Lwin	127,000	14,000	113,000	7	22	40

Table 8: Main characteristics of Meiktila, Thazi and Thabeikkyin Townships

Source: Department of Population, Ministry of Immigration and Population 2014; Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014; provisional results. The Township GAD Socio-economic profiles and MOH township health profiles 2014 were used to calculate the urban and rural populations, using the former urban/rural ratios applied to the new census figures.

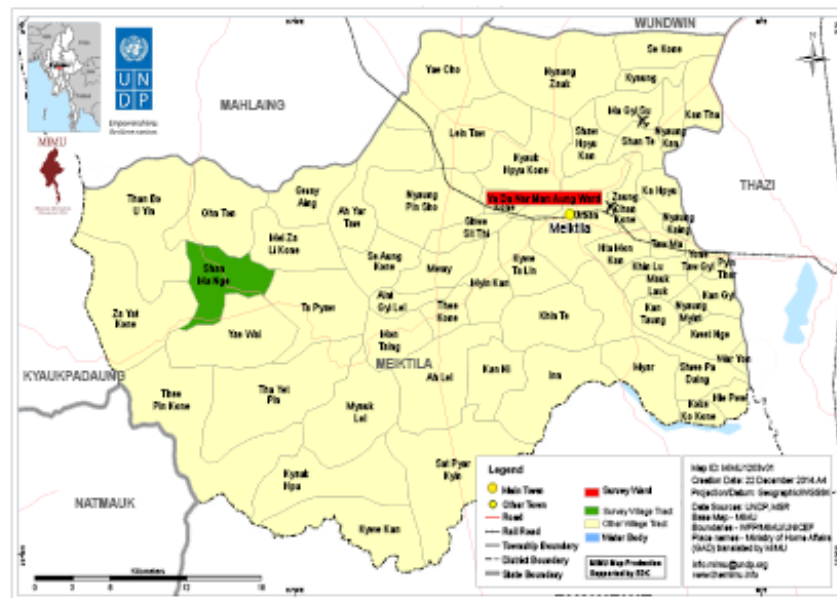
Meiktila

Meiktila Township is the largest township in Mandalay Region (since Mandalay city is split into several smaller townships), located in the centre of the Region on the junction between the Mandalay-Yangon express way and the major road connection with Shan State in the East (see Figure 7). It lies in Myanmar's dry zone which limits agricultural production if not supplemented by irrigation. It has 309,000 inhabitants according to the 2014 population census of which almost one-third or 102,000 people live in Meiktila Town which is a district capital. The Township covers an area of 1,230 square km. and an average population density of 251 per square km. It has 14 Wards, 58 Village Tracts and 379 villages. The majority of the population is of Bamar origin and are of Buddhist faith.

The main economic activity in the township is agriculture, most of which is taking place on small-hold farms and primarily aimed at subsistence. Main agricultural products include rice, cotton, beans, peas, vegetables, etc. Textile and food processing industry can be found in Meiktila Town as well as trade and transport businesses. Besides the normal services available in a city, the town has 6 public universities and a 200-bed district hospital.

In March 2013, communal rioting displaced an entire Muslim community, which had been resident and well-integrated in Meiktila since a long time, after it was attacked and expelled by angry mobs. The events of Meiktila shocked the Region and represented one of the greatest challenges of the Region authorities so far.³³ Although the violence has since subsided, the incident, followed by a few smaller similar ones in other towns,³⁴ has laid bare nerves and highlighted fissures in Mandalay Region's society that have yet to heal. The role of the Region Government is crucial for a process of integrating the Region's increasingly diverse, mobile and growing population, and has to take the lead in offering perspectives for economic development, social justice and the levelling out of regional inequities within its territory.

Figure 7: Meiktila Township



Thazi

Thazi Township falls under Meiktila District, which lies 50 km to the west of Thazi municipality. It is one of the medium sized townships in the Region in terms of population. The total population is 202,000, of which 20,000 live in the urban area and 182,000 in the rural areas. It has 7 wards, 80 village tracts and 249 villages (See Figure 8). The Township total area coverage is 2,037 square km, and a resulting population density of 99 inhabitants per square km. The majority of the population is Bamar especially in the low lands, while those living in mountains bordering Shan State are Lizu. In terms of religious faith, the majority of the population is Buddhist followed by Christians, Islam and some Roman Catholics.

33. Reportedly, 40 people died, including both Buddhist and Muslim, and more than 60 were injured. Some 9,000-12,000 people are said to have been displaced. Several of the perpetrators were sentenced to long prison terms.
 34. Communal rioting targeting Muslim communities spread to Othekone, Tatkon and Yamethia in the following days.

Thazi Township borders Shan State in the east and lies along the main road to Taunggyi, benefitting from the trade and visitors this brings along. Most people are engaged in agriculture, which includes cotton, wild seeds, beans, peas, rice, vegetables, watermelon, bananas, and sorghum, while a few people are involved in business and trading. In addition some people find employment in nearby factories such as the textile factory in Meiktila Township, while others also work in the marble quarry. For higher level services (like higher education and more sophisticated medical facilities), the people of Thazi make use of the services in Meiktila Town.

Road transport is fair though challenges are still being faced in the mountainous areas bordering Shan state comprising of 11 village tracts.

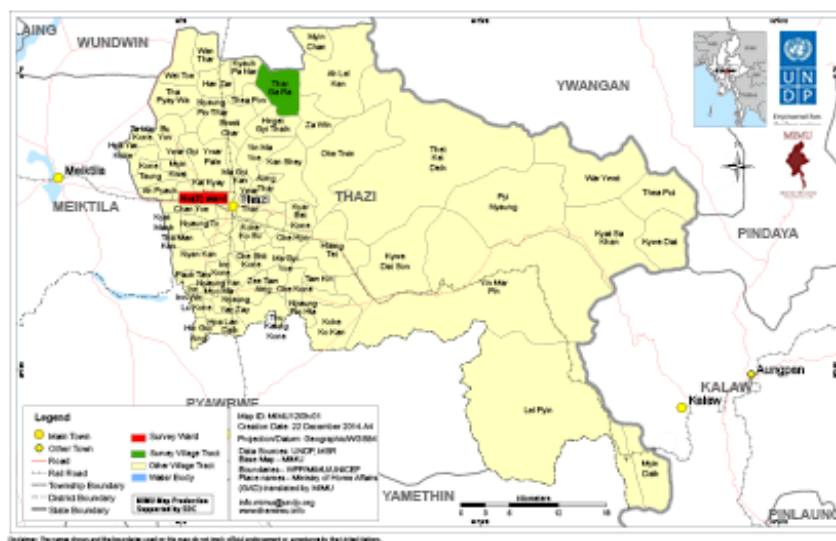


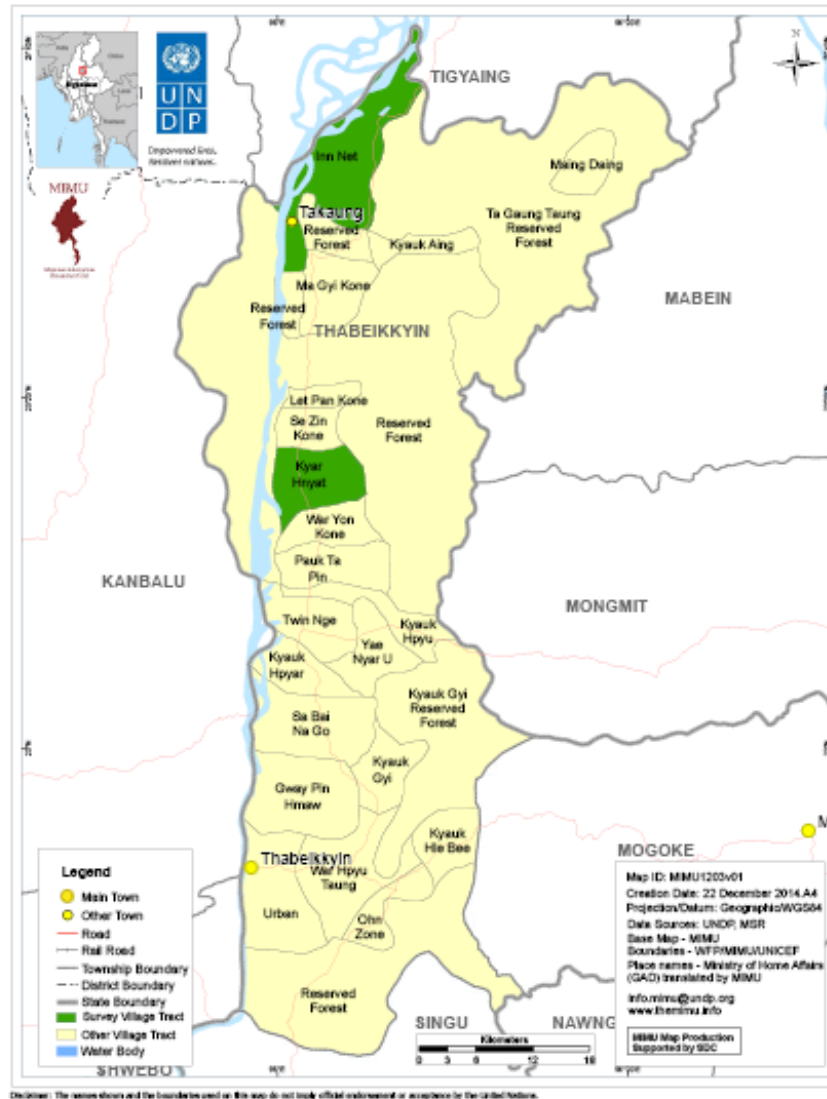
Figure 8: Thazi Township

Thabeikkyin

Thabeikkyin lies in the North of Mandalay Region and is part of Pyin Oo Lwin District of which the capital lies on the south side of Mandalay City (see Figure 9). It is one of the smaller townships in the Region with 127,000 people of which 14,000 live in the municipal area and the remaining 113,000 in the rural areas. 33 percent of the population is below the age of 15, indicating a relatively young and growing population. The total township area is 2,566 square km. which results in a population density of only 49 people per square km. which is far below the regional average of 206 per square km. While the township is peaceful and has no security threat, it did face a serious earthquake in 2012, which greatly affected the livelihood of especially the group of people living close to the Ayeyarwaddy River. A rehabilitation programme is in place for those who lost their houses during the earthquake. Thabeikkyin Township lies on the eastern bank of the Ayeyarwaddy River and falls climatically also in Myanmar's central dry zone and has common traits with other two townships in terms of agriculture production, animal husbandry, religious faith, and climatic challenges. Thabeikkyin Township is only smaller in size compared to Meiktila and Thazi Townships and is the more remote Township of the three included in the study with less floodplains and more hilly areas. Basic services and the internal infrastructure and communication networks are not as well developed as in the other two townships.

The people of Thabeikkyin are mainly involved in agriculture for subsistence, which is centred on the floodplains along the Ayeyarwaddy River. Products include rice, sugarcane, beans, peas, vegetables, watermelon, bananas, poultry and some livestock. In addition, a number of people are engaged in mining and the processing of sugar cane in neighbouring townships. Timber production is another source of income as 75 percent of the Township area is covered by forest. The majority of the inhabitants are Bamar and only one village is occupied by Lisu ethnic minority of Kachin origin. Buddhism is the most important religion in the township.

Figure 9: Thabeikkyin Township







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

4.1 Recent developments in Mandalay Region from a citizen's perspective

Before focussing on some of the governance issues related to service delivery in Mandalay Region, it is worth looking at how the people in the three townships perceive some of the major changes that have taken place over the last few years.

4.1.1 Citizens views on improvements in their village tract or ward

Regarding the situation in their village tract or ward, the respondents were asked “what has been the most important improvement made by the government in their village tract or ward over the last three years”.³⁵ Improvements in education were the ones noted most by 42 percent of the respondents (see Figure 10). 27 percent mentioned that government has not made any major improvements over the last three years in their village tract or ward. Road improvements (27 percent) and improved access to drinking water (24 percent) were also mentioned relatively often. Remarkably, especially if compared to other States and Regions, only 8 percent of the respondents mentioned an improvement in health services, while in other States and Regions it was mentioned more frequently.

Roads in urban areas (45%) and education in rural areas (53%) stand out as improvements as seen by the citizens.

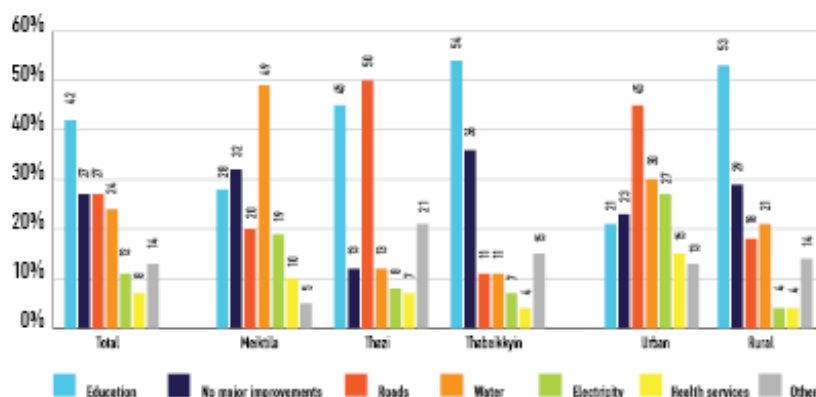


Figure 10: Improvements made by the government in the village tract/ ward over the last three years for the three townships and urban/rural

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014. n=288
Note: More than one answer possible.

Comparing the responses per township, one can notice that in Meiktila the improvements in access to drinking water situation stood out positively as they were noted by 49 percent of the respondents. In Thazi and especially in Thabeikkyin the number of respondents who mentioned improvements in education was relatively high (45 percent and 54 percent respectively), while in Thazi the improvements in roads were also mentioned by 50 percent of the respondents. In Thabeikkyin the percentage of respondents who mentioned that no major improvements were made is relatively high (36 percent).

Comparing the urban and rural respondents shows that urban respondents mention improvements in roads more often (45 percent), while rural respondents mentioned improvements in education more often (53 percent). Electricity and health services scored both relatively low in the rural areas (both only 4 percent).

35. Note that in relation to this question the researchers asked the respondents to name any major improvement themselves without probing. Later on (see section 4.3) when the respondents were asked about improvements in each of the sectors, most respondents were able to identify some type of improvement.

CSOs noted active communication between government and civil society.

When asked to mention the major improvements that have taken place in Mandalay Region, members from the Township Development Support Committees (TDSC) and Township Municipal Affairs Committees (TMAC)³⁶ as well as Civil Society Organisation (CSO) representatives who were interviewed in the three townships mentioned similar improvements. In Thabeikkyin, they noted improvements in access to land, roads extension, community participation plus improved communication through mobiles phones in most rural areas. CSOs in Meiktila mentioned improvements in health services (free medicines and better cooperation with charity organisations active in health), education (school upgrading and salary improvement) and water provision. In addition, both the committee members and CSO representatives mentioned important improvements in governance, which included more active communication between government and civil society and a more respectful behaviour of government staff as well as improved information flow from government.



4.1.2 Citizens' views on challenges in their village tract or ward

Respondents were also asked to mention the most important problems they experienced at the moment in their village tract or ward (see Figure 11).

Overall, four important problems stand out that were mentioned by almost 20 percent of the respondents each: poor health services, poor roads, lack of jobs and no access to clean water. However, the data also show that the responses need to be disaggregated to obtain

³⁶The Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014. Provisional results, August 2014. Labutta population excludes the sub-township of Pyinsaki. Patheingyi population excludes the sub-townships of Ngwe Saung and Shwen Thang Yan.

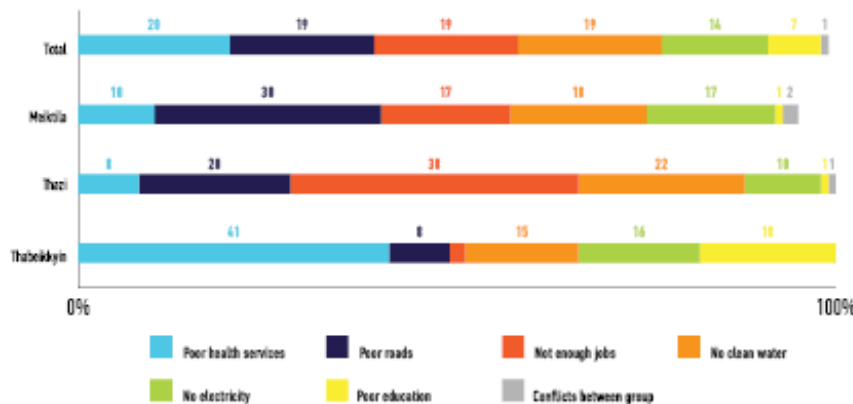


Figure 11: Main problem in village-tract or ward according to the respondents

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014. n= 288.

a clearer understanding of local concerns. Very high figures for highlighting a problem in one locality can skew the overall result for the total in the three townships, even though it constitutes a serious problem only in one or two of them. As can be seen from Figure 11, there were significant differences between the three townships. In Thabeikkyin, 'poor health services' was mentioned by 41 percent of the respondents, while 'poor roads' and 'lack of jobs' was mentioned far less. In Thazi, the 'lack of jobs' was mentioned more often (38 percent), while 'health services' and 'education' was not mentioned that often compared to the other two townships. In Meiktila, 'poor roads' was mentioned relatively more often (30 percent). Remarkably, and perhaps encouragingly, 'conflicts between groups' was not considered an area of concern, not even in Meiktila. The responses were however focused on the specific ward or village tract, rather than the entire township.

Conflicts between groups did not emerge as an area of concern. But what bothered people in Thabeikkyin was poor health (41%); lack of jobs (38%) in Thazi and poor roads (30%) in Meiktila.

A similar difference in development priorities emerged at the community level during the Community Dialogue meetings (see Table 9). The three most important problems mentioned differed across the townships and village tracts/wards, and were contingent on local conditions and needs.

Village Tract/Ward	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
A. Inn Net VT, Thabeikkyin Township	People need loans for agriculture.	Need Hospital Clinic.	Need sufficient supply of clean water.
B. Kyarhnyut VT, Thabeikkyin Township	No electricity (government grid).	Low job opportunity.	Poor condition of school building.
C. Shan Ma Nge VT, Meiktila Township	Hydropower electricity was built, but do not get sufficient amount of electricity.	Need for a secondary school.	Poor employment opportunities.
D. Yatarnar Man Aung VT, Meiktila Township	No health centre in this ward.	Not enough job opportunities.	High commodity prices.
E. TharGaYa VT, Thazi Township	No electricity.	Road condition needs to be upgraded from gravel to bituminous type.	Need tube wells for agriculture.
F. Ward (3), Thazi Township	Not enough safe drinking water.	Little employment opportunities.	No free healthcare.

Table 9: Most important development challenges for each village tract or ward emerging from the Community Dialogues

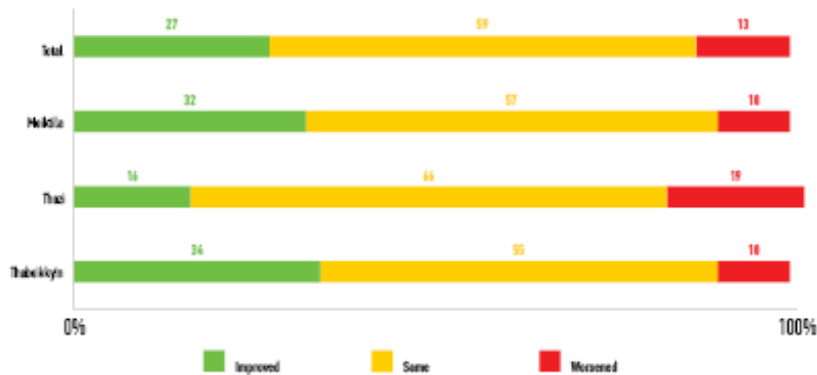
Source: Local Governance Mapping, CD meetings Mandalay Region, November 2014.

Livelihood situation

The food and income situation for most households of the respondents in the three selected townships has also not changed much over the last three years (see Figure 12). For 13 percent of the respondents, the food situation has worsened and for 27 percent it has improved, while for the majority (59 percent) it stayed more or less the same. All three townships show a similar pattern except that in Thazi a slightly larger part of the respondents mentioned a deterioration of their food situation (19 percent) compared to the percentage of households that recorded an improvement (16 percent).

Figure 12: Changes in household food situation over the last three years in the three townships in Mandalay Region

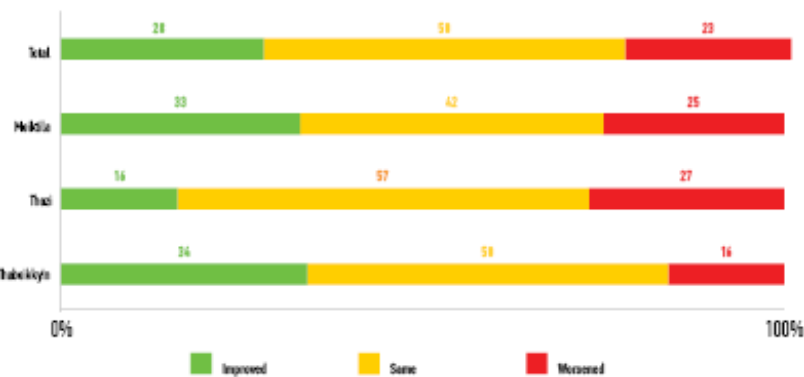
Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n=288.



A similar pattern emerged with regard to changes in the household income situation of respondents, except that 10 percent more respondents mentioned that their household income situation had deteriorated over the last three years (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Changes in household income situation over the last three years in the three townships in Mandalay Region

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n=288.



People were also asked about their perceptions about the actors responsible for resolving their problems. As is shown in Figure 14, most people expect the VTA/WAs to play an important role in solving their problems despite the fact that their ability to solve them is very limited, which could potentially lead to frustration and friction between the VTA/WAs and the community.

When asked what government is doing to tackle these problems the respondents gave the following responses (see Figure 15). The fact that two out of three respondents believe that government is not doing anything to resolve the most important problems shows the continued scepticism or lack of trust people have in their government.

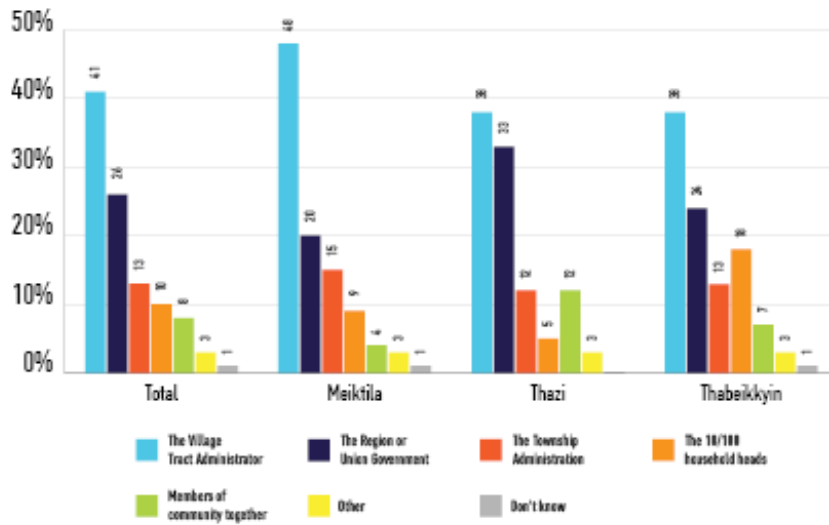


Figure 14: Who is, according to the respondents, first of all responsible for solving the problems in the village tract or ward

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n=288.

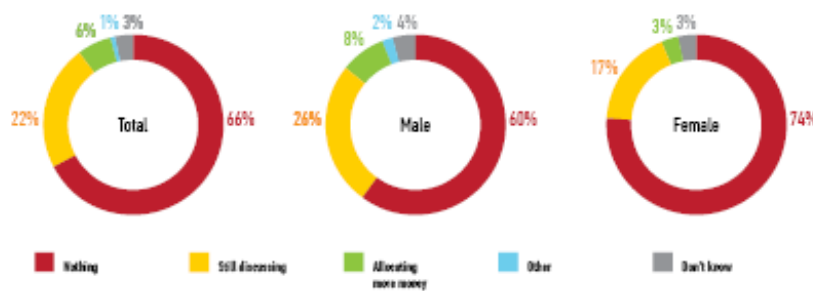


Figure 15: Action taken by government to resolve the most important problem in the village tract or ward according to the respondents

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n=288.

4.1.3 Perceptions on safety and security in Mandalay Region

The violent conflicts that took place in Meiktila in March 2013 do not seem to have had a negative impact on the perception of safety of the respondents in Mandalay Region in general or those in Meiktila in particular as is shown in Figure 16.

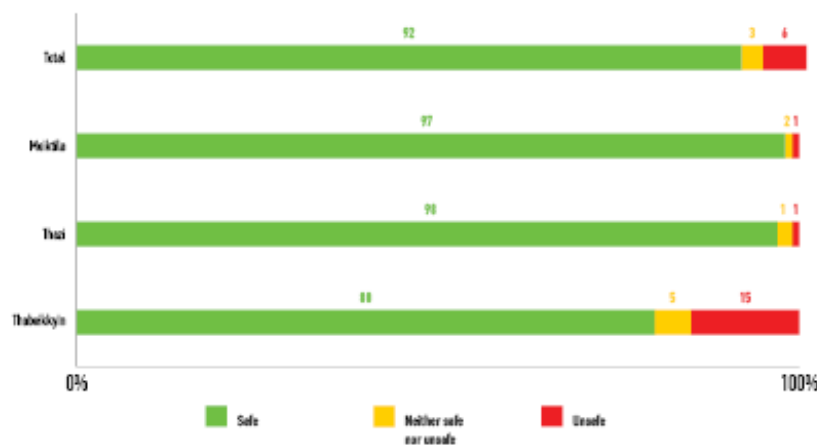


Figure 16: Perception of the safety and security situation in the ward or village tract of the respondents in the three townships

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n=288.

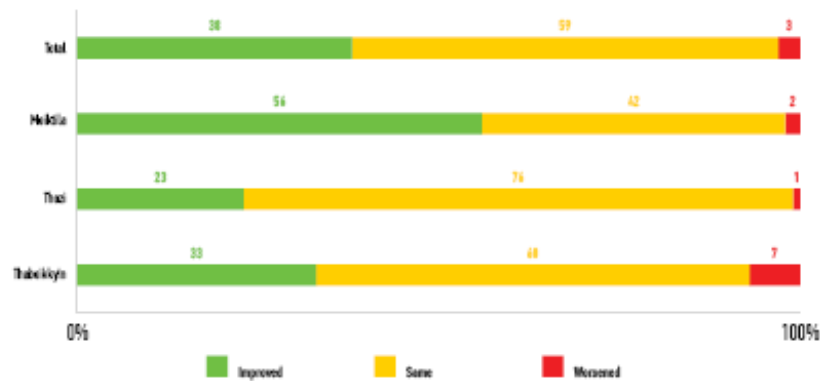
92% felt safe in their village tract and ward and about 38% had even noticed an improvement and the main reason cited was better law enforcement.

Ninety-two percent of respondents mentioned that they felt safe in their village tract or ward at the moment, which is similar to the results in the other States and Regions that have been covered by the mapping so far. Thabeikkyin recorded a slightly higher level of people (15%) feeling unsafe than the other two townships. The respondents who mentioned that they felt unsafe gave as most important reasons: lack of law enforcement in the village tract or ward and low morale of people (resulting in substance abuse and disrespectful behaviour).

Around half of the citizens interviewed (59 percent) reported that the safety situation in their immediate area of residence had stayed more or less the same over the last five years, 38 percent noticed an improvement in the safety situation, while only three percent mentioned that the situation had worsened (see Figure 17). Remarkably, the respondents in Meiktila recorded the highest level of improvement in the safety situation (56 percent), despite the serious violence only one-and-a-half years ago. This is likely not to be representative for the sentiments in the local Muslim community which was most heavily affected by the violence.

Figure 17: Perceived changes in the safety situation in village tract or ward in the three townships

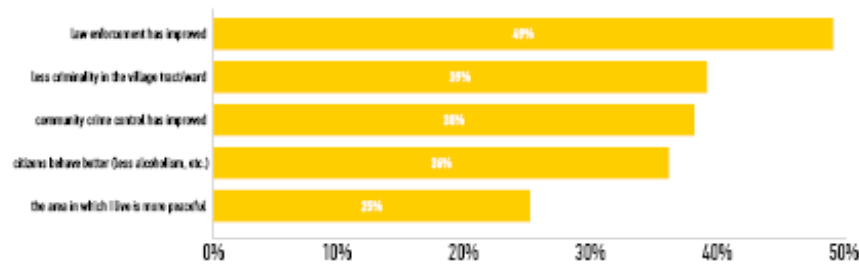
Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n=288.



According to the 108 respondents who stated that the safety situation has indeed improved, the most common reasons given were related to the local situation in their immediate surroundings like improved law enforcement and reduced criminality in the village tract or ward, while issues related to an improved national or regional peace situation were mentioned less frequently (see Figure 18).

Figure 18: Reasons for improvements in the safety situation in the village tract or ward in the three townships

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n=108. More than one answer was possible.



When asked “what could be done more to improve the safety situation in your village tract or ward most of the respondents recommended to establish safety volunteer groups (or community watch), especially those living in the urban areas (see Figure 19).

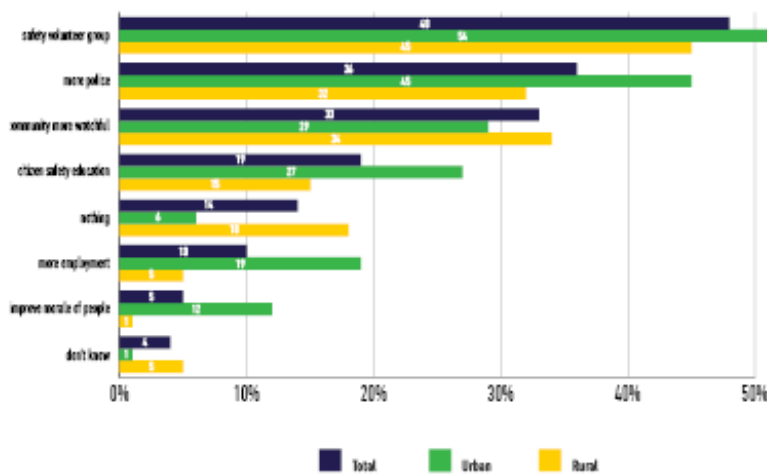


Figure 19: Reasons for improvements in the safety situation in the village tract or ward in the three townships

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n=288.

Another aspect of safety, which the mapping addressed, is the perception of freedom of expression. The study asked the respondents whether they felt free and safe to express their opinion about government in public. Almost half of the respondents (47 percent) mentioned that they felt free to say what they want about government (see Figure 20). This also means however that still more than half of the respondents (51 percent) feel in some way restricted to express themselves freely, being afraid of the possible repercussions this might have. This indicates that people still don't have full confidence in government respecting rule of law and basic human rights. Remarkably, slightly more female respondents mentioned that they felt free to say what they wanted (51 percent) as compared to the male respondents (43 percent).

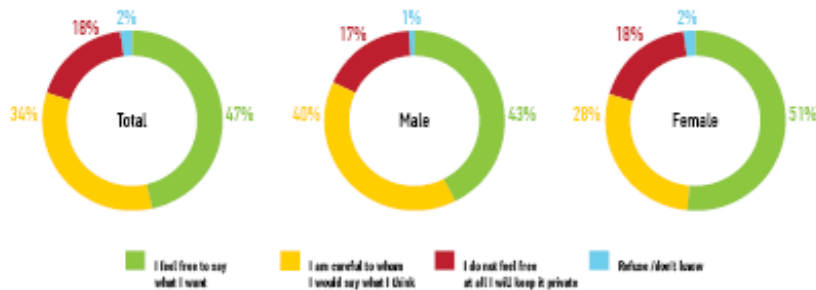


Figure 20: The extent to which respondents feel free to say in public their opinion about the government in general

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n=288.

While certain trends emerge across these communities, there are significant differences between village tracts and wards within one township as well. Since only one village tract and one ward were included in this mapping in each township, it is not possible based on these data to say whether other village tracts and wards have similar priorities or whether they will present different felt needs. What one can conclude from these individual and collective responses and discussions however is that the needs and problems of people can differ significantly per township or even per village tract or ward and that tailor-made solutions and responses are required if government wants to become more responsive to these needs and become more "people-centred". If so, it will be critical for government in general and the various ministries and departments in particular to be able to assess and record these different needs on the basis of transparent and equitable criteria and have the necessary

systems in place that enables it to respond to each of these issues fairly, systematically and adequately while at the same time adhering to priorities defined at the national level. Further below this report will assess whether the township administration and the various departments at township level have the necessary instruments, whether they have sufficient capacity and most of all whether they possess at least a minimum level of autonomy to make them more responsive.

4.2 Development planning and citizen participation

One of the objectives of the administrative reform programme of the Government of Myanmar is to transform the development process in Myanmar and make it more “people-centred”. What this means in the Myanmar context is in general described in the Framework for Economic and Social Reforms of January 2013,³⁷ which mentions: “The Government of Myanmar attaches high priority to developing a participatory process of local budgeting, which should reflect local priorities and needs while corresponding with national policy directions” (FESR, page 34) and “...new forms of public participation are emerging as citizens seek opportunities to actively participate in shaping the policies that affect their lives.” (FESR, page 37). To facilitate this process, new consultative structures at the township and village tract or ward level have been established following Notification 27/2013 of the President in February 2013.³⁸ As a result, the Township Development Support Committees and the Village Tract or Ward Development Support Committees were established in Mandalay Region in March 2013.³⁹ Moreover, each State and Region has adopted a Municipal Law as per Schedule Two of the Constitution. The Township Municipal Affairs Committees were established at the township level in April 2014 after the adoption of the Municipal Law by the Mandalay Region *Hluttaw*.⁴⁰

As a result of these changes, the planning and budgeting processes at the Region level and below are gradually changing as well. In general, from a township level perspective, there are currently three main distinctive planning and budgeting processes that affect service delivery to the township population and in which people could possibly be involved. While these processes are more or less similar across the country, there are differences between the various States and Regions that affect the level of involvement of citizens in these processes. In the following paragraphs an overview is presented as to how planning and budgeting is implemented in Mandalay Region and in what way and to what extent people are involved in these processes.

The first type of planning and budgeting process that takes place at the township level is the planning and budgeting of community level activities related to the various development funds that are made available either by the Union or Region/State level Governments to the township and that are managed by the GAD. The details of the related planning process and the implementation in the three townships will be described. This planning process only relates to capital investments, rather than recurrent government expenditures.

37. See Government of Myanmar 2013, Framework for Economic and Social Reforms, final draft January 2013.

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

39. See Annex 3 for details of these and other committees, their composition and functioning in the three townships in Mandalay Region.

40. See Mandalay Region Municipal Affairs Organisation Law; Mandalay Region *Hluttaw* Law no. 3 2013 of 8 April 2013..

The second and (in terms of volume of public resources that are involved) most important planning and budgeting process, is the sector planning and budgeting process, which covers both recurrent and capital expenditure. Each of the departments at the township level, whether falling under the Region Government (schedule two responsibilities) or under the Union level Government (schedule one responsibilities), adheres to its own annual and sometimes multi-annual planning process although the planning framework, including the timeframe and budget formats are more or less the same. The details of this planning process will be briefly summarized in section 4.3 when reflecting on the planning processes in the health and education departments.

Thirdly there is the municipal planning and budgeting process, which is still fairly new. It is similar to the sector planning process and is implemented by the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA), a newly created department that exists in each State and Region falling under the Ministry of Development Affairs, but has no parent Ministry at the Union level (since “municipal affairs” is included in Schedule Two of the Constitution). Since the revenues for the DMA are generated at the township level, the planning and decision-making process is slightly different from the sector departments however. The details of this planning process will be described in section 4.3 under the drinking water section. It is also important to note that the Mandalay will follow their counterparts in Yangon to elect their municipal officials. A law that has been passed in December 2014 (replacing the 1992 legislation) during the Hluttaw’s 11th session lays down that half of Mandalay City Development Committee members will be chosen by popular vote and the seven-member committee could expand to have either 13 or 15 members.⁴¹

Finally, there are elements of an emerging fourth type of planning, the township development planning process, which takes (or should take) a more comprehensive analysis of the whole township into perspective. It would take its challenges and opportunities as a



41. See Myanmar Times 5 January 2015

starting point for analysis and visioning, resulting in a more strategic mid- or long-term development plan for the whole township and ideally should inform each of the departments of their role in this process, their contribution to the development objectives and their sector priorities. It could foresee the drafting of a more strategic mid- or long-term development plan for the whole township and could inform each of the departments of their role in this process and how their sector priorities contribute to the development of the township. The township plans that are currently compiled by the Township Planning Officer (TPO) and the Township Planning and Implementation Committee (TPIC) in those township that have an active functioning TPIC do not yet meet these criteria. They often have a 2.5-year perspective (until the next national elections in 2015) or 5-year perspective and are at present merely a compilation of the individual sector plans. No budget is available at the township level for their implementation and they are not used to inform the actual planning process of the sector ministries yet.

4.2.1 Planning, implementation and monitoring of development fund projects

In Mandalay Region three development funds are available at the moment at the township level:

1. The Poverty Reduction Fund
2. The Rural Development Fund
3. The Constituency Development Fund

The Poverty Reduction Fund

Mandalay receives 1 million USD under Poverty Reduction Fund. The requested townships submit project proposals to GAD at region level without knowing the ceilings in advance and GAD retains the approval decision-making power "to avoid money being wasted on unnecessary projects or not reaching the poorest communities" and to retain maximum flexibility to allocate the available funds according to its own poverty criteria and the merit of the proposals submitted.

The Poverty Reduction Fund was established as a presidential initiative in 2012 to address rural development and poverty, and is therefore only available for infrastructural projects in village tracts. It was initiated in the 2012-13 financial year and since then each State/Region has received one billion Kyats (1 million USD) each year during its first two years while for the financial years 2014-15 and 2015-16 the amounts per State/Region differ a lot depending on the poverty situation of each State/Region. Mandalay still receives one billion Kyats (1 million USD) per year. The Region Government (as is the case in Mandalay), can top up the fund with additional allocations. These additional allocations differ per year depending on the expected revenues and expenditures of the Region. The funds were initially both budgeted and executed under the GAD, because State and Region government institutions were newly formed and considered unable to manage these funds. Starting from the financial year 2013-14 the funds are budgeted and transferred directly to the State/Region "administrative organization" budget category. The management and administration of the fund is still "delegated" to the GAD Executive Secretary within the Region Government and falls therefore under the GAD's control.⁴²

Projects under this fund can be submitted by village tracts for school and health facility renovation, road improvement or bridges, the improvement of water facilities and electricity (usually solar power). The projects are small (between 2-3 million Kyats (2,000-3,000 USD) each) and should be implemented by the village tract people themselves under supervision of the VTA and the Township Administration. All proposed projects should be outside the national plan meaning that they should not be included in any of the sector ministries' plans for the township. In practice, the sector ministries can also propose small community

42. Nixon, Hamish, and Jolene, Cindy: 2014: *Fiscal Decentralisation in Myanmar: Towards a Roadmap for Reform* page 3

projects that were either too small to be included in their own plans, that were rejected by the Regional or Union level Ministries or that have emerged since they submitted their own plans.

While the normal annual planning cycle starts in September of the preceding year, the planning and implementation cycle of the development projects is much shorter and enables the township administration to be more responsive to urgent needs. In Mandalay Region, the GAD at the Region level requests each of the 28 townships to submit project proposals before July of each year. Similar to other States and Regions, the GAD doesn't allocate indicative budget ceilings to each of the townships beforehand, which means that the townships don't know how many projects will be approved. Hence, they usually submit a long list of projects of which only 10-20 percent will be approved and implemented. After receiving the project proposals from all townships, a committee consisting of senior GAD staff members at the Region level only (no elected Hluttaw members or other Regional government staff are involved) scrutinises all proposals based on "poverty" criteria and data known to the GAD and it informs the Regional Chief Minister and the respective townships of its decisions. After formal endorsement in September, townships are informed which of their proposed projects are approved (without any justification) and funds are transferred in two quarterly tranches to the township GAD accordingly.

At the township level, approved projects are announced during the combined monthly TDSC/TMAC/VTAs meetings while the GAD finance officer informs each VTA individually in writing on the financial details of their approved projects. Implementation of projects takes place during the dry season after crops are harvested and should be completed within six months, i.e. between October and April). The TA is drawing officer for the fund, while the Deputy TA is controlling officer.⁴³ The GAD office distributes the available funds in two instalments to the VTAs pending the submission of progress reports. The VTAs submit progress reports during each TDSC/TMAC/VTAs meeting. In 2013/2014, most projects were completed within three months as the majority were small maintenance projects.

The TA is responsible for administering and monitoring progress but is assisted by the TMC, TDSC and TMAC members who conduct regular inspection tours. A selection of completed projects is checked during the annual audit of the GAD. Discussions with TDSC members and elected Hluttaw members indicate that the existing control mechanisms in place are not sufficient to prevent mismanagement of funds at the various levels, however.

According to the Regional Director of GAD in Mandalay, the GAD retains the decision-making power regarding the approval of PRF projects at the regional level 'to avoid money being wasted on unnecessary projects or not reaching the poorest communities'. In addition, it does not provide township administrations with indicative ceilings in advance in order to retain maximum flexibility to allocate the available funds according to its own poverty criteria and the merit of the proposals submitted. Thus the fact that as a result of this approval process the amount allocated per township can differ substantially each year as well as between townships is not a consideration for the GAD.

⁴³ The drawing officer can authorise payment if the necessary conditions are met and sign cheques, the controlling officer has to check the legitimacy of the payment and countersign any cheque.

Box 1: Small steps of change

The relationship between the departments at the township level and their counterparts at the Regional level seems to have changed. Constructive inputs from below are appreciated and integrated into the planning and the Region is in general more responsive and predictable in behaviour. As one of the Deputy TA noted: “In the past, there was a huge financial gap between e.g. the expected costs for a school renovation of 5 million Kyats (5,000 USD) and the amount actually approved, e.g. 2.5 million Kyats (2,500 USD). Hence, villages had to contribute the remaining amount, which was a burden to the people. At present, if the budget requires 10 million Kyats (10,000 USD) from the village, the TDSC will check consistency with requirements; the TMC takes a decision and when the project is submitted to Region level, exactly 10 million kyats (10,000 USD) is approved. Thus, there is more consistency and convenience in financial allocations than in the past”.

The Rural Development Fund

In addition to the Poverty Reduction Fund, there is a small GAD-operated Rural Development Fund (RDF) available in Mandalay Region, which is a regional fund, but also available in some other States and Regions. Part of the revenues collected by the GAD at the township level on behalf of the Regional Government (like land, mineral and excise tax) are used for this fund, of which the total amount can differ substantially each year as it seems to be used as a closing entry (where the Regional Government first allocates budgets to its regular budget lines and any “left over” is allocated to top up the RDF, which is why the total amount available can differ per year) by the Regional Government. The allocation criteria and the selection process is the same as for the Poverty Reduction Fund and the procedure is in practice often combined in a Rural Development and Poverty Reduction Fund at the township level, even though the funding sources and budget lines are different.

The Constituency Development Fund

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was established by the Union legislature in 2013.⁴⁴ Townships form single-member constituencies for the election of members of the *Pyithu Hluttaw*, the lower chamber of the Union legislature, and are divided in two constituencies for the election of members to the Region *Hluttaws*.⁴⁵ Clusters of several townships form *Amyotha Hluttaw* constituencies in Mandalay Region. Representatives from the two houses of the *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw* and Region *Hluttaw* are allowed to select township development activities in their constituencies to a maximum of five million Kyats (5,000 USD) per project.

The CDF is now budgeted as current revenue and expenditure under the State/Region *Hluttaw* budget. Priorities for these projects include improved water supply, renovations of rural roads and bridges, renovations of school buildings, renovations of buildings related to health and other township needs. The implementation of CDF projects is to be done by Township Development Implementation Bodies consisting of the four *Hluttaw* representatives for a township, members of the TDSC and TMAC and several *ex-officio* members from the GAD and other departments (usually DRD and DMA).⁴⁶

44. Initially the President refused to sign the law and sent it back to the *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw* with comments that the law was unconstitutional due to its granting the *Hluttaw* executive power to implement development activities. However, the *Hluttaw* proceeded to promulgate it with minor amendments. See also Order No. 83/2013 and No. 86/2013.

45. For the election of 12 seats per State/Region in the *Amyotha Hluttaw*, the upper chamber of the Union legislature, townships are either divided (if fewer than 12 townships exist) or grouped together (for States/Regions with more than 12 townships).

46. Nixon, Hamish, and Jolene, Cindy: 2014, *Fiscal Decentralisation in Myanmar: Towards a Roadmap for Reform* page 33.

In the financial year 2013/2014 and again in 2014/2015, each township received 100 million Kyats (100,000 USD) from the Constituency Development Fund irrespective of the population size of the township for the implementation of small projects in both rural and urban areas. For this fund, and therefore contrary to the PRF allocation criteria, both village-tracts and wards can submit proposals. The selection procedure is similar to that of the Poverty Reduction Fund only in this case the budget ceiling of 100 million Kyat (100,000 USD) per township is known beforehand and the elected Hluttaw members need to approve the projects before they are submitted to the Regional Government. The final approval for the selected projects comes from the Regional Government.

As a result of the budget ceilings per township being known beforehand, the prioritisation of project takes place at the township level and the total number of proposed projects per township does not exceed the budget ceiling. The approval at Region level is therefore much more a formality as compared to the selection and approval process for the PRF/RDF funds, meaning that the CDF is in practice much more controlled by the various actors at the township level and often used to fund projects that were rejected or too small for funding by the sector ministries or the PRF/RDF funds or that require urgent attention like the repair of a school roof, which would otherwise take at least a year to be implemented by the sector ministries as they can only include such emergency repairs in their next annual plan.

If one looks at the amounts that were actual available for each of the three townships under these three development funds (see Table 10 and Figure 21), one can notice that the average amount available per village tract or ward in 2013/2014 was 6.0 million kyats (6,000 USD) and per capita it was 1,756 kyat (1.75 USD). As a result of the selection process used in Mandalay Region, the differences between the three townships are however large. Possibly as an effect of the riots in Meiktila at the beginning of 2013 the township received more attention during the subsequent financial year, while Thabeikkyin being one of the poorer townships in the Region did not received that much. As a consequence each village tract or ward in Meiktila could implement on average four projects (assuming that each project costs on average 2.5 million Kyats (2,500 USD)), while only one project per village tract or ward could be implemented in Thazi.

CDF is in practice much more controlled by the various actors at the township level and is in practice often used to fund projects that were rejected or too small for funding by the sector ministries or the PRF/RDF funds. Thus it can focus on interventions that require urgent attention like the repair of a school roof, which would take at least a year to be implemented by the sector ministries.

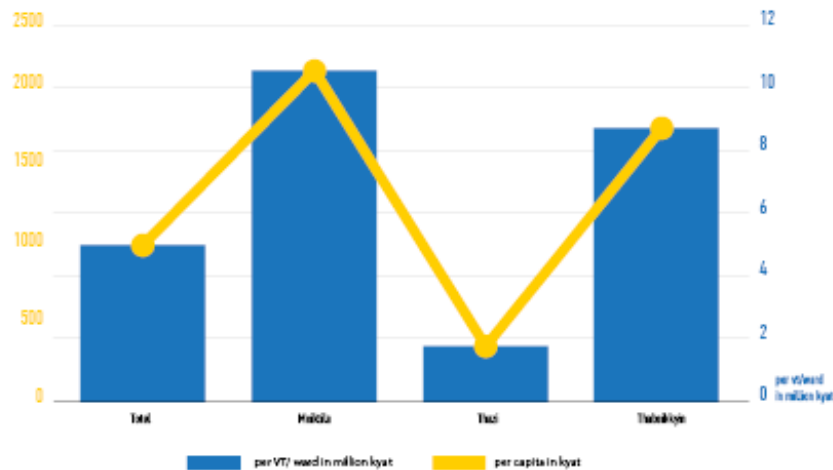
	PRF in million Kyats	CDF in million Kyats	RDF in million Kyats	Total in million Kyats	Citizens	Per capita in Kyat
Meiktila	56	100	563	719	309,000	2,327
Thazi	80	100	0	180	202,000	819
Thabeikkyin	20	100	98	218	127,000	1,717
Total	156	300	661	1,117	636,000	1,756

Table 10: Overview of Development Funds for the three townships for the year 2013/14

Source: Interviews with GAD staff in the three townships and Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014; provisional results.

Figure 21: Overview of Development Funds (PRF, RDF and CDF combined) for the three townships per village tract or ward and per capita for the year 2013/14

Source: Interviews with GAD staff in the three townships and Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014; provisional results.



The mapping team tried to conduct a check of the type and number of projects that were implemented in the three townships during the 2013-14 financial year at the village tract and ward level that were funded by these different development funds. While indeed 4-5 projects were implemented in the few wards and village tracts that were visited, it was not possible to track these projects back to the funding sources. The situation at village tract or ward level is even more complicated because similar projects were implemented by the Department of Rural Development and the Department of Municipal Affairs at the village tract and ward level respectively, which were almost impossible to distinguish for the VTA/WAs involved.

4.2.2 Participation of citizens in decision-making regarding the utilisation of the development funds

While these funds have been in operation since the financial year 2012-13 and 2013-14, the recent introduction of Village Tract/Ward and TDSC as well as the TMAC led to a new process of deliberation and decision-making regarding the selection of projects for this fund at community and township level.

In theory, citizens can be involved at two levels in the planning process of development fund projects. First, they can be consulted either directly or indirectly at the village tract or ward level during the identification of potential projects for their community by the VTA/WAs or the VT/WDSC, and secondly they can participate indirectly through the participation of their VTA/WA and the TDSC/TMAC during the selection and prioritisation process at the township level.

In Mandalay Region, both the VTA/WAs and the TDSCs play an active role in the identification of projects at the village tract or ward level. Most VTA/WAs generally consult their VT/WDSCs and/or the group of elders and respected people (i.e. generally men) and/or the 10/100 household heads.⁴⁷

47. The 10/100 household heads or village heads or village administrators, have been incorporated in the administrative system during the British colonial rule and still play an important role in assisting the VTA who usually oversees 4-6 villages. They are not part of the formal government structure, and are either elected by the community or self-appointed. The Village Elderly and Respected People (VERP) is a kind of advisory committee to the VTA. There is no division of responsibilities between members but one will often assume the role of chairman. They meet in an informal manner and on an occasional basis. The selection process for VERPs is not clear. Typically they are chosen by the Village Tract Administrator with advice from other elders in the village or are self-appointed. Most of them are former VTAs/10/100 household heads who automatically assume a VERP position upon leaving their post. In some villages the VERPs occupy a more permanent position than the VTA and so oversee several VTAs. Members are generally older men of a medium to higher socio-economic background. With the establishment of the VT/WDSC they are sometimes incorporated in these new committees and sometimes continue to exist next to the VT/WDSC. See for more detail Kempel, Susan 2012; Village Institutions and Leadership in Myanmar: A View from Below; UNDP 2012.

For the identification and later on monitoring of projects under the various development funds the TMC and TDSCs in Mandalay Region split themselves up in sub-committees of two to three members each (see Figure 22). Each of the sub-committees visits a selection of village tracts/wards to meet with the VT/WDSC and the VTA/WA to discuss and identify potential projects and visit the actual project sites, take pictures and reach consensus on the proposed project for each village tract or ward. The sub-committee takes this proposal to the township level. If required, engineers from the DRD or DMA assist the communities with making more detailed designs and cost calculations for the proposed projects. If the proposed project exceeds the maximum amount of 5 million kyat (5,000 USD) it is either split in two (the second part being implemented the year after) or transferred to one of the sector departments.

While most VTA/WAs consult their VT/WDSC a few organise one or more meetings for all community members to discuss their priorities. At the community level, opinions were mixed on the extent to which citizens were actively involved in project selection. Broader consultative mechanisms like regular community level meetings through VT/WDSC or town hall meetings would help in receiving citizen input.

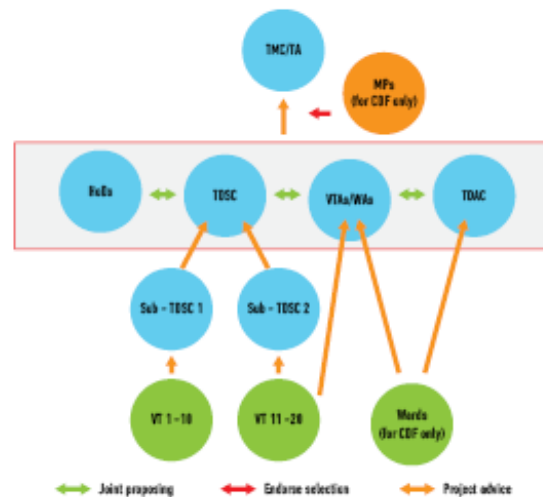


Figure 22: Schematic presentation of consultation process for the PRF and CDF projects in Mandalay Region

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, interviews with key resources persons.

Participation of respondents in village or ward meetings is rather low, which makes it difficult to involve community members actively in these consultation processes. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents do not participate on a regular basis in village tract or ward meetings. Female respondents participate less than male respondents (62 percent of the female respondents do not participate regularly vis-à-vis 53 percent of the male respondents). The main difference is however between young and old people. Of the respondents above 50 years of age 58 percent participate regularly in these types of meetings, but of the respondents below 40 years of age only 21 percent participate regularly. When asked why they do not attend these village meetings, 48 percent of the respondents mentioned that they were not invited, did not know about these meetings or mentioned that such meetings were not held in their village or ward. Forty four percent mentioned that they did not have time to attend (women more often than men), while 7 percent of the female respondents mentioned that their husband or the head of household did not allow them to attend.

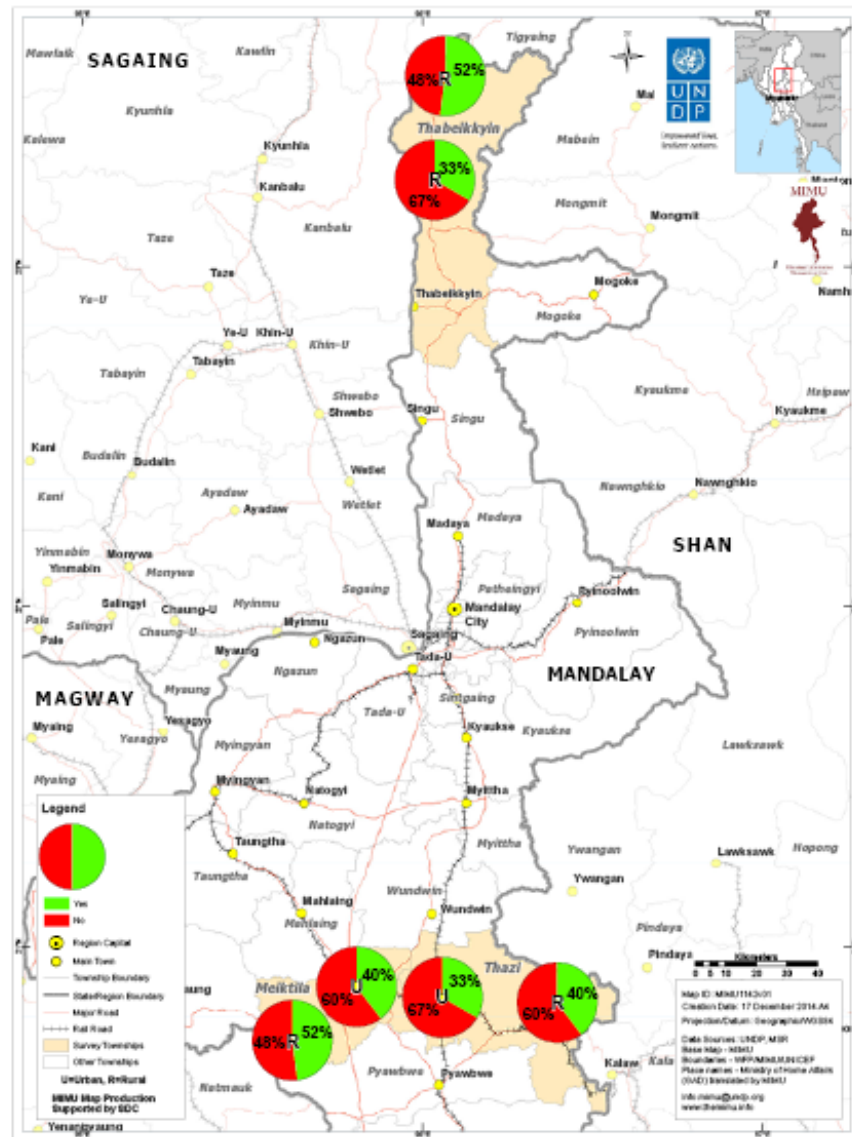
VTA/WA appear to be consulting their VT/WDSC on development priorities but almost 60% people did not seem to be participating in any consultative meetings and this was more the case with women and younger groups.

Figure 23 shows that participation in such meetings is slightly higher in the rural areas as compared to the urban areas and slightly higher in Meiktila and Thabeikkyin compared to Thazi.

It is equally significant that during the mapping, the newly established VT/WDSC which were set up at the same time as the TDSCs at the township level, and are supposedly more broadly representative and inclusive, were not mentioned by either the local people or the VTA/WAs as a significant platform for consultation or information flow. This is despite the provisions in the 2013 Presidential Notification that TDSCs and the TMACs shall give

Figure 23: Citizen Participation in Village Tract/Ward meetings

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014.



Box 2: Citizen participation

During the Community Dialogue sessions, citizens on the one hand and the VTA/WA and government service providers on the other hand tended to blame each other for a lack of consultation. Citizens often said that meetings were not organised, that they were not invited or that they took place at the wrong moment when they are in their fields, while the VTA/WAs cited the lack of interest from their community members to come to the meetings that they organise to consult them as the main reason for the lack of consultation. While it was not possible to ascertain the veracity of these claims, it is likely that the solution must involve much better information and communication between VTA/WAs and other officials and the wider public, and more concerted efforts on behalf of the state to reach out to people in a way that suits them, while citizens also have the duty to engage in consultation and participation opportunities that they are offered. From these and other similar responses made during the Community Dialogue meetings it seems however that the way in which community members are involved in project selection differs a lot from one community to another and depends a lot on the initiative and attitude of the VTA/WA.

advice to the TMCs “on the plans of township development projects, investment projects, and infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water supply and electricity which are going to be carried out through the government’s budget or by private investment” after inviting VT/WDSC for suggestions and giving them explanations on such projects in view of informing the general public. Citizen members of the TDSC and TMAC in the three townships also mentioned that besides consultations on project proposals they did not have regular contact with these VT/WDSCs either.

The second level of citizen participation is taking place during the consultation about the selection of projects during the combined TDSC/TMAC/VTA meeting with the TA. The role of the TDSCs and the TMACs in this process is in accordance with the instructions as mentioned in Notification no. 27/2013, which says that “the TMC, which includes the participation of township level Departmental Staff, must meet, coordinate and seek advice from the TDSC and the TMAC...”.

The TDSCs in the three townships in Mandalay Region take their tasks seriously and inform themselves directly, while the GAD respects the decisions taken collectively during these meetings. All proposals coming from the TDSC sub-committees were discussed in the combined VTA/WA/TDSC meeting together with the TA and a joint decision was made about the prioritization of projects. In all three townships the TA respected the outcome of this prioritisation process and endorsed the list of selected projects. This list was submitted to the GAD at the Region level for further selection and approval.

The TAs as well as the VTA/WAs and TDSC and TMAC members in the three townships confirmed that only a small number of the proposed projects was actually approved by the GAD at the regional level each year and that partly due to the limited funds available. This contrasted with the large number of urgent needs at the community level and the fact that some village tracts or wards were left out completely, which caused frustration among citizens at the community level. Providing townships with an indicative budget before the start of the consultation process would enable them to plan better and request only for a realistic number of projects from each community as is done in other States and Regions. If on top of that, the prioritisation made by the townships would be respected at the Region level the interest of people to participate in the consultation would most likely increase

Proposals from TDSC sub-committees discussed in joint VTA/WA/TDSC meetings with TA result in a joint decision about priority projects which are submitted to GAD at regional level for approval.

while the quality of the debate at the township level would also be enhanced as more would depend on the decisions made at that level. If so, bottom-up consultation would change into bottom-up planning.

Besides playing an active role in project selection, the TDSCs are also actively involved in the progress monitoring of implementation of projects. The same sub-committees that visit the village tracts during the project selection visit the project sites again during implementation and/or after completion of the projects.

While the TDSCs are active and play an important role, respected by the TA, there are however some questions with regard to their composition in general. The public representatives on the TDSCs and TMACs in the three townships are elected according to a combination of geographical and group representation. Except in Thazi, where members for the TDSC were elected both from wards and village tracts, the public representatives of both TDSC and TMAC came from the municipal area only. Each ward nominated one or more representatives (usually a 10/100 household head or a member of the group of Elderly and Respected People) and this group of nominees chose 4 or 5 people (from different interest groups like businessmen, CSOs, farmers) among themselves to become member of the TMAC or TDSC. The TMAC has at least one citizen member who is an (retired) engineer to ensure that there is sufficient professional knowledge in the committee.

TMACs in Thazi and Thabeikkyin have one female member each (both representing the CSOs in the townships), which is exceptional as most committees across the Region are exclusively male.

Both the TMAC in Thazi and Thabeikkyin have one female member each (both representing the CSOs in the townships), which is exceptional as most committees across the Region and the whole country are exclusively male. The lack of female participation can partly be explained by the fact that members of these committees in Mandalay Region were selected or nominated from the various groups of Elderly and Respected People in each of the wards, which have an almost exclusively male membership. As a result, the township committees do not reflect the diversity that exists in society and the different interests that different groups do have within society. This is likely to impact negatively on their legitimacy as was mentioned several times especially by people not feeling represented or involved in these committees.

It is therefore not surprising that 92 percent of the people who were interviewed as part of the CRC exercise had never heard of either a TDSC or TMAC in their township. When this issue was discussed with the various committees they did acknowledge this issue and they mentioned that it needs to improve. A serious question therefore arises as to how these committees can represent the interests of citizens if these citizens in most cases don't even know of the existence of these committees, don't know who its members are and are not aware of whether or how these committees represent their interests. The explanation provided by the various TDSC and TMAC members was that the initial establishment and elections were done in a rather hasty way and people were not yet aware of the potential significance of these new committees. In order to improve their representativeness as well as peoples' awareness about these committees it was suggested during discussion with the members that elections involving citizens are held for electing the next committees after the end of the present term. For TDSCs, it needs to be seen how well they can be elected by different interest group organisations.

According to one of the elected members from the Region Hluttaw, more direct consultations of citizens by the TDSCs and TMAC would not only enhance the participation of citizens, it

would also make these committees better known and enhance their legitimacy. In addition he suggested that the regional Hluttaw members should be by default a member of these committees as well in order to strengthen their ties with the townships they come from, lift the status of the committees and enable them to take relevant issues to the Regional Hluttaw much easier.

Regarding the allocation of the Constituency Development Fund the Hluttaw members as elected representatives of the people play an important and usually active role both in the selection and monitoring of projects. In Meiktila, for example, the two members from the Regional Hluttaw each cover half of the wards and half of the village tracts. When visiting these areas they meet with citizens and VTA/WAs to discuss community issues and potential small community projects for the CDF. During the combined VTA/WA-TDSC-TMAC-TA meeting when the CDF is discussed the elected Hluttaw members participate actively, propose and select potential projects for funding under the CDF together with the other groups present. The Hluttaw members have the last say as per the relevant formal procedures and if they want they can push their projects through. As one Hluttaw member explained however, in practice they manage to find solutions that are acceptable to everyone. For instance, one Hluttaw member wanted to use the CDF to renovate a Rural Health Centre in a certain village which the TDSC didn't agree with. The Hluttaw member accepted this and took this project to the Township Medical Officer (TMO) who included it subsequently in the next health plan.

For deciding on community projects under CDF, in Meiktila, Regional Hluttaw members visited wards and villages and consulted citizens and VTA/WAs. They also participated actively in joint VTA/WA-TDSC-TMAC-TA meetings and collectively selected potential projects under CDF.

In conclusion, it should be acknowledged that after years of top-down decision-making, this is only the first year in which citizens or stakeholder groups, through the various new committees, are consulted by government. It will take time for all parties involved to play their new role effectively. While the total combined budgets of the development funds per township are still rather small, the planning and implementation of development fund projects could play a very important role in the ongoing reform process at the township level because:

1. The results are important to show citizens that the government is serious on improving participation and service delivery, as was noticed during the Community Dialogues and Focus Group Discussions with CSOs;
2. The utilisation of these funds generates very important potential learning processes for all stakeholders involved as they are related to:
 - Collaborative planning of these projects (e.g. TA and VTA/WAs need to work closely together);
 - Integrating the results from citizen consultation into planning at the community and at the township level;
 - Government - citizens dialogue about balancing local needs with national priorities starts to materialize (e.g. between TA and TDSC);
 - Management and accounting of public funds that are spent locally;
 - Citizens' involvement in project monitoring.

In practice, there is still ample space to improve the planning and implementation process of the utilisation of the various development funds. There are three development funds available in Mandalay at the moment that are more or less similar in terms of type of activities that are eligible for funding as well as planning and implementation procedures, while at the same time the DRD and the DMA have their own sector funds to implement similar activities as well (see below). The management of these parallel funds may be confusing for the various

stakeholders involved at community, township and even regional level, which could hamper proper financial monitoring. Only a few people know which projects are funded by each fund, resulting in limited transparency and increased risks of mismanagement. From a perspective of effectiveness, efficiency and transparency it may be preferable to streamline and consolidate the planning and budgeting process for those funds and include indicative budget ceilings that are made known to the township administrations in advance.

4.3 Access to Services

One of the major stated objectives of the reform programme in Myanmar is to improve basic service delivery to the people through an allocation of more public resources and through a more effective and efficient way of service delivery that is more “people-centred”.

Most of the basic social services in Myanmar are provided by deconcentrated sector ministries at the township level and below, sometimes complemented by NGOs, private sector and/or religious organisations. It is therefore important to describe and analyse the planning and organisation of service delivery at the township level. This section will look at three basic social service sectors (basic health care, primary education and household drinking water provision). It will describe how they are organised and how state service providers interact with citizens and respond to their needs within the three selected townships in Mandalay Region - both in terms of planning as well as actual service delivery. The mapping looked at these sectors from a governance perspective and not at the quality of these services from a technical medical, educational or water and sanitation perspective. The picture described below presents therefore only a partial overview and should be seen as complementary to the more in-depth and internally focused sector analyses that are taking place at the moment in each of these sectors.⁴⁸



48. See for a general overview of government spending on the social sectors: UNICEF, 2013; Snapshot of Social Sector Public Budget Allocations and Spending in Myanmar. See for the health sector among others: SDC, 2013; Health Assessment in Southeast Region of Myanmar, August 2013. See for the education sector among others: MDRI, 2013; A Preliminary Assessment of Decentralization in Education: Experiences in Mon State and Yangon Region, December 2013 and JICA, 2013; Data Collection Survey on Education Sector in Myanmar, Final Report, February 2013.

Before presenting the findings per sector, it is important to describe in more general terms the way in which service delivery and the related planning is organised at the township level in Mandalay Region. Depending on the size of township, most Region or Union Ministries or Departments have their own office and representation at the township level, often in different locations, while some only have offices at the district level. All Heads of Departments in the township are accountable to their supervisor at the district or Region level, while all (except for the Department of Municipal Affairs) receive their budget and plans from the district or Region level departments. The mandates and levels of authority and discretion of the Heads of Departments differ per ministry, but are in general limited to implementing tasks and plans that are handed down from the ministry downwards. The resulting structure therefore tends to be strongly hierarchical and compartmentalized, meaning that each department is working in isolation focusing on its own mandate to achieve its national priorities.

While there are some minor variations in the planning and budgeting process between the various sector ministries, the actual planning and budgeting is still taking place at either the Region or Union level. Heads of Departments collect the required baseline data on staff and facilities and provide an estimate of the recurrent budget required for the next year to their supervisors, but they are normally not involved in defining priorities or in the actual planning of investments. So far, no systematic assessment of the needs of the people is conducted by any of the sector departments, and certainly not in a comprehensive and collective manner. The most important sources of information are direct communications with service providers like headmasters, nurses, etc., field visits to the various facilities run by the department and occasional information provided by VTA/WAs although the Head of Department hardly attend the combined VTA/WA-TDSC-TMAC-TA meetings.

Increasingly, Head of Departments mention that while the formal planning system has not changed, the responsiveness of both Region and Union level departments to the needs identified by them has increased substantially over the last few years. Suggestions such as the locations of newly-planned Rural Health Centres or extra classrooms or tube wells are appreciated and are often integrated into the annual plans of the department. It is still a slow and bureaucratic process, but at least most Head of Departments at the township level have the impression that their voices are heard and responded to.

While most Heads of Departments are involved in implementing the operational activities and the recurrent budget expenditures throughout the year, they are only marginally involved in the implementation of the more substantial capital investments that are either implemented by their respective Region Government Department and the Region Government.

The approval for the allocated recurrent budget for each sector department usually comes at the start of the financial year (which runs from April to March) while the actual transfers follow in four tranches. Interlocutors have stated that these are usually late. The capital budget approval usually comes only in June/July, 3-4 months into the financial year. Both the recurrent and the capital budgets come without any explanation or justification, which makes it very difficult for township level officers to explain their budgets to the various committees and to the public in general.

With the gradual expansion and improvement of service delivery and of development support activities by key departments at the township level, the need for horizontal (between departments) and vertical co-ordination (between the township government and the VTA/WA and other government representatives at the village tract and ward level on the

one hand and government at the district and regional level on the other hand) has increased substantially over the last few years. Good horizontal and vertical coordination could improve both the effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery, especially in the Myanmar setting in which the various resources available at the township level (qualified staff, budget and assets, like offices, vehicles and computers) are far from sufficient to tackle all the needs of its population at the same time. These structural limitations make it even more important to ensure that the limited resources are used in the most optimal way. The Government has realised this need and intends to improve coordination between the departments through the TMC and the initiation of an integrated township level planning process.

While the TMC has no executive responsibilities, it can only manage township affairs through discussion and consultation since it can't instruct any of the Head of Departments. In addition, in practice it is the discretion of the TA to decide which matters require discussion in the TMC and which matters he can decide upon by himself. Similarly, it is up to the Heads of Department to decide whether he/she shares the departmental annual plan with other members in the TMC. It is however increasingly custom that all departments send a copy of their annual plan to the Township Planning Officer who puts them all together in a kind of 'township development plan'. As in all other Regions and States, the TMO is not a member of the TMC and often doesn't attend Head of Departments meetings either, limiting the ability of the Ministry of Health (MoH) to coordinate with other departments.

As the main government institution at the township level, the GAD in general and the TA and Deputy TAs in particular, are responsible for both horizontal and vertical coordination of all government activities at the township level and below.

In practice, this coordination role focuses on a broad group of functions:

- Coordination of the planning and implementation of projects and activities by the various township departments;
- Coordinating the work of various committees of which there are at least five per township (see Annex 3 for an overview) and sometimes organising direct consultations with citizens;
- Coordinating and supervising the work of the VTAs and WAs;
- Coordinating the planning, implementation and monitoring of development projects not falling under the responsibility of one of the sector departments;
- Coordinating any ad hoc activities taking place in the township (visits of dignitaries, elections, disaster management, etc.).

Despite the awareness that a "coordinating" role must be played by the TA and is inherent to the formation of various coordinating committees (see Annex 3), horizontal co-ordination between departments remains a challenge in Mandalay Region according to most Heads of Departments interviewed. At present, there is no incentive for departments to coordinate horizontally hence they all are accountable to their region or union level ministry. Therefore, township departments continue to plan and deliver services in a "vertical" fashion, following the instructions from higher levels within their own ministries. They therefore also continue to collect their own baseline data according to their own definitions and requirements, resulting in large differences in very important and basic statistics (including even the total population in the township), which makes integrated planning and coordination almost impossible.

For vertical coordination, the joint VTA/WA-TMAC-TDSC-TA meetings are very important. They are often attended by the elected Hluttaw members as well. They take important matters

to the Region or Union level Hluttaws especially for issues that require extra funding from the Union Government. In this way, the elected member for Meiktila managed to secure additional funds to expand the bridge over the lake that connects the East and West side of town. For improved downward coordination each township has so-called frontier offices. Meiktila has for example six frontier offices across the township. The TMC is divided in three teams and each team visits two frontier offices twice a month. These meetings are attended by the VTA/WAs, clerks of that cluster as well as several VT/WDSC members. Citizens are allowed to attend as well. The TMC uses this mechanism to improve their outreach and discuss progress issues and explain new regulations. These mechanisms have existed for a long time.

The establishment of coordinating and support committees at the township level is a starting point for improved service delivery and people's involvement in planning. But, as long as the responsibilities and mandates of the heads of department at the township level remain more or less the same as before, the coordination and support committees serve more as bodies for information sharing, while their impact on improved effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery and actual involvement of people in planning and decision-making will remain rather limited.

Frontier offices in each township, with Meiktila having 6 such offices, create a space for sub-committees of the TMC to meet with VTAs, clerks and the VTDC to discuss progress and explain new regulations.

Box 3: Inter-departmental coordination

The Deputy TA mentioned an example of improved coordination between departments by involving the TMC in Thabeikkyin Township. "The health sector faces coordination challenges and township level offices were not engaged in the original plan to construct a new hospital in Thabeikkyin. As a result, the MoH had allocated budget for a new hospital, but only for the construction of the building, i.e. excluding additional budget for electricity connection, for a tube well or for any other facilities such as staff quarters. In addition it had not even secured land for a new hospital. The TMC and TMAC, together with elected Hluttaw members and the DRD intervened and sat down with the hospital construction committee and discussed on how to proceed with the challenges at hand. After deliberations, the TMC requested a group of residents to vacate the proposed construction site, which was done amicably. There is a plan to compensate them with land in the new town plan and the area is set aside for them. In addition, the TMC requested the DRD to assist with provision of a tube well to the new hospital, which they have done in the meantime. The same was done for power supply. The DMA provided a transformer plus cable lines out of their own internally generated resources.

In Thazi, the TMC has decided that for the more remote villages in the mountainous areas along the border with Shan State, a joint baseline mapping and needs assessment would be carried out. Hence, the GAD coordinates such activities with the Education, Health and Forest Departments plus the Settlements and Land Records Department. The departments conduct joint field visits to collect baseline data and to discuss the needs of the villagers. After receiving information from the villages, they planned, for instance, for children to study in nearby schools at sub-centres. These issues are not only included in the township plan but they also share reports with the Region Government for further support. A similar process will be implemented in Meiktila as well this year to improve service delivery to the remote villages.

4.3.1 Basic healthcare services

After decades of stagnation in the budget for public health, the national health budget has increased over the last three years from 92 billion Kyats (92 million USD) in 2010-2011 to 652 billion Kyats (652 million USD) for 2014-2015.⁴⁹ While this is a substantial increase, government expenditures on health as part of total government spending at present still only amounts to 3.38 percent of the total government budget, or only 0.76 percent of the total GDP, which is approximately half of the average amount spent by similar countries in the region on healthcare. This section aims to shed some light on how the recent 600 percent increase in the health budget has trickled down to the lowest level of health care provision at the village tract or ward level and how people are experiencing changes in the healthcare services. However, it goes beyond the scope of the mapping to assess the reasons for these historically low figures. As a consequence of this legacy, the provision of healthcare by the private sector is more substantial and as a result, the private expenditures by the people in Myanmar for healthcare rank much higher than elsewhere in the region. Accordingly, 60-70 percent of the health spending in Myanmar is paid for directly by the people according to the Ministry of Health.⁵⁰

Besides increasing the public health budget, the Government of Myanmar realises that more structural measures are required to improve the quality of public healthcare. In its FESR, which is the Government of Myanmar's major policy document for the 2012-2015 period, it mentions "the government also recognizes the importance of quickly updating its overall health strategy, reviewing current health policies and strengthening the National Health Law".⁵¹ Recently, the Ministry published its National Health Plan 2011-2016. According to the WHO, the plan takes account of the prevailing health problems in the country, the need to realize the health-related goals of the MDGs, the significance of strengthening the health system and the growing importance of social, economic and environmental determinants of health.⁵² The National Health Plan has 11 priority programme areas, but does not mention or propose changes in the way health services are provided in Myanmar, in particular at the local level. In August 2013, the President announced some measures to further de-concentrate major Union ministries. One of these included that the Ministry of Health is to continue training nurses and midwives at central level but to make coordination with State and Region governments in assigning them to their home regions; and the State and Region governments to appoint medical staff in remote regions through vacancy announcements in newspapers.

"National health" remains a competency included in Schedule One of the Constitution, which falls under the Union Legislative List.⁵³ In practice, this has been interpreted as meaning that the provision of public healthcare services is the exclusive responsibility of the Ministry of Health at Union level, without any involvement of the State or Region Hluttaws or the State or Region Governments (either legislative or executive/administrative). However, the 2013 Presidential Notification has included health-related matters also among the issues township, ward and village tract support committees are mandated to discuss and assist in.

49. Myanmar Times 5 November 2014

50. Based on 2010 health figures see: Myanmar Times 5 November 2014

51. Government of Myanmar, 2013, Framework for Economic and Social Reforms, page 30

52. WHO Country Cooperation Strategy Myanmar 2014-2018, 2014

53. The executive power of the Union extends to administrative matters over which the Union has power to make laws (Article 216). However, the Constitution also foresees that "moreover, it also extends to the matters which the Region or State Government is permitted to perform in accord with any Union Law. Additionally, Art. 259 states that the Region or State Government shall discharge the functions occasionally assigned by the Union Government. This means that the Union can delegate the administrative functions over what constitutionally falls under Union jurisdiction to the State/Region tier of government, either through a Union Law or through executive decision by the Union Government.

Basic Healthcare Service provision in the three townships in Mandalay Region

As elsewhere in Myanmar, primary healthcare in Mandalay Region is partly provided by private health facilities (like private clinics, dispensaries, traditional doctors and auxiliary midwives) and partly by the Ministry of Health, often with support from various international Non-Governmental Organisations (see Table 11).

Township	UN organisations and O/NGOs active in health services
Meiktila	East Meets West, Family Health International, Myanmar Red Cross, Ipsos, Myanmar Health Assistance Association, PACT Myanmar, Population Services International, United Nations Population Fund
Thazi	Ipsos, Myanmar Nurse and Midwife Association, Myanmar Positive Group, Population Services International, United Nations Children Fund
Thabeikkyin	Population Services International, United Nations Population Fund

Table 11: Non-Governmental Organisations active in health in the three townships

Source: MIMU: Overview of the November 2014 Who, What, Where and VT MAP Mandalay Region provisional results.

Table 12 presents an overview of the public health facilities available in the three townships in 2014, while in Table 13 some key health indicators are presented.

	Meiktila	Thazi	Thabeikkyin
Population	309,000	202,000	127,000
District hospitals	1 (200 beds)		
Township hospital		1	
Station hospitals	2	3	1
Maternal Child Health Centres	1	1	1
Urban/Rural Health Centres (RHC)	6	5	2
Sub-rural Health Centres (SHRC)	35	35	20
Private clinics	49	--	19
Number of healthcare staff approved	111	198	98
Number of healthcare staff appointed	101	125	68
Number of vacancies	10	73	30

Table 12: Key health service data for government operated facilities, Mandalay Region townships

Source: Township Health Profiles, Mandalay Region, 2014.

It is difficult to draw any conclusions from the above figures as numbers are small and the timeframe is very short. The reliability of these data also need to be validated. The significant increase in number of out- and inpatients in some townships is however an indication that the outreach of public healthcare has increased over the last few years.

Table 13: Basic healthcare indicators, Mandalay Region townships

Source: Township Health Profiles, 2014.

	Meiktila			Thazi			Thabeikkyin		
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
Home deliveries by health staff (percent)	57	43	35	57	43	35	57	43	35
Antenatal care coverage (percent)	71%	72%	86%	71%	72%	86%	71%	72%	86%
Infant mortality rate/ 1000 live births	7.7	10.5	14.2	7.7	10.5	14.2	7.7	10.5	14.2
Under 5 years mortality rate/ 1000 live births	9.8	13.6	18.3	9.8	13.6	18.3	9.8	13.6	18.3
Maternal mortality rate/ 1000 live births	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.5
Children under 5 moderately underweight (percent)	--	6.4%	4.15	--	6.4%	4.15	--	6.4	4.15
Children under 5 severely underweight (percent)	--	0.05%	0.02%	--	0.05%	0.02%	--	0.05%	0.02%
Immunization BCG	92%	95%	79%	92%	95%	79%	92%	95%	79%
Number of outpatients	843	612	1742	843	612	1742	843	612	1742
Number of inpatients	1621	2160	2351	1621	2160	2351	1621	2160	2351
Deliveries	303	456	375	303	456	375	303	456	375

Service providers feel that the health services in the three townships of Meiktila, Thazi and Thabeikkyin have improved due to an increase in budget, essential drugs, and qualified staff.

All health service providers interviewed (3 TMOs, 6 health facility managers (1 RHC, 2 SRHC, 1 station hospital and 2 Maternal and Child HC) and 8 health staff) acknowledged however that the provision of health services in the three townships has improved over the last three years mainly due to an increase in both recurrent and capital budgets over the last few years. As a result, more facilities have been built (there are more (Sub-) RHCs and station hospitals have been upgraded) and more health staff is available. In addition, most of them mentioned that the health facilities are better equipped, that there is an improvement in the supply of medicines (essential drugs), that the costs of health care for citizens has gone down and that preventive health care has improved.

None of the six health facility managers mentioned they had structural vacancies (more than 3 months) in their facility over the last year, while six out of eight health staff mentioned there was at the moment no shortage of medical staff at their facility.

Generally speaking, there is sufficient supply of medicines and medical supplies in the health facilities covered in the mapping. When shortages in medicines were reported they were successfully resolved. Shortage of desks, chairs and beds were common however and these shortages were regularly brought up during inspection visits but hardly ever resolved.

All health facility managers and health staff were of the opinion that the health workers in their facility were all properly qualified for their job and received regular in-service training. They all said that they treated everybody in the same way irrespective of ethnicity, gender and wealth or (dis)ability. Half of the health workers mentioned that they received a fair salary which was usually paid in time.

Basic output indicators for the monitoring of healthcare facilities are also in place. Township and Region health administrative staff in Mandalay Region regularly visit rural health centres to provide oversight and check performance based on key health indicators. All healthcare facility managers interviewed mentioned that they had received at least one inspection visit last year either from the Health Assistant or from the TMO who conducted routine inspections, stock checks, in-service training and audits. All six health facility managers qualified the support they received from their supervisors at the township level as good.

Regarding payment for essential drugs, three managers and all health staff answered that patients never had to pay for those drugs, while three facility managers mentioned that patients do have to pay if essential drugs are out of stock.

While the overall provision of health services has improved, according to the service providers there are several specific bottlenecks for further improving public health services in these three townships. In addition to the challenges, specific suggestions were made to improve the quality of the health services (see Figure 24).

Box 4: Challenges in Healthcare services

Specific bottlenecks for improving public health care services as identified by the health staff in the three Mandalay townships were:

1. The basic infrastructure of the facility is still not optimal;
2. There is still a lack of essential drugs and basic equipment at the facilities;
3. Limited salary for medical staff hampers motivation and performance;
4. Lack of training facilities for nurses (Thazi).

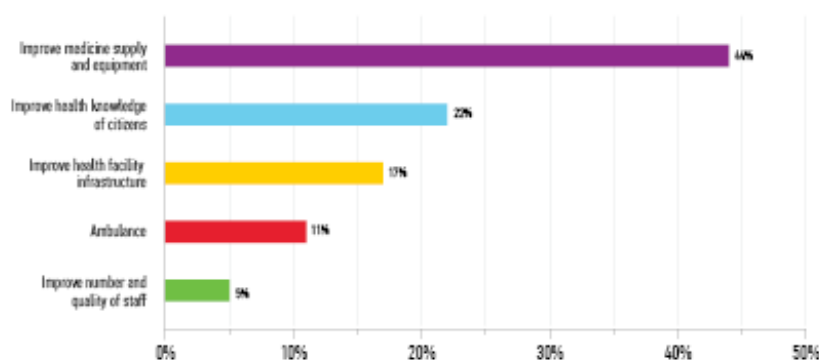


Figure 24: Suggestions made by health staff interviewed (n=14) as to what could be done to further improve the quality of health services at their health facility

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014.

The changes recorded in Mandalay Region are in line with the Ministry of Health's priorities as mentioned by a director in the Ministry's Health Planning Department, who said that the budget increases since 2011 had initially been used to provide medicines free of charge and to replace out dated medical equipment and will now shift to further improve the infrastructure of the health facilities.⁵⁴

Organisation and administration of public basic health care services

In most townships in Mandalay Region, the TMO plays both a medical and an administrative role, being responsible for staff planning, quality supervision of all health facilities, the distribution of medical supplies, as well as for collecting health baseline data. As in other larger townships across Myanmar, in Meiktila the duties of the TMO are split between the TMO, who is in charge of the hospital and all medical affairs, and the Township Health Officer (THO), who is in charge off all public health matters and the provision of medical supplies to all health facilities. The TMO/THO can recruit support staff for the various health facilities directly if there is a vacancy, but is not in charge of hiring and firing or the transfer of medical staff between health facilities.

An overview of the more specific tasks of the TMOs/THOs is provided in Figure 25.

While salaries are paid from the recurrent budget and are usually paid out in time, there is very limited operational budget available for the senior staff to actually carry out their duties and functions, which contributes to an inefficient use of manpower resources. While the TMOs are for example supposed to supervise and visit the Rural Health Centres on a regular basis, there is no, or in some cases, only a very limited budget for travel or transport available, forcing the staff to pay for these travel costs from their own pockets. This lack of operational budget combined with a highly centralised decision-making structure in most departments has a negative impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and on the optimal use of the limited manpower available.

Village Health Committee provides support by providing labour to carry out small repairs at the health facility and assist with non-medical care for patients.

In four out of the six communities included in the mapping there is a Village Health Committee (VHC). Members are either elected or appointed by the Village Administrator or VTA. These VHCs assist the staff by providing labour to carry out small repairs at the health facility and assist with non-medical care for patients. They are however not involved in the management of the health facility and are also not functioning as an intermediary between the population and the service providers.

Planning and budgeting

The THO/TMO and lower level health facility officers merely provide basic data as an input into the planning process. The TMO is requested to submit a proposal for the annual recurrent budget for township healthcare to the District Health Officer, who collates the various township requests and submits them to the Region level. As there are no township strategic (health) plans, most TMOs calculate their recurrent budget needs based on historical facts (the previous year's actual expenditure) and add to that any additional requirements based on e.g. an increase in number of medical staff in their township.

One major change in the planning process has been the delegation of the procurement of medical supplies from the Union to the Region and district level, which is now handled and managed by the Region Department of Health with the intention of thus providing for a

⁵⁴ Myanmar Times 5 November 2014

Role and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Management and administration. ✓ The Ministry of Health is responsible for two streams of administration - hospital management and public health. The THO leads operations, management, budgeting and planning. ✓ TMO/ THO is responsible for distribution of essential drugs to RHCs ✓ Monthly reporting to Ministry of Health through its district offices.
Monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Maintain standards, staff code of conduct., but no specific staff performance indicators. ✓ TMO/THO and staff visit rural health centres 4-6 times a year to provide oversight, maintain Township Health Profiles and collect key health performance indicators.
Co-ordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The TMO/THO chairs Township Health Committee, but is not a member of the TMC, TDSC or TMAC. ✓ The TMO/THO co-ordinates with the DMA on the maintenance of hospital buildings and with the TEO in delivering basic health education at schools.
Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There is a notice board in every health facility telling the public where to go with complaints. ✓ First point of address is the health facility manager. More serious cases are addressed by the TMO/THO who is obliged to investigate, in some cases traveling to the site of complaints.

Figure 25: Key characteristics of township health administration in Mandalay Region

more efficient allocation. As a result of these changes, the THO/TMO can now transfer medical supplies between RHCs in order to deal with acute shortages. The THO/TMO is not involved in the planning and implementation of capital investments (new RHCs, renovations, etc.), which is all dealt with by the Department of Health at the Region and Union level.

While the formal planning and delegation within the Ministry of Health hasn't changed much, the TMOs interviewed mentioned that the Ministry of Health is nowadays more responsive to the needs of and suggestions made by the TMOs. As one TMO mentioned: "in the past we were not expected to make any inputs in the planning, while at present suggestions made by the TMO are appreciated and often included in the planning if budget is available". The TMOs also noted that the flow of information to and from the Regional level has improved. As a result, financial and budget issues are now more transparent than before.

As a result of the Union level led planning system in the Ministry of Health the ability of the THO/TMO to coordinate planning with other sector departments and with other health

"In the past we were not expected to make any inputs in the planning, while at present suggestions made by the TMO are appreciated and often included in the planning if budget is available"
Township Medical Officer

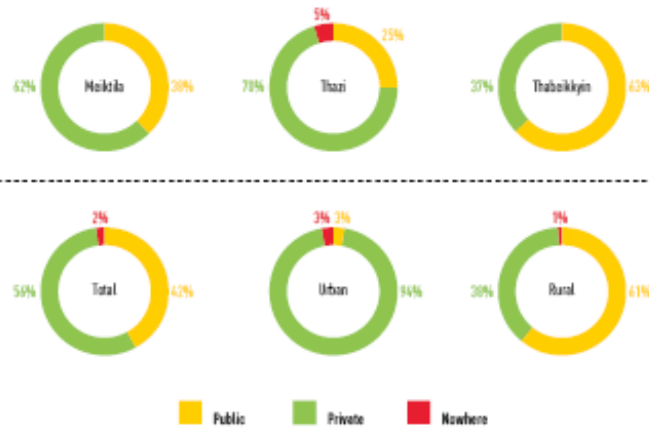
service providers in the township is de facto limited. The TMO provides the Township Planning Officer (TPO) and GAD with the annual budget and health plans but this is not mandatory. In addition, the TMO does not have the means nor the mandate to respond to specific local needs or bottlenecks in service delivery, while they are in the best position to identify such bottlenecks. As a result it takes for instance a very long time to recruit or replace medical staff once there are vacancies available.

People's views on health services

Regarding the use of public or private health facilities, 107 respondents (or 37 percent) stated that they usually make use of public health facilities ((Sub) Rural Health Clinics, station and township hospitals), while 168 respondents (or 58 percent) said that most of the time they make use of a private health facility (see Figure 26).

Figure 26: Use of public vs. private health facilities in the three townships

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n=288.

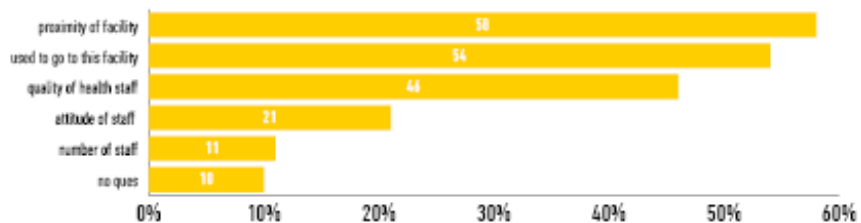


As Figure 26 shows, there were big differences between urban and rural respondents regarding the use of public or private health facilities. Of the urban respondents, only three percent of the respondents said they made use of public facilities, while 61 percent of the rural respondents said they made use of the public facilities.

Reasons for using a private facility are presented in Figure 27 below and are mainly related to factors like distance and convenience.

Figure 27: Reasons for using a private health facility

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014 n=163. More than one answer possible.



The reasons for going to a public health facility are similar (see Figure 28).

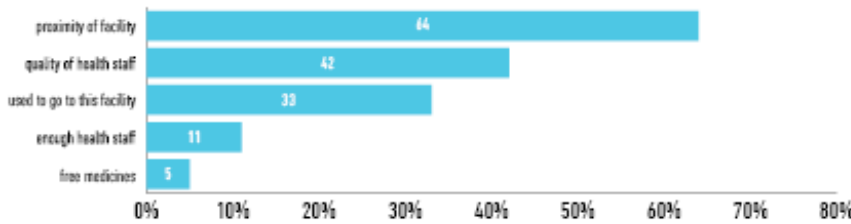


Figure 28: Reasons for using a public health facility

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014 n=120. More than one answer possible.

It is remarkable that cost considerations were hardly mentioned at all (only by 5 percent of the respondents using a public health facility) as a reason for choosing a public health facility.

In order to get an impression of the awareness of citizens of the improvements made by government in the health care sector, respondents were asked whether health services in general (public and private combined) have improved in their village-tract or ward over the last three years (see Figure 29).



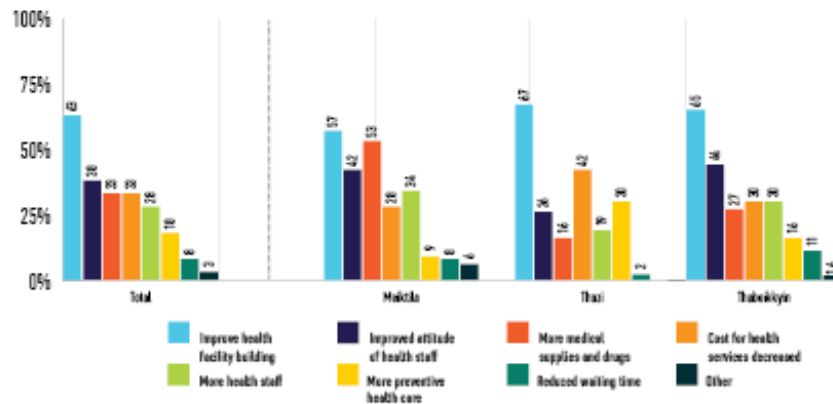
Figure 29: Perceived changes in primary healthcare services over the last three years at the village tract or ward level

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n= 288.

Fifty-five percent of the respondents mentioned that the health services in their village-tract or ward have indeed improved, while 42 percent mentioned that the quality of the services had stayed more or less the same. Only three percent mentioned that the quality of health services had deteriorated over the last three years. These are similar figures as compared to the other States and Regions included in the research. Urban respondents (though not many were using the public health facility) were more positive as compared to rural and rural respondents, while there was not much difference between male and female respondents. Of those respondents who mentioned that the situation had improved, the main reasons mentioned are presented in Figure 30.

Figure 30: Reasons for improved health care as mentioned by respondents who were of the opinion that health care had improve in their village tract or ward

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014 n= 159. More than one answer possible.



These improvements are more or less similar as mentioned by the health staff, showing that citizens are monitoring their health services pretty well. There were slight differences between the respondents of the three townships, with those in Meiktila mentioning the availability of drug and medical supplies more frequently.

Taking the changes in health care into consideration, the respondents were asked whether they were satisfied with the quality of health care services in their village tract or ward (see Figure 31).

Figure 31: Overall level of satisfaction with health care services in village tract or ward

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n= 288.

55% people mentioned improvement in health services with 61% being satisfied.



Sixty-one percent of the respondents (62 percent of the male and 61 percent of the female respondents) said that they were satisfied, 18 percent qualified the services to be “not good, not bad” while 20 percent were not satisfied with the quality of the healthcare services. The levels of satisfaction were slightly lower in Thabeikkyin as compared to the other two townships (see also Figure 32).

In box 5 and 6 some of the responses made by the communities during the Community Dialogue session are presented to illustrate some of the progress made and the challenges that are still present at the village tract or ward level.

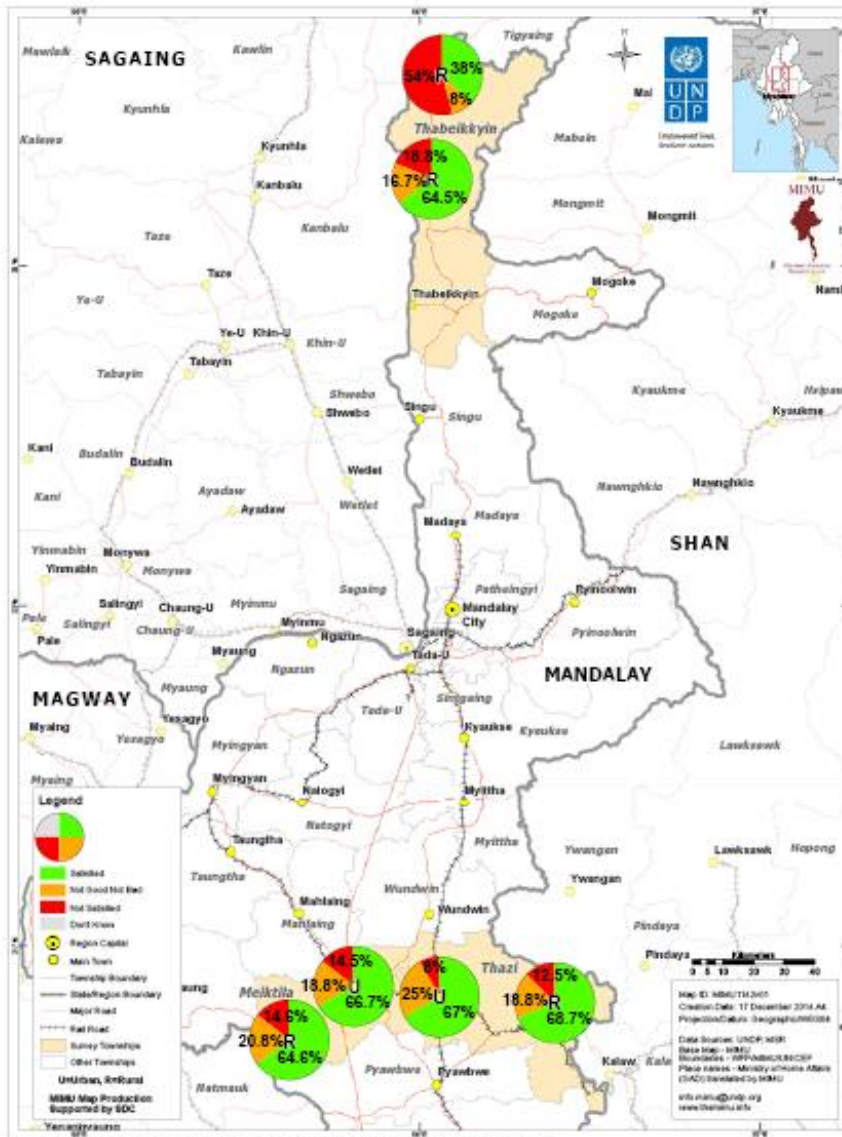


Figure 32: Level of satisfaction with health care services in their village tract or ward

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014.

Disclaimer: The names shown and the boundaries used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, April 2014.

Box 5: Examples of improvements made in healthcare services as mentioned by the communities during the Community Dialogues

- Health Staff and VTA will request to Ministry of Health via TA to provide health staff and a clinic for each village.
- The villagers can work together with health staffs to improve the health conditions in the VT and promote health care activities.

Inn Net VT Thabeikkyin

- Administration will report to relevant departments about insufficient health staff.
- UNICEF is now providing some medicines and Township health departments also give medicines if requested.
- Community will provide labour and support to fulfil the needs of the health staff.

Yatanar Man Aung Ward Meiktila

- Government project for providing preventive medicines to pregnant women and children under 5 once a month.
- Immunization program providing curative service to women between 15 to 45 years old and school children.
- The quality of service and communication of health staff are good.
- Overtime healthcare service is available.

Ward 3 Thazi

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, April 2014.

Box 6: Examples of challenges in health care services as mentioned by the communities during the Community Dialogues

- One health staff needs to take responsibilities for all six villages.
- Medicines are not sufficient for all the villages.
- Road and transportation is poor to reach the nearest hospital that leads to delay in referral.
- No ambulance to transport patients to hospital

Inn Net VT Thabeikkyin

- Not enough medicine at hospital
- Not enough facilities in labour room.
- Insufficient health staff (no doctor available for 24 hours)
- Bad building and no access to 24 hours electricity at hospital
- No ambulance

Shan Ma Nge VT Meiktila

- Medicines are not sufficient.
- Cannot supply enough drugs even for immunization.
- Not enough health staff.
- Not enough building and current building is not in good condition.

TharGaYa VT, Thazi

Subsequently, the 120 respondents who normally make use of a public health facility were asked whether or not they had to pay for the medicines they received from the health staff. Their responses are presented in Figure 33.



Figure 33: The number of times respondents who are using a public health facility had to pay for medicines

Sources: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n=120.

Seventy-three percent of the respondents said that they always had to pay for medicines in a public health facility and 23 percent sometimes, while most medicines (i.e. essential drugs, if in stock) should be provided for free. Respondents using a public health facility in Meiktila said more often than in the other townships that they had to pay. Of the respondents who mentioned that they always had to pay for medicines 84 percent stated that they did not get an explanation from the medical staff on why they had to pay for these medicines. These statements seemed to contradict with what the health facility managers and the TMOs had reported.

Seventy-three percent of the respondents said that they always had to pay for medicines in a public health facility and 23 percent said sometimes however health staff said that they refrained from selling drugs that are free.

In 2013, the MoH made generic (non-specialist) drugs available to patients at public-health facilities free of charge. The six public healthcare facility officers interviewed all confirmed that they adhered to the regulations from the ministry regarding the provision of essential drugs and that health staff at their facility refrained from selling drugs that should be for free. Only if essential drugs were out of stock patients were charged to pay for the replacing commercial medicine. In addition, all facility officers mentioned that essential drugs are almost always available, while they always provide an explanation to the patients in case they deviate from the regulations.

These discrepancies, while possibly raising some concerns, are also understandable in the currently shifting context of Myanmar. Yet, they cannot be used as direct proof of mismanagement of healthcare resources, as the rules related to the distribution of drugs and medical supplies are not always clearly formulated and communicated, and there are some specialist medicines in circulation that are not subsidised by the MoH. In addition, health staff often assists patients with non-government supplied medicines once their regular stock is depleted, and charge people for the actual costs.

At the very least, these results are indicative of a poor articulation and understanding on both sides on the rights of patients. This points to gaps in mutual understanding between service providers and users, which, at best, can erode trust between citizens and the public sector, and at worst, lead to systematic and unchecked corruption in the delivery of basic services. In either case and even if there is no mismanagement of drugs, such lack of clarity will lead to allegations of misuse because people are told that in general drugs provided at the health facility should be free of charge.

96% of people using public health facilities noted that they are meted out equitable treatment without discrimination in health services but only 7% have participated in discussions on health services in their village tract and ward.

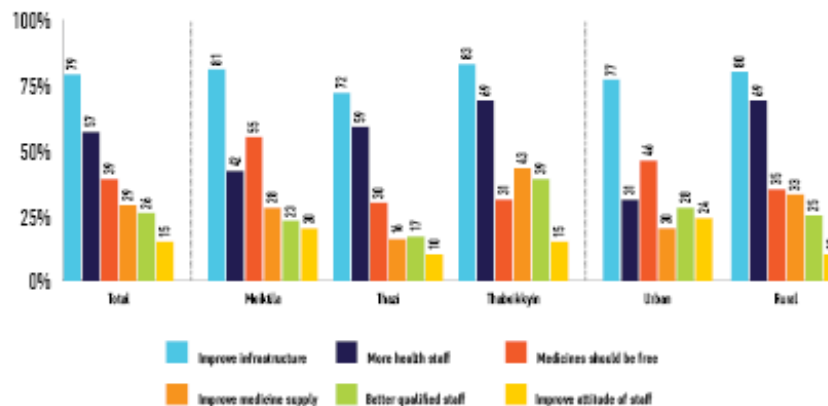
On a more positive note, regarding equity in treatment, almost all respondents (96 percent), both male and female, who made use of public health facilities felt that they received the same treatment as any other person in their village tract or ward, i.e. there was no discrimination against particular groups within the community.

Direct participation of people in the planning of health care improvements is still very limited. Only seven percent of the respondents stated to have ever participated in a meeting organised by government to discuss the quality or planning of health services in their village tract or ward. As mentioned above, as long as the TMOs or the health facility managers have no resources to respond to the felt needs and can neither influence the planning of the Ministry of Health even at the lowest levels, such consultations will not be very useful. According to its members, the TDSCs and TMACs in the three townships meet on a regular basis with the TMO to discuss health related issues, either directly or during the monthly combined committee meetings.

Finally, respondents made the following suggestions to further improve health care services in the village tract or ward (see Figure 34).

Figure 34: Possible improvements to be made to further improve health care services in the village tract or ward

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n=288.



4.3.2 Primary education

Similar to public healthcare, the quality of primary education has been very poor in Myanmar for decades if compared to internal standards and performance improvements in other countries.⁵⁵ The Government of Myanmar has recognized this deficit and has started to address this backlog first of all by gradually increasing the education budget from 310 billion Kyats (310 million USD) in 2010-2011 to 1,142 billion Kyats (1,142 million USD) for the current year 2014-2015, which constitutes an increase of 368 percent within five years.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, despite this increase, the Government's planned expenditures on education are still only 5.92 percent of the total government's budget for the year 2014-2015, which remains very low if compared to other countries in the region. As a result, in the current fiscal year Myanmar spends a mere 1.33 percent of its GDP on education while other countries in the region spend on average approximately 3 percent of their GDP on education, with Thailand leading the group with more than 5 percent.⁵⁷

55. Zohriat, Brooke and McCormick, Patrick 2013. 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.

56. As mentioned by President U Thein Sein during the 2014-15 fiscal year budget meeting of the Financial Commission on 7 January 2014.

57. UNICEF, 2013. Snapshot of Social Sector Public Budget Allocations and Spending in Myanmar.

Not only has the education sector been subject to severe underfunding for decades, in addition, “the education system is characterized by poor quality, outdated pedagogy and insufficient geographic coverage, with rural and border areas being poorly served”⁵⁸ As a result of both factors, roughly half of Myanmar’s children (2011 figures) do not complete primary school.

In addition to the above mentioned budget increases, the education sector is under revision and based on the initial outcomes of a Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) several minor reforms are already being implemented or in preparation. Regarding the management of education the CESR concluded:

- 1) The relevant ministries, administrative bodies and schools are not fully serving their intended functions without appropriate coordination and demarcation of roles to serve for a unified and coordinated purpose;
- 2) The existing laws and policies have become outdated and do not reflect the realities of the education sector today.⁵⁹

The Constitution of Myanmar guarantees that “the Union shall provide a free, compulsory primary education system.” However, there is no overarching policy document that presents the strategy and concrete approach of how government wants to transform the sector. Together with “national health”, a number of education-related responsibilities are listed in Schedule One of the Constitution.⁶⁰ A recent study has found that the inclusion in Schedule One is held as “meaning that the State and Regional *Hluttaw* cannot enact any legislation in that sector. Nor is there formal provision for the State governments to have a role in education, or practical means for them to do so”.⁶¹ In Mandalay, this view clearly prevailed as was confirmed during interviews with education sector stakeholders and the township administration.

The government’s review of the school system began in 2012 and is expected to be completed this year. The first phase of the review, known as the “rapid assessment,” included a quick look at the current situation to identify priority areas for reforms. Reports for the second phase, which examined the initial recommendations in more detail, have been reported to be completed. The third and final phase of the review will see the development of an education sector plan through 2021. However, some quarters of the population including civil society and ethnic groups have expressed concerns.⁶²

Against this backdrop, and given this rough sketch of the state of primary education in Myanmar, the local governance mapping explored how local service providers and users in the three townships in Mandalay Region see the quality of primary education and appreciate the way in which it is delivered. The results of these findings are presented in the following section.

58. Zobrist, Brooke and McCormick, Patrick. A Preliminary Assessment of Decentralisation in Education, page 10.

59. JICA 2013. Data Collection Survey on Education Sector in Myanmar Final Report, February 2013, Page 10

60. Schedule 1, Section 9. “Social Sector”: (a) Educational curricula, syllabus, teaching methodology, research, plans, projects and standards; (b) Universities, degree colleges, institutes and other institutions of higher education; (c) Examinations prescribed by the Union; (d) Private schools and training. [...]

61. Zobrist, Brooke and McCormick, Patrick. A Preliminary Assessment of Decentralisation in Education: page 8-9.

62. The Irrawaddy, 2014

Primary Education service provision in the three selected townships in Mandalay Region

In line with the national trend, both the investment as well as the recurrent budget for primary education in Mandalay has increased a lot over the last three years (see Table 14). The increase was mainly caused by a rise in the number of schools and teachers (e.g. in 2014/15 an additional 2,000 teachers will be available for primary education in Mandalay Region), and by a gradual improvement in the salary of teachers.

Table 14: Mandalay Regional budget for primary education in billion Kyats

Source: Interview with Director Primary Education Mandalay Region.

	Capital	Recurrent	Total
2012/13	1.5	49	50.5
2013/14	8	70	78
2014/15	9	116	125

As a result of the additional budget resources available and the increase in teaching staff, enrolment rates for primary education have gone up from 95.4 percent in 2011-12 to 98.8 percent in 2014-15 in Mandalay Region and the average size of classes has gone down as well. By the end of this year the remaining group of teachers on daily wages will either qualify as teacher or be replaced by a qualified teacher. According to the Regional Director for Primary Education the priorities for the coming years will be to improve the quality of teachers at the primary schools through on-the-job training especially in the rural areas, while the expansion of classrooms will be a priority for the urban areas.

Looking at the figures provided by the Township Education Officers (TEOs) for primary education in the three selected townships (see Table 15), the teacher-student ratio differs a lot between the three townships. While it is well below the national guidelines of one teacher per 40 students in Meiktila, it is at that threshold in Thazi and exceeds it in Thabeikkyin.

Table 15: Key education data for government operated facilities in the three townships in Mandalay Region

Source: GAO township profiles and information provided by the TEOs.

	Meiktila	Thazi	Thabeikkyin
Population	309,000	202,000	127,000
Primary schools	200	148	37
Primary school students	27,425	21,608	15,875
Primary school teacher: student ratio	1:29	1:40	1:45
Primary school teachers appointed	930	547	356

Compared to the other Regions and States there are fewer (I)NGOs active in the education sector in the three townships included in the survey (see Table 16).

Township	UN organisations, (I)NGOs and CBOs active in education
Meiktila	Karen Baptist Convention, Save the Children Myanmar, UN Children Fund
Thazi	UN Children Fund
Thabeikkyin	Monastic Education Development Group, Karen Baptist Convention, UN Children Fund

Table 16: (International) Non-Governmental Organisations active in the education sector in the three townships

Source: MIMU: Overview of the November 2014 Who, what, where and VT MAP Mandalay Region. Note that this overview does not include local organisations active in education.

Seventy-five percent of education staff interviewed (three TEOs, six headmasters and 19 teachers), mentioned that primary education has improved over the last three years in the three townships in Mandalay Region. Most interlocutors identified the improved quality of teaching (better and more trained teachers), improved infrastructure (buildings and classrooms) and overall improvements in the education system as the main factors contributing to this improvement. Teachers believed that improvements to school accessories, teaching support materials and books for the library are the most cost-effective way to further improve the quality of teaching. In addition, more structural basic infrastructural improvements by the Ministry of Education were also seen as required, although overcrowding of classrooms has reduced significantly (most classes have 30 students and some have between 30 and 40 students). This makes Mandalay Region one of the most advanced Regions in this regard. All three TEOs mentioned a substantial increase in both investment and recurrent budgets, resulting in more schools being built or upgraded, better motivated staff and more money being available for teaching material and stationary.

Education staff perceived an improvement in primary education over last 3 years with substantial increase in budget leading to school up gradation, more teaching material and enhancements in quality of teaching. Some also perceive challenges in number of teachers and basic infrastructure (like toilet facilities).

While things have improved, four out of six headmasters experienced a shortage of teachers and three experienced poor basic school infrastructure (especially toilet facilities) as challenges during the 2013-2014 school-year, which was confirmed by the teachers. The majority of headmasters had reported low-cost problems, such as the need of more school chairs, desks and textbooks, to the TEO and these were for the most part successfully resolved, indicating that the responsiveness of the Ministry of Education to the needs of the actual teaching staff has improved. Teaching staff made the following suggestions to further improve the quality of primary education (see Figure 35).

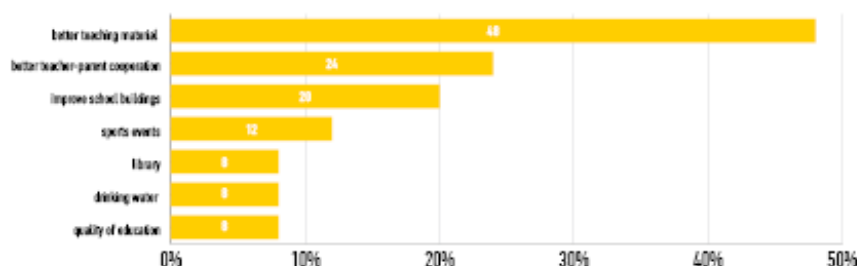


Figure 35: Suggested improvements by teaching staff to improve the quality of primary education

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014.

Education staff said that every child is treated in the same way but there are no special facilities for children with learning disabilities.

Almost 50 percent of the teachers found their salary to be reasonable for the work they are doing. Teachers believed that they adhere to the code of conduct from the Ministry of Education, that they are punctual, report honestly on their performance to the education office at the township level, listen to the parents about their children's education and take any complaints from parents seriously. The teachers were divided about the quality of education they are able to provide. Forty percent mentioned that their school is doing not as good as other similar schools in the area in providing good quality education, while the other 60 percent mentioned that they were doing as good or even better than other schools. More than half of the teachers recorded a lack of interest and involvement of the parents in the education of their children. According to the education staff, every child is treated in the same way, but there are no special facilities or programmes for children with learning problems like physical disabilities, except for a special school for blind children in Meiktila.

Township Education Officers would welcome an improved performance management system as this would make it easier for improving the actual quality of education.

The concept of performance management was understood by education staff as the timely reporting on basic indicators. Standards and practices for monitoring are fairly well-established for primary schools, for which there are regular inspection visits conducted typically by the Assistant and Deputy TEOs (at least twice a year, but usually at least four times a year). These are done with the objective to conduct routine inspections, evaluate personnel and audit stock, and collect data on 12 basic output indicators for primary schools (seven relate to quality, five to physical infrastructure). Though inspectors are supposed to inspect personnel, no data is collected with respect to staff performance (i.e. teacher absenteeism, or quality of teaching). The TEOs would welcome an improved performance management system as this would make it easier for improving the actual quality of education.

All schools had a Parent Teacher Association (PTA). These PTAs are mainly involved in implementing small maintenance works and in collecting donations from the parents. Only in one school the PTA was also involved in checking finances and stock of the school. The community members did not participate in discussions on education related issues and 78 percent of all the respondents with children at a primary school reported that they had never been involved in discussion meetings.

The organisation and administration of primary education.

Together with a few assistants, the TEO manages roughly 60-70 percent of all civil servants in the township including their salary administration; monitors the quality of all levels of education; collects relevant educational baseline data, supervise all renovation and construction works, organises teacher trainings and, resolves a multitude of practical issues especially with regard to the structural shortage of teachers in the more remote areas. In practice, the TEO handles the budget in the township (roughly 2,200 million Kyats – 2,200 USD in Thazi and 4,000 million Kyats – 4,000 USD in Meiktila for recurrent expenditures only). While the responsibilities of the TEO are huge, the ability to respond to urgent problems and to influence planning is very limited, due to the fact that the TEO's autonomy is very limited as a result of the centralised way in which the Ministry of Education is organised.

The administration of primary education at township level in Mandalay Region is in line with standard procedures within the Ministry of Education (see Figure 36).

Role and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The TED is in charge of the management and administration of all education facilities and staff (including salary payments). ✓ The TED reports on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis to the district Department of Education (DoE). Reports consist of education statistics (enrollment, dropouts, etc.), staffing and infrastructural needs. ✓ The TED provides data for planning and budgeting to the district and Region level Departments. ✓ The TED proposes teacher transfers based on staffing needs of schools.
Monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ School inspections (Assistant TEDs for primary schools) are conducted at least twice a year. The inspection focuses more on the state of educational facilities than on actual performance of teachers or students. ✓ TED also monitors the construction of new buildings in cooperation with GAD.
Co-ordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ TED is the secretary of the Township Education Committee. GAD chairs, members are TMO, TDSC/TMAC members and NGOs. They meet on an ad hoc basis. ✓ There is ad hoc coordination with the Department of Health on school health programmes and anti-narcotics campaigns. ✓ TED sends statistics and information to the GAD on request.
Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All complaints that cannot be handled by the headmaster are channelled to the TED. ✓ As required, the TED will form an enquiry committee (TED, Assistant and headmaster of another school). After investigation, the committee proposes a decision. The proposed decision is sent to District ED for approval.

Figure 36: Key characteristics of township primary education administration in Mandalay Region

Source: Interviews with Township Education Officers Mandalay Region, July 2014.

For monthly salary payments, the TEO issues cheques to each primary school headmaster who pays the teachers (or to one headmaster who coordinates salary payments for several schools). They return the signed salary sheets the following month.

According to the TEOs interviewed, not much has changed in the organisation of education over the last few years, although it has become easier for the TEO to recruit local teachers to deal with acute staff shortages, especially in the more remote townships or villages. The TEO can recruit teachers on a daily wage basis (these are unqualified teachers who are not part of the civil service, they do not receive any additional benefits like pensions, and are not paid during school holidays). The need for such daily wage teachers has however reduced substantially over the last three years in the three townships.

If there is a serious shortage of teachers in a certain school, the TEO can only request other schools/teachers to assist temporarily, as he/she does not have the authority to transfer any of the qualified teachers permanently from one school to another. The last resort to resolve the shortage of teachers is for the PTA of a school to recruit a teacher locally and pay for him/her by collecting money from the parents. These teachers fall outside the official education system and records. The TEO does not keep a record of these teachers and does not check their qualifications or actual performance.

Planning and budgeting of primary education in the three townships

Using the inputs provided by every school, the TEO drafts a recurrent budget proposal based on the previous year's figures, including the newly arrived teachers, and submits this via the District Education Officer (DEO) to the Department. A copy of the recurrent budget request is sent to the Township Planning Officer and the TA. In addition, the TEO provides the DEO with the basic data for the Department of Basic Education at the Ministry of Education to conduct its planning. Based on the actual needs, as provided by the headmasters of each school, the TEO can submit requests for capital investments but is not involved in the actual planning of new education facilities. The TEO only knows where and when a new school is going to be built when the actual construction works starts as tenders for these activities are done at the Regional level. Not knowing the capital investment plans of the ministry beforehand, and not having a copy of the contract or specifications, makes it very difficult for the TEO to monitor construction progress or consult with the community in this regard. In practice, the inputs from the TEO into the annual planning process of the Ministry of Education is however more and more appreciated and it somehow finds its way all the way up to the decisions makers at the Union level.

School construction projects are supervised by a school construction committee which is formed at both township and village level when required. The committee is chaired by one of the parents and has the headmaster, a VT/WDSC and a PTA representative as members. The committee is mainly involved in progress monitoring, while quality monitoring is usually done by an engineer from the District Education Office. To pass the instalment payments, the headmaster signs the completion certificate on behalf of the school construction supervision committee.

As a result of the centralised planning system, and similarly to the TMO, the TEO is limited in coordinating planning with other sector departments and with other education service providers in the township beyond very practical coordination of educational activities such as anti-drug campaigns that are carried out jointly with the TMO or THO at primary and secondary schools.

People's views on primary education

Just like in health care, and similarly to the opinions of the teaching staff, almost two-thirds of the respondents in the three townships in Mandalay were of the opinion that primary education in their village-tract or ward had improved over the last three years, while 32 percent mentioned that the quality had stayed more or less the same. Only 5 percent mentioned that the quality had deteriorated (see Figure 37).

There was no significant difference in response between male-female or urban-rural respondents, while the youngest group of respondents (18-30 years old), recorded a slightly lower score (58 percent). The main reasons for improvements as mentioned by the respondents who stated that education had improved (182) are presented in Figure 38.

Most of the respondents mentioned the improvements in infrastructure as the main reason for the upgrading of education. Of the few respondents (13) who mentioned that primary education had worsened over the last three years, 85 percent attributed this to a reduction in the number of teachers at their primary school.

63% people in Meiktila, Thazi and Thabeiklyin opined that the primary education in their village had improved and 72% with children in primary school were satisfied and these changes were due to a new or upgraded school infrastructure and regularity and attitude of teachers.



Figure 37: Perceived changes in the quality of primary education at village tract or ward level, over the last three years

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014. n=288.

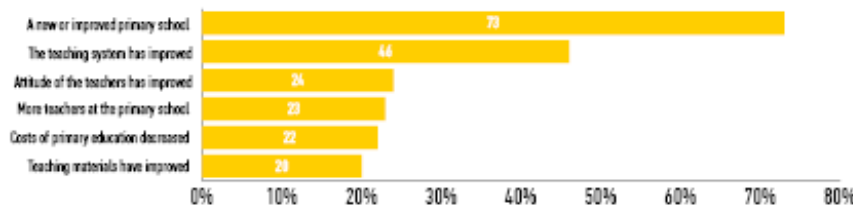


Figure 38: Reasons why according to the respondents primary education has improved

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014. n = 182
Note that more than one answer was possible.

Respondents with children attending primary school (115) were asked about their satisfaction with the quality of education. Seventy-two percent of the respondents with children attending primary school were satisfied, 17 percent qualified it as “not good/not bad”, and 11 percent were not satisfied (see Figure 39 and Figure 40). The differences between the three townships are however big with Thazi recording the highest level of satisfaction (90 percent satisfied) and Thabeikkyin the lowest (54 percent). Male respondents were slightly more satisfied with the quality of primary education of their children (76 percent satisfied) than female respondents (68 percent satisfied).

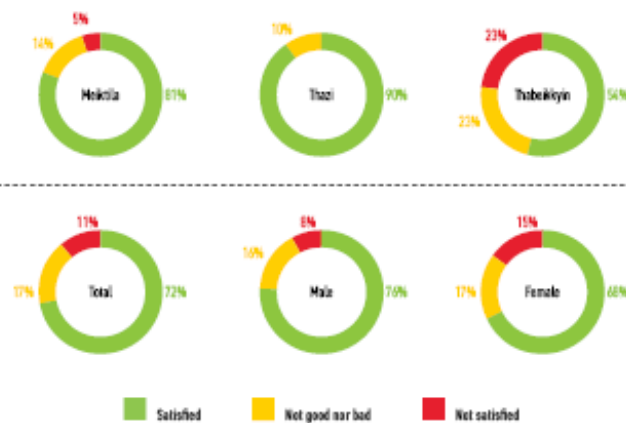
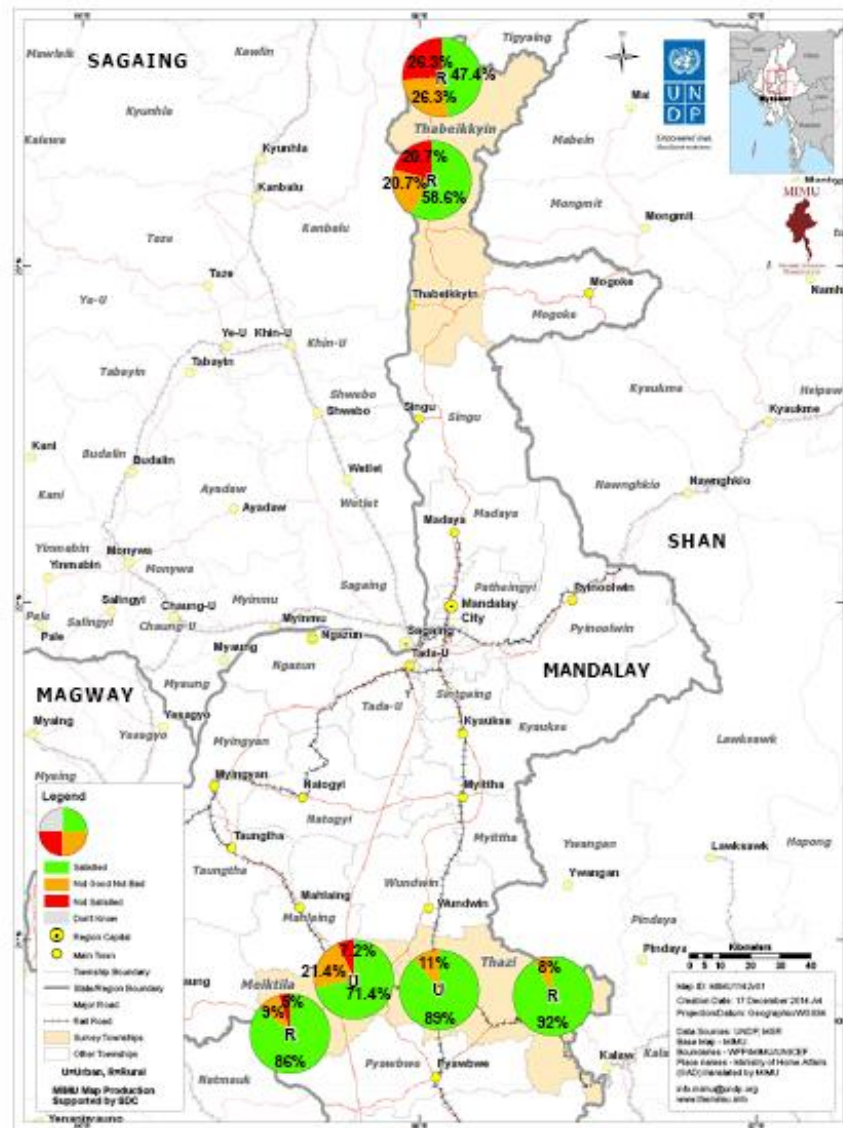


Figure 39: Overall satisfaction with the quality of primary education for respondents with primary school-going children

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014. n = 115.

Figure 48: Overall satisfaction with the quality of primary education for respondents with primary school-going children

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n = 115.



Disclaimer: The names shown and the boundaries used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Respondents with children attending a primary school were in general satisfied with the attitude of teachers. Ninety-seven percent of these respondents mentioned that in general the teachers at the primary school were observing regular working hours (i.e. they are present when the school is open), and 90 percent said that the teachers are polite and friendly to the parents and their children.

Fifty percent of the parents mentioned that teachers were providing extra tuition after school hours for payment. Of these parents, 88 percent mentioned that this should not happen as teachers should receive a decent salary for the regular teaching activities they do and integrate this extra teaching into the normal practice.

On the question of gift-giving, i.e. whether respondents had to pay or provide a gift to the teachers, school principal or the school, for the education of their child/children, 63 percent of the respondents with children at school said that they 'never', 31 percent that they 'sometimes' and 6 percent that they 'always' gave a gift. Of those who said that they always or sometimes paid or provided a gift 30 percent felt they were obliged to do so while the others felt they did this on a voluntary basis.

Ninety percent of the respondents with children at primary school felt that their child was treated in the same way as all the other children. Only a small group of parents felt that children from poor households were treated differently. According to 81 percent of the respondents, different needs of boys and girls (like separate toilets) were always taken care of by the schools.

Below are several examples of the discussions that took place in the Community Dialogue sessions about primary education. During these discussions the citizens or parents were a bit more critical about primary education than in the individual interviews.

Respondents were finally asked whether they had any suggestions as to how primary education in the village tract or ward could improve further. The results are presented in Figure 41 below.

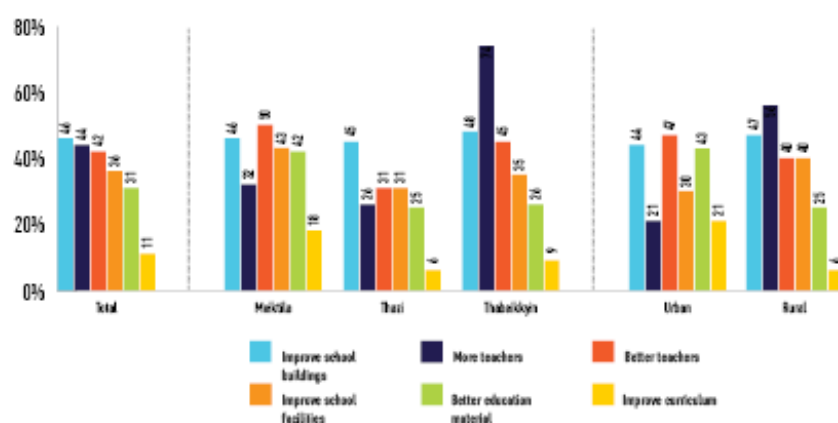


Figure 41: Suggestions made to improve quality of primary education

Source: UNDP, Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014.

Further improvements to the infrastructure was mentioned most often, while increasing the number of teachers followed, especially in Thabeikkyin and more so by respondents in the rural areas as compared to the urban areas, where better education material was mentioned more often.

Source: UNDP, Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014.

Box 7: Examples of improvements made in primary education as mentioned by the communities during the Community Dialogues

- Good quality of teaching.
- Good communication between teachers and students.
- High pass rate of students.
- Enough furniture (tables, chairs).
- Balanced teacher-student ratio.
- Extension of school buildings.
- No bribe or gift required for schooling.

Ward no. 3, Thazi

- Good teaching skill by teachers.
 - Government supply stationary for students.
 - Regular monthly examination and teachers make the result available to parents
- Yatarnar Man Aung VT, Meiktila

- Teachers are enthusiastic in their teaching.
- Children can access free education.
- Better education status because there are two students who get scholarship. One in Grade 6 and another in Grade 7.
- There is a library.
- Government provides stationary for students.
- There is a monthly nutrition program at school.
- No need to pay money to teachers.
- There is good cooperation between parents and children.

TharGaYa VT, Thazi

Source: UNDP, Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014.

Box 8: Examples of challenges in primary education as mentioned by the communities during the Community Dialogues

- There is a problem of not enough teachers. But it needs time to recruit teachers because teachers need to be trained before sending to service area.
- Quality of temporary teachers (not government approved staff) is not good.
- Not enough furniture (tables, chairs).
- There is no specification on what primary school is and what post primary school is.

Inn Net VT, Thabeikkyin

- Salary for teachers is not enough for their daily living.
- School buildings are not in a good condition.
- There are not enough tables and chairs.
- Teacher - students ratio is not appropriate (Need more teachers)
- No safe drinking water.
- Need refresher training for teachers.

KyarHnyut VT, Thabeikkyin

- The hall type school building should be separated into partitions to get particular class rooms

- Not enough drinking water
- Insufficient latrines.
- Teachers are late for school.
- Teachers are absent to inform parents about the condition of children

Shan Ma Nge VT, Meiktila

Box 9: Examples of action plans for the improvement of primary education as mentioned by the communities during the Community Dialogues.

- School Headmaster will take action on teachers providing private tuition.
- Two teachers are taking responsible for environmental sanitation within the school compound in every day. But there is no place to throw the garbage away.
- School Headmaster already submitted to the Township Education Administration about the problems of latrines, roads and fence.

Yatarnar Man Aung VT, Meiktila Township

- Administration group will report the need for stationeries in the mid-term of school year.
- Education group will submit report for renovation of school building.
- Public would cooperate more between teachers and parents in the future.

Ward no. 3, Thazi

Source: UNDP, Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014.

4.3.3 Drinking water

In a development context, ‘access to safe drinking water’ can be defined as having access to a private or public tap, a deep well, a protected hand-dug well or a protected open water source all within 30 minutes walking distance. As per this definition, access to safe drinking water stood at 76 percent for Mandalay Region as a whole in 2010, which is slightly above the national average of 69 percent.⁶³

This aggregate figure however does not allow any conclusions for the availability and accessibility of drinking water at the local level in different parts of Mandalay Region as this depends very much on local conditions. Providing safe and equitable access to drinking water is a core responsibility of government at the local level. However, government authorities in Mandalay Region have only recently begun to invest more resources in this sector, while at the same time, residents of Mandalay Region’s urban and rural communities have only recently started expressing their needs for safe drinking water.

The responsibility for drinking water provision is shared by the DRD for rural areas and the municipalities and the DMA in towns⁶⁴ (see Figure 42). These departments were only established in late 2013 and are still in the process of being established in most townships. The main reason to split these departments was to improve service delivery related to water, electricity and infrastructure to the rural areas as they were in past often neglected. The DRD falls under the Union Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, while

63. IHLCA 2011; Integrated Housing and Living Conditions Assessment 2009-2010; Poverty Profile page 64

64. In 2014 the Government of Myanmar decide to change the English translation of the “Department of Municipal Affairs” and of the “Township Municipal Affairs Committee” into “Development Affairs Organisation” and “Township Development Affairs Committee”, while the Myanmar names remained the same and refer to “municipal affairs”.

Figure 42: Administrative set up of water provision

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

Role and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Split between the DMA (urban areas) and the DRD (rural areas), since September/October 2013. ✓ Management and administration of public works and general affairs in municipality (DMA only). ✓ Monthly reporting to district and regional DRD and DMA.
Monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The DMA along with the TMAC monitors municipal water supply in the wards. ✓ The DRD monitors the situation in each village through its own staff and through established volunteer groups, comprising of five local people selected to assist the department on the ground.
Co-ordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The DMA receives requests to work with other departments on joint initiatives in the municipal areas. ✓ The TMAC serves a key coordination mechanism for water supply. ✓ The DRD works closely with the TA and VTAs to identify needs in the village tracts.
Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The TMAC is a key mechanism for fielding municipal water-related grievances (though this is not a core role as originally conceived). ✓ In rural areas, the DRD's volunteer groups will support investigation of complaints.

the DMA is part of the Regional Ministry of Development Affairs and forms the executive/administrative service of municipal committees. Both departments have a multitude of responsibilities including the provision of safe drinking water. The DRD focusses on the rural areas of a township (village tracts), while the DMA is responsible for drinking water provision in the municipal area (wards).

While they carry out similar activities, the way in which these two departments, plan, operate and implement their responsibilities is quite different as described in this paragraph.

Drinking water provision in rural areas by the Department of Rural Development

The DRD split off from the Department of Municipal Affairs in 2013, but in most cases it inherited the least number of staff. In most townships it started with a relatively small budget that is increasing fast however. It falls directly under the Department of Rural Development within the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development at the Union level that allocates staff and budgets to each of the townships. It is responsible for the construction of roads and bridges, drinking water provision, housing and electricity provision in the rural areas.



Since there was in most townships no reliable and updated overview of available facilities in all the village tracts in each township, the DRD has started last year with conducting a baseline study of facilities available in each village. Based on this overview and consultations that were held with VTDCs and VTAs, the DRDs drafted their first full year annual plan for 2014/15. As in other sector Ministries this means that the DRD identifies projects, makes cost calculations and submits a long list of proposed projects to the Regional office, which submits it to the Union-level Department. No indicative budget ceilings are provided beforehand so most DRDs submit enough projects that would take 10 times their actual allocated budget to implement. The disadvantage of this way of working is that a lot of energy is spent on preparing project proposals that are in the end not implemented while at the same time expectations are raised at the community level when the DRD collects proposals. If throughout the year only 10 percent of the proposed projects are actually implemented, there is a high risk that people at the community level get frustrated as they don't see any benefits from active participation which will also result in demotivation of DRD staff members who constantly have to explain that not enough money is available.

Similar to education and health, rural development falls under Schedule One of the Constitution, meaning that budget allocation, planning and decision-making is all taking place at the Union-level Department, while no Regional Budget is available to the Department. For Mandalay Region the total budget for 2013/14 was 9 billion Kyats (9 million USD), while for 2014/15 the capital budget is 26 billion Kyats (26 million USD) and the recurrent budget 936 million kyat (936,000 USD), i.e. totally almost 27 billion Kyats (27 million USD).⁶⁵ The increase can partly be explained by the enhanced implementation capacity of the department at township level but is also a result of the increased attention government is paying to stimulate development in the rural areas. The relatively low allocated recurrent budget as compared to the allocated capital budget can be explained by the fact that DRD, contrary to the DMA, doesn't implement any of the project activities itself. Once approved by the Union Ministry, similar township projects (like the digging of tube wells or the provision of solar panels) are grouped per district and go for tendering by the Regional tender board. For 2014/15 a total of 42 tenders for Mandalay Region are planned for the DRD. Looking at the

⁶⁵ Information provided by the Regional Deputy Director of DRD in Mandalay

Table 17: DRD capital budgets for the year 2014/15 for the three townships (in million Kyats)

Source: Regional Deputy Director of DRD in Mandalay.

	Water supply	Roads construction	Bridge construction	Electricity connection	Total
Meiktila	313	37	7	27	304
Thazi	272	77	2	17	368
Thabeikkyin	33	0	0	0	33
Total	618	114	9	44	705

rural development budgets for 2014/15 for the three townships (see Table 17), drinking water provision has the highest priority, followed by road and bridge construction and electricity provision.

The Regional Deputy Director could not explain why Thabeikkyin received so much less than the other two townships and why only for water supply.

Drinking water provision in urban areas by the Department of Municipal Affairs

Mandalay Region was the first to adopt a new Municipal Law on 1 April 2013 in line with Presidential Notification 27/2013, and as provided for in Schedule Two of the Constitution.⁶⁶ The Regional Municipal Law provides the legal basis for the formation and composition of the Township Municipal Affairs Committee as well as a description of its mandate and responsibilities and its relationship with the DMA. The main deviation with the former law is the inclusion of citizen representatives in the Township Municipal Affairs Committees.

Since 'municipal affairs' fall under Schedule Two of the constitution, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the DMA are Region level bodies only. The revenues of the DMA are almost exclusively generated locally, while the planning and implementation process of public works and the management of municipal affairs is more or less completely delegated to the township level. In that sense, the DMA differs completely from all other departments present at the township level, which is reflected in, for Myanmar standards, relatively high level of decisiveness, effectiveness, responsiveness and speed of implementation as described below.

The tasks and responsibilities of the TMAC and the DMA range from urban planning, water supply and sanitation, urban power supply, the management of markets, slaughter houses, business licencing, slow-moving vehicles, construction and maintenance of roads and bridges, inspection of construction works, traffic regulation, road names and building numbers, eviction of squatters, construction of parks and recreation centres, cemeteries, garbage collection and public health as well as other typical municipal functions and duties. Sources of revenue include: license from buildings, animal slaughter houses, street vendors and markets and other businesses (contributing on average to 75 percent of its income). Other revenues include income from power supply, various taxes (like building tax, water supply tax, street light tax, waste and sanitation tax, public sanitation tax, and tax on vehicles) and penalty fees. Under the Municipal Law, the TMAC has been allocated the status

66. Mandalay regional Hlutaw, 2013; Mandalay Municipal Affairs Organisation Law, Law no. 3 of 2013, 8 April 2013

of a statutory body meaning that it can sue and be sued and enter into any type of legal transaction. In Mandalay Region, over the past one and a half years there have already been several cases in which the TMAC successfully started a legal case against contractors who did not adhere to existing building regulations.

The TMAC consists of 7 members, three ex-officio members (GAD, DRD and executive officer of the DMA who is secretary of the committee) and four members from the public who represent the wards and specific groups in society (like professionals, business sector, CSOs, etc.) of whom at least one should have an engineering background. One of the citizen members is chairperson of the TMAC. In contrast with the voluntary development support committees, the citizen members receive a monthly allowance of 180,000 Kyats (180 USD) for the ordinary members and 200,000 kyat (200 USD) for the chairperson, which is similar to the salary of a senior government official at the township level. In the bigger municipalities, like in Meiktila, being a citizen member on the TMAC is almost a full time job.

Regarding the implementation of municipal public works, the TMAC/DMA can implement or outsource activities that have a total expected cost of less than 5 million Kyats (5,000 USD),

Box 10: Generating resources for municipal works

The DMA and TMAC together make up the institutional manifestation of municipalities, which are the only bodies at the local level that generate their own income and can decide (with approval from the Regional Minister of Development Affairs) how to use that income to implement their functions. The TMAC and DMA draft an annual plan based on the estimated revenues for the coming financial year that is submitted to the Regional Ministry for approval but that differs a lot per township, based on locally developed priorities and revenues. The operational costs of the DMA (including staff salaries) are limited to 35 percent of the planned expenditures. Once approval is obtained, the DMA and TMAC are in charge of implementing all activities, making regular adjustments throughout the year based on the actual revenues received. For temporary cash flow shortages the Ministry is able to assist with low interest short-term loans. For bigger investments that surpass the capacity of the TMAC/DMA they can either request - via their elected Hluttaw members or the Region Ministry - an extra contribution from government (supplementary budget) or a low-interest loan from the Union Government for which the Ministry acts as a guarantor. Thazi for example received a supplementary budget of 270 million Kyats (270,000 USD) last year for the construction of a 13 km stretch of road, while Meiktila received a supplementary budget of 923 million Kyats (923,000 USD) for the construction of a water filter system and extra money for the expansion of the bridge connecting East and West Meiktila.

From 2015 onwards, 45 percent of the penalty fees collected by all TMACs/DMA in Mandalay Region will be transferred to the regional level DMA. Ten percent of these funds will be used to cover the operational costs of the regional office, while the remaining 90 percent will be made available to townships with limited revenue sources as extra revenue in order to balance the differences between the better-off and poorer townships. In practice, the impact will be rather limited since the penalty fees in Meiktila e.g. constitute only 4 percent of the total revenues of the DMA.

The citizen representatives of TMAC have a full time job from identifying projects with the WA and WDSC, monitoring on-going projects in the municipality on a daily basis, and checking the financial and progress reports.

while they have to tender for any project above that amount. The tender is implemented at the township level (TMAC + an engineer are the tender board), but the conclusions of the tender need to be endorsed by the Regional Minister of Development Affairs before the contract can be awarded.

One and a half years after the adoption of the new Mandalay Municipal Law and the establishment of the TMACs in Mandalay they seem to settle in an operational mode that suits the different township/municipal settings in the Region. In Meiktila, the citizen representatives on the TMAC are four retired professionals of whom one is an engineer. According to them being member of the TMAC is almost a full time job and they clearly operate as an executive municipal committee. They meet the executive officer of the DMA every week, when they check the financial and progress reports and discuss any issues arising. Together with an engineer from the DMA each of them actively monitors four to five ongoing projects in the municipality almost on a daily basis. Besides that, they actively monitor any construction projects in their wards and talk to the people to collect first-hand information on problems or needs that are arising. In 2013, the TMAC sued 15 contractors for not abiding to building regulations. In addition, they supervised the tender process of 25 projects in the municipality. Finally, they are actively involved in the planning process, identifying and assessing with the WAs and WDSCs new projects to be included in next year's annual plan.

The TMACs in the other two townships have the same legal status but are in practice still more advisory to the executive officer of the DMA. They meet less frequently (often only as part of the bi-monthly combined VTA/WA-TDSC-TMAC-TA meetings), they don't monitor the physical progress of projects with the same level of detail and focus mainly on the identification of projects that should be included in the DMA annual plan.

The difference can partly be explained in the magnitude of the work that is undertaken, since Meiktila has more than three times the budget of Thazi and more than 6 times the budget of Thabeikkyin (see Table 18 below), while it has comparatively the lowest revenues per capita of all three townships, but also on the attitude, skills and personalities of people involved.

Table 18: Estimated municipal revenues/budget for 2014/2015 for the three participating townships

Source: Department of Population, Ministry of Immigration and Population 2014; Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014; provisional results. The Township GAD Socio-economic profiles and MoH township health profiles 2014 were used to calculate the urban and rural populations, using the former urban/rural ratios applied to the new census figures.

Township	Total expected revenues 2014/15 in million Kyats	Estimated Urban Population	Revenues per capita
Meiktila	1,302	102,000	12,5
Thazi	402	20,000	20,100
Thabeikkyin	200	14,000	14,286

Except for actual staffing of the DMA, which is decided at the Regional level, the DMA can operate relatively independent and can easily adjust its plans throughout the year if actual revenues or costs deviate from the planned figures, while it has an emergency fund (5 percent of the total revenues) to deal with unforeseen events.

Knowing the estimated budget in advance makes planning and project selection at the municipal level much easier and realistic. The TMAC can meet with WDSCs and WAs and negotiate priorities and come to agreements at their level. This makes the TMAC quite powerful but also enhances the decision-making process since people know that at least two

out of the five projects they propose for their ward will indeed be implemented during the next year. In this way, consultation at the ward level shifts more towards real participation and will motivate citizens to attend meetings and present and defend their case for a certain project. In addition, giving people a say in the selection of activities and implementing them accordingly will in the end improve tax compliance as well, since people start to understand the relationship between paying taxes/fees and the services they receive in return. Since approval procedures are much shorter than in sector ministries projects can be implemented much faster which also has a positive impact on the confidence people have in the newly established structures.

During discussions with the TDSC and TMAC members in the various townships it became clear that the fact that the TMACs have a legal framework that defines their mandate and defines their relationship with the DMA is of great support to the citizen members on the committee. They saw the present law as being sufficient to do their job, but most of them stressed that they would prefer a direct election system in which there is broader involvement of people (adding that this should also be done with the VTA/WA election) as this would improve their legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens and their authority over government staff. In addition, direct elections would also reduce the risk of elite capture, which certainly exists at the moment. Citizen members of the various TDSCs belong in practice to the local elite that is seen as very close to government. Since the TMAC has both an executive and a controlling function, it could be quite easy for the committee to collude with government staff to misappropriate funds intended for the development of the municipality.

TMAC members highlighted the need for direct election of the citizen representatives on the committee to improve their legitimacy.

The TDSC members mentioned at various occasions that such a legal framework that is now regulating the work of the TMACs (i.e. the Municipal Law) should also be established for the TDSCs, and should define more clearly what “advisory” means, since the actual use of their “advice” depends in practice too much on the discretion and therefore personality of the TA. For the moment, the Presidential Notification 27/2013 is the only source of authority and guideline for the work of the TDSC and VT DSC in the three townships.

Both in Thazi and Meiktila, the improvement of drinking water provision is high on the agenda of the TMAC and DMA and they both have multi-annual plans to improve the water provision as budgets are too small to implement all necessary activities in one year. Having such a master plan available helps them also to mobilise their elected Hluttaw members to lobby for extra funding from either the Regional or Union level Governments.

While, especially in Meiktila, the TMACs seem to function professionally and are able to boost municipal development only one year after they have been established, it will be worthwhile to monitor their performance closely over the coming years, especially from the perspective of whether their executive and oversight function can remain combined or should be split, giving the oversight function to a separate body at the municipal level.

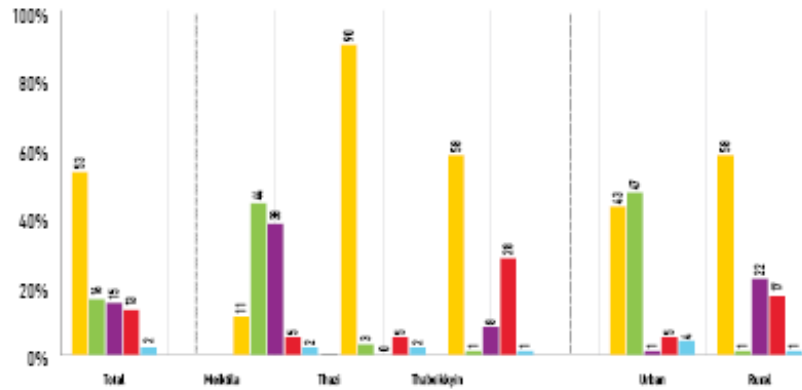
Citizens' perspectives on safe drinking water provision

Fifty-three percent of the respondents interviewed said that they got their water from a deep tube well, 16 percent from a private water connection 15 percent from a shallow tube well and 13 percent from an open water source (river or pond) (see Figure 43).

Only in Meiktila private water supply (44 percent) was more substantial than a deep tube well (11 percent). Despite the improvements made in water provision in Meiktila, the time it

Figure 43: Administrative set up of water provision

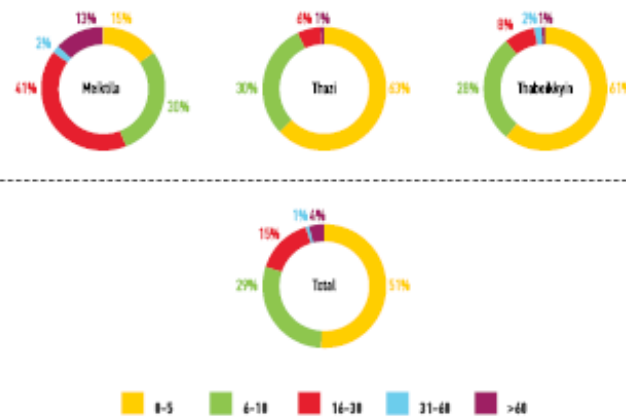
Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014.



takes to get to the main water source is on average higher in Meiktila than in the other two townships (see Figure 44).

Figure 44: Time required to get to the main water source in minutes

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014.



Regarding the quality of their drinking water, 51 percent of the respondents mentioned that it was good, 37 percent that it was acceptable and the remaining 12 percent found the quality poor. Regarding access to safe drinking water, the respondents were asked whether the drinking water situation has improved in their village tract or ward over the last three years (see Figure 45).

Forty-two percent of the respondents mentioned that the provision of safe drinking water has improved over the last few years, which is much lower than the figures for health care and primary education. Also, 7 percent mentioned that the situation has worsened. In section 4.2 it was already stated that the provision of safe drinking water was high on the list of needs in some village tracts and wards.

As shown in Figure 45, these responses are highly affected by the positive figure for Meiktila, where 66 percent mentioned an improvement in access to drinking water as a result of the recent improvements made in the water filter system.



Figure 45: Perceived changes in the provision of clean drinking water in the village tract or ward over the last three years

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014.

The main reasons mentioned by the respondents who noticed an improvement in water provision were:

- The water source is protected/cleaner (53 percent).
- New taps or pumps have been installed (48 percent).
- The water source is nearer (34 percent).

For those who mentioned that the water situation had worsened the main reasons cited were:

- The water source got polluted (84 percent),
- An increase in distance to their water source (32 percent)⁶⁷.

With regard to the provision of drinking water in the three townships, it seems that government is becoming more responsive. Access to drinking water came up as a serious problem both during the individual interviews and during the Community Dialogues. It seems that officials at the township level is beginning to pick up on this message and that more and more resources over which the local committees have some say (i.e. the RDF, the CDF and the municipal revenues from DMA) will at least for the coming year be allocated to improve access to drinking water.

Concluding remarks on service delivery

The figures from Mandalay Region on both health and primary education are encouraging; as they show that frontline service providers and people see that improvements are made at the community level. However, one has to be cautious using these figures as an indication for the actual quality of primary education or primary health care in Mandalay Region or in Myanmar at large. Myanmar continues to perform poorly on a number of international rankings both for primary education and health care, particularly when viewed against global standards set through initiatives such as Education for All.⁶⁸

67. More than one answer was possible.

68. In education, enrolment rates are still low, and completion rates from primary school remain poor. In health, Myanmar has improved on most MDG indicators but still lags behind as compared to other countries in the region (e.g. the 'under-5 child-mortality' rate is 52.3 compared to 28 as average for the region, maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live birth) is 200 compared to 150 as average for the South-East Asia Region). Most recent figures (2012) are from the MDG global data base (www.mdg.uu.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx) for Myanmar on progress regarding the achievement of the MDGs.

Since the quality of education and health care in Myanmar has been very poor over the last decades, the starting point against which people compare progress is very low. In addition, due to Myanmar's isolated position over many years, the reference frame for most people is the education and health care situation as it has been over the past decades in their village tract or ward, and not the better education or health care situation in other countries or even in Yangon. Furthermore, in the absence of any established standards, which can help ordinary citizens compare the actual situation against the "ideal" situation, any positive change may be seen as an improvement. Moreover, given past experiences, many people are still very cautious of expressing any criticism of the authorities, in particular among ethnic minority communities.

4.4 Information, Transparency and Accountability

Transparency of government and accountability of office bearers are critical elements for a well-functioning and sustainable democratic society. In Myanmar, given the legacy of an inaccessible government, citizens or people have had limited opportunities to exercise their voice or influence change. This has also meant that the government that did not share information or justify decisions made, which has affected the pace of progress towards greater transparency and accountability. This is more so as behavioural and attitudinal change takes long to change and is true for both government and citizens that have almost become part of the culture. As described in the sections above, planning and service delivery is still done in an hierarchical manner within the "silo" of each sector, and the top-down decision-making structure that persists is not designed and well-suited for the integration of "the needs of the people" and neither for any form of downward or horizontal accountability.

While reforms have been initiated, transparency and accountability take long for a strong foothold. As a VTA noted that there is more budget allocation for health and school infrastructure, but the quality control is still insufficient.

Since 2012, the quest for the rule of law and people-focused service delivery in public administration has become a priority in public discourse. The FESR has also underlined the need for a clean government and effective and transparent use of public financial resources. At the same time, while administrative accountability, the answerability to higher levels within the administration, and the related reporting and accounting mechanisms as well as the minimal internal checks and balances are fairly well developed and implemented in Myanmar, they may not prevent mismanagement or corruption if they are not complemented by effective political and social accountability mechanisms. Despite the adoption of the Anti-Corruption Law in August 2013, both the Support Committee members and CSO representatives mentioned that they had not experienced any change in practice. According to them "departments that deal with people directly often ask for money and the police is still accepting bribes". Or as one VTA mentioned: "For work construction projects in health, water supply, school construction etc., more construction and budget allocation is well noted than in the past. A lot of activities are being implemented." However, in terms of quality, the VTA added, "quality control is still wanting. Once activities are accomplished, outputs are still wanting and not the best. For instance if a building is estimated at 20 million Kyats (20,000 USD) and the village committee manages construction, it is accomplished well. However if a similar construction is under contractors from the District or Region level, the cost shoots higher over 50 million Kyats (50,000 USD). At times, the approved construction companies are well-linked with authorities from higher levels. We at times complain but it is a challenge to solve such issues".

Nevertheless, some changes in the interaction between government and citizens are taking place at the township level and below that contribute to a restoration of basic mutual trust

between the citizens and the state. Some of these processes as they present themselves in Mandalay Region are described in the section below.

4.4.1 Aspects of institutional and social accountability

Changes in accountability at the township level

The government institutions at township level (both administration and departments) are an integral part of the Region or Union government in Myanmar, and do not form a separate tier of local government that is primarily accountable to its own citizens, either directly (which is called social accountability) or indirectly via elected representatives (which is called political accountability). As described in the sections above, being merely an extended arm of the Region-level government prevents the TAs and Heads of Departments from playing a more independent role in improving governance at the local level in Myanmar.

Despite the introduction of some elected offices at the local level, formally, there have only been minor changes in the accountability structures in actual decision-making processes at the township level over the last few years. From the beginning of 2014, the TA accounts for the use of the Poverty Reduction and Constituency Development funds also to the Region Chief Minister as these funds fall under the Region budget, but his main line of accountability is to the Secretary General of the Region GAD via the District Administrators. Secondly, the adoption of the Municipal Law by Mandalay Region has changed the relationship between the TMAC and the Executive Officer of the DMA (see below).

Another TA mentioned that: “decision-making is now done through a consultative process. Citizens are raising voices and holding their leaders accountable through meeting with them and airing their concerns. So there is positive participation, awareness raising and engagement, i.e. quality control on services provided and challenging leaders on issues of environmental protection. For example, people successfully organized a petition against plans to build roads through a forest area to enable logging of trees”.

TAs feel that there is more consultation with people and people are raising their voices, such as, against a road project through a forest area, for environment protection.

The VTAs or WAs, as elected office-holders responsible for their village tract or ward, the TMAC and the support committees (TDSC and VI/WDSCs) can submit questions to the Heads of Departments or the TA. However, it is not clear from the laws and regulations to what extent they are obliged to provide any explanations as they are not answerable to these structures and there are no ways in which these structures can demand answers or implement sanctions on mismanagement, except for reporting matters to higher levels in the administration.

The Region and Union-level *Hluttaw* members often participate in meetings at the township level (when the *Hluttaws* are not in session), usually in the combined VTA/WA-TA and advisory committee meetings. However, they have no formal oversight function over the township administration except in the implementation of the recently introduced Constituency Development Fund in which they play an executive and oversight function at the same time. Nevertheless, they play an important role in bringing up issues or needs of the township to the Region and Union level, especially lobbying for additional funds that fall outside regular budget lines or ceilings. All three townships mentioned successful lobby activities of the elected *Hluttaw* members in the recent past.



The TAs formal role and responsibilities in Mandalay Region are not different from that of their counterparts across the country. Primarily, the TA is responsible for leading the GAD to promote peace and security, maintain law and order, assist development and improve livelihoods. Over the last few years a gradual shift in the role of the GAD at the township level in general and that of the TA in particular can be noticed. Next to representing the government at the township level and fulfilling his administrative, oversight and controlling functions, the TA is increasingly expected to play a more developmental and coordinating role, responding to the needs and serving the interests of the township population as well.

These new roles (both developmental and coordination) stretch the capacity of the GAD at the township level (in terms of number of staff, competencies and resources). The TAs in the three townships that were interviewed acknowledged the importance of these extra tasks and of involving citizens more actively in governance and service delivery. One of them stated that more than before he sees himself as a facilitator ensuring that the various stakeholders work together for the development of the township.

The new Mandalay Region Municipal Law might, if implemented properly, create a precedent in establishing new relationships between citizens and local administrations. The Municipal Law establishes the TMAC, whose members include two government staff and local citizens representing various interests groups in the municipal area of the township. The Law gives the TMAC executive responsibilities and a statutory foundation in Region law, rather than Union law, which is rather innovative in the Myanmar tradition. The TMAC can, on advice from the Executive Officer of the DMA, determine local taxes and levies. It can also instruct the Executive Officer to carry out certain works, and analyse draft regulations and notifications of the DMA. The Executive Officer remains directly accountable to the Minister of Municipal Affairs at the Region level and the Minister can overrule any decision of the TMAC. As a consequence of this new law, the Executive Officer of the DMA

becomes to a certain extent also accountable to the TMAC. Since this law is still fairly new, it will be interesting to see how all parties deal with these rather complicated and multiple accountability lines in practice in future.

Changes in accountability at the village tract or ward level

The *Ward or Village Tract Administration Law of 2012* is not very clear about the formal accountability of the Ward or Village Tract Administrators. To become a VTA/WA one has to meet certain basic criteria. The VTA/WA is elected from and by the group of 10/100 household heads (in practice many different election procedures were applied). The TA appoints the VTA/WA, and provides him/her with a monthly subsidy and can assign functions to the VTA/WA. The VTA/WA reports to the TA and in case of misconduct, the TA can dismiss a VTA/WA. While the VTA/WA is not a civil servant following the usual rotation scheme, he/she is formally engaged by the government, and the main accountability line is upwards.

Notification 27/2013, on Ward or Village Tract Development Support Committees, also stipulates that the VT/WDSC has to cooperate with the VTA/WA in performing his/her duties but does not make the VTA/WA accountable to the Committee.⁶⁹ Implicitly, it does however add the task of village tract or ward representation to that of the VTA as it states under 7c: "To submit matters which cannot be done at the ward or village level to the meeting of the Township Management Committee". It also provides for a direct line of communication from the VT/WDSCs to the TMC and the TDSCs which has however hardly become operational in practice.

The *2012 Law* assigned 32 duties to the VTA/WA of which 22 are directly related to maintaining law and order, eight functions are more general administration functions and only two are a more developmental in nature:

- 13d: Helping and assisting in implementing the works relating to the rural development and poverty reduction.
- 13dd: Coordinating and assisting the functions and duties of department organization at the level of ward or village tract.

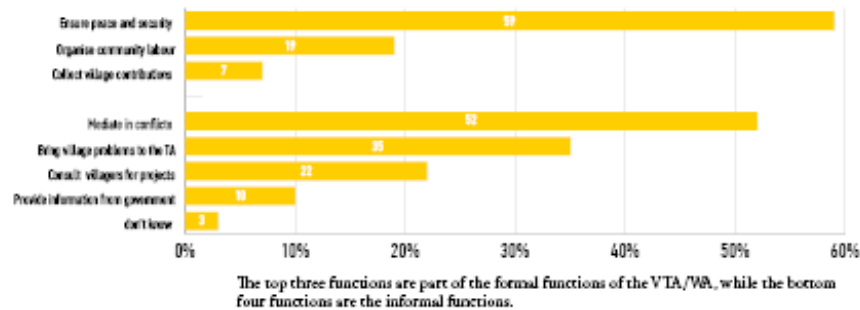
In Mandalay Region, this formal mandate of the VTA/WA, which originally dates back more than a century⁷⁰ may be significantly different from the role the VTAs and WAs play in practice and how members of the community perceive this function. Partly due to the emergence of the various development funds that require the involvement of communities, in Mandalay Region the VTA/WA has in practice become more of an "elected representative" of the village tract or ward, acting as the intermediary between the village tract or ward and the township (informing community members on the one hand and bringing relevant village tract or ward problems or needs to the attention of the TA) next to his/her formal role as mentioned in the *2012 Law* being in charge of maintaining law and order, while also playing an important role in mediation and settling disputes which could be seen as an extension of the maintaining law and order functions (see Figure 46).

69. The Notification does not amend or stand hierarchically above the 2012 W/VTA Law. It is simply an instruction by the president to the executive branch of government, which he heads, but does not change any provisions of the laws adopted by the legislative bodies of Myanmar.

70. The original mandate of the Ward or Village Tract Administrators was introduced in the 1907 Village Tract Act and the 1907 Towns Act.

Figure 46: Functions of the VTA/WA according to the respondents

Source: Local Governance Mapping Mandalay Region November 2014, n = 288. Note that more than one answer was possible.



In Mandalay Region the VTA/WA has in practice become more of an “elected representative” of the village tract or ward, acting as the intermediary between the village tract or ward and the township playing the role of information disseminator to the community as well as bringing village tract/ward problems to the TA.

Only 3 percent of the respondents could not mention any function at all, while other respondents could mention one or more functions. “Ensuring peace and security” (one of the legal functions) and “mediating in conflict situations” (one of the functions not mentioned in the law) were mentioned as the most important functions by 59 percent and 52 percent of the respondents, followed by bringing village problems to the attention of the township administrator” (also not mentioned in the law) with 35 percent. Female and male respondents provided similar answers.

The VTA/WAs of the six village tracts and wards interviewed themselves also emphasized their bridging role. “Mediation in conflicts or problems” was mentioned by all VTA/WAs as among their key responsibilities, followed by “maintaining peace and security” and “bringing the needs of the people in the village tract or ward to the attention of the government at township level”. Also during the Community Dialogue sessions in which the VTA/WAs participated they showed that they felt to be the link between their village tracts or wards and the township and that they are at least informally accountable to the people in their community (see also annex 2 with examples of village tract or ward action plans, which often include as an important component the VTA/WA reporting a problem to the TA). On the one hand, VTA/WAs are integrated into the government machinery (since they report to the TA, receive instructions from the TA, and are remunerated by the GAD) while on the other hand they are elected by, feel part of and responsible for the wellbeing of the community. The VTA/WAs are therefore often caught between the genuine demands and needs of their communities that they bring to the attention of the government at township level and the limited ability of the township government to address all issues at the same time. Another example that shows their difficult position between government and citizens was provided by another VTA: “department officials should try and handle or perform their duties directly. In matters where say construction of houses on farmland is illegal, the higher authorities do not come down to enforce such laws. In such cases, they only instruct VTAs to handle it, which puts us in conflict with our citizens. It would be good if top leaders enforce such laws themselves instead of leaving all matters to us”.

“It makes a difference since I feel I can put more efforts for the wellbeing of citizens, I feel more responsible and more accountable to the citizens. It is

In practice however, the interviews with the six VTA/WAs showed that since they are now elected (either through secret ballot by all male and female community members (2 out of

6) or by the 10/100 household heads (4 out of 6), most of them do feel accountable to their community members. As one of them mentioned: "It makes a difference since I feel I can put more efforts for the wellbeing of citizens, I feel more responsible and more accountable to the citizens. It is not just voluntary service but an elected position and is it much better now for the will of the public citizens is very much felt and they can now make demand and their views must be respected".

not just voluntary service but an elected position and is it much better now for the will of the public citizens is very much felt and they can now make demand and their views must be respected".
VIA

The majority of respondents however didn't notice any significant change in the behaviour of the VIA/WA after them being elected. This could be related to the fact that even while they are elected, they are formally only answerable to the TA and not to the community members (see Figure 47).

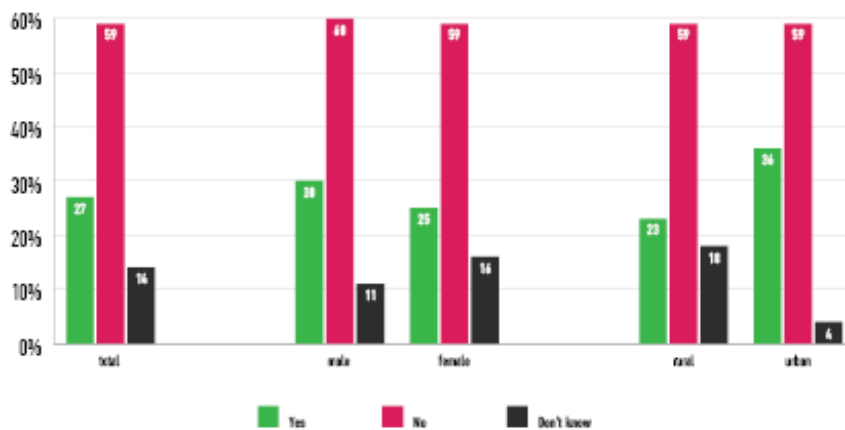


Figure 47: Perceived changes in response and communication of VIA/WAs after being elected

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014. N= 288.

Respondents who did mention that they had noticed a difference were asked to mention what had changed (see Figure 48).

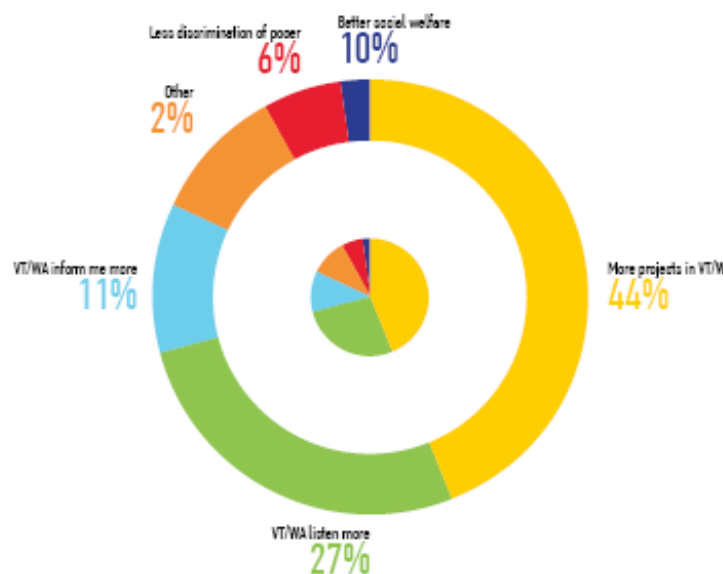


Figure 48: Difference in VIA/WA behaviour or situation in the village tract or ward after the VIA/WA was elected (n=79)

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014. N= 79

In Mandalay, the number of complaints by citizens for resolution has gone up displaying greater confidence in the system and these conflicts relate to land conflicts between tenants and absentee landlords and over water resources for agriculture.

Grievance redressal

Across the three townships participating in the mapping in Mandalay Region, the number of complaints and requests for conflict resolution by citizens has increased. This may indicate an increased confidence from the public that there will be no reprisals in a new environment of openness and an expectation that their grievances are treated seriously and fairly.

The most common complaint in these townships are about land and are agriculture-related issues. Land conflicts between tenants and absentee landlords are common as well as new or old cases of land grabbing. Also, being in the dry zone, conflicts over water resources for agriculture are common. Others are related to social issues and personal matters linked to resources like inheritance disputes. Some complaints are resolved and dealt with at the village level by VTAs. In case a complaint is beyond their capacities to handle, they refer it to the township GAD or to the police and courts for further action.

According to the land registrar in Thazi there are mainly three kinds of disputes related to land: inheritance, rent and ownership disputes. Since the new Land Law has become effective, the value of land has increased and therefore the number of disputes as well. Absentee landowners have started to increase the rent they are asking from their tenants, while it has become more important to be able to prove land ownership to use it as a mortgage for a loan. As a result of the increased number of land registration requests, the number of disputes has increased as well.

For land holding disputes, the initial step is to file a case at Village Land Management Committee. The village level committee consists of a chairperson (farmer representative), the Village Administrative Clerk (from the GAD), the VTA and 5-6 citizen members. They review cases/facts and take decisions. If a party is not satisfied, they can appeal to the Township Land Department, which will review the case in the Township Farmland Management Committee. They review the track record to ascertain if the land under dispute is registered or not. If it is registered, they can resolve the dispute. If land is not registered, then the parties have to start the process afresh. "At the end, there must be a rightful land holder and a loser". If still not satisfied with the decision, one has a right to appeal to the Region level for the final resolution or decision within 30 days.

According to the Land Registrar, with new guidelines and the Farmland Law in place, the process is clear on resolving such disputes. In case of unlawful land grabbing, there is now a good mechanism to resolve it with the citizens.

Complaints in primary education

As part of the CRC survey, respondents with children at a primary school were asked whether complaints by parents are taken seriously by the school management and are properly dealt with. While still a large percentage of 15 percent mentioned that they don't know how complaints are dealt with, most likely because they have never made a complaint, 81 percent of the respondents mentioned that complaints would always or usually be treated seriously, while only 4 percent mentioned that complaints are not taken seriously. The

school principals and the TEOs confirmed that they do take complaints seriously and that mechanisms are in place to deal with them. Depending on the gravity of the complaint, either the principal resolves the case or reports it to the TEO who will appoint an ad hoc team of three 'independent persons' to investigate the matter. If the matter cannot be resolved at the school or township level it will be forwarded to higher level authorities. Appeal procedures were said to be in place as well. None of the respondents with children at the primary school had ever submitted a complaint, so it was not possible to check how these were dealt with.

For most citizens, the VTA/WA is the first person to approach to resolve civil cases like quarrels, domestic issues or land disputes (see Figure 49).

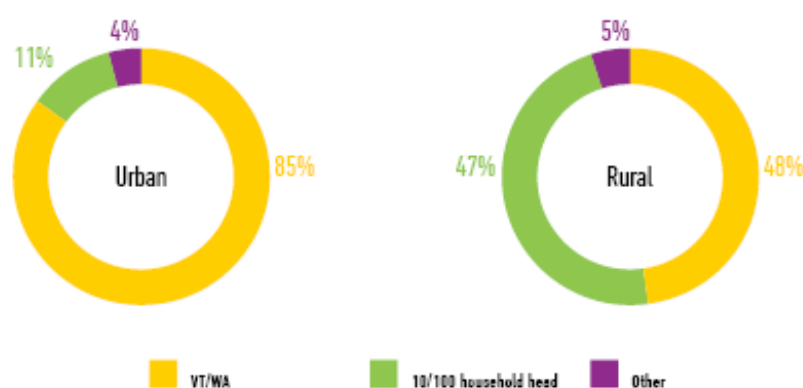


Figure 49: First person to approach to resolve a possible dispute

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014.

Forty-nine percent of the respondents said they would turn to the TA in case they wanted to appeal against a decision of the VTA/WA. In Mandalay Region, the GAD at township level is dealing with most complaints. The TA (or a designated officer) addresses the case and if necessary an investigation committee is established of which the composition depends on the character of the complaint. The committee reports to the TA, who takes a decision (possibly in consultation with the TMC). Very serious cases will be transferred to the district or Region level. While this appears to follow normal and logical administrative procedures, these processes do not seem to be governed by administrative laws or regulations or at least none that are known to the wider public.

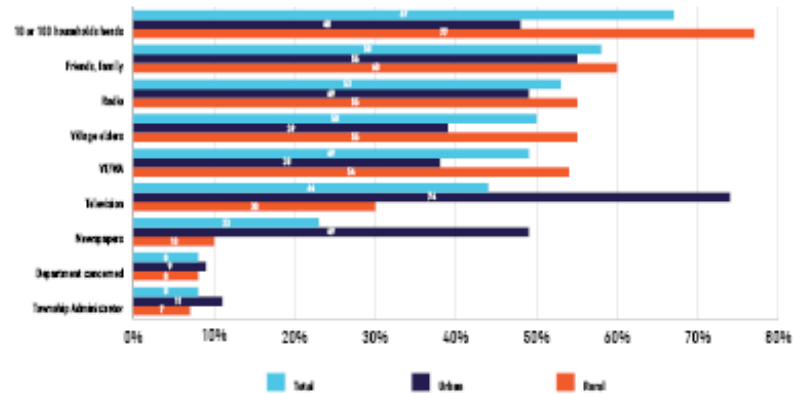
The fact that more complaints are being channelled to the GAD justifies more in-depth research as part of an effort to further improve the administrative complaint handling mechanisms of the government. Some questions that emerged but could not be tackled by the mapping were: Why other conflict handling mechanisms like the regular court system not used more often by the people? Are they not trusted or are they not functioning adequately? Are most of these grievances/ conflicts between citizens and government or between citizens themselves? Are these conflicts the result of the implementation of "new" regulations and government actions, or do people feel more confident to bring up issues of land grabbing without fear of reprisal, indicating an improvement in both civic awareness about their citizen rights and confidence in the fairness of the present mechanisms and of receiving a fair treatment by government?

4.4.2 Transparency and access to information

Easy access to information by citizens is a prerequisite for a government to become more transparent and accountable to its citizens. In Mandalay Region, the traditional hierarchical channels of official information provision (the 10/100 household heads, the Village Elders and Respected People and the VTA/WA)⁷¹ play an important role in the information flow from government to citizens as is shown below in Figure 50. Television and newspapers play a more important role in the urban areas, while in the rural areas face to face contact with 10/100 household heads and other people in the village tract play a more prominent role.

Figure 50: Ways in which respondents are informed about new laws or directives from government in urban and rural areas

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n = 288. Note that more than one answer was possible.

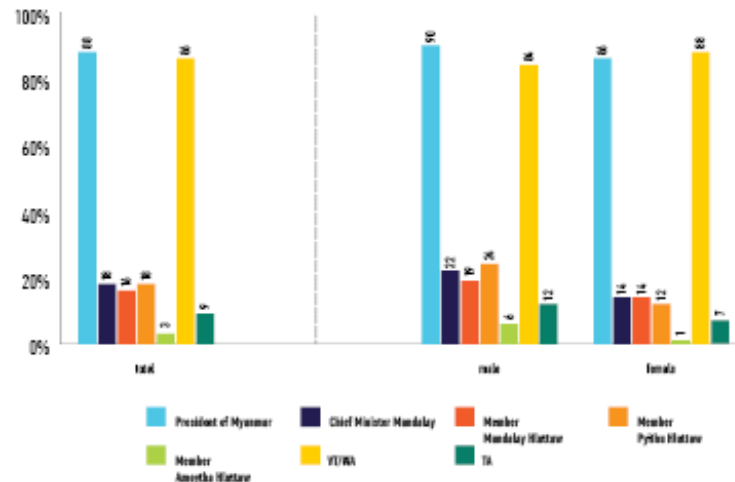


The same pattern emerged regarding the way in which respondents were informed about the national elections in 2010. Seventy-eight percent received information via the 10/100 household heads, 69 percent via friends or relatives, 66 percent via the VTA/WA, and approximately 55 percent via the media through TV, radio or newspapers.⁷²

In order to get an idea about the familiarity of respondents with government, they were also asked to mention the name their VTA/WA, the name of the President of Myanmar, and the name of their elected representative in the Region Hluttaw (see Figure 51).

Figure 51: Knowledge of the names of various government representatives

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014, n = 288.



71. See footnote 45 for a more detailed description of these groups.
72. More than one answer was possible.

Eighty-eight percent of all respondents knew the name of the President of Myanmar, and 86 percent knew the name of their VTA/WA, while knowledge about their elected representatives at Region and Union level and of important government officials at the Region or township level was very limited. Male respondents had a slightly better knowledge of the names of these government representatives than female respondents, while female respondents had a slightly better knowledge of the name of the VTA/WA.

86% people (and more women) knew their VTA/WA but only 4% knew about the Township Committees (TDSC or TMAC).

Citizens' knowledge of what is happening in government institutions and processes at the township level is very limited. As mentioned earlier, only four percent of the respondents had heard about the newly-established support committees at the township level (TDSC) or the municipal committee (TMAC). If these committees are intended to represent the interests of (groups of) citizens and the government wants to use them in order to involve citizens more actively in planning and decision-making, and if these committees themselves are to become more accountable to the communities they supposedly serve, there is clearly a need to raise more awareness about their existence, and their role and functions, as well as their actual discussions and deliberations.

The awareness of people about what their government is actually doing in their village tract or ward is less in rural areas compared to urban areas. The survey asked people whether they know that government is spending money in their village tract or ward. The results are presented in Figure 52.



Figure 52: Awareness of respondents of government spending money in their village tract or ward

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014. n= 288.

As Figure 52 shows, the differences in awareness between the townships are very big, with Meiktila having a very high awareness level compared to the other two townships. This could be explained by the fact that recently several large projects have been implemented in Meiktila of which people are aware (like the water filter system and bridge upgrading), but that also shows that people link government spending only to special projects and not to the provision of regular services like the payment of the salary of a nurse working in their village tract.

“Information flow is much faster than before. It is now in good shape and even in tough mountainous areas both VTAs and Administrative Clerks have mobile phones. So it is easy to share and receive information i.e. on issues of road accidents, seizure of narcotic drugs through police outposts, VTAs call offices and inform the Township Police Stations; they cross-check and see if information is valid”. Deputy TA, Thazi.

The six VTA/WAs interviewed all mentioned that the township administration and other government departments inform them sufficiently about the plans they have for new projects in their community regarding construction and renovation of schools, roads and health facilities etc. The most important means of receiving information from the township level are either direct information from the TA or through a sharing of information during the TA-VTA/WA meetings. The Deputy TA in Thazi mentioned: “Information flow is much faster than before. It is now in good shape and even in tough mountainous areas both VTAs and Administrative Clerks have mobile phones. So it is easy to share and receive information i.e. on issues of road accidents, seizure of narcotic drugs through police outposts, VTAs call offices and inform the Township Police Stations; they cross-check and see if information is valid”.

Government officials at the township level as well as the VTA/WAs were of the opinion that they are informing citizens well enough about important government directives or news and about planned projects in their villages, either through notice boards and or via the VTA/WA or VT/W support committee members. This however stands in stark contrast with the views of citizens. Sixty-eight percent of the citizens interviewed mentioned that the information provision by the township institutions about important government information and new projects was insufficient (see Figure 53).

In order to understand and if possible overcome these bottlenecks, these findings need to be placed in the historical context of Myanmar. Government and administrative information has not been shared freely with the public in the past, and focused more on informing people about their duties than on their rights or entitlements. In terms of public finance, only very recently has there been a break with the past as evidenced by high-profile examples such as the unprecedented publication of the national 2012-13 budget.⁷³

In the past, government officials were not required to explain or justify decisions made by government to the public, while government officials at the township level were themselves often not informed by their superiors about departmental plans. They were neither provided with an explanation for decisions taken. In practice legacies of this attitude still persist which “disempowers” lower-ranked government staff and inhibits them to become more proactive. On one hand, it still depends a lot on the discretion and attitude of the TA and other senior officials as to what type of information is shared with the population of the township and in what way such information is communicated. Citizens on the other hand were not used to ask for information and explanations and are still reluctant to do so at present. These general trends were confirmed by the situation observed in the three selected townships in Mandalay Region.

Within the present organisational culture in which lower level staff generally do not take action unless they are told to do so, it would perhaps be best if the Mandalay Region government would take the initiative to draft an information and communication policy in which it clearly described what type of information is available to citizens if they ask for it and what type of information should be made available by the township administration and departments and in what way that information should be made available.

73. Sub-national Budgeting in Myanmar.” Soe Nandar Linn, MDRI-CESD, September 2012.

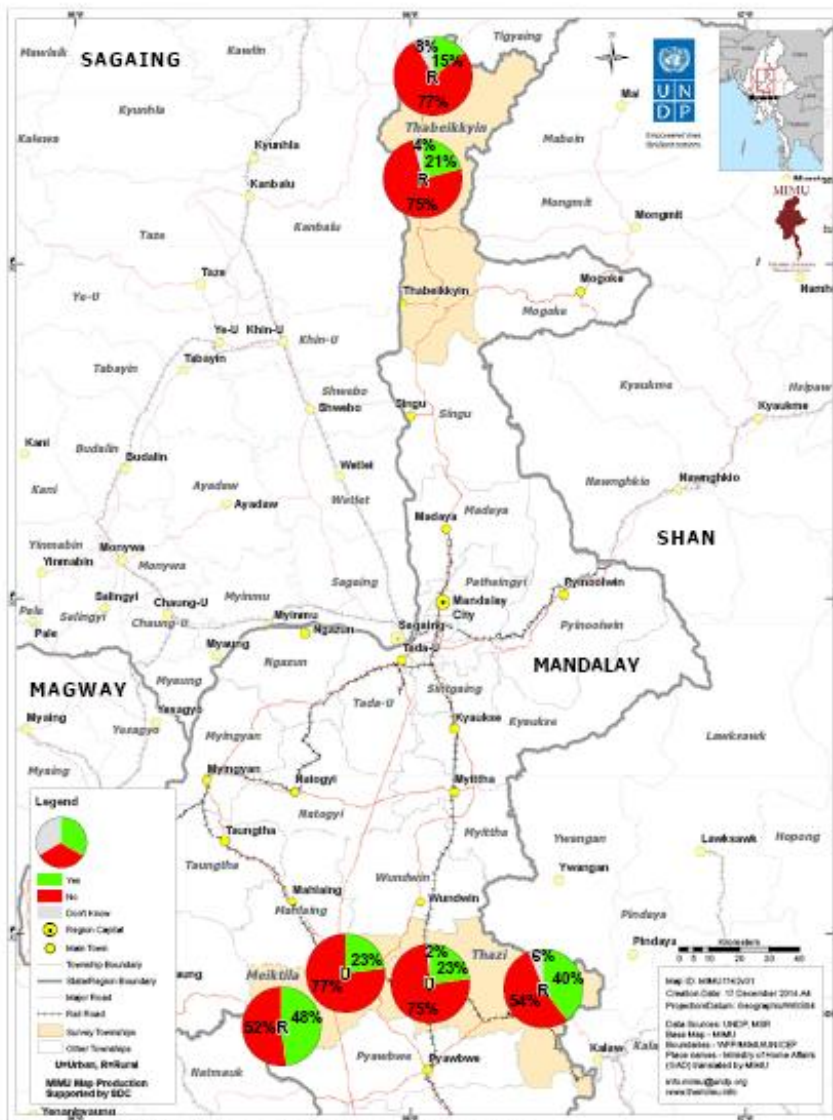


Figure 53: Level of satisfaction with information provision by township government

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014. n = 288.

Box 11: Information flow

In the community dialogues as well as in discussions with TDSC and TMAC in Mandalay, the citizens, the service providers and the Township Committee members acknowledged that although more and more government information is available nowadays and is actively shared by the township institutions, it is not reliably and consistently reaching the citizens in the communities yet. According to them, the main bottleneck in information flow is at the village tract or ward level. They said that a lot depends on the willingness and attitude of the VTA/WA to share information either directly with citizens and/or via the 10/100 household heads. CSOs and NGOs in the three townships also acknowledged that there were improvements in information provision by government, but that there is still a lot of room to improve on transparency.

There were also examples of improved information flow. People in Shan Ma Nge Village Tract in Meiktila mentioned that: "Government informed the villagers when the station hospital was improved to better facilities by calling a meeting with the villagers and village administration. It informed the villagers about electricity supply and the mobile phone sim card lottery for the village by calling a meeting with 10/100 household heads".

4.4.3 Civil society's role in enhancing transparency and accountability

Ideally, being independent from government and working closely with citizens, civil society, including the media, can be expected to play an important role in improving the quality of governance. Media and civil society organizations can play this role if they can operate freely and without fear and have the capacity and ability to monitor government's performance. In practice, this ideal of civil society can be hard to find, in particular in countries under transition where democratic space has been extremely narrow in the past and government did not welcome any dissent or criticism.

Similar to government, most CSOs are still in the beginning of a transformation process and in general adopt a wait-and-see attitude. The size and outreach of civil society organisations (CSOs) operating at the township level in Mandalay Region are still limited while the numbers are increasing (e.g. 42 in Meiktila, 20 in Thazi and 30 in Thabeikkyin, according to the CSOs themselves). Most organisations are active in health or education, free funeral services, youth activities or providing direct support to people in need. In character they are better described as community-based organisations (CBOs) than as well-organised non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Most are volunteer organisations receiving donations from the public while only a few receive funds and support from (I) NGOs or donors. Even though their outreach is limited, it became clear from the interviews that their work is appreciated both by committee members and government staff. In addition, there are branch organisations of traditionally government-related associations like the Mother and Child Welfare Organisation, the Nurse Association, etc. So far they have not been mapped systematically, partly because most of them are rather hesitant to provide such information at this stage. As a result, there is not much information available on their membership, their outreach, their organisation, their funding sources, etc. This situation is particularly true of the townships where mapping was undertaken, as compared to relatively more developed CSO and NGO activity in Mandalay district where they focus on capacity building, environmental awareness, and issues of women's rights, land rights and peace building.

CSO outreach in the townships covered under mapping is limited but growing where CSOs are sharing information through regular meetings among themselves but in Mandalay district they are also taking up other broader issues of environment, women's rights and peace building.

In Meiktila, the CSOs have started organising regular meetings among themselves where they share information, send members together for trainings, etc. They want to formalise their regular joint meetings. However, currently, they are still working only within their own capacities and soliciting for assistance as individual organisations and not as a network of members or as a group.

Most CSOs interviewed as part of the mapping acknowledged that improvements have been made in the three townships over the last few years, especially in infrastructure and education. Several of them added that in addition the mutual trust between government and CSOs is slowly growing, even though there are many areas where the government performance has not much improved, like in fighting corruption and being more transparent about its planned activities and budgets. According to the CSOs “it still depends a lot on who you know in the system whether you can get access to information and therefore people close to government can benefit from this knowledge”.

While CSOs feel that they are closer to the people and know better than government what their needs are, they are reluctant to participate actively in the governance process at the township level. They are not only hesitant because they are afraid of possible negative repercussions, which would hamper them to carry out their normal support activities and charity work, but also because they lack the experience and capacity to lobby and advocate. Most do not receive any support from national or international NGOs who could train them and act as an intermediary between them and the government.



5. Conclusions

Over the last year three years and in particular during the last one and a half year significant changes in local governance have been taking place in Mandalay Region in general and in Meiktila, Thazi and Thabeikkyin townships in particular. These changes followed the establishment of the TMAC and TDSCs, the split between DRD and DMA and are a result of the additional resources that have become available for service delivery at the local level. These and other adjustments brought government closer to the people and have enabled its staff at the township level and below to do more for its citizens. At the same time, attitudes and mind-sets of government staff start to change as well, becoming more responsive to the needs of the people they work for and more open about the decisions they need to make about the allocation of their limited resources.

The findings also show however that in order to reach the ultimate objectives of these reforms, improved service delivery, clean government and people-centred approach to planning, these new institutional arrangements are only the first important steps in a reform process that needs to be complemented with more systemic changes in structures, attitudes and relationships that will require a more concerted and comprehensive approach to (local) governance reform.

In Mandalay Region, the TDSCs seem to work as they were intended to. The TDSCs in the three townships are active and take their role seriously, while the TAs have established good working relations with them. The TDSCs are actively involved in project identification, in the decision-making process and in progress monitoring and they meet on a regular basis with the TA and the TMC to discuss development-related problems and solutions in the township. At the moment, it depends however a lot on the discretion of the TA whether or not to accept the advice of the TDSC, making its advisory role rather non-committal. Several TDSC members therefore asked for an enhanced (legal) framework, similar to the Municipal law applicable for the TMACs, that would define its role and mandate more precisely and make its advice more binding (e.g. requiring the TA to explain a decision in writing if he discards the advice from the TDSC). This would enhance the status of the TDSC, the quality of the deliberations as well as increase the level of transparency in decision-making. In addition a clearer demarcation of the role and functions of the TDSC vis-à-vis those of the TMAC could be included in such framework or guidelines.

The TMACs have only recently been formalized through the Municipal Law that was drafted and adopted by Mandalay Region in April 2013. As described in this report, the law allocates municipal executive and oversight functions to the TMAC in which citizens' representatives participate as well, and makes the Executive Officer of the DMA at least partially answerable to this new municipal committee. It will be interesting to see how this revised relationship will work out in practice and whether this additional line of accountability could be applied to other departments as well in future. So far, the Executive Officers from the DMA seem to have established good working relations with the various TMACs in the three townships as they see them as an added value to the management of the municipal affairs in the townships. According to one of them it makes his work much easier, problems are identified faster, while the committee members act as an intermediary between the municipality and citizens, explaining matters and identifying problems. Nevertheless, as described in this report, a huge difference can be noticed in the way in which the TMACs operate in practice between the various townships albeit they function within the boundaries of the same legal framework. In Meiktila a strong executive TMAC together with an effective DMA seems to achieve a lot for the municipality, not only raising some of the highest revenues in the country, but more

importantly also enhancing the level of service delivery and the number of public works implemented in the municipality. In other townships the TMAC seems to play its role more at the background, more in an advisory capacity to the DMA, which could work fine as well, but doesn't generate the same "drive" and energy as in Meiktila.

Despite the fact that the township committees are functioning relatively well, there remain several areas of concern that require the attention of the Regional and Union level government as they are beyond the authority of the township administration to resolve. The first one is the question of selection and representation. The non-government members of both township committees were selected from various groups in society in accordance with the Notification and the Municipal Law. In practice, these members mostly represent the business sector or local elite in the townships, a small group of people with specific interests that have access to information and are in general close to government. Only a few members are female and only a limited number of TDSC members come from the rural village tracts. As a result, the support committees do not reflect the diversity that exists in society and the different interests that exist in the community. This is likely to impact negatively on their legitimacy as was mentioned several times especially by people not feeling represented or involved. In addition, there is the risk of "elite capture" if only a small group in society is represented and has access to the information. No hard proof was found of any abuse of these privileged positions at the moment, but as the mandates and amount of funds that these committees deal with expands the risk of such trends materializing happen will increase, based on comparative experiences in other countries.

Fortunately, most of the interest group/citizen members in those committees realised the limitations as well and pleaded for direct elections of these members the next time elections are held. Such elections would not only enhance their legitimacy, but would at the same time increase the visibility of these committees, which is critical for their appropriate functioning, since people can only question decisions taken if they are taken in the public open sphere and somehow made known to everyone. This will subsequently create the necessary answerability and accountability link between these representatives and the citizens, which is completely lacking at the moment as no feedback mechanisms exist between these members and the groups they are supposed to represent.

Given the fact that there are no strong organisations that will push for equal representation of women in the Region and that women themselves are not yet very vocal to claim their rights, it would be worthwhile to consider a (temporarily) quota system for all representative institutions (like the VT/WDSC, the TDSC and the TMAC) to ensure that women are getting more involved in consultation and decision-making processes and gain experience and confidence in playing a more active public role in society. Opinions were however divided among the people interviewed as some said that: "women should simply vote for women if they want to be represented in all democratic institutions".

In Mandalay Region, service delivery has generally improved. Especially in the health and education sector in which government has invested a lot more during the last few years, most people interviewed confirmed that they have noticed improvements in actual service delivery. In the health sector, 55 percent of the respondents noticed that the situation had improved over the last three years and in education 63 percent of the respondents had noticed improvements, which is slightly more than in the other States and Regions included in the mapping.

Whether with the same amount of additional resources that have become available much more could have been achieved remains difficult to say as most sector ministries do not systematically monitor performance or effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery at present and there are no long term strategic plans at the township level (neither sectoral nor integrated) against which progress could be measured. In addition, the practice of planning and delivering of services has not changed much over the last few years according to the key service providers at the township. While more information is collected at the grass-roots level to feed into the planning system, the actual planning is still done in top-down manner. “Bottom-up planning” up to now appears to be not much more than “bottom-up information provision” to District, Region and Union-level decision makers. Since the actual planning in most departments is still taking place at the Region or Union level it is almost impossible for Heads of Departments at the township level to adjust their plans to any agreed upon township priorities or to the plans of other departments. Their ability to become more responsive to the needs of the township citizens and to coordinate their plans and activities is as a consequence limited. In that sense, Mandalay Region is not much different from the other States and Regions in Myanmar. What was noted by most service managers (like headmasters and nurses managing a RHC e.g.) as well as Head of Departments at the township level is that the planners and decision-makers higher up in the hierarchy have become more responsive to their ideas and needs for improvement and they therefore feel more respected and appreciated in the work they are doing.

Looking at the low-cost solutions that were proposed by service providers to some of the bottlenecks identified, it seems however that a further deconcentration of responsibilities within these sectors to lower levels in the respective departments and even to school or health facility level would help to solve some of the most burning and immediate problems related to staffing, the availability of basic facilities, maintenance of buildings, etc. If at the same time the oversight capacity of local institutions like the Parent Teacher Associations and the Village Health Committee could be enhanced this would not necessarily result in an increased risk of mismanagement of funds at the lowest levels.

In the drinking water sector, improvements over the last three years were only noted by 42 percent of the respondents, while at the same time improving access to safe drinking water was mentioned most frequently by the respondents both in the individual interviews as well as during the Community Dialogues as the most important problem at the village tract or ward level. While the provision of drinking water did not receive much attention from the government in the past, it seems that over the last few years (partly based on the priorities allocated by the TDSCs and TMACs) more and more of the resources over which citizens have some kind of say (development funds, municipal revenues and DRD budget) are directed to improved access to drinking water. Based on the budget allocations for both the DRD and the DMA for 2014/2015 as well as the number of water improvement projects that will be implemented in the coming year under the PRF and CDF funds in the three townships, it can be noticed that there is an increase in resource allocation to tackle problems in access to drinking water. Apparently, through the VTA/WAs, TDSCs and TMACs, the needs of the people become known to the Heads of Departments and the TA and they respond by allocating more of the resources that fall to a large extent under their discretion to address these problems.

Even though only six village tracts and wards were included in this mapping, the inventory of the most important problems either through the individual responses or through the Community Dialogues showed that the needs and problems of people can differ significantly per township or even per village tract or ward and that tailor-made solutions and responses are required if government wants to become more responsive to these needs and become more “people-centred”. Government in general is however not yet able to systematically assess and record these different needs on the basis of transparent and equitable criteria and have the necessary systems in place that enable it to respond to each of these issues fairly, systematically and adequately. It is hampered to respond adequately, partly because government officials at the township level lacks sufficient resources (like development funds or income from taxes/levies and services) which it could allocate at its discretion to address all needs and partly because sector departments are limited in their ability to respond to local needs as described above and continue to work parallel to each other each collecting data and citizens needs in their own different way. The quality of planning could be enhanced tremendously if consultations at the village tract and ward level could be implemented in a more systematic and comprehensive manner in which all departments would participate and if one collective database for planning purposes could be created and maintained at the township or district level that is used by all departments concerned.

Regarding transparency and accountability of government at the township level, only small improvements have been made in Mandalay Region over the past few years according to the various stakeholders involved in the mapping. Access to information is critical for improving transparency and accountability. More information is flowing downward from the township administration and departments to the VTA/WAs and to the committee members but this information is not reliably and consistently reaching citizens at the community level yet. In addition, it is left to the discretion of the Heads of Departments and the TAs to decide what information they share with the public, making the availability of information dependent on the personality of these government staff rather than on clearly defined procedures.

In the context of efforts to further improve transparency and accountability, the problem of poor information flow between township committees (or the township administration) and citizens was identified as a critical bottleneck. While the TDSC committee members do go out and talk to the VTA/WAs and VT/WDSAs, hardly anyone at the community level is aware of the existence of these committees and the important role they play at the township level.

With regard to complaint handling and grievance redressal mechanisms, the mapping noted the important role that the VTA/WAs and TAs play in these processes, either as resource persons who can refer a case to the right institution or to resolve or mediate in an actual case. While no detailed information on individual cases was collected, most TAs mentioned that the number of cases that were brought to them had increased over time and that many of them were related to recent or old cases of land grabbing. This can be partly explained by the fact that as a result of the new Farmland Law the intrinsic value of land has increased substantially making it more important for users to establish ownership, while absentee landlords see it as an opportunity to increase the rent they are collecting. The fact that the GAD is dealing with these cases and the fact that their number is increasing could mean that there is more confidence of the people that their cases are dealt with by government in a fair way. While the more serious cases are investigated by ad hoc committees consisting of at least three members, the TA still has much discretionary power to make a ruling. There is

a lack of transparency on how decisions related to disputes or complaints are made, leaving too much room for arbitrariness. A further specification and clarification of the regulations regarding complaint handling and dispute resolution would help to create more clarity and limit the space for arbitrary rulings and possible mismanagement. An appeals procedure to an independent tribunal-type body for administrative decisions could also contribute significantly to the fairness and transparency of administrative acts that affect the rights of community members.

Formally, there have been no changes in existing accountability mechanisms as each government official is only accountable to his/her supervisor in the same department and there are no political and social accountability mechanisms in place at the township level. Informally however, the fact that VTA/WAs are now elected has changed the relationship with their communities as they feel more than before to be the representative for their community and have received the mandate to act as the bridge between the township and the village tract or ward (also because they are actively involved in the consultations regarding the use of the development funds) and as a result they do feel more answerable to them.

The number and size of Civil Society Organisations in Mandalay Region is still rather limited and so far they play a marginal role in governance, particularly in the townships where mapping was conducted as compared to relatively more developed CSO activity in Mandalay district. Most organisations in the selected townships are active in health and education, providing direct support to people in need. Even though their outreach is limited, their work seems to be appreciated by committee members and government staff. From the discussions with the CSOs, it became clear that they are still rather ambivalent with regard to intensifying their relationship with the government at township level. On the one hand, they would like to meet more often as a group of civil society organisations and also meet with the township government to coordinate activities and to discuss issues that are of their interest such as registration, taxation, etc. On the other hand, they are also hesitant to do so as they do not know how government would respond to such initiatives. Some of the TAs mentioned however that they would appreciate such initiative from the CSOs.

Even though the process of change has only started recently, several early gains in terms of improved governance can already be noticed. Basic social services like public health care and primary education are improving at a higher pace as compared to the period before 2011 according to the people that were interviewed. The VTAs are increasingly acting as an intermediary between the village tracts or wards and the townships. Also, some initial forms of citizens' representation at the township level are emerging that start to play an active role in the decision-making process with regard to the utilisation of development funds and defining the priority areas for the Department of Municipal Affairs in the three townships to focus on.

While improvements were noticed, other intended changes, like enhanced area-based coordination between sector ministry departments, accountability measures and improved responsiveness of government to the needs of the people will require more fundamental systemic changes in the way the Government operates. These more systemic blockages to change relate to existing power relations between ministries, between the Union level and Regional levels of government and administration and ultimately on the interrelations between the state and its citizens in Myanmar, which can only gradually change over a longer period of time.

6. Annexes

Annex 1: Citizen Report Card interviews

In November 2014, 288 respondents in 6 village-tracts and wards across the three townships in Mandalay Region were interviewed on their perceptions and experiences regarding service delivery and local governance by means of a Citizen Report Card (CRC) questionnaire. The Citizen Report Card requested people to reflect on the basic social services provided by government (like education and health) and to assess the quality of these services from a citizen perspective. In addition, they were asked to appraise the quality of governance by answering questions about key governance issues (like participation, access to information, corruption, etc.) that have a direct impact on their livelihoods.

In Meiktila and Thazi townships, one ward and one village tract and in Thabeikkyin two village tracts were selected, and in each of these 48 adults were interviewed using a random selection process.

Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents

By alternating between male and female respondents it was ensured that 50 percent of the respondents were male and 50 percent were female. All age groups were represented in the survey as is shown in Figure 1.1. Not knowing the actual age distribution of the total population in these ward and village tracts makes it difficult to say whether the age distribution of the respondents was representative.

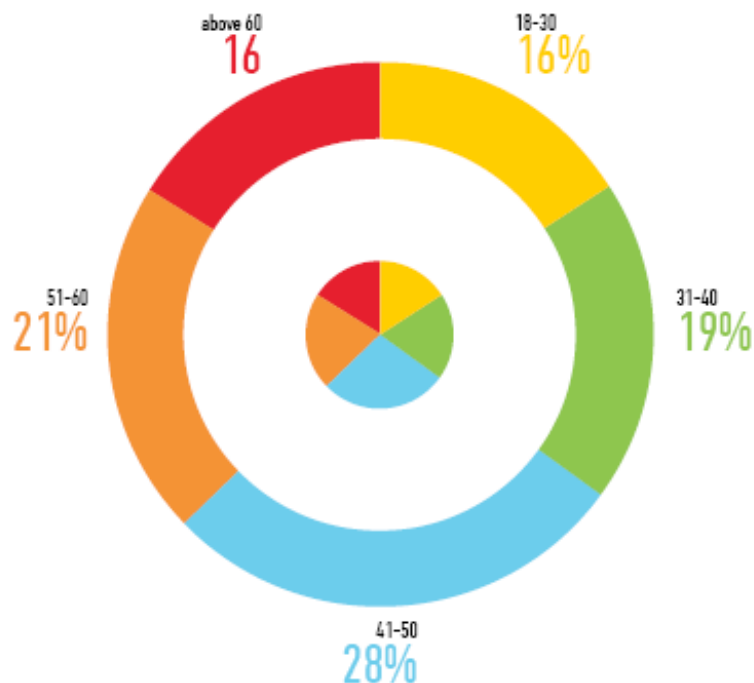


Figure 1.1: Number of respondents per age group

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014. n=288.

20 percent of the respondents had no education or did not finish primary education while more than one third (37 percent) completed primary education (see Figure 1.2). About one-fifth of the respondents (21 percent) reported to have finished middle school (grade 9) while only 5 percent of the total respondents said to have completed high school (grade 11). Despite fairly equal gender distribution among those who completed primary and middle schools, there is a wider gender gap among those with no completed formal education – 23 percent males vs. 31 percent females.

Figure 1.2: Education Attainment

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014. n= 288.

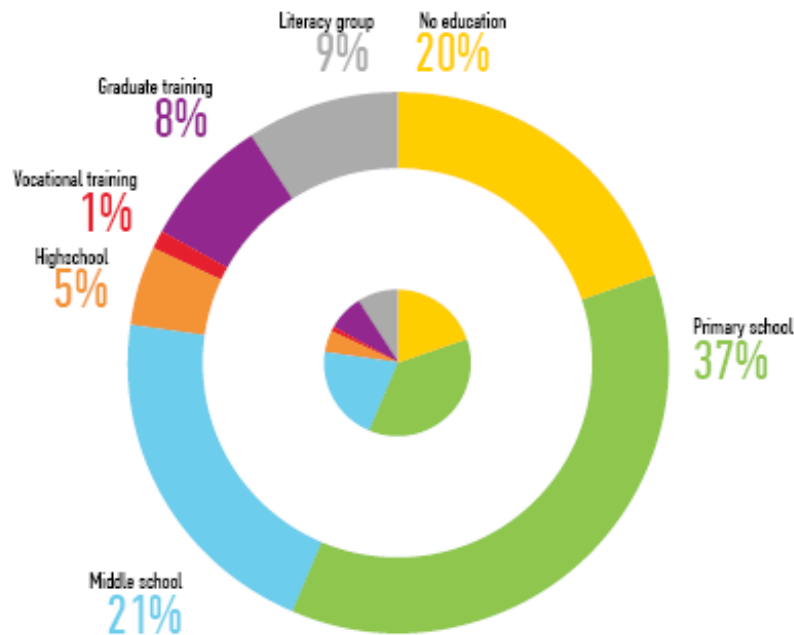
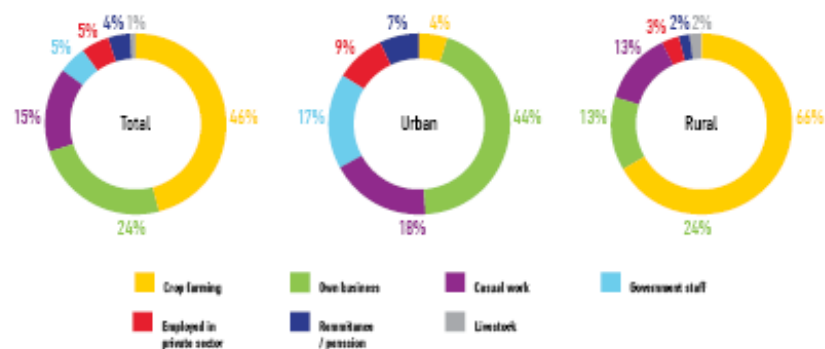


Figure 1.3: Main economic activity of the household of the respondent

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Mandalay Region, November 2014. n= 288.



Annex 2: Community action plans

At the end of each Community Dialogue session the citizens and services providers agreed upon a simple action plan to resolve some of the issues identified in the meeting that could be resolved at their level. These rudimentary action plans are presented below not with the intention to monitor actual progress, but more to show how a half-day Dialogue Session can be instrumental in bridging the differences in perception between service users and service providers and in stimulating community self-help activities.

Village Tract/ Ward/	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
A Inn Net VT, Thabeikkyin Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding quality of basic education, Education group regularly reports on the need of teacher/ absence places. But it need time to recruit teachers because teachers need to be trained before sending to service area. Education group already submitted report for renovation of school building and also to supply drinking water. Public will cooperate more between teachers and parents in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding quality of primary health care, government staff requested to Ministry of Health to provide health staff and clinic for each village. They reported on lack of infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be better if villages attend the meeting and need to participate. Government staff will disseminate information through PA system. If the village administration clearly stated the objective about the meeting when inviting people, villagers will be more interested to attend the meetings. Villagers also need to attend the meetings.
B KyarHnyut VT, Thabeikkyin Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government staff can find funding for improvement of education. Government staff can report the need of teachers, need for renovation of building, need of teaching aids and school furniture to Township Education Ministration. Citizens would cooperate together with government. They find some donor for school furniture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be SRHC on "SeXinKone" and "Let Pan Kone village". But no infrastructure and not functioning yet. At "ShweZaKar" village, there is no infrastructure and even MW has no place to stay. Building for health centres were donated by villagers. Villagers will donate to build latrines. But government need to provide medicines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish village libraries for raising public awareness and knowledge to reach out to the communities.

Table 2.1: Overview of community action plans resulting from the CD sessions in the six village tracts/wards

Village Tract/ Ward/	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
C. Shan Ma Nge VI, Meikhtilar Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village Administrator reported that he is now discussing with water resources department to dig wells in the villages • VTA would report to TED to build teachers' housing and school building • People said that they would offer their manpower to build houses for teachers and school building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be SRHC on "SelXinKone" and "Let Pan Kone village". But no infrastructure and not functioning yet. • At "ShweZaKar" village, there is no infrastructure and even MW has no place to stay. • Building for health centres were donated by villagers. • Villagers will donate to build latrines. • But government need to provide medicines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be better if villages attend the meeting and need to participate. • Government staff will disseminate information through PA system. • If the village administration clearly stated the objective about the meeting when inviting people, villagers will be more interested to attend the meetings. • Villagers also need to attend the meetings.
B Kyarhnyut VT, Thabeikkyin Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government staff can find funding for improvement of education. • Government staff can report the need of teachers, need for renovation of building, need of teaching aids and school furniture to Township Education Ministration. • Citizens would cooperate together with government. They find some donor for school furniture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be SRHC on "SelXinKone" and "Let Pan Kone village". But no infrastructure and not functioning yet. • At "ShweZaKar" village, there is no infrastructure and even MW has no place to stay. • Building for health centres were donated by villagers. • Villagers will donate to build latrines. • But government need to provide medicines. 	Establish village libraries for raising public awareness and knowledge to reach out to the communities.
C. Shan Ma Nge VI, Meikhtilar Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village Administrator reported that he is now discussing with water resources department to dig wells in the villages • VTA would report to TED to build teachers' housing and school building • People said that they would offer their manpower to build houses for teachers and school building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village Administration said that they would report to government about insufficient health staff. • Then they presented that they would arrange health education program after discussing with township healthcare specialists. • The people responded that they would offer their manpower to build more building in the hospital. 	

Village Tract/ Ward/	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
D. Yatarnar Man Aung VT, Meikhtilar Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Head Administrator will take action on teachers providing private tuition. • Two teachers are taking responsible for environmental sanitation within the school compound in every day. But there is no place to throw the garbage away. • School Head Administrator already submitted to the Township Education Administration about the problems of latrines, roads and fence. • School head administrator will take action for all discrimination problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration will report to relevant departments about insufficient health staff. • UNICEF is now providing some medicines. • Community will participate and support the health staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward administration office is situating in inner side and not on Main Street. So that people who come to office can see the notice and the rest cannot see. • Can use the PA system on when township administration approved. • Do not invite community for township development project and invite leaders and 100/10 household heads only. • Home project for homeless is shared on homeless only.
E. TharGaYa VT, Thazi Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already submitted to the Township Administration about the problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School principle already announced to teachers not to teach private tuition. • School principle made bonding with teachers not to teach private tuition. 	
F. Ward (3), Thazi Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration group will report the need for stationeries in the mid-term of school year. • Education group will submit report for renovation of school building. • Public would cooperate more between teachers and parents in the future. 		

Annex 3: Composition of management, support and coordinating and committees in the three townships in Mandalay Region.

In Mandalay Region, like in other States and Regions, various formal and informal committees have been established at the township level and below with the intention to assist the TA with the management of the township, to coordinate the activities of various departments or to involve citizens in the planning of the development funds and service delivery.

For management there are:

- The Township Management Committee (TMC),
- The Township Municipal Affairs Committee (TMAC),
- The Township Farmland Management Committee (TFMC),

For coordination there are:

- The TA-VTA/WA coordination meetings,
- Heads of Department meetings.
- The Township Planning and Implementation Committee (TPIC),

For consultation there are:

- The Township Development Support Committee (TDSC)
- The Village Tract/Ward Development Support Committee (VT/WDSC)

Besides these committees there can be additional sector or coordinating committees in each of the townships, like the education and health committees, while temporary committees are established to oversee construction projects.

3.1 Management Committees

Township Management Committee

In all three selected townships in Mandalay Region, the Township Management Committees are well established. The composition is slightly different per township (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Composition of TMCs in the three townships

Role	Position	Meiktila	Thazi	Thabeikkyin
Chair	Township Administrator - GAD	Y	Y	Y
Secretary	Township Planning Officer	Y	Y	Y
Joint Secretary	Deputy Township Administrator - GAD	Y		Y
Member	Chief of Police	Y	Y	Y
Member	Township Immigration Officer			
Member	Township Agricultural Officer	Y	Y	Y
Member	Township Education Officer			
Member	Township Executive Officer DMA	Y		
Member	Engineer, Public Works		Y	Y

In all three townships, the TMC meets every week after the weekly Heads of Department meeting, and according to its members is a collective decision-making body, dealing with matters of safety and security, planning and coordination (except for project selection under the development funds), issues raised by the VTA/WAs, etc.

Township Farmland Management Committee (TFMC)

Since the adoption of the Farmland law in 2012, farmers can own agricultural land. They can obtain a land registration certificate for the land they formerly leased from government. The District Officer for Land Registration (Land Registrar) deals with these registration requests. The Township Farmland Management Committee, consists of the TA (chairperson), The Officer and Record, Head of Agriculture Department, Township Planning Officer and the Head of Department of Rural Development. It handles issues related to farmlands, i.e. registration process and handling of land disputes plus designing policies for water supply to farmlands in coordination with township water supply committee.

Township Municipal Affairs Committee

The Township Municipal Affairs Committees (TMACs) were officially established in April 2014 after the adoption of the Mandalay Region Municipal Law by the Mandalay Regional Hluttaw.

One of the citizen representatives is elected by the committee members as chairperson (see Table 3.2). Except for the chairperson in Thabeikkyin who is a female, all members are male.

Role	Position	Meiktila	Thazi	Thabeikkyin
Chair	Citizen (town elder)	Y	Y	Y
Secretary	Executive Officer DMA	Y	Y	Y
Member	Deputy TA/GAD	Y	Y	Y
Member	Elder	Y	Y	Y
Member	CSO/Business Representative	Y	Y	Y
Member	Professional Representative	Y	Y	Y
Member	Rural Development Officer	Y	Y	Y

Table 3.2: Composition of TMAC in the three townships in Mandalay Region

3.2 Coordination Committees

Township Planning and Implementation Committee

The TPIC was conceived in 2012 by the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development (MoNPED) as a vehicle for channelling “bottom-up planning” in the development of national plans and budget allocation. In addition, the TPIC is charged with gathering the relevant data to calculate the township GDP and to support the work of the Township Planning Officer (TPO). The TPIC is chaired by the TA, the Planning Officer is designated as secretary, all township departmental officers, village development supportive committee chairpersons and representatives of business community are members.

In all three townships the TPIC is active but the frequency of meetings and its membership differs significantly. The three Planning Officers could not clearly explain its added value to the planning process, especially since there are no integrated (long term) township development plans in place or in preparation in these three townships yet.

TA-VTA coordination meetings

In all three townships, the TA and the VTA/WAs meet on a regular basis usually once or twice a month. The VTA/WAs report progress on development projects in their village tracts/wards, and on urgent matters within their village tracts or wards that require the attention of the higher level government. The TAs use these meeting to collect information from the VTA/WAs, to inform the VTA/WAs of important directives, decisions and planned activities or visits. Minutes of meetings are made and decisions are recorded.

In all three townships the VTA/WA meetings are once a month combined with meetings of the Township Development Support Committee and the Township Municipal Affairs Committee. This has been the case especially when the selection of development projects was discussed or when the TA announced which proposed development projects had been endorsed by the Mandalay Region Government.

Heads of Department and Heads of Office meetings

In all three townships the TA chairs a Heads of Department meeting, which take place almost every week. These meetings are more informal and focus on the more practical and operational matters within the township.

3.3 Support Committees

Township Development Support Committees

The Township Development Support Committees (TDSC) were established in 2013 to support the township management in the planning and implementation of development activities by involving citizens actively in township development. Their formal role is limited to an advisory one, primarily intended to support the Township Management Committee (TMC), which is made up of the Township Administrator as well as the other Heads of Department.

The Township Development Support Committee (TDSC) are a starting point for the inclusion of the perspectives of interest groups and citizens in the decision-making processes at the township level – as specified within the notification directing State or Region governments to form these bodies. Only the secretary and one member of these committees are government staff while the rest of the members are selected by “popular vote” of town elders and representatives of wards/village tracts and from the various social and economic organizations (like business, farmers and workers), thus ensuring the participation of “local organisations and private individuals” in township development.

In Mandalay Region, the TDSCs were established in May 2013. Except for one member in Thazi who is a female, all members are male.

Table 3.3: Composition of TDSCs in the three townships Mandalay Region

Role	Position	Meiktila	Thazi	Thabeikkyin
Representative of citizens (elder)	Chair person	Y	Y	Y
Representative of Business Association/business men	Member	Y	Y	Y
Representative of Labour Union/workers	Member	Y	Y	Y
Representative of Farmers	Member	Y	Y	Y
Deputy Township Administrator	Member	Y	Y	Y
Executive Officer, Department of Municipal Affairs	Member	Y	Y	Y
Person proposed by community elders, civil society and business group representatives	Member	3	3	1

The TDSCs meet on a regular basis, usually twice a month and usually together with the TA-VTA meeting, which takes place once a month. During these meetings they are informed by the TA about issues relevant to their township, directives, development projects, etc. The Chairman and secretary set the agenda in consultation with the TA. Members of all three elected legislatures are invited and attend almost always (as observers). During their discussion they focus on all 10 areas mentioned in the instructions: but mainly on health, education, roads, telecommunications and project selection.



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Resilient nations.*

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