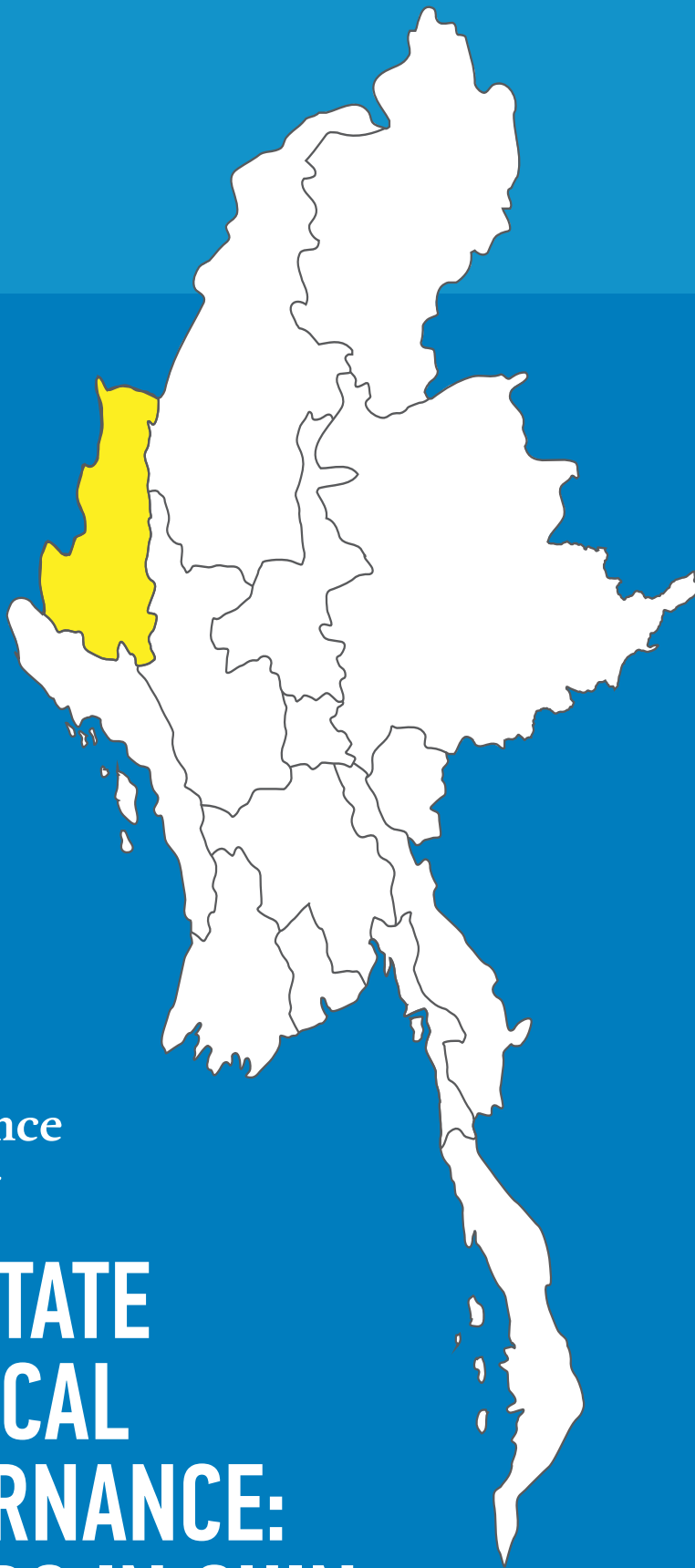




*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*



Local  
Governance  
Mapping

# THE STATE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE: TRENDS IN CHINA



#### **Photo credits**

---

Christian Hainzl  
Manisha Mirchandani  
Shipra Narang Suri  
Shobhna Decloitre  
Tom Cheatham  
Myanmar Survey Research

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent the views of UNDP.



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

Local Governance Mapping

# THE STATE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE: TRENDS IN CHINA

UNDP MYANMAR



# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	II
Acronyms	III
Executive Summary	1 - 8
<b>1. Local governance mapping in Chin State</b>	<b>9 - 18</b>
1.1 Introduction	10
1.2 Application of local governance mapping methodology to Chin State	11
1.3 Local governance mapping in Chin State: people, process, priorities	14
1.3.1 The people of Chin State: Citizen Report Card	14
1.3.2 Community priorities: Community Dialogues	15
1.3.3 Township priorities: Government Self-Assessment	17
<b>2. Local governance mapping findings</b>	<b>19 - 54</b>
2.1 Effectiveness and efficiency in implementing projects and programmes	20
2.1.1 Co-ordination between township-level departments	20
2.1.2 Planning	22
2.1.3 Human resources	24
2.1.4 Performance standards	26
2.1.5 Public satisfaction with service delivery	28
2.2 Transparency and rule of law	32
2.2.1 Information flow between stakeholders	32
2.2.2 Safety and security	39
2.2.3 Grievance redressal	39
2.3 Accountability	41
2.3.1 Checks and balances	41
2.3.2 Public trust	44
2.4 Participation	46
2.4.1 Engagement	46
2.4.2 Civic awareness and CSO performance	49
2.5 Equity	51
2.5.1 Urban-rural	52
2.5.2 Poverty	52
2.5.3 Gender	53
<b>3. Conclusions and interim recommendations</b>	<b>55 - 66</b>
3.1 Township development priorities and decentralisation	56
3.2 Policies and institutions	57
3.3 Processes and procedures	60
3.4 Capacity building	63
3.5 Communication and dialogue	65



## Acknowledgements

This report was developed under the leadership and guidance of Christian Hainzl, Team Leader, Local Governance/Local Development, UNDP Myanmar. Several individuals and organisations have made contributions in the production of this report. Manisha Mirchandani led the analysis of the empirical data and drafting of the report. The township and community level research and data analysis was undertaken by Myanmar Survey Research (MSR) and supported by Moses Tumusiine. Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) has been very helpful in production of the data maps for the report.

The report has benefited from the substantive contributions of Paul van Hoof, Shipra Narang Suri, Aye Lwin, Anki Dellnas, Thusitha Pilapitiya, Henri Schumacher, Jaiero Acuna-Alfaro and Marcus Brand. Editing of the report was done by Emilie Röell, Mithulina Chatterjee and Shobhna Decloitre and translation support was provided by Tin Maung Maung Ohn and Khin Kyaw.

The mapping in Chin would not have been complete without the cooperation and the strategic direction of the General Administration Department, Ministry of Home Affairs. The Local Governance Mapping being undertaken as part of UNDP Myanmar's Local Governance/Local Development Programme is funded by the Government of Japan, DANIDA and UNDP.

# Acronyms

CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CD	Community Dialogue
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CNF	Chin National Front
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
EO	Executive Officer (Municipal Affairs)
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
FMC	Farmland Management Committee
FSP	Frontline Service Provider
GAD	General Administration Department
GoM	Government of Myanmar
GSA	Government Self-Assessment
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
LGB	Local Governance Barometer
LGM	Local Governance Mapping
LM	Line Ministry
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MLFRD	Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development
MNPED	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development
MDRI-CESD	Myanmar Development Resource Institute-Centre for Economic and Social Development
MSR	Myanmar Survey Research
MoAI	Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
SLRD	Settlements and Land Records Department
TA	Township Administrator
TAO	Township Audit Office
TDSC	Township Development Supportive Committee
TEO	Township Education Officer
TFMC	Township Farmland Management Committee
TLO	Township Land Record Officer (Settlements and Land Records)
TMAC	Township Municipal Affairs Committee
TMC	Township Management Committee
TMO	Township Medical Officer
TPIC	Township Planning and Implementation Committee
TPO	Township Planning Officer
TRDO	Township Rural Development Officer
UCSB	Union Civil Servant Board
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VC	Village/ Ward Clerk
VTA	Village Tract / Ward Administrator
VTC	Village Tract / Ward Committee



# Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from the Local Governance Mapping conducted in Chin State between December 2013 and January 2014.

Sharing a long northern border with India and its western front with Bangladesh, Chin State is the poorest among Myanmar's state/regions, and among its most diverse. Chin State has a unique demographic composition, with six main ethnic groups (Acho, Cho, Khum, Laimi, Mizo and Zomi) and dozens of sub-groups represented in this majority-Chin, predominantly Christian area of the country. With an estimated population of 465,000 people, Chin State is the second smallest (by population size) of all states/regions. Widespread poverty, low population density, challenging mountainous terrain and an underdeveloped infrastructure are all severe barriers for development. The ceasefire agreement of 2012 between the Government of Myanmar (GoM) and the Chin National Front (CNF), a non-state armed group, has removed what was previously a serious bottleneck for development. Recognising the immense challenges faced by Chin State, the union government has allocated additional investment funds to the tune of Ks 2 billion in addition to around Ks 1 billion already allocated to each of the states/regions for regional development and poverty reduction in 2013-14.<sup>1</sup>

For the Local Governance Mapping in Chin State, three townships in the north (Thantlang, Falam and Tonzang) and three townships in the south (Mindat, Matupi and Paletwa) were selected. 576 respondents from 12 villages across these six townships were asked about their perceptions and experiences related to local governance using a Citizens' Report Card (CRC).<sup>2</sup> Half (49%) of citizens interviewed were between 18-40 years of age. Reflecting the geographic dynamics of Chin State, the majority of respondents (67%) lived in rural areas. The vast majority (91%) of those interviewed were of Chin ethnicity, while 8% of respondents originated from Rakhine.

Alongside the opinions of the people, multi-stakeholder dialogues at the community (Community Dialogues (CD)) and township (Government Self Assessments (GSA)) levels, and primary research on the functioning of local governance in three townships (Thantlang, Tonzang and Mindat), informed the findings from the Local Governance Mapping exercise, which are structured along the five core principles of good local governance. These form the basis of the mapping framework and methodology adopted in Myanmar, viz. effectiveness and efficiency; transparency and rule of law; accountability; participation; and, equity. In addition, the mapping exercise has also yielded some significant "process" results, which are also highlighted below.

1. Chin Struggle for Role in New Myanmar. 27 May 2013, Radio Free Asia.

2. See the chapter on the methodology in the separate report *Local Governance Mapping in Myanmar: Background and Methodology*.

## Findings

### *Effectiveness and efficiency in implementing projects and programmes*

The mapping results indicate that citizens are cognizant of improvements that have taken place in the past three years with relation to primary education and healthcare services. However, serious issues persist in terms of coordination between various departments, including but not limited to education and health, at the township level. Despite the “steering and coordinating role” played by the township GAD office and the Township Administrator in all townships nation-wide, and the establishment of new committees to facilitate township level co-ordination, coordination of planning and implementation between departments remains a challenge.

The majority of township development priorities are decided by consensus between the Township Management Committee (TMC), the Township Development Supportive Committee (TDSC) and the Township Municipal Affairs Committee (TMAC). In fact, the Chin state government, based in the capital city of Hakha, recognises proposals from the township level only with the signatures of all the three committee chairpersons - a specific interpretation of the obligation of the TMC to “meet, coordinate and seek advice” from the TDSC and TMAC in assigning township works. This is an innovative approach that merits further exploration of its strengths and weaknesses.

### *Transparency and rule of law*

Information flow between all stakeholder groups emerges as the major concern across townships in Chin State. In five of the six township GSAs, it was raised collectively by government, committee members and civil society as being one of the top three governance priorities for further discussion and action. The importance of the Village Tract/ Ward Administrator (VTA) as the most important channel for public information was confirmed by CRC respondents. However, Chin State’s inhospitable terrain presents a major logistical challenge for VTAs to meet regularly with Township Administrators and receive information and updates which can then be passed on to citizens. As result, more than two-thirds of the 576 respondents feel that township government is not providing them with sufficient information about plans for new projects in the village.

In terms of rule of law, dispute resolution and grievance redressal, it emerged that incidents of formal complaints are relatively infrequent in Chin State. Several respondents attributed this to the existence of customary practices in Chin State, meaning that most grievances are resolved through traditional mechanisms. Surprisingly, land disputes are also rarely mediated through the formal system of grievances - this is partly related to the customary rotational systems of farming, which has resulted in fewer disputes around land rights. As a result, the Township Farmland Management Committees (TFMC) was observed to be largely inactive in the townships in Northern Chin.

### *Accountability*

Though there are a number of practices in place to deter and weed out malfeasance, and a new *Anti-Corruption Law* has been enacted in August 2013, none of the six townships

participating in Chin State had a localised or active anti-corruption policy or practice. One key weakness is the *post facto* nature of existing anti-corruption practices, i.e., a heavy reliance on the Township Audit Office as a formal check, as opposed to internal review mechanisms and setting of standards.

In considering the extent to which unethical practices may impact services delivery at the facility level, the attitudes of patients and healthcare providers with respect to payments can be telling. In 2013, the Ministry of Health (MoH) made generic (non-specialist) drugs available to patients at public-health facilities free of charge. The vast majority of health facility managers, 8 of 11, answered that patients do not have to pay for essential drugs or medical supplies. Yet, of the 489 users of public health services, 70% always paid for medicines at their regular health facility.

## Participation

Participation in the 2010 union elections for the Union Hluttaw was moderately high among citizen respondents in Chin State (576) of which 78% voted. There were no major differences in participation among urban and rural, or male and female voters. However, the engagement of the people of Chin State in public meetings is another matter altogether. Around half (51%) of 576 respondents had actually participated in a village tract/ward meeting, and people in rural areas were more likely to do so (61%) than those in urban areas (32%), which is unsurprising given the reliance on village administration for local information and matters of governance. Of the 576 citizens surveyed, 70% had never been invited to a meeting about development projects and problems in village.

The TDSC and the TMAC represent a starting point for integrating the perspectives of interest groups and community members in the decision-making process at the township level. But the mapping exercise indicates that lack of clarity on procedures and a rush to form committees has resulted in problems with the election of members in at least two townships. Another challenge related to the credibility of the two “supportive” committees, is the very low levels of awareness among the wider community about their existence and therefore their representativeness, and ability to function as an intermediary body.

## Equity

At the surface level, the mapping indicates that equality of treatment is perceived to be fairly high among users of public services, particularly for primary education. 93% (of 286 parents) believed that their children receive the same treatments as other students. For healthcare services, 73% (of 576) thought that they and their family members receive the same treatment as everyone in the village. A number of disparities do emerge however, when considering differences in opinion on access to services and government resources across various groups including the rural and poor.

The mapping results also indicate that women are poorly represented in Chin State on at least two fronts: in positions of leadership within the township administration and committees itself, and in the realm of citizen participation. Only 33% of the female respondents have participated in village tract ward meetings, as opposed to 70% of the male respondents. Women are also less likely to be invited to meetings about new development projects or village problems, and are less aware of committees at the township level in which citizens

participate. These results confirm that women in Chin State are significantly less engaged in public participation than men and appear to have less exposure to public information and government news.

Attention of the township management to the interests of people with special needs was ranked as the second-weakest areas of competency across the six Government Self-Assessment exercises conducted.

## Process results

The mapping methodology has been developed particularly for the Myanmar context and draws on various local government assessment methodologies and frameworks that have been tried and tested in different parts of the world. As such, it is quite innovative and combines a variety of tools – citizen report cards, frontline service provider interviews, community dialogues at the grassroots level, and governance self-assessments, along with an extensive background study that includes secondary data collection, key informant interviews and focus group discussions, at the township and state/region levels. The process by itself has yielded some important results, including:

**Enhanced appreciation of different points of view:** The engagement of different stakeholder groups, and the sharing of views and perceptions of these different groups with one another, has led to an improved understanding of different perspectives across the board. Dialogues such as the CDs have the potential to drive better mutual appreciation of the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders. For example, though improvements were observed in some village tracts/wards, citizens were not aware of some of the challenges as faced by government in the dissemination of information. Issues of access and poor roads were cited by administrators as being a key impediment in being able to disseminate information effectively, while a shortage of staff was attributed in Matupi. Although no resolution was reached on this issue, such discussions help to dispel suspicion and foster mutual understanding of resource and other constraints faced by various actors.

**Taking the government's reform process down to township and lower levels:** The mapping exercise has initiated an extensive discussion on good governance, principles of governance, and their implications for service delivery, at township, village tract/ ward and even village levels. One of the key outcomes of this discussion is that the citizens as well as government staff and service providers at these lower levels have become more aware of the government's reform agenda and policy priorities.

**New models of engagement:** The mapping exercise has introduced new methods and models of participation, such as CDs and GSAs which have proved to be very effective and could provide the basis for continued engagement between government and communities, service providers and services users, in the future. In one Thantlang ward, Civil Society Organisation (CSO) representatives offered to co-operate to help improve the quality of primary education if the government were able to provide materials and improve teaching capacity. Though nascent, such examples of co-operation and negotiation to meet development objectives are striking in a context where the relationship between government and CSOs has been traditionally acrimonious.

**Local solutions to local problems:** The discussions in CDs and GSAs have in many cases led to the stakeholders finding local, collective solutions to some of their problems, for instance improved information sharing approaches, or extended timings for local health facilities, etc. Examples of resourcefulness in tackling local issues have already emerged through such forums. In one ward in Mindat, the administrator used the opportunity to explain the drivers of poor information flow (lack of staff capacity), and committed to erecting a noticeboard in the ward upon which to display information as an interim solution.

## Conclusions and recommendations: Entry points for improved local governance

The findings from all four tools used in the mapping exercise point in the same direction: Development priorities vary significantly by township and by community. In addition, citizens appear to be concerned that the township administration was not always aware of the problems they faced at the community level. Further, the levels of responsiveness of the government are also felt to be generally low: 76% (of 338) respondents felt that the government was doing nothing. The differences in socio-economic conditions between the townships, as well as their (partially related) specific development bottlenecks justify a continuation and even acceleration of the decentralisation process to further enhance the capacities (in terms of funding, manpower and mandate) of township administration and sector departments to respond more adequately to specific local development priorities and needs.

Areas for attention and recommendations for township and state-level actors in Chin State towards improving quality of governance and the governance of service delivery include the following:

### *Policies and institutions*

**Improve access to public information:** One of the key issues identified by the mapping exercise relates to the information flow from government to citizens - a relatively new concept in the Myanmar context. Without improving transparency it will be very difficult to fight corruption within the government system and improve on accountability, and eventually increase the trust of people in their government. At the moment, it depends more or less on the discretion of the TA or head of department what type of information is made available to the general public and it is all too easy to declare certain information as confidential (such as the results from a tender procedure).

The township administration and the state level government should work towards making the General Administration Department ((GAD) and the activities of other departments at the township level) more transparent - particularly with respect to the tendering and procurement process in Chin State. Developing fair and transparent practices in this area is important given the surge of funding for infrastructure development.

**Apply policies and institutions at the local level with a view to preventing (as opposed to detecting) malfeasance:** The findings indicate that a perceived implementation gap exists at lower level of administration in Chin State on corruption-prevention activities. Most practices in place are *post facto*, rather than designed to deterring and prevent fraud and corruption. Yet the primary perception of township officials and civil society groups was that no coherent anti-corruption or anti-malfeasance policy applied at the township level,

though public servants spoke of adhering to a code of conduct in the workplace as specified by the union government.

**Begin to advocate for and focus on excluded groups:** The mapping findings indicate that equality of treatment in the delivery of public services was perceived to be relatively high in Chin State. Yet, shortfalls remain, particularly with respect to participation of women versus men, and for rich versus poor and rural versus urban people in access to services and equality of treatment. The CDs indicated that concerns regarding discrimination of the poor do exist at the community level. In all six townships, service users expressed concern at discriminatory treatment of low-income groups, giving cause for further research and attention to the experiences of the poorest households with respect to local governance administration and public service delivery.

**Improve support to Village Tract Administrators:** At this stage in Myanmar's development, the elected VTA and VTC are key mechanisms for participation, and they constitute the main channel by which people can be involved in local decision-making. The 2012 *Ward or Village Tract Administration Law* has conferred some formality to community governance roles and institutions. Some improvement has been observed by participants of the CDs in the participation of citizens in decision-making - however, the mapping exercise has identified specific challenges in Chin State related to the transfer of public information between the Village Tract Administrator and the community. In one Paletwa ward, service users noted that they were rarely invited to meetings and were not made welcome to participate, while service providers cited a lack of interest on part of citizens to take part.

### *Processes and procedures*

**Establish clear and transparent procedures for township planning, budgeting and tendering:** Many of the challenges associated with "horizontal" coordination and communication are structural in nature, including the large number of departments, the double accountabilities shouldered by some departments (the Township Administration, the Department of Planning (DoP) and the vertical nature of sector planning and budgeting. If and when township funding will increase, which is likely to happen in the future, the need to develop a comprehensive vision on the development of the township and more integrated planning will become more evident. There is growing awareness of such issues in the state-level administration, where state-level representatives of the DoP have alluded to the establishment of an upcoming budget ceiling and new processes to help townships gain greater clarity in 2014.

**Clarify the roles and responsibilities of committee members:** The new committees are operating in an environment in which relic systems and committees continue to operate, although there are large differences between townships as noted. In addition, there are overlaps not only between these new committees and the functions of pre-existing committees and institutions, but also between the newly established committees themselves. There is currently uncertainty over which committees are most important and active for township governance - in some cases, officials are members of numerous committees that meet irregularly, and with functions that overlap with those of newer, more active institutions. In Chin State, the relative dormancy of the Township Farmland Committee (TFMC) and very limited activity by the Township Planning and Implementation Committee (TPIC) is worthy of further consideration.

**Develop alternative channels for grievance redressal:** Incidents of complaints filed through existing formal systems are relatively infrequent in Chin State - though this falls under the initial guidance for the establishment of supportive committees outlined by Presidential Notification No 27/2013: “To bring grievances to the attention of TMCs to reach solutions in a co-ordinated manner”. The mapping indicates also, that the VTA remains the key channel for passing complaints up from the public to township administration. It is worth considering the establishment of an independent, formal grievance mechanism as an alternative for groups excluded by both customary and administrative systems.

**Develop specific strategies to overcome issues of access:** Barriers to mobility within and between townships in Chin State present a major challenge for governance and development, most obviously in hindering communications and information flow, deepening the rural-urban divide in Chin State. TAs have attempted to mitigate these barriers by holding meetings in alternative locations with VTAs, and in one case mobilising extra support along geographical lines in the form of “Terrain Representatives”. Such resourceful measures should be observed and encouraged.

### *Capacity building*

**Develop the leadership capacity of women in administration:** In Chin State, the presence of women is limited in township management. Further, the mapping team found no evidence of women who had been selected as a member of the supportive committees (TDSC or TMAC), indicating the existence of barriers to entry for political appointments. Development of women’s capacity in political leadership and democratic politics should be pursued at the state and township level.

**Develop the capacity of CSOs and community-level leaders to build civic awareness:** The formerly antagonistic relationship between civil society and the authorities has limited the scope of their activities, their ability to grow and their eagerness and capacity to take up a stronger social accountability role in the local setting. There is need for an expansion of the default role of many of Chin State’s ethnically-based organisations to advocate for their special interests during the conflict period.

**Build upon the management skills of the Village Tract Administrator:** The mapping has reaffirmed the critical role of the VTA as the “face of the government” at the community level, and the main conduit of public information. Already, the mapping would indicate several categories of capacity building for the VTA (legal, information gathering). In addition, the VTA continues to be the focal point for relaying information upwards to the township administration, and also channelling public news back to the communities.

### *Communication and dialogue*

**Facilitate forums for dialogue between citizens, government and civil society:** While there are several practical challenges for enhancing participation in local decision-making, it seems that there is an underlying structural difference in the perception of government staff on the one hand and citizens on the other hand about the meaning and extent of citizen participation in public affairs.

### Drawing upon the mapping outputs as a basis for capacity development plans for Chin

**State:** The outcomes resulting from the governance mapping exercise, which included discussions on key challenges and identification of capacity gaps at the level of the community and township, could (after consideration and approval by government) inform a capacity development plan per state/region in which activities are identified that the state/region can implement itself but also those that require external support, which could be provided by the union level government, UNDP and/or other development partners.

The introduction of state and regional governments overseen by elected parliamentarians, and thereby the principle of separation of power is one of several important steps undertaken towards democracy and a decentralised governance structure in Myanmar. Efforts are underway to provide state and regions with some discretionary funds and autonomy to make their own development priorities.

The basic structures, for the implementation of local government have been established at the township level but are, as highlighted in this report, not yet always functioning optimally. A gradual improvement of governance capacities at the state/region and township level is within the immediate reach, remit and capacity of local actors. But how existing institutions underpin the longer-term decentralisation agenda is far beyond the mandate of the local administration, and will require a leading role from union-level government.



# 1. Local Governance Mapping In Chin State

This chapter defines the context for the Local Governance Mapping in Chin. Beginning with a brief background of Chin state, it goes on to profile the respondents using the data collected in the Citizens' Report Card. Further, the chapter explains the process of community dialogues and township governance self-assessments, extracting some preliminary findings and community priorities from these discussions.

## 1.1 Introduction

Sharing a long northern border with India and its western front with Bangladesh, Chin State is the poorest among Myanmar's state/regions, and among its most diverse. Chin State has a unique demographic composition, with six main ethnic groups (Asho, Cho, Khum, Laimi, Mizo and Zomi) and dozens of sub-groups, represented in this majority-Chin, predominantly Christian area of the country. With an estimated population of 465,000 people, Chin State is the second smallest (by population size) of all states/regions. Widespread poverty, low population density, challenging mountainous terrain and an underdeveloped infrastructure are all severe barriers for development.

However, the cease-fire agreement of 2012 between the Government of Myanmar (GoM) and the Chin National Front (CNF), a non-state armed group, has removed what was previously a serious bottleneck for development. The agreement spells out the fundamental rights to cultural and religious freedoms for the state's people, and outlines the objectives of sustainable development for the state's people in the form of an airport, improved roads and wider access to electricity. Recognising the immense challenge of development in Chin State, the union government has allocated additional investment funds to the tune of Ks 2 billion in addition to around Ks 1 billion already allocated to each of the states/regions for regional development and poverty reduction in 2013-14.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1: Chin State township population figures**

\*Township with sub-township.

Note: Six selected townships in bold.

Source: General Administration Department, 2013.

		Population
1.	<b>Mindat</b>	41,295
2.	<b>Matupi *</b>	52,755
3.	<b>Paletwa *</b>	89,257
4.	Kanpetlet	20,582
5.	Hakha	42,787
6.	<b>Thantlang</b>	52,160
7.	Tedim	88,094
8.	<b>Tonzang *</b>	30,475
9.	<b>Falam *</b>	47,666
Average township population		51,675
Total:		465,071
Total for selected townships:		313,608

3. Chin Struggle for Role in New Myanmar. 27 May 2013, Radio Free Asia.

## 1.2 Application of the Local Governance Mapping methodology to Chin State

The Local Governance Mapping is one of the first activities undertaken as part of the UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) focusing on the need to know more about how government bodies at local level are functioning at present; to understand whether they are able to adjust to the new requirements of people-centred service delivery and participation; and to assess their potential support needs in this regard. In order to improve this collective understanding and knowledge, UNDP is working together with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) to map the quality of governance in general, as well as specifically in relation to a selected number of basic services. This exercise is to be concluded in all 14 states/regions in Myanmar before the end of 2014, beginning with the pilot studies in Mon and Chin States (see the separate report *Local Governance Mapping in Myanmar: Background and Methodology* for a detailed explanation of the Local Governance Mapping methodology).

Mon and Chin States were selected to pilot the Local Governance Mapping, based on previous agreement with the Union government and the respective state-level governments, and on the premise that they capture the inherent diversity across Myanmar's states/regions. Chin State is Myanmar's poorest with an estimated poverty incidence of 73.3% in 2010 and has smaller townships (the average population size is 51,675 across the nine townships). Meanwhile Mon State is the country's third wealthiest with a poverty incidence of 16.3% (behind Yangon at 16.1% and Kayah at 11.4%)<sup>4</sup> and tends to fare above the national average on social development indicators. Township populations are relatively large, at an average size of 191,484 across the 10 townships.

The pilot study was conducted with the intention of improving and adjusting the methodology in subsequent phases. In selecting six townships across each of the pilot states, the research team aimed to extrapolate state-specific trends and also provide insights on the differences that may exist between urban and rural areas, remote and accessible townships, rich and poor townships, and more generally between the various townships. Within each of the selected townships, one urban and one rural village tract/ward was selected randomly. Within each of these 12 village-tracts/wards 48 households were randomly selected using a transect methodology. In order to ensure that 50% of the respondents were female, the enumerators were instructed to alternate between male and female respondents.<sup>5</sup>

In order to obtain a holistic perspective of governance at local level, the Local Governance Mapping adopted a three-step approach to map the quality of local governance from a ward/village-tract, township and region/state level perspective (as outlined in *Local Governance Mapping in Myanmar: Background and Methodology*). By incorporating these three levels and by also including the views of citizen, civil society and government stakeholders, a "360 degree" perspective on the quality of governance at the local level was obtained.

4. Against the national average of 25.6%. See for more detail: Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment, 2009-2010. UNDP Myanmar, 2011.

5. The total sample size of the CRC of 576 respondents is sufficient to draw valid conclusions for the whole population of Mon State, with a confidence level of 95% and an error margin of 5%. In each township, about 96 citizen respondents were interviewed, which raises the error margin to 10% (based on average population size per township), but is also adequate to get a sense of local issues, experiences and perceptions. The number of Frontline Service Provider (FSPs) interviews - VTAs, primary school principals, teachers, healthcare facility managers and healthcare staff - was necessarily limited to those working in the sampled village tracts and wards.

Table 2 below provides an overview of the various tools used at each level of data collection type and number of participants in Chin State.

**Table 2: Local Government Mapping exercise participants, coverage and outputs for Chin State**

\*Township with sub-township.

Note: Six selected townships in bold.

Source: General Administration Department, 2013.

Mapping level	Activity	Participants	Geographical scope	Outputs
1. Community	Citizen Report Card (CRC)	576 citizen respondents	12 villages/ wards in six townships	Dataset and report on key findings
	Frontline Service Provider (FSP) interviews	12 Village Tract Administrators 14 primary school principals 30 primary school teachers 11 heads of healthcare facilities 23 healthcare staff	12 villages/ wards in six townships	
	Community Dialogues (CD)	291 service users 151 service providers	12 villages/ wards in six township	Data from scoring exercise and summary report for each village, including community-level action plan
2. Township	Background Research on Local Governance	Government staff from relevant departments. Civil society representatives	Three townships	Report on key findings
	Government Self-Assessment (GSA)	Government staff, committee members and civil society representatives	Six townships	Data from scoring exercise and summary report for each township, containing township-level action plan
3. State	Focus-group discussions and interviews	Government staff from relevant departments. Civil society representatives	State capital	Qualitative data to inform integrated analysis
	Workshop to share interim findings	Government staff, committee members and civil society representatives	Representatives from community, township and state	Summary report and action plans developed by participants

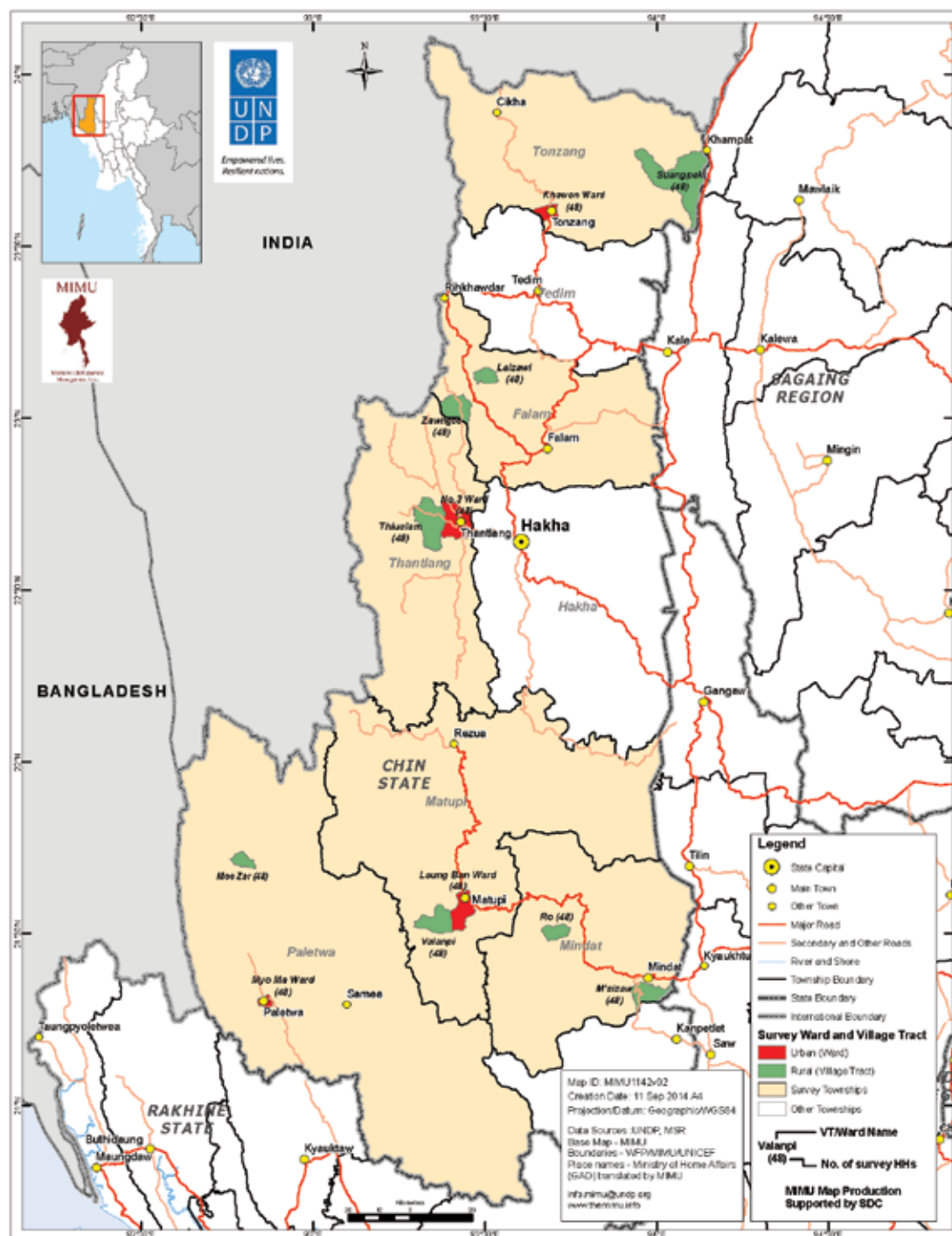


Figure 1: Distribution of household interviews for Citizen Report Card survey in Chin State

Source: Citizen Report Card Chin State, January 2014.

## 1.3 Local Governance Mapping in Chin State: People, process, priorities

### 1.3.1 The people of Chin State: Citizen Report Card

In January 2014, 576 respondents from 12 villages across six townships in Chin State shared their perceptions of local governance and service delivery to inform the Mapping exercise.<sup>6</sup> While the national census will provide new insight into the demographics of Myanmar's states/regions,<sup>7</sup> the data collected from households during the Local Governance Mapping exercise gives a snapshot on the demographic and socioeconomic dynamics that characterise communities in Chin State.

**Demographics:** Half (49%) of citizens interviewed were between 18-40 years of age, while one-fifth were between 41-50 years. Those aged 51-70 made up the remaining 30% of respondents. Reflecting the geographic dynamics of Chin State, the majority of respondents (67%) lived in rural areas, while 33% lived in urban wards. Around one-third (35%) of respondents did not receive an education nor complete primary school, while primary education was the highest level achieved for around 50% of those surveyed.

The vast majority (91%) of those interviewed were of Chin ethnicity, while 8% of respondents originated from Rakhine. As a result, Chin (or a dialect of it) was the most common language spoken at home (90%), followed by the Rakhine language, which is spoken widely in the township of Paletwa. Very few of the respondents spoke the Burmese language. It is notable that a large number of ethnic Chin people live outside of the state: some estimates point to around 700,000, along with over 200,000 who have migrated from Myanmar.<sup>8</sup> Some 2% of the households surveyed rely on remittances from this the diaspora network as their primary source of income.

**Livelihoods:** Respondent livelihoods are highly dependent on subsistence agriculture with the majority of households (61%) citing crop farming as the main activity for generating income. A significant proportion of rural respondents (40%) viewed their incomes to have worsened in the past three years, while only 21% reported an improvement. A serious rat infestation in 2006-08 resulted in a poor harvest, which continues to have implications for food security today. Observers note that the effects are still being felt in fluctuating market prices for crops, and high interest rates on loans. Some households are still holding debt for food purchased during the scarcity. Food availability is sometimes, often or almost always a problem for 74% of rural respondents, and 50% of urban dwellers.

**Safety and security:** A sense of public safety and security among respondents is very high across the townships in Chin State. Following the ratification of a ceasefire agreement between the government and non-state armed groups, 92% of respondents reported feeling safe in their village tract/ ward at the moment, while 42% noted a discernable improvement over the past three years.

6. Households were selected based on a random sampling method, with provision to represent the voices of women - half of the respondents for the CRC in Chin State were female. See CRC methodology note for further details.

7. Commencing in April 2014, the GOM, with the support of UNFPA, is conducting a nationwide census, the first to be conducted in Myanmar since 1983.

8. "Chin Struggle for Role in New Myanmar". 27 May 2013, Radio Free Asia.

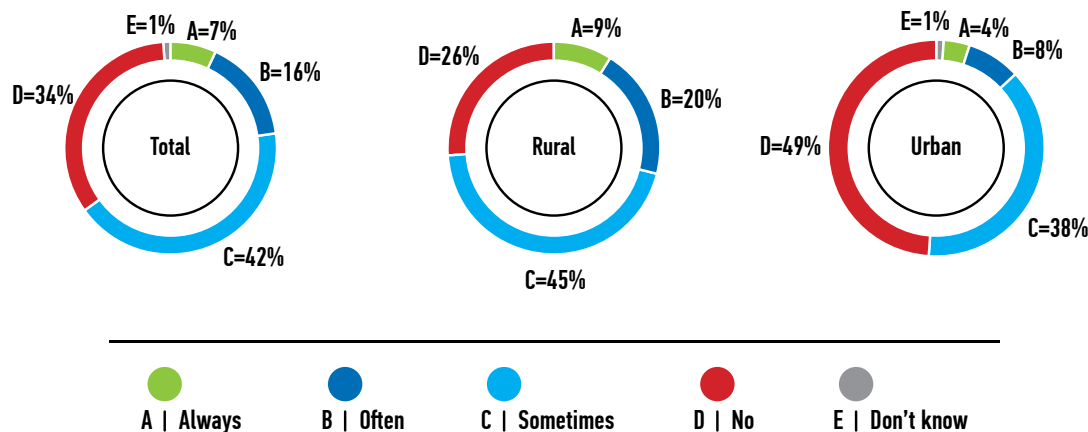


Figure 2: During the last year, did you ever face any problems in satisfying the food needs of the household?

Source: Citizen Report Card Chin State, January 2014.

### 1.3.2 Community priorities: Community Dialogues

A range of development and governance issues was discussed collectively in a Community Dialogue (CD), which was held in twelve villages/wards across the same representative townships. Different groups present in the community (including women, youth and elders) - “service users” - participated alongside Frontline Service Providers (FSP) and the Village Tract Administrator (VTA) - “service providers”. The objective of this exercise was to collectively identify issues of governance emerging in relation to service delivery and local administration, and to agree on solutions that could be implemented at the community level.

The responses reflected varying levels of trust between government and communities, and the perceived needs of people in the twelve villages/ wards in which the CDs took place. Some general trends on community level priorities can be surmised.

**Perceived improvements:** Across the 12 villages/ wards, participants noted that there has been progress made towards **development of general infrastructure**, though the areas



highlighted were diverse across the townships. In Falam, Tonzang and Thantlang, participants observed improvements to telecommunications; improvements to school buildings were highlighted in Paletwa, Falam and Matupi.

#### **Development and governance issues:**

- **Effectiveness of service delivery** - Though improvements to education and healthcare services in the past three years were appreciated - for instance the provision of free education for primary students, and free-of-charge medicines and mosquito nets - shortfalls were still evident to participants in the lack of supplies, equipment and sufficient supportive infrastructure. Citizens also observed a paucity of qualified and punctual staff. However, it was only in Paletwa that respondents clearly stated that primary education had actually worsened due to a lack of qualified teaching staff and insufficient infrastructure.
- **Information flow from government to citizens** - Though improvements were observed in some village/ wards, concerns remained about information flow from local government actors to citizens with respect to the plans and projects that concerned them – in Thantlang for instance, citizens were not advised in advance of which company had been awarded the tender to build a local primary school. Issues of access and poor roads were cited by administrators as being one impediment in being able to disseminate information effectively, while a shortage of staff was attributed in Matupi.
- **Security and stability** - In the majority of townships, citizens noted that the ceasefire agreements have led to overall improved levels of peace and security. In Tongzang, village-based service users observed a worrying decline in peace and security in the township, though government officials cited the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the military and non-state armed actors as an improvement from previous times.
- **Participation of citizens in decision-making** - Partially due to the VTA now being an elected position, and partly because of participation by citizens in the new township advisory committees, some improvement has been observed in the participation of citizens in decision-making. Still, some dissatisfaction was recorded as a result of poor information flow, where villagers in Mindat were not receiving information on new village projects and plans, hampering their participation in the process. Accessibility emerged again as a challenge, with some 10/100 Household Representatives revealing that they had difficulty attending some village meetings. In a Paletwa ward, service users noted that they were rarely invited to meetings and were not made welcome to participate, while service providers cited a lack of interest on the part of citizens to engage.
- **Trust in government** - Levels of trust in government varied by community. In one Mindat village, high levels of trust in government in recent years is attributed to the distribution of free medicine, improved roads and the management of the VTA, while in another, failure of government officials to provide sufficient electricity and support road construction has resulted in a lack of trust. In a number of cases, unfulfilled promises had played a key role in damaging trust, in spite of improvements. This is seen for example in Matupi, where improvements in road infrastructure were acknowledged, but pledges to improve water and electricity supply and build new health clinics remain unfulfilled.
- **Equality of treatment** - Equality of treatment in the provision of primary education and health regardless of ethnicity, religion and gender is considered to be fairly good across

all townships, though some concerns regarding discrimination of the poor do exist. In all townships, service users expressed concern at discriminatory treatment of those from low-income backgrounds.

**Community priorities:** Community priorities differed across the townships, and were contingent on local conditions and needs, as listed below. However, a few issues were recurrent across the six townships, namely: **Access to clean drinking water and electricity supply.**

**Falam:** Access to clean drinking water, electricity supply and improvements to basic education, health care and road infrastructure.

**Matupi:** Access to clean drinking water, electricity supply.

**Mindat:** Development of basic education, health care and road infrastructure, and lack of employment opportunities.

**Paletwa:** Access to clean drinking water, electricity supply, electricity supply and development of road infrastructure

**Thantlang:** Access to clean drinking water, electricity supply.

**Tonzang:** Development of basic education, health care and road infrastructure lack of employment opportunities.

### *1.3.3 Township priorities: Government Self-Assessment*

In January 2014, Government Self-Assessment (GSA) sessions were conducted in Falam, Mindat, Matupi, Paletwa, Thantlang and Tonzang townships, comprising day-long workshops where government staff, civil society representatives, committee members and citizens discussed challenges related to local governance and service delivery, and possible actions to address agreed-upon problems. Participants were divided into three groups (government staff; committee members and members of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and citizens) and separately asked to share views on various issues related to local governance administration. Individual group responses and ratings were discussed in a plenary session, where the top three issues most requiring attention were voted upon, and local-level action plans devised accordingly.

While the individual townships differed in terms of the context and perceived needs of citizens, overarching trends could be ascertained with relation perceptions of improvements with relation to governance priorities across Chin State.

**Perceived improvements:** The participants of the six GSAs were asked to identify the major improvements in their townships over the last three years. Though answers differed along with the local context, general trends could be ascertained. Participants observed the expansion of public services related to water supply, communications and most commonly across Chin State, the development of road infrastructure.

**Township priorities:** The participants were also asked to identify priority issues in each township, in order to create an action plan for each of the identified challenges, and to highlight areas for future capacity development for township officials and committee members in Chin State. The following issues were highlighted for attention across all six townships:

- Participants highlighted a perceived weakness in existing **government processes for tackling corruption**, particularly with relation to tendering processes and poor responsiveness on complaints related to corruption.
- Participants highlighted the **lack of a cohesive strategy to address the needs of the disadvantaged**. Through targeted microfinance loans and special education services, government participants stressed the availability of some support for vulnerable groups. However, citizens and representatives of civil society were generally not aware of such services, and felt that some were poorly implemented if they did.
- **Poor information flow between various stakeholder groups** was identified as a priority issue in the majority of the townships. All stakeholders agreed that there were delays in information sharing, and that information was not necessarily reaching citizens as envisaged by the township administration. Citizens and civil society representatives also expressed some concern that information and feedback was not percolating back upwards to township government either. Travel budgets, geographical and telecommunication barriers to delivering some information were cited as challenges.
- Across the townships, participants agreed that **existing complaint-handling mechanisms were inadequate**, and that there was not enough transparency around associated processes for citizens to submit complaints. Though government has established systems for dealing with complaints via the committees at the village tract/ ward and township levels, committee members and civil society representatives raised concerns regarding the responsiveness of the process.



## 2. Local Governance Mapping Findings

This chapter presents an integrated analysis of the results from the various mapping tools used as part of the local governance mapping exercise in six townships in chin state: falam, mindat, matupi, paletwa, thantlang and tonzang, which combined present an adequate representation of chin state. the findings and the key challenges and opportunities for chin state have been grouped under the five basic principles of good governance, namely:

- 1) Effectiveness and efficiency;
- 2) Transparency and rule of law;
- 3) Accountability;
- 4) Participation;
- 5) Equity.

## 2.1 Effectiveness and efficiency in implementing projects and programmes

Effectiveness is about ensuring that implemented activities contribute to achieving agreed upon development objectives, and requires the formulation of key strategic targets. Value for money considerations underpin the principle of efficiency, which for local governance is often about using limited resources in the most cost-effective way, and begins with the definition of input, output and performance standards.

### *2.1.1 Co-ordination between township-level departments*

**Horizontal coordination of activities between township departments remains a challenge.**

Despite the “steering and coordinating role” played by the township General Administration Department (GAD) office and the Township Administrator (TA) in all townships nationwide and the establishment of new committees to facilitate township level co-ordination, coordination of planning and activities between departments continues to remain a challenge on the horizontal plane of local governance.

The (limited) fiscal decentralisation of the budget to the state has been a major change for all townships across Myanmar - particularly for Chin State, which received three times the amount of the other states/regions as part of the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF, Ks 1 billion) alongside an additional Ks 2 billion for social welfare and community development activities. In order to receive these funds, township administration along with the committees, were tasked with consulting citizens at the village level regarding their development priorities and needs, prior to submitting a township development plan to the state for consideration. The majority of township development priorities are decided by consensus between the Township Management Committee (TMC), the Township Development Supportive Committee (TDSC) and the Township Municipal Affairs Committee (TMAC). In fact, the state government, based in the capital city of Hakha, recognises proposals from the township level only with the signatures of all the three committee chairpersons - a specific interpretation of the obligation of the TMC to “meet, coordinate and seek advice” from the TDSC and TMAC in assigning township works. As a result, despite their distinctive formal roles - the TMC as the executive committee, with the TDSC and TMAC serving as advisory bodies - decisions on township planning and other issues raised via the TMC are ultimately made by consensus in Chin State. The fact that the TDSC and TMAC have to co-sign the township development plan not only ensures that they have been properly consulted in the process, but also raises their status and creates some form of mutual accountability.

Various township administrators in Chin State discussed the difficulties associated with gaining a “horizontal” overview of township activities and understanding key gaps and priorities for basic services delivery, despite the best efforts of the department heads and committees to share information. In practice, the key mechanism for information sharing at the township level remains the weekly inter-departmental meeting, which takes place in all townships on a regular basis (and which the key members of the TMC attend in their capacity as department heads). Meanwhile, the schedule for support committee meetings is more fluid and they usually take place on an “as needed” basis, with the TA inviting relevant members to join as required, as observed in Mindat, Thantlang and Tonzang townships. Typically the three committees (TMC, TDSC and TMAC) meet together, rather than each individually. While meetings are not based on a regular schedule, committees can convene up

to 2-3 times a day when the state makes urgent requests for proposals or information. This was observed in Tonzang Township - where officials and committee members spoke of a very high frequency of meetings, raising questions around the reactive nature of committee operations, and implications for efficiency.

Another challenge for good coordination is in relation to the composition of committees - an area of particular interest in Chin State where at least one township has deviated from national guidelines. This is pertinent when considering the importance of integration of a core service such as healthcare into township planning. The limited profile of the Department of Health (DoH) within the committee system has implications for Effectiveness, if not efficiency, in coordinating on basic service delivery, infrastructure development and healthcare priorities. As per national guidelines, the Township Education Officer (TEO) sits as a member on the TMC while the Township Medical Officer (TMO) does not participate in any of the new committees. Yet in Mindat, the TMO is a member of the TMC, as opposed to the TEO (see Table 3). In addition, the secretary varies (in absence of a Township Revenue Officer (TRO)) in Mindat and Tonzang. Whether this results in more inclusive and locally-relevant township planning is of interest, as it poses a question regarding the extent to which the existing selection methods and criteria are the most conducive to effective local governance. Solely based on the formal responsibilities of the committees, there are grounds for both the TEO and TMO to be included in the TDSC, which has a remit for the development of health and education. Indeed, its duties stipulate that it should be working in co-operation with relevant departments to advise and co-ordinate.

Role	Position as specified by national guidance	Mindat	Thantlang	Tonzang
Chair	Township Administrator - GAD	✓	✓	✓
Member	Township Police Officer	✓	✓	✓
Member	Township Law Officer	Township Co-operatives Officer	✓	✓
Member	Township Planning Officer	✓	✓	✓
Member	Township Agricultural Office	Township Immigration Officer	✓	✓
Member	Township Education Officer	Township Medical Officer	✓	Secretary, in lieu of Department of Revenue at the township level
Member	Township Municipal Affairs Officer	✓	✓	✓
Secretary	Township Revenue Officer	Y, as member. Township Labour Officer as secretary	✓	Y, as member Township Education Officer as Secretary
Joint Secretary	Deputy Township Administrator - GAD	Y, as member	✓	✓

**Table 3: Composition of TMCs in Chin State against national guidance**

Source: Township administration offices, Chin State, January 2014.

In terms of how committees are functioning against their outlined duties, in practice, the TMC is fulfilling its function as the key driver for the ratification of township development plans and priorities, in consultation with the advisory committees (TDSC, TMAC) and relevant departments. Given the large injection of funding for development in recent years, the main activities of the township level committees in Chin state has been to co-ordinate and ratify proposals for development projects funded by the state, and subsequently to monitor and supervise them.

### *2.1.2 Planning*

**Planning activity at the township level is defined by highly centralised processes. The role of the Township Administrator as horizontal coordinator remains limited.**

Planning activity at the township level is defined by highly centralised processes for the majority of line departments, particularly in education and health. Like its departmental counterparts, the GAD continues to report to higher levels of the line ministry, communicating and negotiating its yearly recurrent budget with the district-level GAD. But the township administration's role is complicated by a concurrent responsibility to the state/region government on issues of township development and budgeting in general. "If lateral co-ordination is involved, the GAD has to take the lead," observes one Mindat official.

The ebb and flow of the GAD's work is structured along two lines of reporting. As is the case with other township departments, the GAD is under the supervision of its parent department, and reports upward through the district and state to the union level in a "line of command" fashion, primarily through monthly progress reports. In addition, the TA also reports to the state government, though directives are more spontaneous, and typically concerned with requests for township data and the work of the committees on development activities. In Chin State, it was observed by GAD staff that assignments by the state government were generally more time-consuming than those issued by the district GAD - a trend that is likely associated with the large injection of capital to the state from the PRF and additional administration required in the development and ratification of project proposals. For this, the TA interacts and reports to the state-level GAD in its function as Secretariat for the state government, responding to the need to co-ordinate information on the progress and activities of a relatively large number of departments: There are 36 township-level entities in Mindat, 39 in Thantlang and 27 in Tonzang. This can represent a logistical challenge for co-ordinating integrated township planning, as was noted by a state-level official; "It is difficult to say what the total (integrated) township budget is at any point in time."<sup>9</sup>

This task of coordinating the township-level departments has been made somewhat easier recently by upgrading the function of TA from a Gazetted Officer to that of an Assistant Director, thereby making him/her the most senior government official at township level. In Chin State, this has imparted the TA with greater authority to co-ordinate and manage township affairs, and a higher level of responsiveness from other departments. As noted by one GAD staff member, "mutual respect was an issue in the past." The TA can now assign tasks to other departments, for which the respective head is obliged to report back to the TA directly. But despite best efforts (primarily through weekly inter-departmental meetings in Chin State), a continued focus on vertical planning by sector department means that the township development plans and those of individual sector departments are not well

9. Focus group discussion with state and district-level officials, Hakha.

interconnected. This is in particular troubling for integrated development planning of services (for the social sectors in particular), and makes it more difficult to integrate other important cross-sectoral issues, such as the environment, gender and livelihoods - which may have (unintended) implications for vulnerable or minority groups in their access to services and administration.

“In the past, (township development) budgets were estimated and approved top-down. Now we are preparing the budget from the township level,” observes one Thantlang official. Townships across the country are now required to submit development plans and proposals to the state government, listening to the needs of citizens. Though its approval is not required for submitting township proposals to the state government, and its role has partially been overtaken by the newly established committees, the Township Planning and Implementation committee (TPIC) (which was established to collect supportive data and facilitate bottom up planning) remains active in Chin State. This body holds responsibility for providing input into local development planning and for the timely and cost-effective management of projects. In most townships in Chin State it functions in practice as the driver and coordinator of participatory planning.

While the structures for a more participatory way of planning are in place, the degree to which citizens have been involved in planning so far has been limited and depended in large part on the discretion of the Village Tract Administrator (VTA) who was tasked to gather information on development priorities at the village level. Firstly, it is still early days, and the various committees and actors involved are still adapting to the process. “It was done in a hurry last year so the state did budgeting and planning, and I was not involved,” says one TPO. Secondly, the logistical and procedural challenges associated with gathering information from villages cannot be underestimated in the challenging terrain of Chin State. “It is very difficult to put together a budget including input from all villages,” observes the same respondent. Still, township administrations are developing their own practices to enhance bottom-up planning, with one township keeping track of special requests from the public made during regular field visits, alongside those channelled through by the VTA. While acknowledging the importance of participatory planning, several officials expressed some concerns that the importance of technical skills for sound planning might be ignored. “My worry is that the activities and services proposed are not well assessed or surveyed, and that some budgets are not well calculated,” observes one TA. In theory, sector departments and the planning department should be providing technical advice and conduct feasibility studies, though weak technical skills and limited co-ordination between relevant departments at the township level hamper the actual implementation.

The development of cross-sectoral budgets and plans is also challenged by the poor predictability of budget transfers from the state government. “To date, there are no standard norms to propose and calculate (projects) with certainty,” says one township official. “It is a challenge to predict in advance the amount of the budget we will get, and to plan accordingly.” The mapping team was shown a number of township development plans in Chin State, which consisted of a long list of priorities in the hope that the majority will be selected. “As it stands, we might prepare a total of 20 projects of which the state government picks five,” notes another officer. Conversations with TAs revealed that townships were beginning to “game” the process, and prioritise projects which they believed are more likely to be selected, as opposed to those perceived to be of highest priority. “Normally we prepare lower cost projects (i.e. electricity supply), anticipating that they are more likely to be approved by the

**“To date, there are no standard norms to propose and calculate (projects) with certainty. It is a challenge to predict in advance the amount of the budget we will**

get, and to plan accordingly”.

state government,” said one TA. Another impediment to medium-long term planning are the emerging inconsistencies between what is requested by townships, and what is reflected in the earmarked funds. A common observation across townships is that the activities and size of grants prioritised at the township committee level were not always granted in the final project funding approved by the state government. In Thantlang Township, support for a hydropower project at a particular village tract was requested - and duly granted to another village tract, to the confusion of local administrators.

### *2.1.3 Human resources*

**Vacancies are not a primary issue of concern across township departments, except for the municipal and rural development departments.**

Interviews with township officials revealed that vacancies were not a primary issue of concern for key departments, though the situation varied across departments (see Figure 3). With the exception of Tonzang, for which 60% of positions were filled, the GAD offices were well staffed, with around 90% of its positions filled. The most acute capacity challenge is currently being faced by the municipal and rural development departments - both responsible for water supply - who are facing staffing constraints as a result of a national restructuring of the rural development portfolio.

The formation of a new department to administer rural development functions has resulted in a situation where the human resources level in Department of Rural Development hovers at around 20% of the recommended level. Meanwhile, many staff have left the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA) to join the new entity - one state-level official cited that around 60% have been transferred, while between 30-35% have remained.<sup>10</sup> The DMA has approximately 30% of positions filled in Mindat and Thantlang, and none at all in Tonzang. In this transitional period, staff have been playing a dual role, working in the interests of both departments. But capacity is a more pervasive challenge for DMA given the extent to which the organisation has been decentralised. The DMA funds staff salaries almost entirely from municipal taxes<sup>11</sup> - there is no parent ministry, or budget support from the union level. The number of staff that can be hired depends upon local income and is therefore often limited by the low tax base in the poorer, smaller townships of Chin State.

**Women are poorly represented in managerial positions.**

In considering managerial roles in key departments, women are poorly represented across the board. The head of the GAD, planning, education, rural development and municipal affairs departments in the three townships of Mindat, Thantlang and Tonzang were all male as of January 2014 (with the exception of Mindat's Township Audit Office (TAO) which was headed by a woman) (see Figure 4). The gender balance is pronounced at the townships administration in Tonzang - the most isolated of the three visited - where women represented only 20% of staff, with the most senior being a Branch Clerk (the most senior clerical position).

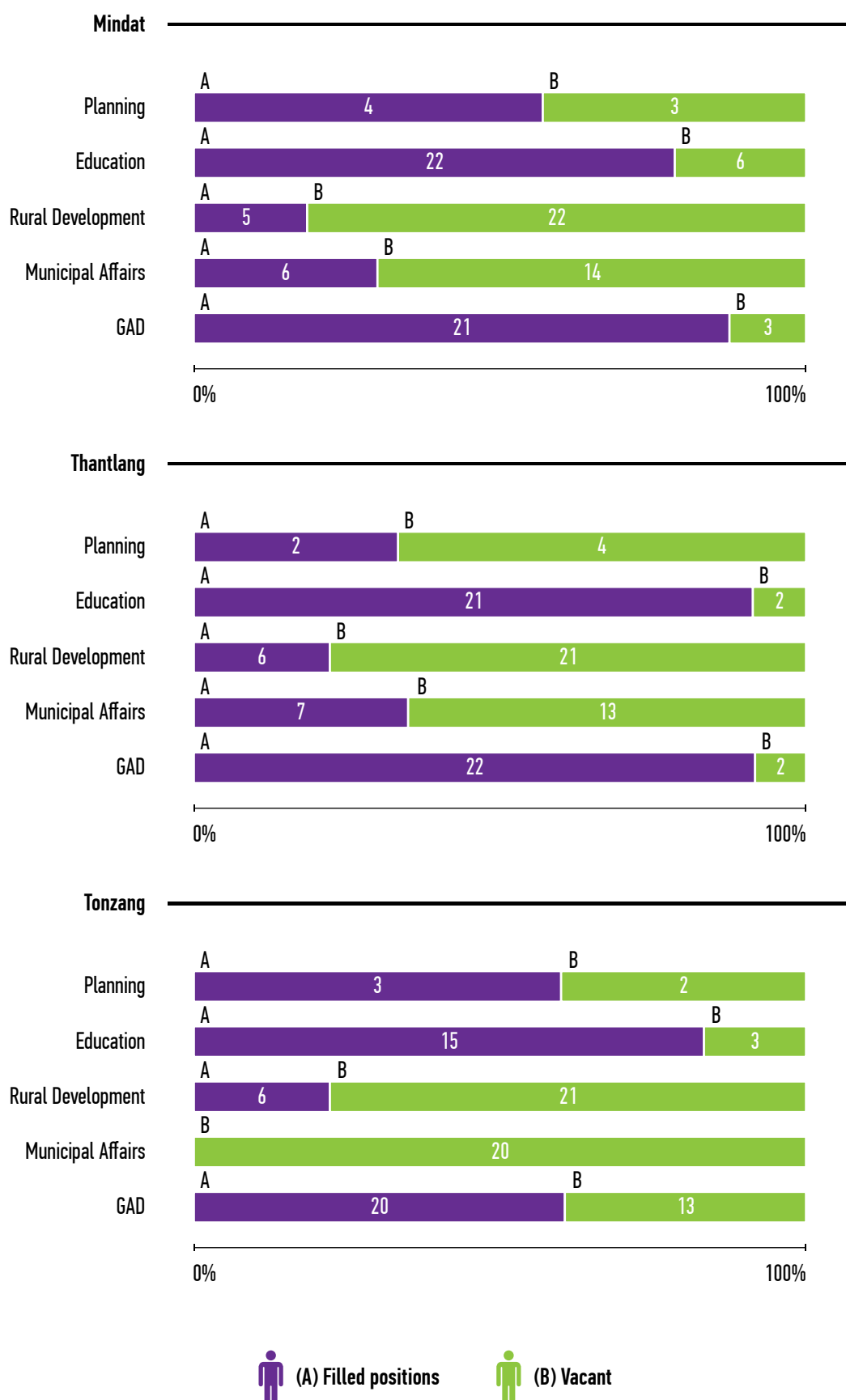
Bearing in mind that all senior administrative positions in Myanmar are filled by the union line ministry, this could be the result of a number of factors - the perceived risk of sending female administrators into what is considered a hardship position (senior civil servant staff are paid three times as compared to those working in regions), or a paucity of women administrators willing to work in a difficult posting - which may even vary between northern

10. Focus group discussion with state and district-level officials, Hakha, February 2014.

11. The municipal department receives 5% of local business tax from the revenue department, and 0.5% of land tax from the GAD.

**Figure 3: Staffing across key township departments (administrative positions)**

Source: Township departments, Chin State, January 2014.

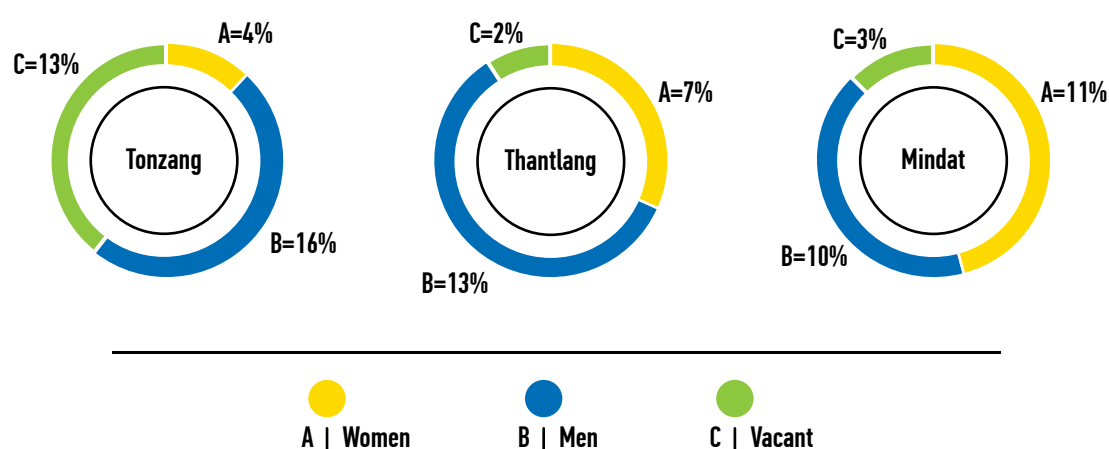


and southern Chin. Government positions on township committees are currently linked to specific job roles (i.e. heads of departments), and there is little room for township officials to influence the gender balance in either sector departments or the township committees. Rules or practices from the union ministry on assigning civil servants to leadership positions (for which a military background is sometimes required at the GAD) may have significant bearing here as well. While a detailed gender assessment is outside the scope of this analysis, this does represent a rich area for further study, particularly considering inter-state comparisons.<sup>12</sup>

Although the hiring and firing of all other teachers and managers remains a union-level responsibility, there is evidence of some limited decentralisation taking place. In the education sector for example, the recruitment of Assistant Junior Teachers now falls under the responsibility of the state/region education department.<sup>13</sup> Still, at the facility level, staffing concerns are perceived by the frontline service providers interviewed in Chin State to be more acute in schools, as opposed to health facilities. Just 6 of 23 healthcare staff (26%) thought that there was an inadequate number of qualified medical staff for its daily operations, against 18 of 30 primary-level teachers interviewed (60%) who responded that their school did not have the required number of teachers to provide good quality education to all children. This is a concern also shared by TEOs interviewed, who noted that human resource challenges are common when it comes to teaching staff. “Availability of teachers is poor, particularly in the more remote areas,” notes one education official. In addition, there is a state-level policy in place to deliver primary education in the common ethnic language, but administrators admitted that this is not always possible due to staffing constraints.

**Figure 4: Vacancies and gender composition in the township administration office (GAD)**

Source: Township departments, Chin State, January 2014.



### 2.1.4 Performance standards

Two trends emerge when considering performance standards in Chin State. Firstly, issues of physical access have implications for the process of performance monitoring of individual facilities across both the education and health sectors. Secondly, based on the mapping findings, health facilities are more challenged regarding performance management, with

12. In contrast, in Mon State women were found to hold managerial positions in key portfolios such as the Department of Planning and Department of Education.

13. Towards more child-focused social investments: Snapshot of Social Sector Public Budget Allocations and spending in Myanmar. UNICEF, 2013.

fewer incidences of monitoring visits reported and lower awareness of the departmental code of conduct.

The concept of performance management was understood by education and health officials as the timely reporting of basic indicators (i.e. coverage of facilities, attendance rates), which is understandable in the context of Myanmar's limited exposure to such concepts to date. Basic requirements for performance for monitoring have been established for primary schools, as per national guidance. School inspections are to be conducted by the Assistant TEOs on a twice-yearly basis, during which information is collected on 12 performance indicators for schools (of which seven pertain to quality and five to physical infrastructure). No specific staff performance indicators are included, though. Of the 30 teachers interviewed, 27 (90%) agreed that regular visits were taking place from the township DoE. The majority of primary school principals interviewed (11 of 14) reported at least one visit from the township education office, but the mapping team were informed of three primary schools that were not visited at all the last year. It is likely that such shortfalls are related to problems of accessing remote villages, which township education officials referred to as a major challenge in their ability to meeting their oversight objectives.

Standards for monitoring of healthcare facilities are also in place - higher level health staff are tasked to visit rural health centres on a regular basis to provide oversight, conduct inspections and stock audits, provide training and to collect information on key health indicators. Such visits have been relatively sparse in Chin state, and varied by facility - which again, is likely to be related to difficulties in accessing these facilities. Of the 23 healthcare staff interviewed, 65% (15 of 23) observed that township health officers were undertaking regular supervision and support visits, while 7 (31%) disagreed that this was taking place. Three healthcare facility managers of the 11 that were interviewed reported a visit by the State Medical Officer and a representative from the MoH respectively, and four reported at least one visit by the TMO.

Both primary school teachers and healthcare staff were familiar with the code of conduct established by the parent ministry. The vast majority of teachers interviewed (27 of 30, 90%) were aware of a code of conduct, while 97% (29 of 30) believed that the staff generally adhered to it. Awareness of a code of conduct was lower among healthcare staff - at 57% (13 of 23), while 61% (14 of 23) agreed that workers in their health facility generally adhered to it. In this context, the question that must be asked is whether citizens are also aware of such codes of conduct, and whether they have ever tried to hold the service-providers accountable on the basis of these regulations. This query could potentially be included in future surveys to assess the utility and relevance of these performance standards. A high awareness of departmental code of conducts and a fairly robust system of monitoring community-level facilities for primary education facilities in Chin State provides a basis for the development of more specific and tangible performance indicators to drive future efficiency gains. As mentioned above, this could begin with basic statistics on indicators such as absenteeism, or quality of service delivery (either in simple performance evaluations conducted onsite, or creating a means of collecting user feedback, through a drop box for instance). For the healthcare sector, weaker adherence to codes of conduct and monitoring of facilities is deserving of further examination at the facility level.

Issues of physical access have implications for the process of performance monitoring of education and health care facilities.

Primary school teachers and healthcare staff are familiar with a code of conduct established by the parent ministry.



### 2.1.5 Public satisfaction with service delivery

Citizens perceive improvements in education and health care services.

How effective and efficient is public services delivery in Chin State today? The satisfaction levels of service users are a relevant (but not the exclusive) indicator for these variables. The findings from the CRC indicate that roughly 50% of the respondents are conscious of improvements that have taken place in the past three years in relation to basic education and healthcare services.

Half (51%) of 576 respondents observed that education services have improved in their village over the past three years, attributing this to new or improved building infrastructure (52%) and more teaching staff (40%). On the basis of these improvements, 72% of the 286 respondents with children in primary school were satisfied with the quality of primary education delivered. Considering differences between townships, Matupi stands out with significant lower levels of satisfaction than the other townships with only 39% of parents in Matupi being satisfied with primary school education (see Figure 5). Poor maintenance of buildings and lack of infrastructure (48%), and insufficient teaching materials and furniture (31%) were cited as their major concerns. Note that this is only a snapshot of the situation in the limited number of villages that participated in the survey and does not necessarily mean that the overall level of satisfaction for all primary schools in Matupi Township is lower.

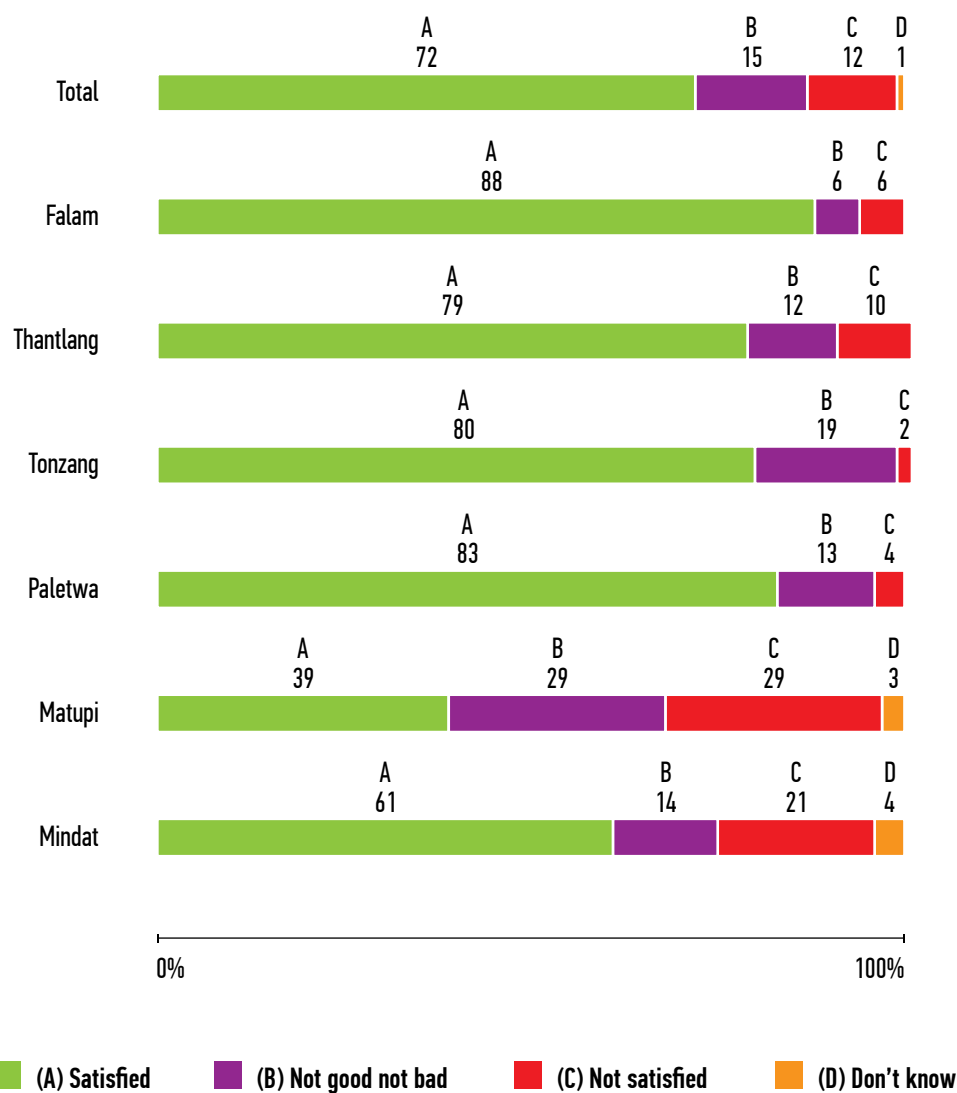
Myanmar continues to perform poorly on a number of international rankings for primary education, particularly when viewed against global standards set through initiatives such as *Education for All* (to which the country is signatory). Enrolment rates are low, and pass through rates from primary to middle school remain poor, and as observed in a recent sector study, “/.../the education system is characterised by poor quality, outdated pedagogy and insufficient geographic coverage, with rural and border areas being poorly served./.../. Roughly half of Myanmar’s children do not complete primary school.”<sup>14</sup> So while perceptions of user improvement indicate a positive change, one should be cautious using them as objective data that the quality of education has improved substantially. First of all, the quality

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

of education in Myanmar has been very poor over the last few decades, and therefore the starting point against which people compare progress is very low.

In addition, due to Myanmar's isolation, the reference frame of most people is the education situation as it has been over the past decades, and not the better education situation in other countries or even in Yangon. Furthermore, since there are no publically known standards against which ordinary citizens can compare the actual situation against the "ideal" situation, *any* positive change is seen as a big improvement. With this in mind, service users at the village tract/ward were consistent in assigning "bad" rankings in relation to the quality of education during the CDs with 11 out of 12 recording a "bad" score, along with one "very bad" score. Taken together, the mapping findings indicate that citizens are aware of the additional efforts made by government to improve education but a lot remains to be done in this regard. Suggestions from respondents on how this might be achieved vary by township, but the two most common were to build more classrooms or schools buildings (47%) and to increase the number of teachers (46%).

**Due to Myanmar's long isolation and the absence of publically known standards it is difficult for citizens to assess the quality of education.**



**Figure 5: Overall, are you satisfied with quality of the primary education at this primary school?**

Source: Citizen Report Card, Chin State, January 2014.

A similar story can be surmised for primary healthcare where 49% of all 576 respondents noted an improvement in primary healthcare service delivery over the past three years, which they attributed to a higher number of staff (31%) and new or upgraded health facilities (30%). Improvements were more often mentioned by urban service users (65%), and less by users in rural areas (41%).

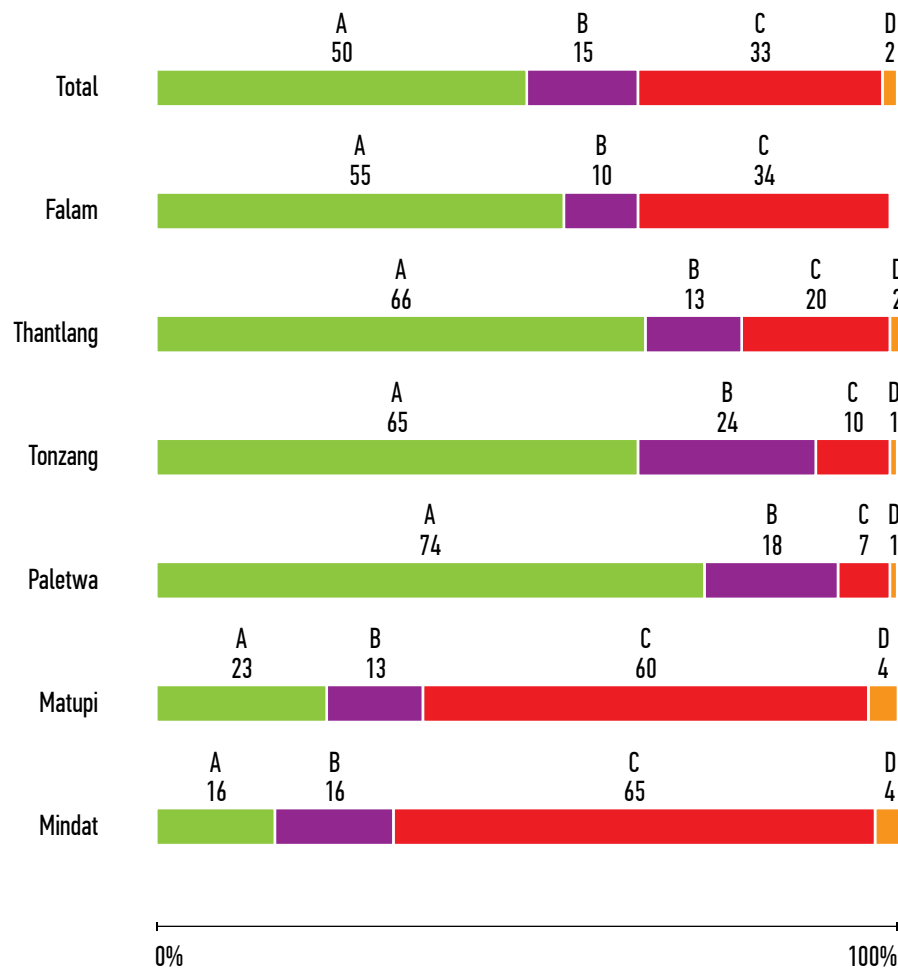
50% of the respondents mentioned that they were satisfied with the quality of primary health care in their village tract or ward (see Figure 6). Comparing the responses across the various townships, Matupi and Mindat stood out given the relatively low levels of satisfaction (with only 23% and 16% satisfied respectively) as compared to the likes of Paletwa with a “satisfied” score of 74%. These results are to be viewed in a national context in which service delivery for healthcare is known to be weak in remote, rural areas, and NGOs and the private sector provide the majority of health care services.

Low quality has resulted in even poor citizens moving to the private sector, which is utilised by an estimated 80% of patients nationally.<sup>15</sup> This is not necessarily true in poorer, less accessible context of Chin State, where the majority of CRC respondents utilise public-sector health facilities. Over half (56%) of 576 citizens polled used public facilities, with only 26% utilising private health services. This did not vary significantly between urban and rural respondents. Differences were also observed according to income group, with 55% percent of CRC respondents residing in houses with brick/stone wall made use of private services, compared to 32% of respondents living in houses with wooden or reed/grass/bamboo walls.

As with education, perceptions of healthcare quality are framed by the local context and offer a modest starting point by which to judge progress. Results are to be taken as an indication of a positive trend, rather than proof of substantive technical improvements that have taken place in the healthcare sector over the past few years. During the CD exercises, eight village tracts/wards rated primary health services as being “bad” or “very bad”, two as “not bad, not good”, and two as “very good”.

The lower scores regarding satisfaction of primary education and primary health care services recorded during the CD exercise cross-referenced with findings from the CRC interviews confirm the value of using different research techniques in the Myanmar setting in which individual respondents might still be reluctant to be completely open because of fear for possible repercussions. If user improvement indicate a positive change, one should be cautious using them as objective data that the quality of education has improved substantially. First of all, the quality of education in Myanmar has been very poor over the last few decades, and therefore the starting point against which people compare progress is very low.

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



■ (A) Satisfied    
 ■ (B) Not good not bad    
 ■ (C) Not satisfied    
 ■ (D) Don't know

Figure 6: Overall, are you satisfied with the quality of the primary health services in your village tract/ward?

Source: Citizen Report Card, Chin State, January 2014.

## 2.2 Transparency and rule of law

In the context of good governance, transparency is related to an open and free flow of information between stakeholders and between government and citizens. Processes, institutions and information are directly accessible, and both government and non-government actors share information and are open about the manner in which decisions are made and funds are utilised. In addition, existing laws and regulations should be fair, adhered to and enforced impartially.<sup>16</sup>

### 2.2.1 Information flow between stakeholders

Information flow between all stakeholder groups emerges as the major concern across townships in Chin State. During GSA discussions, it was raised collectively by government, committee members and civil society as being a top three governance priority for further discussion and action in five of the six selected townships (see Table 4). Findings from other tools used show that there are challenges related to the flow of information between layers of administration, and also between government and non-government actors.

**Table 4: Priority governance issues agreed upon by government, committee members and civil society**

Source: Township Government Self-Assessments, Chin State, February 2014.

	Falam	Matupi	Mindat	Paletwa	Thantlang	Tonzang	Times mentioned as a "top three" priority	Ranking
Limited information flow between all stakeholder groups		1st	Ranked	2nd	2nd	3rd	5	1
Insufficient citizen participation and involvement in decision making			Ranked	2nd	1st		3	2
Role and mandate of supportive committees (TDSC and TMAC) unclear	1st	2nd				2nd	3	2
Corruption and lack of government processes for fighting corruption	3rd	3rd				1st	3	2
Capacities of CSOs to conduct civic education is limited				1st	2nd		2	3
Government processes for dealing with complaints are too complex and cumbersome and not transparent	2nd		Ranked				2	3

16. The indicators underlying transparency and rule of law focus on those related to information supply and grievance redressal mechanisms, which are important for other variables like accountability (checks and balances), participation (communication and civic awareness) and equity (access) as well.

**Government-to-government:** As a continuation from the past, upward information flows between levels of administration are well established in Chin State, as exemplified by the reporting mechanisms in place across various departments, which typically go upward to the district, the next administrative layer. For the MoE, planning, budgeting, and decision-making remains centralised, with planning and decision-making taking place at the union level, with practically no budgetary discretion at the township level. In the healthcare sector too, budgets and plans are highly centralised, with the township health administration submitting plans and proposals upward for review, which is where the decision-making takes place. Requests for additional information from higher levels or from the TA and the state/region government for township affairs are dealt with on a more *ad hoc* basis.

Upward information flows between levels of administration are well established.

There are departmental mechanisms in place for staff to elevate internal issues and complaints/requests for resources to higher levels. Typically, such requests/complaints are communicated to the direct supervisor within the line department, as has been the case among primary school principals who lodged complaints/requests. Of the 14 principals interviewed, 8 had made complaints or requests on behalf of their schools regarding the insufficient number of teachers, 7 of which were communicated to the TEO - suggesting that lines of communication “upwards” between the various levels are available, and that a clear procedure is in place. However, with 5 responses “not successful” and 3 pending, the same could not be said for the downward flow of information and responsiveness from higher levels of administration to deal with internal complaints and requests. At health facilities, mixed responses indicate a lack of a consolidated feedback mechanism or processes. Of the 11 healthcare facility managers interviewed, 9 felt that there were not enough qualified health workers at their facility, of which 7 complained to a variety of higher bodies including the state health office (3), the TMO (2), the Station Health Officer and Health assistant (1 each). Of these complaints, 3 were “not successful”, 2 were “pending” while one was “partially successful.”

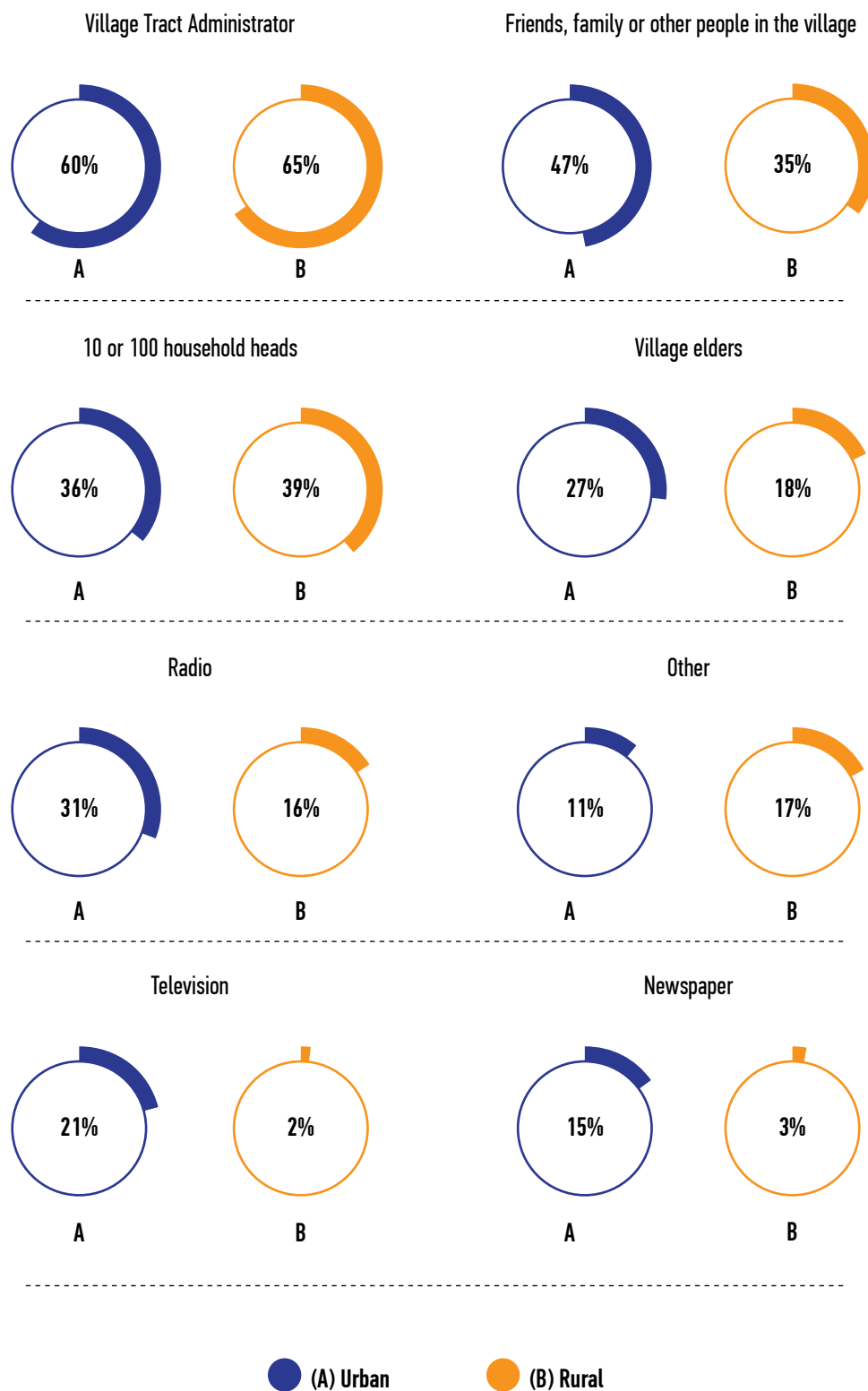
**Government to citizens:** The findings of the mapping exercises indicate that there are problems in the information flow from the township administration to its citizens. Information on government’s intentions and actions as well as administrative information has historically not been shared with the public, though high-profile examples such as the publication of the national 2012-13 budget represent a break with the past.<sup>17</sup> To date however, channels for dissemination of government news and information remain limited in Chin State. Underdeveloped communications infrastructure and the costs associated with the movement of people and goods limit wider access to the media, which remains a nominal source of information regarding government laws and directives in Chin State. Only 11% of the 499 responses on this question get such information from newspapers, 9% from television and 18% from the radio. The majority receive government news via the VTAs (47%), and even more so in the rural context, where 58% of respondents rely on the VTA for public information, versus 28% in urban areas. One third of the respondents (33%) receive news via the village grapevine, through word of mouth from friends, family or other villagers (33%), or from 10 or 100 Household Heads (28%). Very few respondents received information directly from government representatives at the township level - just 3% from the GAD, and 2% from concerned departments.

There are problems in the information flow from township administrations to communities. Channels for dissemination of government news and information remain limited in Chin, and the Village Tract Administrator is the only source of information for many citizens in Chin’s rural areas.

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

**Figure 7: In what way were you informed about the 2010 Union Parliament elections? (more answers were possible)**

Source: Citizen Report Card, Chin State, January 2014.



This current situation represents a continuation of the past, also in the way in which the 452 respondents had learned about the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw 2010 elections. The media remained a secondary source of information for rural respondents, but was more accessible to urban respondents, 31% of which relied on the radio, 21% on television and 15% on newspapers. Again, the VTA was the key information source for both urban (60%) and rural (65%) respondents, followed by community-level sources (see Figure 7).

The importance of the VTA as the most important channel for public information is confirmed by respondents in their selection of the most effective and reliable way to be informed about elections and other government news. 39% of urban respondents chose the VTA as did nearly a half (46%) of all rural respondents. 10 or 100 Household Heads were preferred by 15% of rural and 10% of urban based respondents. Friends, family and other villagers were the next preference, trailed by the media which emerged as a nominal choice.

The centrality of the VTA in the dissemination of public information creates some additional challenges for adequate information flow between government and citizens in the Chin State context. VTAs meet their TA, who is their main source of information, normally on a monthly basis, during which the VTAs gather government news and information to share with their communities, and receive instructions (as well as to collect their salary).<sup>18</sup> This meeting also serves as a conduit for villages to be able to communicate concerns on public service delivery and other relevant information to the township administration. The GAD will inform sector departments of any relevant issues raised, to which the department head is obliged to respond, reporting back to the township administration office on the final resolution of problems. Yet in practice, Chin State's inhospitable terrain presents a major logistical challenge for such meetings to take place at all. Travelling from some of the more remote village tracts to the township office can be time-consuming and often impossible during the rainy season (May-October). Meetings in the remote township of Tonzang are particularly difficult, with some VTAs convening with township officials in the Sagaing Division township of Kalay as an alternative.

In the past year, the Tonzang TA has travelled to distant villages to hold a meeting for VTAs where access to the administrative hub was too challenging for a number of VTAs under his management. Such lack of access means that it is unlikely that all village tracts are receiving information from the township administration on a regular basis, nor that their interests and concerns are made known to the township administration.

The *Ward or Village Tract Administration Law* outlines the duties of the VTA, emphasising the key functions to maintain national unity, uphold citizen's rights under the Constitution, promote peace and stability, protect rights to customary practices, handle local emergencies and co-operate with various departments (see Chapter 3.3 Administration for further details).<sup>19</sup> The Law makes little mention of a "conduit" role to be played by the VTA in conveying public information either downwards from the TA to the village tract and village level, nor upwards from the people to higher levels of administration, emphasising security related matters and monitoring and oversight of development projects as core functions.

18. Kempel, S. and Myanmar Development Research, *Village Institutions and Leadership in Myanmar: A View from Below*. UNDP, unpublished, 2012.

19. Chapter 6, *Ward or Village Tract Administration Law*, 2012.

This is consistent with the perceptions of the VTAs that were interviewed; 11 of the 12 VTAs thought that ensuring peace and security in the village were among their most important functions, along with a duty to raise village-level issues to township administration (11 of 12 VTAs thought this was an important function). Consulting and involving villagers in decision-making at the village level was on the other hand seen being as important by only 1 of the 12 VTAs, while the imperative to provide villagers with information and directives from government was seen to be important for only 3 of 12 VTAs interviewed (see Table 5). The prevailing priorities of the 12 VTAs in Chin State are more consistent with the letter of the Law, than with the representative mandate inferred on them as elected officials.

**Table 5: Selection by Village Tract Administrators of their most important functions (multiple responses possible)**

Source: Frontline Service Provider interviews, Chin State, January 2014.

Rank	Function	Responses
=1	Ensure peace and security in the village	11
=1	Bring village problems to the township administration	11
3	Mediate when there are conflicts or problems between villagers	9
4	Law enforcement	5
5	Provide villagers with information and directives from government	3
6	Ensure that people participate in community labour	3
7	Consult and involve villagers in decision-making at village level	1
8	Birth and death registration	1
		n=12

Clearly, the role of the VTA in disseminating information, and his ability to do so, is important in a context where other means of communication remain underdeveloped. “Even if the information is well communicated at the township meeting, the challenge is for VTAs to pass it on to the public,” says one TA. The extent to which this is actually happening in Chin State is problematic from a citizen perspective with only 33% of the 576 respondents stating that township government was providing them with sufficient information about plans for new projects in the village (see Figure 8).

The disconnect in perceptions regarding the quality of information flow between government and citizens was also apparent when 10 of the 12 VTAs who were interviewed (83%), mentioned that the township administration and other government departments were providing citizens with enough information about development projects in the village tract. The extent to which this situation is localised – and thus contingent on the performance or access to information by individual VTAs became clear during the Community Dialogue exercises, when service users (citizens) were asked to score how the government is informing people about new projects and plans in the 12 village tracts/wards. The replies were mixed, varying from “good and very good” in five village tracts/wards; “not good, not bad” in two, and “bad or very bad” in five as well (See Table 6).

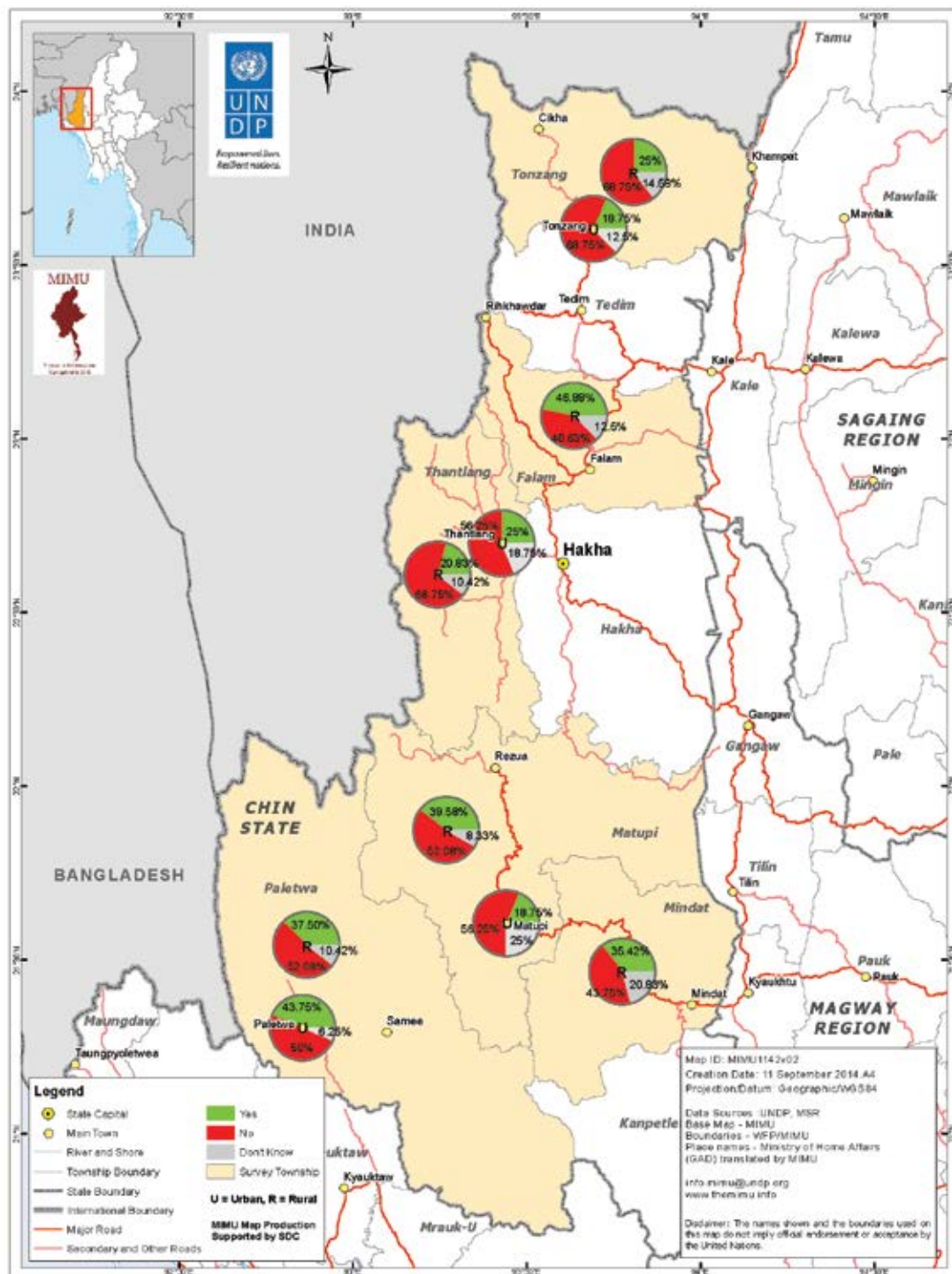


Figure 8: Is the township government informing you enough about the plans it has for new projects in their village tract/ward like e.g. schools, roads, health facilities, etc.?

Source: Citizen Report Card, Chin State, January 2014.

**Table 6: Summary of service providers' and service users' ratings on local governance performance and service delivery**

Source: Community Dialogues. Chin State, February 2014.

Key:

0 = no answer given

1 = very bad

2 = bad

3 = not bad, not good

4 = good

5 = very good

Township	Falam		Matupi		Mindat		Paletwa		Thantlang		Tonzang	
Township	Village tract	Zungthe		Valangpi	M'sizaw	Ro		Meezar		Thlualam		Sung Fatt
Village tract			Lungvan				Myoma		No. 2		Khawon	
Service providers	14	15	15	13	10	13	12	18	11	13	15	16
Service users	34	22	27	31	26	18	28	39	14	23	26	37
Total	48	37	42	44	36	31	40	57	25	36	41	53
Male	32	22	25	22	21	18	22	34	13	20	19	37
Female	16	15	17	22	15	13	18	23	12	16	22	16
Quality of primary education, service providers	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	1	3	2
Quality of primary education, service users	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Equal treatment in primary education, service providers	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4
Equal treatment in primary education, service users	4	5	2	4	2	4	3	5	3	4	4	4
Quality of primary healthcare, service providers	1	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	1	3	1
Quality of primary healthcare, service users	1	2	2	2	5	2	2	3	3	1	2	1
Equity in treatment in primary healthcare, service providers	4	4	4	4	3	4	2	4	4	1	4	4
Equity in treatment in primary healthcare, service users	4	5	3	4	2	4	2	4	2	5	5	2
Informing people about new project and plans by the government, service providers	3	2	4	4	3	3	2	4	3	5	4	3
Informing people about new project and plans by the government, service users	4	5	2	4	3	3	1	4	2	4	1	1
Involvement of citizens in decision-making, service providers	4	4	4	5	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Involvement of citizens in decision-making, service users	4	5	4	4	2	4	1	4	3	5	1	2
Trust in government, service providers	4	4	2	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3
Trust in government, service users	2	5	3	3	2	4	4	3	3	3	2	2
Maintaining peace and security, service providers	4	4	4	4	4	1	4	4	4	4	3	4
Maintaining peace and security, service users	4	5	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	2	2

### 2.2.2 Safety and security

Regarding the maintenance of law and order, the findings indicate a high level of public satisfaction. Government service providers inspired confidence in their ability to maintain public safety and security according to citizens participating in the CDs, in which 9 out of the 12 citizen groups rated government efforts “good” or “very good” in this aspect.

**There is a high level of public satisfaction with law and order.**

There is a high sense of public safety and security among survey respondents as well: 92% of (576) respondents reported that they felt safe in their village tract/ward at the moment, while 42% noted a discernable improvement in security over the past three years. Although being an important component of and prerequisite for improved rule of law, the gains made in law and order do not automatically mean that the rule of law has improved as well, as was observed by the UNDP Access to Justice Mapping in Ayeyarwaddy, Mandalay and Shan States/Regions.<sup>20</sup> Public trust in government depends in large part on the predictability of government action, and on whether it applies existing rules and regulations in a fair and equal manner, actively detecting and sanctioning misconduct by government staff. High ratings for law and order therefore do little to mitigate issues of public trust in the actions of the authorities or offset low legal awareness of public issues, which is a barrier for citizens in attempts to seek grievance redressal.



### 2.2.3 Grievance redressal

The handling of complaints is not explicitly mentioned as a function of the TMC or TMAC in national guidelines, though the TDSC is required to “submit to the TMC cases of genuine loss suffered by the people in the township and assist in solving them.”<sup>21</sup> Across the committees and sector departments in Chin State, incidents of complaints are relatively infrequent. “We get requests (for roads, schools, food) rather than complaints,” observes one Thantlang-based administrator. “These tend to be addressed to the GAD for sharing and discussion

**Incidents of formal complaints including those related to land are relatively infrequent in**

20. Summary report: Rule of Law and Access to Justice Mapping. UNDP, 28 February 2014.

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

Chin. This is partially due to the existence of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms.

with the committees.” In cases that formal complaints do arise, the township committees tend to play a mediating role, with examples emerging of committee members playing a role in brokering solutions to community problems. In one case, citizens complained to the township committees (TMC, TDSC and TMAC) that a local contractor who was selected to upgrade the road network in Thantlang was avoiding the cost and effort of building optimal new routes, and simply upgrading existing ones instead. The committees jointly made an assessment and filed a complaint to the state government, resulting in the contractor altering its approach and ultimately constructing a more convenient, less dangerous route. Nonetheless, complaints do not take up the majority of time for administrators and committee members, who instead devote a large part of their efforts to planning and co-ordination for township development projects.

Several respondents attributed this to the existence of customary practices in Chin State, meaning that most grievances are resolved through traditional mechanisms. “There are fewer cases in the courts as a result of more customary laws and practices, so often conflicts and issues are resolved in their own way outside of the formal systems,” observes one township official in Mindat. In addition, the mapping team found that church pastors and reverends serve as community leaders, and often act as mediators in local conflict situations as well. This is consistent with observations by the Rule of Law and Access to Justice Mapping exercise that was conducted by UNDP<sup>22</sup> in Shan, Ayeyarwaddy and Mandalay States/ Regions, which confirmed that informal justice systems can be favoured by local people given their affinity to long-held cultural norms, and the inexpensive and predictable nature of grievances addressed through traditional systems.

**Land disputes:** Another area where Chin State diverges from other states/regions in Myanmar<sup>23</sup> is that land disputes are rarely mediated through the formal system of grievances. This is partly related to the customary rotational systems of farming, which has resulted in fewer disputes around land rights.

“Customary rotational systems (of farming) that are practiced here are very different from other states/regions, so land regulations have minimal effect,” observes one Tonzang official. Land disputes taken to the township administration in Northern Chin are few and far between, though there is a higher prevalence of complaints in Mindat Township, where around 2-3 are reported to the GAD every month. As a result, the TFMC was observed to be largely inactive in Tonzang and Thantlang townships - and the onus is on the remaining three committees (TMC, TDSC and TMAC) to review complaints and reach consensus on township affairs.<sup>24</sup>

The mapping findings are also indicative of how citizens might handle disputes at the level of the community. 73% of 576 citizens surveyed would approach the VTA as a first recourse - which is not necessarily inconsistent with the preference for traditional systems. Previous research at the village level found that in Chin State VTAs often belonged to families that

22. Ibid.

23. Both in relation to the states/ regions of Shan, Ayeyarwaddy and Mandalay researched for the UNDP Access to Justice Mapping, and the Local Governance Mapping results from Mon State.

24. Another driver for its dormancy could be the perceived “weakness” of the committee given the composition and seniority of its members. In Tonzang, this was noted as a factor by one township official, observing that four of its members were not even gazetted officers within the nation-wide organisational structure.

have traditionally held village leader positions,<sup>25</sup> though this may have shifted somewhat with the mandated election for the VTA outlined in the *Ward/Village Tract Administration Law* of 2012. The fact that land disputes are rarely elevated by the VTA upwards to the township level to be handled administratively, or make it to the courts (only 1% of citizen respondents cite the magistrate or courts as a path of first recourse) is significant with respect to understanding and improving upon existing grievance redressal processes. One committee member spoke of the “costs” associated with formal systems, including the difficulties of actually withdrawing a case if parties opt to resolve matters outside of the courts once the process has commenced; delays associated with seeking to justice via the township administration; and that such mechanisms may not reflect “rights” as per Chin customs and traditions.

The existence of well-functioning traditional systems for addressing grievances and conflicts does relieve the formal system of a heavy burden, seeing as committees and government officials spend a lot of time on such matters in other states/regions. Within the framework of governance however, it is important to assess whether these mechanisms are impartial and fair or accessible to minorities, women and disadvantaged group - though gaining insight on what such mechanisms might look like was beyond the scope of this research.

## 2.3 Accountability

Well-functioning accountability mechanisms are the cornerstone of a sustainable and healthy democracy. In practice, accountability is related to the sharing of information by government officials on their actions, justifying the decisions that they have taken to appropriate oversight mechanisms, and adequate means of sanction and reward. In relation to citizens and civil society, “answerability” relates to the institutions and practices for “social accountability” of government officials to the people.

### 2.3.1 Checks and balances

Anti-corruption and anti-bribery laws and policies are issued from the union level - most recently, in the form of an *Anti-Corruption Law* in August 2013 - while civil servants are obliged to work in accordance with the codes of conducts issued by their respective line ministries. In addition, township departments are also subject to regular checks by the Township Audit Office (TAO), which conducts audits twice a year for larger departments and once a year for the smaller ones. The TAO also audits development projects funded from the state, sometimes with the participation of the relevant VTA, reporting upwards to the district to their own line ministry and that of the department being audited, should they find irregularities or misuse of funds.

**Anti-corruption practices in Chin are of a post-facto nature.**

Though there are a number of practices in place to deter and weed out malfeasance at the township level, even with the passing of the Anti-Corruption Law, no explicit anti-corruption policy was operational at the level of the township. The lack of policies and mechanisms for

25. Kempel, S. and Myanmar Development Research, *Village Institutions and Leadership in Myanmar: A View from Below*. UNDP, unpublished, 2012.

fighting and especially preventing corruption at the township level was highlighted during three of the six GSA exercises by government, committee members and civil society as a priority. Good corruption prevention mechanisms will also improve public procurement, as was illustrated in a recent case from Thantlang Township. The state government in Hakha advertised a request for proposals for the construction of a new school in Thantlang in the Hakha based press only and did not invite construction firms based in the township. “The state education department informed the public one day before the tender submission day,” notes one township official. “So there was only one particular construction company that submitted a tender without competition.”

As with other states/regions existing anti-corruption practices are of a post facto nature in Chin State. Audits are conducted related to projects that were completed in a closed financial period, and as such more geared towards catching offenders than preventing corruption. Generally, financial regulations and practices tend to focus on control at the transaction level - as exemplified by a focus at the township level on monitoring transactions and the flow of funds through designated bank accounts, “/.../ where a large amount of supplementation and virement takes place.”<sup>26</sup> As observed by the World Bank with regards to public financial management in Myanmar, “there is a high degree of delegated negotiability in areas such as revenue collection. The effect is to provide a framework of control and practice, but to leave the system open to abuse by those who would seek to make use of that vulnerability.”<sup>27</sup> Our observations in Chin State townships are consistent in the sense that there is a heavy reliance on the TAO as a formal check, as opposed to internal review mechanisms and the definition and adherence to minimal standards.

**Gifts and donations:** In considering the extent to which unethical practices may impact services delivery at the facility level, the attitudes of parents and primary teachers regarding the culture of gift-giving can be telling. 60% of the 286 respondents who answered this query have never provided any gifts to teachers, but the gifting of donations and presents to teachers does take place in Chin State: 34% “sometimes” have and 5% “always”. This trend was more pronounced for rural than urban parents - 38% of rural respondents “sometimes” provided gifts, versus 22% in rural areas. Further, 6% of rural respondents “always” gave gifts or donations against just 1% of urban parents. In sum, 67% of 110 respondents stated that offering gifts to teachers was voluntary, while 35% of parents thought they were obliged and 2% felt obliged (see Figure 9).

When asked if they believed that their primary schools were free from corrupt practices, all 30 teachers agreed, or strongly agreed. Of the 11 principals interviewed, the vast majority (8) thought that education staff in their schools were honest, in that the money or goods are recorded and are used for buying equipment or supplies. Though primary school education is free in Myanmar, there are pressures to pay additional “fees” in some cases for ceremonies, equipment and there is an expectation that children should attend paid tuition, run by the local schoolteacher. As observed in a recent study on the education sector, this is a primary source of income for many local teachers.<sup>28</sup> This culture however, along with lower salaries, can contribute to creating an environment for malfeasance and discrimination. This is an

26. Public Financial Management Performance Report, Republic of the Union of Myanmar. World Bank, May 2013.

27. Ibid.

area for administrators to monitor and be in a position to provide further clarity to FSPs, potentially through revisiting the ministry codes of conduct or the provision of additional guidance.

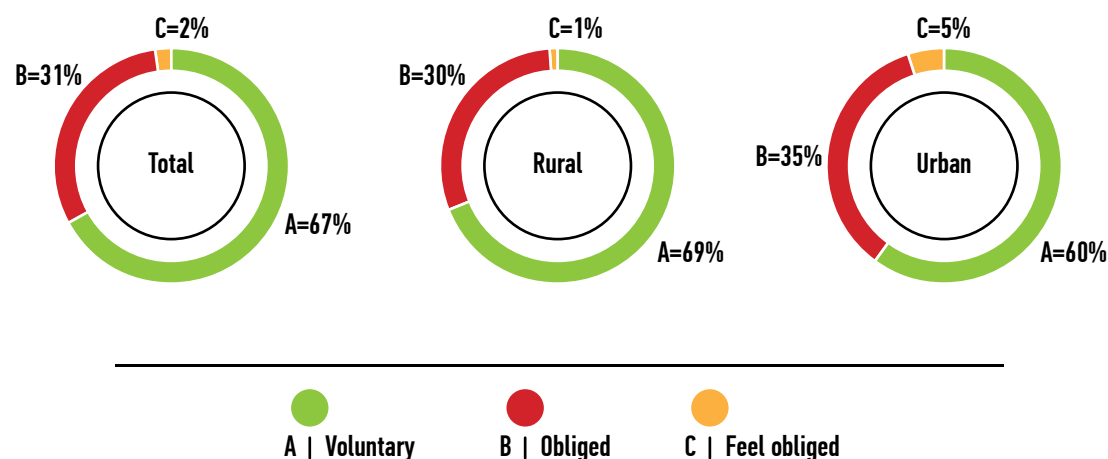


Figure 9: Do you feel that paying a donation or a gift to the teachers is voluntary or do you feel obliged to pay?

Source: Citizen Report Card, Chin State, January 2014.

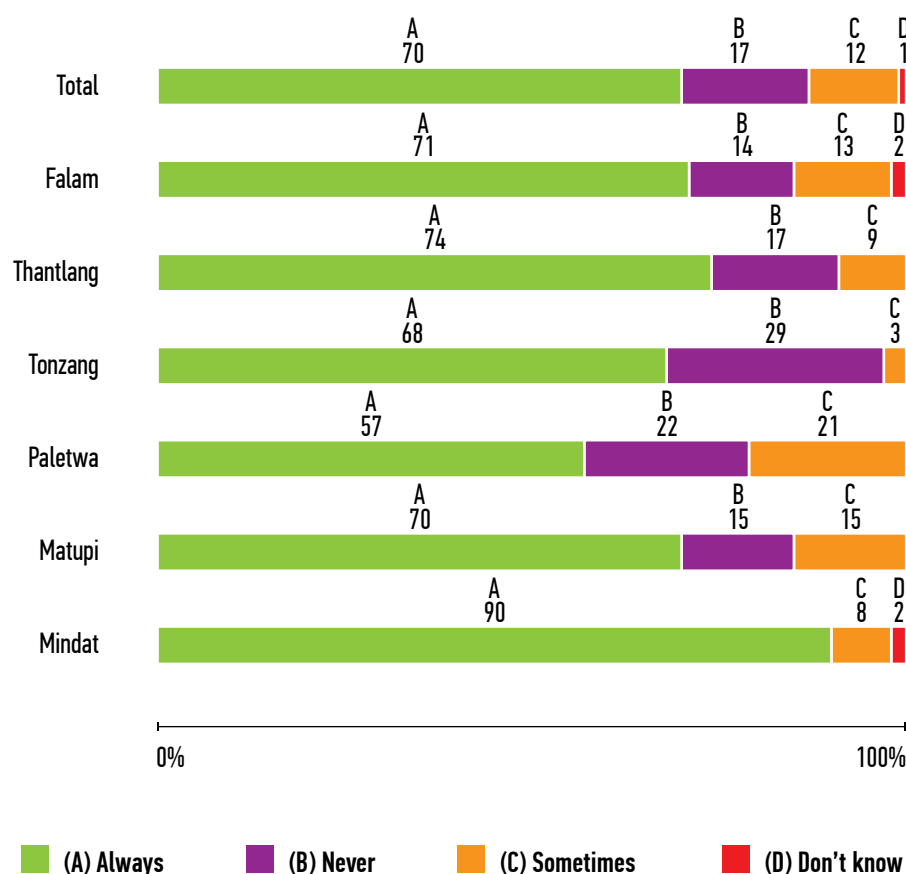
**Payment for medicines:** In 2013, the MoH made generic (non-specialist) drugs available to patients at public-health facilities for free of charge. The vast majority of health facility managers, 8 of 11, answered that patients do not have to pay for essential drugs or medical supplies, with three, observing that patients, always or sometimes, have to pay for those that are not available at the clinic. Yet, of the 489 users of public health services, 70% always paid for medicines at their regular health facility, while 12% sometimes did, and 17% did not have to pay at all (see Figure 10). Moreover, 78% of those who had to pay for their medicines responded that they did not receive an explanation as to why, while 15% always did, and 4% only sometimes. An urban patient is more likely to receive an explanation (21%) than a patient in the rural areas (12%). The majority of those who did receive an explanation were advised that the government supplied only some medicines, while others had to be bought (93%), which may be pertinent to issues of accessibility. Researchers were told of the challenges of transporting medicine supplies to Northern Chin State, which involved transportation via the Sagaing Division township of Kalay.

**A majority of public health users report they always pay for medicines at their regular health facility.**

This data cannot be reflective of any systematic corruption, as the rules related to the distribution of drugs and medical supplies are not clearly articulated, and there are some specialist medicines in circulation that are not subsidised by the MoH. In addition, health staff often assist patients with non-government supplied medicines once their regular stock is depleted and charge people for the actual costs. Whether they also sell the drugs provided by government or make a profit on the drugs bought on the market is not clear from our research. To this point, the majority (62%; 14 of 23) of healthcare staff interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that public health facilities in Myanmar are in general free from corruption. But these results are indicative of poor understanding on both sides on the rights of patients and potentially supply issues related to medicine provision and at the same time creates an environment that facilitates corruption or mismanagement.

Figure 10: Do you always, sometimes or never have to pay for the medicines that the nurse or doctor provides you or a household member (at the health facility you frequent)?

Source: Citizen Report Card  
Chin State, January 2014.



The township management's capacity to prevent corruption is considered weak by township officials, committee members and civil society groups.

Indeed, township officials, committee members and civil society groups collectively attributed the lowest scores during the GSA exercises to the capacity of township management to prevent corruption (see Table 7). At the very least, the low score points to gaps in mutual understanding between service providers and service users, which, at best, can erode trust between citizens and the public sector, and at worst, can lead to systematic and unchecked corruption in the delivery of basic services.

### 2.3.2 Public trust

The Access to Justice Mapping team observed a “gap in public trust” in the justice system, as confirmed by both government officials and civil society in Ayeyarwaddy, Mandalay, and Shan State/Regions.<sup>28</sup> Observations from the Local Governance Mapping indicates that this deficit extends to governance institutions in Chin State - but that results vary significantly by village tract/ward. During the CDs held in the 12 village tracts/wards across the six selected townships, government officials and FSPs (supply) and end users (demand) came together to discuss the quality of local governance and service delivery, and to identify collaborative strategies to find local solutions to local problems. As part of the exercise, both groups were asked to separately rate various features related to service delivery and governance, and rate these on a scale of 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good).

28. Summary report: Rule of Law and Access to Justice Mapping, UNDP, 28 February 2014.

	Falam	Matupi	Mindat	Paletwa	Thantlang	Tonzang	Average
a. Corruption prevention activities by township management	7	7	7	6	5	7	6
b. Attention to the township management in the interests of people with special needs	7	6	8	6	7	7	7
c. Involvement of township committees in decision making	4	10	9	6	8	8	7
d. Interaction between committee members (TDSC and TMAC) and citizens	8	7	8	6	10	8	8
e. Information flow from township government to committees and citizens	8	8	9	5	9	8	8
f. Overall functioning of township management	8	9	9	7	7	9	8
g. Leadership of township management in developing a clear vision	7	9	9	7	8	10	8
h. The way in which township management is dealing with complaints	9	7	9	8	9	8	8
i. Civic education activities implemented by the CSOs	9	5	9	4	11	11	8
j. Ability of CSOs to lobby and advocate for the needs of members or target groups	10	7	9	7	9	12	9
k. Activities of CSOs to contribute to development of the township	11	10	10	10	10	9	10

**Table 7: Combined ratings on existing capacity attributed by government, committee members and civil society groups during township GSA**

Source: Government Self-Assessment, Chin State, January 2014.

Key:  
1 = very bad  
2 = bad  
3 = not bad, not good  
4 = good  
5 = very good

Scores are the combined rating attributed by three groups- government, committee members and civil society.

Range = 0-15  
Response range = 6-12  
High = 11-12  
Not high, not low = 9-10  
Low = 6-8

Ratings on public trust (defined as government being reliable in terms of actually doing what it says it will do; being respectful to its citizens; and generating confidence that it acts with the best interests of its citizens in mind) varied significantly across the 12 village tracts/wards. Service providers from seven village tracts/wards rated trust in government (themselves) as “good”, three as “not bad, not good” and two as “bad. Meanwhile, three groups of service users rated trust in government as being “very good” or “good”, five as “not bad, not good” and four village tracts/wards as “bad”. For example, in Zungthe Village Tract in Falam Township, service users acknowledged that the government implemented the projects that they had promised, made loans available for citizens and employed more teachers, resulting in a “very good” trust in government rating. In Losoru Village Tract, also in Falam, services users attributed a “bad” rating due to a lag in allocating funding for an approved project to improve the roads, water supply and to build a health facility, and importantly that “there were many needs conveyed to government but very little was accomplished.”

Another proxy indicator for the level of public trust is the gap between the scores attributed to performance by both service providers and service users. A paucity of trust between service providers and citizens appears likely to exist in Sung Fatt Village Tract and Khawon Ward in Tonzang, where service providers scored themselves as “good”, while users rated performance as “bad” across a number of variables - suggesting a divergence of expectations on both sides with respect to governance and the delivery of public services (see Table 6). While no clear patterns emerged, the variance in rankings suggests that trust in government is a localised issue, based on existing relations between front line service providers and service users rather than the performance of government at higher levels. This underpins the

**Trust in government is a localised issue largely based on existing relationships between frontline service providers and service users**

rather than performance of government at higher levels.

community context for broader government reform efforts to drive bottom-up participation. Such outcomes of the CDs highlight the importance of open and constructive dialogue between government and its citizens in managing expectations from citizens and in keeping the community informed about developments that affect their lives.

## 2.4 Participation

Citizens' participation as one of the cornerstones of good local governance relates to the degree in which citizens are provided with on the one hand an opportunity to engage actively in decision-making processes and on the other hand are able to make use of that opportunity. Citizen participation can take the form of representation, through elected representatives with a mandate to represent the interest of constituents, or direct participation through public hearings or community meetings, or through lobby and advocacy activities of civil society organisations. Citizens can only participate actively if they know their rights and are able to voice them, either directly, through CSOs, or through their representatives.

### 2.4.1 Engagement

Since 2011, government has launched various initiatives to reinforce citizens' participation in local planning and local development. The establishment of the township and village tract development supportive committees as consultative bodies representing the interest of various groups in society (business, workers, farmers, elders and social organizations), together with the election of VTAs in June 2013 are important steps in developing a governance system that reinforces participation of local organizations and citizens in local development. In Myanmar's current context, the reality is that the vast majority of (rural) citizens will participate through representation of their interests by MPs, and directly by attending public meetings at the local level. Participation in the 2010 union elections for the Union Hluttaw was moderately high among CRC respondents in Chin State (576) of which 78% voted. There were no major differences in participation among urban (78%) and rural (79%), or male (80%) and female (78%) voters.

Around half of respondents had participated in public meetings.

To what extent are the people of Chin State engaging in public meetings? This is important in the sense that meetings are the only viable option for direct participation immediately available to most citizens in Myanmar: making it important to understand if they indeed are taking place, and whether citizens are being afforded the opportunity to attend. Around half (51%) of 576 respondents had actually participated in a village tract/ward meeting, and again people in rural areas were more likely to do so (61%) than those in urban areas (32%), which is unsurprising given the reliance on village administration for local information and matters of governance. Participation in meetings varies across townships, at a low of 34% in Tonzang and 36% in Matupi, to a high of 88% in Mindat indicating that it is likely at the discretion of the government officials at the township and village tract level as to whether people are involved.

Secondly, are people even being given the opportunity to participate the first place? In Myanmar context, where public meetings are the single means of participation for the majority of people, the extent to which they are taking place serves as an indication of the

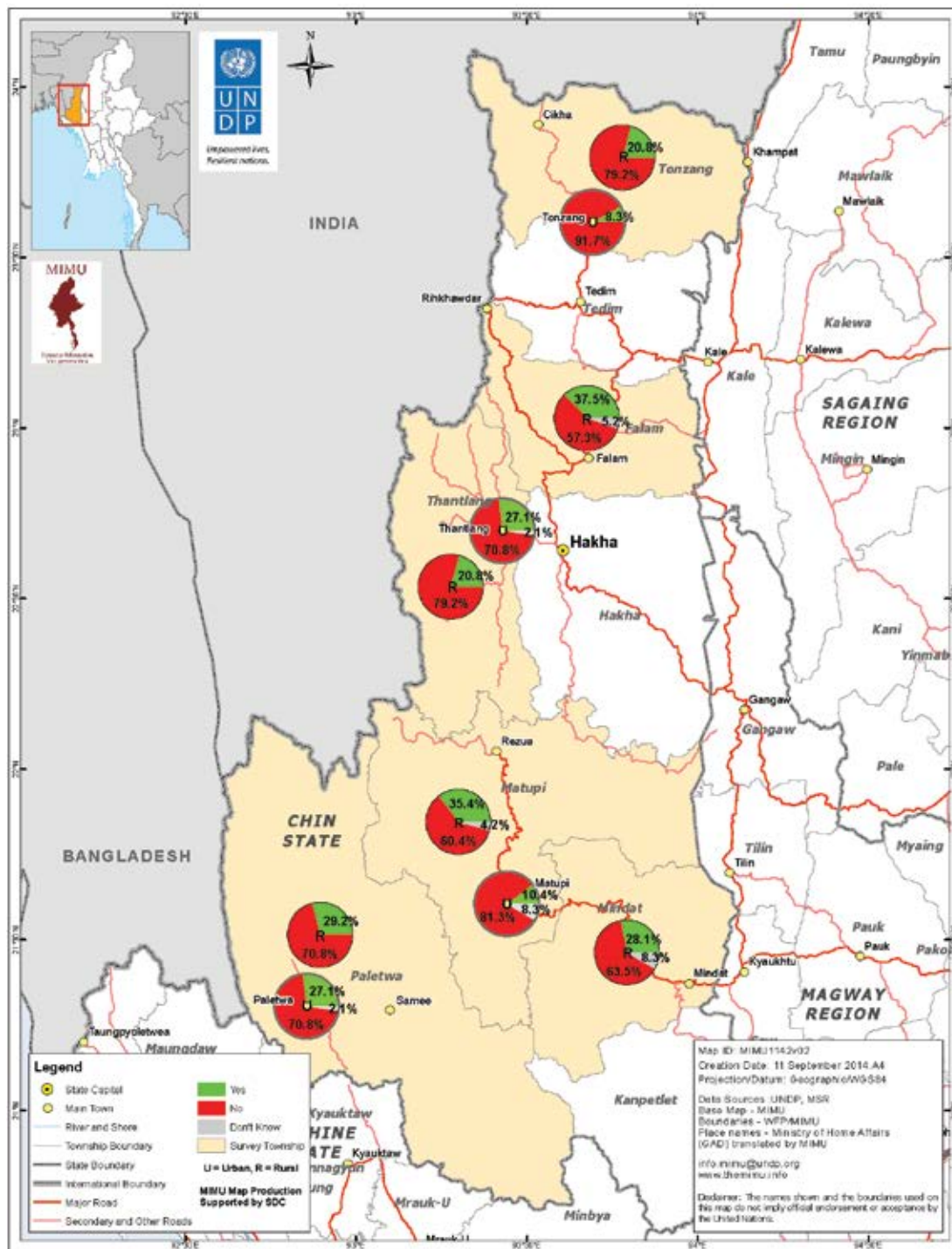
extent to which different sectors are seeking to consult citizens on planning and decision-making. Of the 576 citizens surveyed, 26% have been invited to a meeting about development projects and problems in village, while 70% have not. People who lived in rural areas were more likely to be invited (30%) than those in urban areas (18%) – perhaps given a heavier reliance on local administrators for information in general. The situation varied across the representative townships: The proportion of people who had been invited to such a meeting was highest in Falam (38%) and lowest in Tonzang (15%), (see Figure 11). 34% per cent of (286) parents have been invited to or involved in discussions on primary education at their village tract/ward. In contrast, just 8% of all 576 respondents have been invited to or involved in a meeting with government officials on the health services, and again, only 8% of all respondents have ever been invited to a meeting to talk about the water services in the village tract/ward.

The low proportion of those who have been invited to public meetings raises a number of questions regarding the communications process. What barriers exist to people being informed of public meetings, if indeed invitations are being issued at all? Accessibility remains a major barrier to the development of economic development in Chin State, and also hampers the task of public administration. This again casts the spotlight onto lower levels of administration, placing the onus on the VTA to communicate effectively with village administrators and clerks, and downwards to citizens. As highlighted earlier this can be problematic in Chin State given the all-pervasive challenges to mobility - to the extent that some TAs are developing alternative solutions for reaching citizens in isolated areas. The TA in Thantlang Township has established a voluntary position of “Terrain Representative”, whose role is to work with the existing township and village administrative structure to promote development. Rather than displace the VTA, the role is taken up by nine locally-influential volunteers to support development and communications by logical geographical clusters.



Figure 11: Have you ever been invited to a meeting in which the government wanted to talk to villagers about new projects like schools or health facilities in your village or about the problems in your village?

Source: Citizen Report Card, Chin State, January 2014.



The TMAC and TDSC represent a starting point for integrating the perspectives of interest groups and community members in the decision-making process at the township level – as specified within the Presidential notification directing state/region governments on the formation these bodies. Basic guidance on the selection process was outlined - that “the Secretary would be elected by representatives of the economic sector, community societies and township informal leaders, and that the Secretary and members will then elect a chairman.”<sup>29</sup> But this mapping exercise indicates that lack of clarity on procedures and a rush to form committees has resulted in problems with the election of members in at least two townships, Hakha and Thantlang, where communal meetings were held in February 2014 to reform the TDSC. In the case of Thantlang Township, MPs complained when they became aware that many members were recruited without a legitimate election process. Issues related to the election process reflect both a lack of clarity in the process, and raises questions about the legitimacy of the advisory committees in the eyes of the interest groups they represent.

**The lack of clarity on procedures and rush to form committees has often resulted in problems with the election of members.**

Across the townships, government officials and committee members spoke of challenges associated with fully understanding the roles and responsibilities, which are primarily geared towards advising the TMC on township planning and local affairs. “Some members of the TDSC thought that their role replaced that of the VTA,” notes one Tonzang township official. A concern expressed to the mapping team is the lack of clear operating guidelines for the committees, particularly for the TDSC (the TMAC is offered more detailed guidance via the municipal bylaws) - though responsibilities and assigned tasks are outlined in the original directive on the formation of supportive committees<sup>30</sup>, detail on procedures and processes are lacking, as noted by some of committee members themselves.

The lack of clarity on the mandates and roles of these committees was also mentioned in three of the six GSA discussions (see Table 4). A final challenge related to the credibility of the two “support” committees (TDSC and TMAC), is the very low levels of awareness among the wider community of their existence and therefore their representativeness, and ability to function as intermediary bodies. Only 6% of citizens were aware of the existence of the committees at the township level, while 92% were not. Their recent formation means that is no surprise that they are not yet known to citizens. But if government seeks to promote these committees as the main instruments for citizen consultation, they will need to become better anchored within the communities.

**Only 6% of citizens are aware of the existence of committees at township level.**

#### *2.4.2 Civic awareness and CSO performance*

Government officials and civil society alike mentioned that citizen understanding of the institutions and processes associated with governance and public service delivery was very weak in Chin State. “The public is not aware of procedures and are strangers to such principles,” notes one township official. Low awareness of civic duties and the scope of government responsibility was also reported. “In visiting some villages there is an attitude of ‘What are they going to give us?’ rather than ‘How are we going to manage this efficiently?’” says another township official. This observation is put into context when citizens were asked

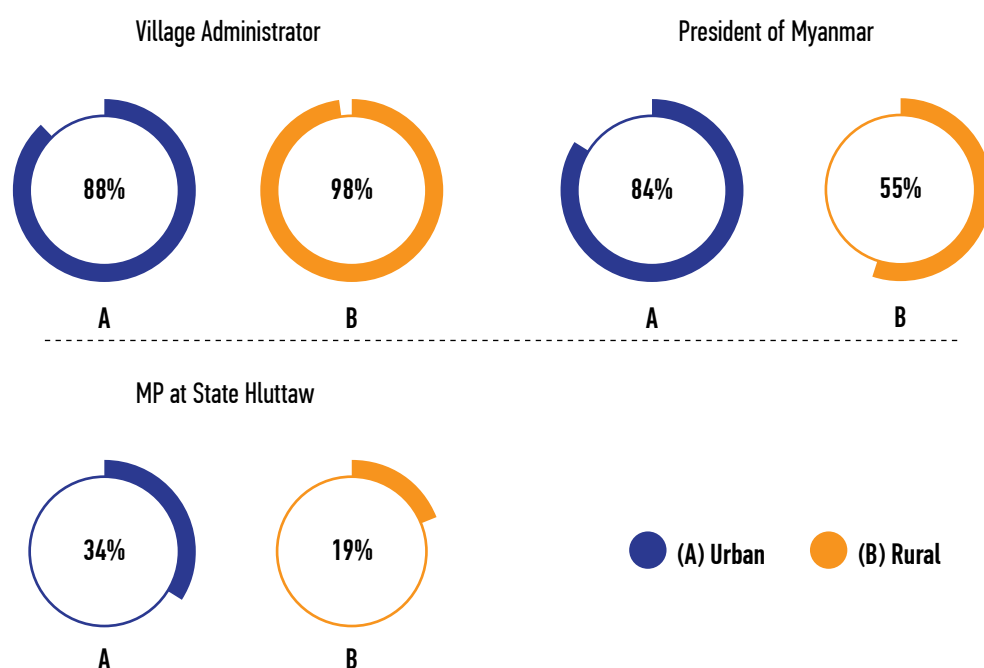
29. Ibid.

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

about their knowledge of elected government representatives. The majority demonstrated strong knowledge of their local VTA (who 88% of urban and 98% rural respondents were able to name) - again reinforcing the centrality of the VTA to public life, particularly in rural areas. A much higher proportion of urban respondents were able to name the President of Myanmar (84%) than rural ones (55%), indicating a potential urban-rural divide with respect to political awareness. It emerges from the mapping that only 19% of rural and 34% of urban (of 576) respondents could name their township MP in the state Hluttaw, suggesting both a challenge and opportunity to drive greater participation through the state/region legislature (see Figure 12).

**Figure 12: Respondents' knowledge of names of various government representatives**

Source: Citizen Report Card, Chin State, January 2014.



Administrative actors share a growing concern with regard to rising citizen expectations, and expressed a need to improve public knowledge on the key policies and laws that affect their lives. CSOs in Chin State share this priority. As relayed to the mapping team, complicated history with the authorities has restrained CSOs from engaging with government in a meaningful way so far. As observed by one TA, “(We are) not very aware of how many CSOs we have – there is not much activity.” The procedures for registration have still not been fully clarified, as outlined by one township-based CSO, who is still waiting for response to a registration application submitted in October 2013. Another shared this sentiment: “We feel that overall the government is not particularly interested in engaging. We asked the township administration if a form was available, but were told that a response was unlikely, so best not to apply!” Some CSOs did speak of more informal support from township administration, where the GAD and other departments have supported CSOs in their outreach.

**CSO engagement with government is restrained and remains centered around development work rather**

CSOs could play a significant role in enhancing grassroots participation through lobby and advocacy activities in the interests of their members or target groups. Mutual mistrust between CSOs and the government in general, and the fear of repercussions has restrained CSOs from engaging with government in a meaningful way so far, with many preferring an “arm’s length” approach to engaging with government. With an estimated 43 CSOs in Chin State, these entities have the potential to be a vital link through Community Based Organisations (CBOs). “Every village has a CSO (presence), but the current weakness is the

lack of a civil society network,” notes one civil society representative. Township government, committee members and civil society groups came together during a Government Self-Assessment exercise in each of the six sample townships, expressing a general appreciation for the work of CSOs in Chin State. CSOs were collectively viewed among townships to as strong in their activities to support development in the township - which typically spans a wide range of “social work” services; and in their ability to lobby and advocate for the needs of members and target groups (see Table 7).

than lobby and advocacy.

CSOs scored lower on the civic education activities they implemented (see Table 7 as well), which is unsurprising given the contentious relationship between the government and Chin ethnic groups in the past. Two of the six townships ranked the capacity of CSOs to deliver civic education as a priority for discussion and action planning. In the context of Chin State, the task of effective and efficient public services delivery - and civic education - is a particularly challenging one. Some non-state actors provide education and health services at the township level through Faith Based Organisation (FBOs) (primarily church-based groups), but the mapping team was informed by civil society representatives that there is little co-ordination with relevant sectoral government departments.

## 2.5 Equity

**With relation to good governance, the principle of equity confers equal access of citizens to services and resources irrespective of gender, ethnicity, age, ability, etc.; and that all members in society have an equal opportunities to improve their welfare.**

Reflecting the geographic dynamics of Chin State, the majority of respondents (67%) lived in rural areas, while 33% lived in urban wards. The vast majority (91%) of those interviewed were of Chin ethnicity, while 8% of respondents were of Rakhine origin. As a result, Chin (or a dialect of it) was the most common language spoken at home (90%), followed by the Rakhine language that is spoken widely in the township of Paletwa. Very few of the respondents spoke the Burmese language. Around one-third (35%) of respondents did not receive an education or did not complete primary school, while primary education was the highest level achieved for around 50% of those surveyed. At the surface level, the mapping indicates that equality of treatment is perceived to be fairly high among users of public services, particularly for primary education. 93% (of 286 parents) believed that their children receive the same treatments as other students. For healthcare services, 73% (of 576) thought that they and their family members receive the same treatment as everyone in the village.

Equality of treatment in public services is perceived to be fairly high.



### 2.5.1 Urban-rural

Based on the mapping findings, a rural respondent is more likely than an urban one to face shocks to their livelihoods, barriers to accessing services or administration, and fear of discrimination in using public services.

**A rural respondent is more likely than an urban one to face shocks to their livelihoods, barriers to access administration and fear of discrimination in access to public services.**

As could be expected due to Chin State's difficult terrain, physical access to services by citizens and administrative channels appears to be slightly better for urban versus rural dwellers - for example, the children in 12% of rural households travel for more than 30 minutes to get to primary school, versus 2% of urban households. The rural-urban distinction is even more apparent when considering the prevalence of land use registration, where 63% of urban households versus 25% of rural households (of 196 who responded) have received a land use certificate for the land that they farmed. This makes sense when considering that urban respondents will have better access to MoAI representatives, under which the SLRD sits - 76% (of 71) urban respondents received an explanation on how to register land, as opposed to 58% rural. With 46% (of 485) urban and 42% of rural respondents interested to register their residential plot to secure tenure, the current set up favours urban dwellers both in terms of access to information and the administrative channels to do so.

Meanwhile, rural parents feel more obliged to provide gifts or donations to primary school staff: 23% of urban people sometimes or always did as opposed to 44% of rural (of 286 parents). Another area of interest is in the perception of these parents regarding complaints made to primary schools. Overall, urban parents (56%) had a slightly higher level of confidence than rural parents did (42%) in the ability of school management to be responsive to their concerns.

### 2.5.2 Poverty

Poorer households - as determined by the materials from which buildings have been constructed - are more likely than wealthier households to face shocks to their livelihoods and barriers to administration.

Respondents' livelihoods are highly dependent on subsistence agriculture with the majority of households (61%) citing crop farming as the main activity for generating income. It is notable that a large number of ethnic Chin people live outside Chin State: Some estimates point to around 700,000, along with over 200,000 who have migrated out of Myanmar.<sup>31</sup> Some 2% of the households surveyed rely on remittances from this the diaspora network as their primary source of income. A significant proportion of rural respondents (40%) viewed their incomes to have worsened in the past three years, while only 21% reported an improvement. Of 359 people who lived in houses with wooden walls, 50% sometimes or always faced problems in satisfying household food needs, and for the households who live in reed/bamboo houses this figure rises to 81% (of the 193).

It is also more likely that those who are wealthier have the means and knowhow to access administrative resources and protections: 35% (of 144) of those who live in wooden dwellings have registered for land use certificates on the land that they farm, compared to 25% (of 44) of those in reed/ grass/ bamboo houses.

### 2.5.3 Gender

Gender remains a highly sensitive issue in Chin State where traditional patriarchal attitudes are prevalent. "Chin men are people who build up the family or a tribe following the legacy of their parents, and are entitled to inheritance as per customary practices," observes one committee member. A detailed gender assessment is outside the scope of this study, though the mapping does indicate that women are poorly represented in Chin State on at least two fronts: in positions of leadership within the township administration and committees itself, and in the realm of citizen participation.

In considering the active participation of women in the decision-making processes, the mapping indicates a clear gender imbalance in Chin State: only 33% of the female respondents have participated in village tract ward meetings, as opposed to 70% of the male respondents. Women are also less likely to be invited to meetings about new development projects or village problems: 15%, against 37% for men. Furthermore, women were less likely to be able to name government representatives beyond the VTA. 45% of women could name the President of Myanmar, versus 78% of men, and 12% of women could name a State Hluttaw MP against 34% of men surveyed. Men were also more aware than women of committees at the township level in which citizens participate: 11% of the male respondents were cognizant of these bodies, versus just 2% of the female respondents.

These results confirm that women in Chin State are significantly less engaged in public participation than men and appear to have less exposure to public information and government news. Again, complex and multi-dimensional factors related to customary attitudes and structural issues related to access to information and civic education will likely underlie such imbalances.

**There are challenges related to women's participation in administration at the township level and in public consultative fora at the local level.**

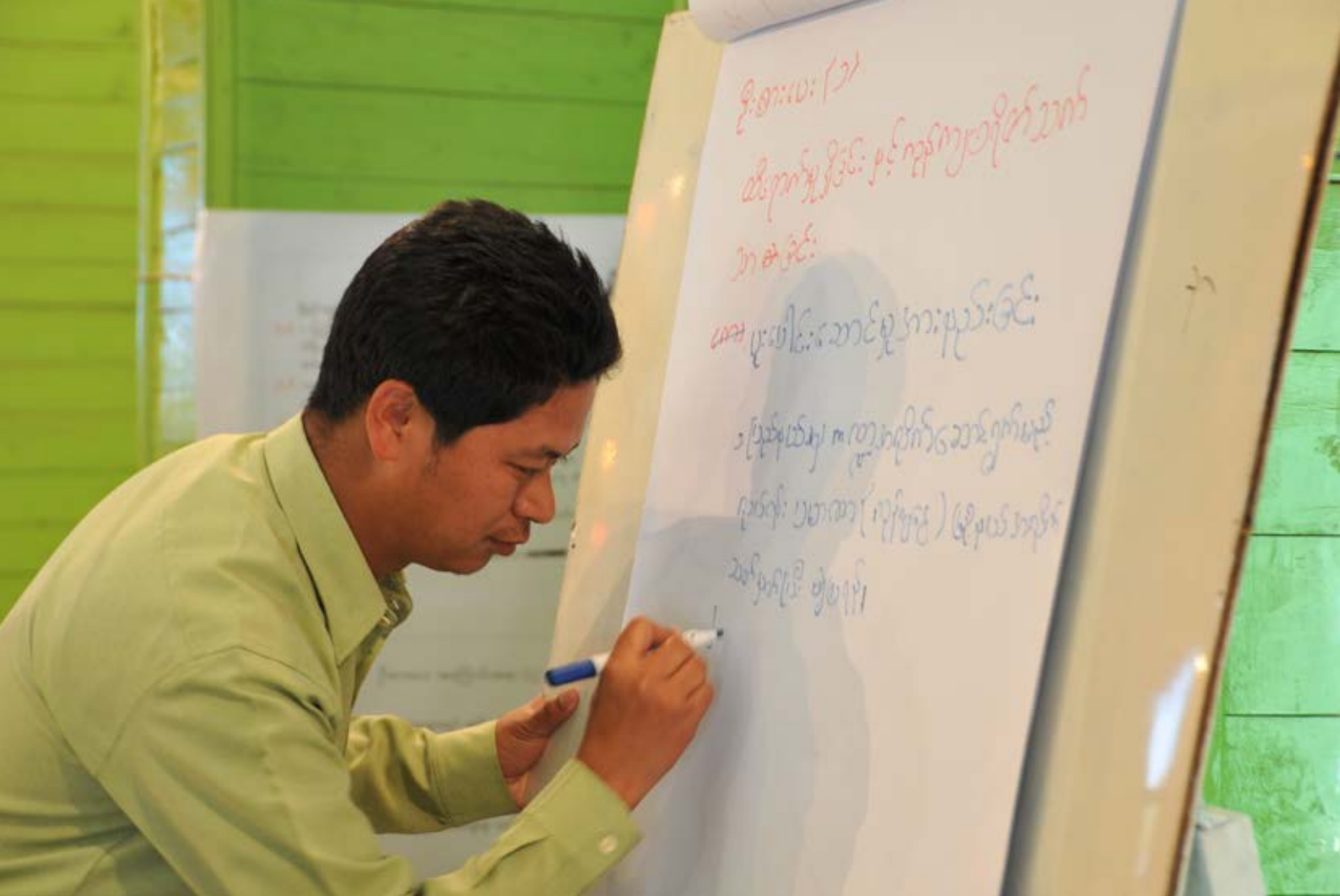
31. "Chin Struggle for Role in New Myanmar". 27 May 2013, Radio Free Asia.

**Table 8: Equity concerns for local governance in Chin State: Disadvantaged groups**

Source: Citizen Report Card, Chin State, January 2014.

	Livelihoods support	Access to administration and services	Non-discrimination	Participation
Rural	✓	✓	✓	
Poor	✓	✓		
Women				✓

The mapping indicates that disadvantaged groups in Chin State face particular barriers to equal opportunity and treatment across various governance dimensions (as outlined in Table 8 above). In addressing equality of opportunity, the mapping indicates a need for considering the interests of marginalised groups in developing local governance systems. This is an underdeveloped area of activity and one in which government lacks capacity to address the related issues adequately as became clear from the GSAs exercise (see Table 7) - across the six township GSAs conducted, attention to the township management in the interests of people with special needs was collectively ranked as the second weakest area.



# 3. CONCLUSIONS AND INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS

Reviewing the main findings from the various mapping tools, some conclusions can now be drawn, and recommendations made, for the improvement of governance at township level and below in Chin State. This chapter proposes several ways in which government and non-government stakeholders in Chin State - within the existing reform framework of the union government - can take initial steps to overcome some of the gaps highlighted by the mapping, and achieve better, more responsive local governance. It also highlights entry points for local actors at the community, township and state/region with respect to policies and institutions; processes and procedures, capacity building and communication and dialogue.

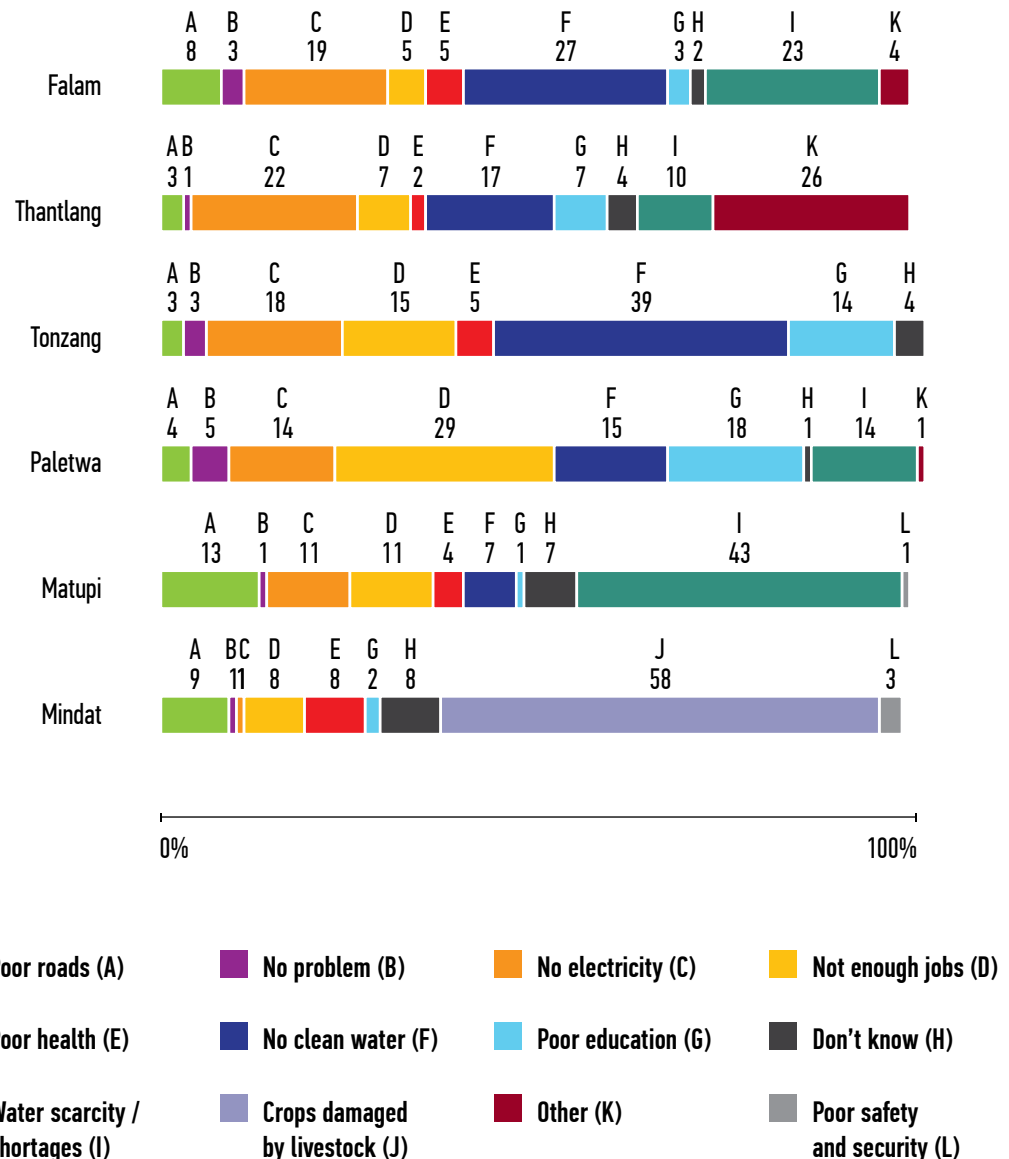
The conclusions and recommendations in this report will focus on those actions that can be taken at the township level (with support and guidance from the state government) in the short-to-medium term. Upon completion of the first seven states/ regions participating in the Local Governance Mapping, comparisons across states and regions will allow for higher-level conclusions and recommendations related to policy development to be drawn.

### 3.1 Township development priorities and decentralisation

The findings from all four tools used in the mapping exercise point in the same direction: Development priorities vary significantly by township and by community (see Figure 13).

**Figure 13: What is according to you the most important problem in this village tract/ ward at the moment?**

Source: Citizen Report Card, Chin State, January 2014.



Of the 576 respondents, lack of electricity emerged as the most important problem for respondents in Thantlang (22%), and no clean water for residents in Tonzang (39%) and Falam (27%). Residents in Matupi complained of water scarcity or shortages (43%), while the primary problem for Mindat residents is related to crop damages caused by livestock. Urban and rural areas of Chin State both prioritised access to clean water as the most important issue (urban 23%, rural 14%) as well as incidences of water scarcity or shortages (22% of both urban and rural respondents). No electricity also emerged as a top challenge for 14% of urban and rural residents respectively.



Urban respondents were more positive (75% of 536) that the township administration or government was aware of the problem versus rural citizens (57%). But when asked whether it was felt that government or the township administration was doing something to resolve the problems, levels of responsiveness were felt to be generally low. 76 percent (of 338) respondents felt that they were doing nothing, with 9% believing that the problem was still being discussed and 7% thinking that more money was being allocated. This perceived lack of responsiveness extends further to opinions on what the government is doing with respect to improvements made in the past three years. Half of 576 respondents (51%) were unaware of any improvements while the most visible were in education (16%) and roads (17%).

The differences in socio-economic conditions between the townships, as well as their (partially related) specific development bottlenecks justify a continuation and even acceleration of the decentralisation process to further enhance the capacities (in terms of funding, manpower and mandate) of township administration and sector departments to respond more adequately to specific local development priorities and needs. If the Government of Myanmar follows this track, it can gradually strengthen the existing administrative accountability mechanisms to manage these additional responsibilities adequately. But in order to manage additional resources and in accordance with the principles of democratic governance, the need for additional political and social accountability mechanisms at the township level will become increasingly evident.

## 3.2 Policies and institutions

**Improve local access to public information:** One of the key issues identified by the mapping exercise relates to limited information flow from government to citizens - a relatively new concept in the Myanmar context. Without improving transparency it will be very difficult to fight corruption within the government system, improve accountability, and eventually increase the trust people have in their government. At the moment, it depends more or less on the discretion of the TA or head of department what type of information is made available to the general public, and it is all too easy to define certain information that should

be publically available as confidential (such as the results from a tender procedure). The township administration and the state level government should work towards making GAD (and the activities of other departments at the township level) more transparent.

- **Short term:** As a starting point, townships can consider the posting of minutes from public meetings or those involving members from interest groups or MPs in public forums. Making information available at facilities such as the working code of conduct for FSPs is also a step towards improved accountability.
- **Medium term:** The state government can play an important role in this regard by drafting an “access to information” policy, stipulating what information should be made available by the township level government institutions and the ways in which people can gain access to that information. In addition, it would be useful to develop a specific communication policy for township government institutions as part of their development planning process. Such policy can assist township administrators and his/her staff to define the types of information relevant to their citizens and identify the most cost-effective ways to get these messages across to the communities. In addition, such a communication can outline ways in which citizens can raise issues and ideas, and participate in the formulation of development plans.

**Develop local policies and institutions with a view to preventing (as opposed to detecting) malfeasance:** As mentioned earlier, the mapping indicates that a perceived implementation gap exists at lower levels of administration in Chin State on corruption-prevention activities. Most practices in place are post-facto, rather than designed to deterring malfeasance. In theory, the TSDC was in part conceived to address this problem, “to reduce public grievances caused by the high-handed actions taken by individual administrators”.<sup>32</sup> Yet the primary perception of township officials and civil society groups was that no coherent anti-corruption or anti-malfeasance policy existed at the township level, despite the passing of the union *Anti-Corruption Law* in August of 2013 (nor is there any evidence of its applicability at the township level): though public servants spoke of adhering to a code of conduct in the workplace as specified from the parent union ministry.

An assessment of the nature of corruption at the community and townships levels is outside the scope of this study, and the findings from the mapping exercise cannot indicate the extent to which instances of corrupt practices are taking place in communities, or the form this might take. However, there is evidence that there are particular practices and attitudes which may be conducive to malfeasance such as the sense of an obligation to gift-giving to FSPs, and vague rules over what the public was entitled to with respect to treatment and medical supplies in the case of healthcare.

- **Short term:** Clarification of ethics and responsibilities by which public servants and FSPs should abide, and transparency on the rights of citizens to public services, is a potential starting point. Township officials can achieve this by making information on existing codes of conducts and user entitlements publicly available (i.e. posting notices at facilities on patient/ student entitlements, informing local communities through village

32. Presidential address, Nay Pyi Taw, 26 December 2012.

meetings). Administrative actors have an opportunity to set best practice in their approach to project tenders and procurement, while MPs can seek to enhance their oversight role in the townships and they represent.

- **Medium term:** At the state-level, actors can review the union 2013 Anti-Corruption Law to understand and promote its application at the local level. Based on existing codes of conduct, basic performance indicators could be developed focusing on staff performance and accountability to service users (absenteeism rates, stock checking), and such information could be collected through the existing inspections schedule (though this is contingent on the willingness of line ministries, who will need to be brought into this process). Alongside this, internal reviews within state government departments would be a step towards a more preventative approach to malfeasance. MPs and CSOs can also work to influence local expectations on what citizens can rightfully expect from their public services - for instance, the international standards established within the *Education For All* initiative for primary schools, or the Millennium Development Goals for basic healthcare.



**Begin to advocate for and focus on excluded groups:** The mapping findings indicated that equality of treatment in the delivery of public services was perceived to be relatively high in Chin State. Yet, shortfalls remain, particularly with respect to participation of women versus men, and for rich versus poor and rural versus urban people in access to governance and equality of treatment. The mapping indicated some of the specific barriers faced by excluded groups with respect to local governance and services (see Table 8).

- **Medium term:** Many Chin State CSOs were founded on the basis of ethnic groupings, forming the lens by which they provide social services and conduct advocacy work. Development partners and lower levels of administration can provide support in building the capacity of CSOs to better account for special needs in the communities they serve, and encourage the recalibration or formation of CSOs to account for excluded groups. In this, CSOs could eventually play an important social accountability role within the evolving local governance framework.

MPs have a mandate to serve the interests of the community, and excluded groups are part of that. The mapping offers several entry points by which the legislature could approach this. For example, with an understanding that women have been excluded from participation in local governance, MPs could consider the application of the 2013 National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women, and ways in which the state government could measure progress in this area (i.e. through basic metrics on female participation).

**Improved support to Village Tract Administrators:** At this stage in Myanmar's development, the elected VTA and VTCs are the key mechanisms for participation, and the main channel by which people can be involved in local decision-making. The 2012 *Ward or Village Tract Administration Law* has conferred a higher degree of formality to community governance roles and institutions. However, the mapping has identified issues in Chin State related to transfer of public information between the VTA and the community.

- **Short term:** If public meetings are not taking place and all people are not given the opportunity to participate (particularly women) - as the mapping results would indicate is happening in Chin State - it is unlikely that communities are being sufficiently consulted with respect to local decision-making, or that this information is being captured in township plans. Township administration could seek to gather data from the VTAs at monthly meetings related to number of public meetings, and emphasise this as an important aspect of reporting for the role.
- **Medium term:** In practice, the VTA wears a number of hats within the community - as the first point of call for land disputes, and as an elected representative of the community for instance. The two roles are distinctive and requires different skills: how the VTA and clerk roles evolve to account for this in the future is a point of great interest, and in part contingent on the Law and deliberations at the union-level.

### 3.3 Processes and procedures

**Establish clear and transparent procedures for township planning, budgeting and tendering:** Many of the challenges associated with "horizontal" township administration are structural in nature, including the large number of departments, the double accountabilities shouldered by some departments (GAD, DoP) and the vertical nature of sector planning and budgeting. As township funding will most likely increase and with that the need to develop a comprehensive vision on the development of the township and more integrated planning, these barriers to horizontal co-ordination and planning will become more bothersome to township development. There is growing awareness of such issues in the state-level administration, where state-level representatives of the DoP have alluded to the establishment of an upcoming budget ceiling and new processes to help townships gain greater clarity in 2014.

- **Short term:** One way in which the state government and parliamentarians could make a significant difference is by making a concerted effort to improve downward information flow (and set an example for others) with relation to township planning. For instance, the state government could provide information on the guidance used to allocate funding for development projects to township administration, and provide explanations to townships on why and how decisions were made. This would establish a degree of predictability as

township actors build their development plans. This should help to reduce uncertainty for Chin State in particular, where the surge of development funding flowing into townships has shaped the often reactive operating behaviour of the three key township committees (TMC, TDSC, and TMAC).

- **Medium term:** A number of challenges in this area is related to the ongoing public-sector reform at the union level, and necessitate a national-level conversation on strengthening the mandate and expanding budget of the township and the establishment of an integrated, computerized data management. Where township officials can achieve more immediate gains is in the setting of clear operating procedures around meetings and duties of various local actors related to township planning, to drive efficiencies and information sharing. Consultations on development projects and sector-related consultations (if happening) could easily be integrated into one integrated consultation process. This will be helpful in clarifying any confusion that may occur from double accountabilities. State level government, working with union ministries, can support this in clarifying the procedures and actors to be involved in township planning (for instance, revisiting the role of the TPIC).

**Clarify the roles and responsibilities of committee members:** The new committees are operating in an environment in which relic systems and committees continue to operate as well, although there are large differences between townships as noted. In addition, there are overlaps not only between these new committees and the functions of pre-existing committees and institutions, but also between the newly established committees themselves. There is currently uncertainty over which committees are most important and active for township governance - in some cases, officials are members of numerous committees that meet irregularly, and with functions that overlap with those of newer, more active institutions. In particular, the mapping team was consistently informed of challenges and confusion related to the role and responsibilities of supportive committee members, and indeed, the true extent of their mandate as representatives of the community.

- **Short term:** An important area of work for state government and MPs is to provide oversight in ensuring advisory committees (TDSC and TMAC) are formed systematically and in consultation with the wider community, as this will ultimately have implications for their mandate and legitimacy to represent various interest groups within their membership.
- **Medium term:** A Presidential notification<sup>33</sup> provided the basic framework upon which the TMC, TDSC and TMAC committees were established, but both township administrators and the committee members themselves agreed on the need for more guidance on the role of committee members. As part of the support to Chin state government, such operating guidelines are currently being developed by UNDP, with the aim of providing more clarity on the role, and accompanying processes and election procedures for the various committees, which can be shared throughout the state and be used for additional training of committees.

More discussion at the national level is required on the issue of committee composition, committee structure (specifically the need to reduce their number to avoid overlap and

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

inefficiencies), mandates and composition. But the mapping suggests a scope for re-examining the composition and selection criteria for the members of TMC and potentially raising the profile of the DoH, for which the TDSC may be a natural seat given the committee's official assignment to coordinate on healthcare (and education). The variations demonstrated across some of the townships in Chin State may provide some insight here.

**Develop alternative channels for grievance redressal:** Incidents of complaints filed through existing formal systems are relatively infrequent in Chin State - though this falls under the initial guidance for the establishment of supportive committees, "to bring grievances to the attention of TMCs to reach solutions in a co-ordinated manner".<sup>34</sup> The mapping indicates also, that the VTA remains the key channel for passing complaints up from the public to township administration.

In order to establish whether the existing informal conflict mediation and redressal mechanisms are complementary to the formal system and are able to relieve it of having to deal with too many cases as is the case in other states/region, it is important to assess and understand these mechanisms in more detail from a human rights perspective. Whether they are fair and impartial, and if all groups in society have equal access to the mechanisms, are important questions to address before the government makes decisions on whether such systems are to be sustained or even supported. Alternatively, the question emerges whether the government should focus instead on improving access to formal systems - that too will require support in order to improve fairness and impartiality.

- **Short term:** With clearer guidance for VTAs and VTCs on when and how issues are to be elevated to higher levels of government - along with legal training - more of these could most likely be resolved at the lowest levels of government. UNDP have provided training for all VTAs in Chin State between December 2013 and January 2014, and could complement such initiatives. In the short term, it is within the reach of township-level administrators to make necessary changes to improve efficiency, access and responsiveness. For instance, township administration could make simple complaint boxes available at the community level for citizens to submit complaints, and establish standards for timely response. Such approaches are optimised in tandem with strategies to establish a direct dialogue with the community (See Section 3.5 below on *Communication and dialogue*).

- **Medium term:** The establishment of an independent, formal grievance mechanism as an alternative for groups excluded by both customary and administrative systems, merits consideration from both the state government and MPs. Both can play a role in developing institutional and public awareness on rule of law issues, and work with development partners and higher levels of government to build capacity within the legal system. UNDP is working with the union government to establish Rule of Law Centres in various states/regions in Myanmar to this end, with potential for application to Chin State. Insights provided by the UNDP's Access to Justice Mapping can provide some direction in the Myanmar context.

**Develop specific strategies to overcome issues of access:** Barriers to mobility within and between townships in Chin State present a major challenge for governance and development, most obviously in hindering communications and information flow, deepening the rural-urban divide in Chin State.

34. Ibid.

- **Short term:** TAs have attempted to mitigate these barriers by holding meetings in alternative locations with VTAs, and in one case mobilising extra support for VTAs along geographical lines in the form of “Terrain Representatives”. Such resourceful measures should be observed and encouraged.
- **Medium term:** In the long run, a union and state-level infrastructure development strategy for the state is of course critical. In the interim, however, state government and parliamentarians can seek to develop clear criteria to ensure that rural communities are prioritised in the distribution of township development funds (the latest research suggests this is currently done on an equal shares basis)<sup>35</sup> and other resources.



### 3.4 Capacity building

**Develop the leadership capacity of women in administration:** In Chin State, the presence of women is limited in township management and further, and the mapping team found no evidence of women who had been selected as a member of the TSDC or TMAC; indicating the existence of barriers to entry for political appointments (such as the requirement that some senior government positions require a military background).

- **Medium term:** Restrictions remain on the ability of local actors to influence recruiting, given that this largely happens at the union level. However, there is drive from the centre to improve the gender balance. A 10-year National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women was introduced in 2013 that spells out initiatives including strengthening the legal and institutional environment for women, improving access to education and healthcare, and new policies to increase political leadership for women.<sup>36</sup> State/region governments could do well to examine how these can be articulated at lower levels of administration, what metrics could be established to drive progress (particularly in understanding the situation for access

35. Nixon, Hamish et al. Myanmar's State and Region Governments, Myanmar Development Resource Institute - Centre for Economic and Social Development (MDRI-CESD) and The Asia Foundation. September 2013.

36. “Burma Launches National Plan to Empower Women”. The Irrawaddy, October 7 2013.

to public services and participation in local decision-making). In Chin State, of particular interest is how the Plan sits with existing customary practices and attitudes towards women.

In terms of capacity building, a focus on training women to improve their opportunities to apply for and enter administrative roles in civil service can be considered to further expand the pool of female hires, in consultation with the Union Civil Servant Board, though the centralised nature of appointments indicate this would be a union-level discussion. Development of women's capacity in political leadership and democratic politics though can be pursued at the state and township level.

**Develop the capacity of CSOs and community-level leaders to build civic awareness:** The formerly antagonistic relationship between civil society and the authorities has limited the scope of their activities, their ability to grow and their eagerness and capacity to take up a stronger social accountability role in the local setting. Progress has been made at the union level to resolve some of the bigger areas of contention around registration for CSO.

- **Short term:** Township administrations and state-level actors have a role to play in improving the operating environment for CSOs, and encouraging their active participation in decision-making processes. Transparency and public dissemination of information regarding the registration process, which is a serious impediment, especially for smaller CBOs and CSOs. Improvements here would be an important step forward in creating an enabling environment not only for CSOs to become recognised and appreciated, but also enable them to play a critical constructive role in township development.

- **Medium term:** Part of this process is developing the capacity of CSOs and community leaders to engage with government in a constructive fashion. UNDP's Local Governance Programme is currently developing the concept of community-learning centres for Chin State, to support CSOs in their capacity to interact with each other and with government. In addition, development partners have already implemented community-level programmes to "train the trainers" and improve the capacity of other community actors for local development planning.

**Build the management skills of the Village Tract Administrator:** The mapping has reaffirmed the critical role of the VTA as the "face of the government" at the community level, and the main conduit of public information. Already, the mapping would indicate several categories of capacity building for the VTA (legal, information gathering). In addition, the VTA continues to be the focal point for relaying information upwards to the township administration, and also channelling public news back to the communities.

- **Short term:** In the context of Chin State's underdeveloped communications infrastructure and accessibility issues, one clear focus of capacity building efforts is to complement existing training for VTAs with one on communication skills and techniques.

- **Medium-to-long term:** The skill set required by the VTA will be contingent on whether the role becomes more governance-focussed, or retains its executive/administrative character. The two roles are distinctive and require different skills. To a large extent, this will be defined at the national level, and it is an important decision for longer-term capacity building strategies and resourcing for state/ level government.

## 3.5 Communication and dialogue

**Facilitate forums for dialogue between citizens, government and civil society:** While there are several practical challenges for enhancing participation in local decision making, it seems that there is an underlying structural difference in the perception of government staff on the one hand and citizens on the other hand about the meaning and extent of citizen participation in public affairs.

- **Short term:** The CDs were an initial attempt to open a space for dialogue between communities and service providers, while the township GSAs served as a platform for engaging government, committees and civil society. Further dialogues of this nature and capacity development for local leaders to facilitate such discussions could help to alleviate community tensions in the short run, and form the basis for more inclusive participatory planning: but within the context of the reforms already made to drive participation.
- **Medium term:** The CDs represent one of the possible formats that the Chin State government and township administrators could consider as a repeatable, scalable exercise for improving direct participation and gathering information on community priorities for the purposes of planning.

Applied and tested by the research team, the CD sessions focused on problem identification on the one hand, but also on identifying collective actions to resolve some of the problems identified at local level (see UNDP's knowledge management hub for detailed reports reflecting key priorities by stake holders and agreed points for collective action at the community level). If facilitated professionally, the CDs can contribute to disperse prejudice and misunderstandings and start to create mutual trust and lay the foundations for collective action.

**Draw upon the mapping outputs as a basis for capacity development plans for Chin State:** The outcomes resulting from the governance mapping exercise<sup>37</sup>, which included discussions on key challenges and identification of capacity gaps at the level of the community and township, could (after consideration and approval by government) inform a capacity development plan per state/region in which activities are identified that the state/region can implement itself but also those that require external support, which could be provided by the union level government, UNDP and/or other development partners.

- **Short term:** There are some outputs from the mapping that can be utilised by state and township-level actors immediately. These include:
  - Capacity priorities identified by township stakeholders (government, committee members and civil society) towards tailored capacity proposals for each township (See Annex for an example of an action plan agreed by local actors during the township GSA).
  - Review and consider the implementation of action plans created by local communities to address local concerns emerging from the 12 village tract/ ward CDs and the 6 township GSAs. (See Annex for an example of an action plan agreed by local actors during a CD).
  - Utilise data from the mapping exercise to understand local strengths and weaknesses

37. The various components of the Local Governance Mapping, including the CRC, FSP Interviews, CDs, GSAs, the Background Study on Township Governance and the Workshop to Share Interim findings will be made available at request from the UNDP.

with respect to local governance and governance of services to be more responsive to people's concerns, and initiate conversations with higher levels of government to address some of the structural issues identified.

- Utilise data from the mapping on equity and participation to plan strategies and conduct further assessment of the barriers for excluded groups.

- **Medium term:** The dialogue platforms at township and state/region level that were introduced as part of the mapping exercise could later on be used to monitor progress (as a means for understanding if capacity needs are being met, or if new ones were emerging) and could in the long run even be institutionalised as a mechanism for dialogue between government and non-government actors for resolving development bottlenecks at the township and state/region level collectively.

In addition, the repetition of some or all parts of the CRC exercise can provide state/region and township government with useful time series data on key aspects of governance for example:

- Public satisfaction in governance institutions and governance of services
- Participation in meetings at village tract/ ward level
- Public levels of awareness on civic issues

These could provide a starting point for measuring performance of government and public service providers, and inform an understanding of strengths and gaps in local governance systems over time.

The introduction of state and regional governments overseen by elected parliamentarians, and thereby the principle of separation of power is one of several important steps undertaken towards democracy and a decentralised governance structure in Myanmar. As outlined earlier, efforts have been made in recent years to provide state and regions with some discretionary funds and autonomy to make their own development priorities.

The basic structures for the implementation of local government have been established at the township level but are, as highlighted in this report, not yet always functioning optimally. A gradual improvement of governance capacities at the state/region and township level is within the immediate reach, remit and capacity of local actors. But how existing institutions underpin the longer-term decentralisation agenda is far beyond the mandate of the local administration, and will require a leading role from union-level government.





*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

United Nations Development Programme  
No.6, Natmauk Road, Tamwe Township  
P.O. Box 650, Yangon 11211  
Myanmar

[www.mm.undp.org](http://www.mm.undp.org)