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Local
Governance
Mapping

THE STATE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE: TRENDS IN MAGWAY



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UNDP MYANMAR

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Acknowledgements

UNDP would like to thank the Region Government and the people of Magway Region for their unrestricted support and participation in the process of local governance mapping and information gathering. The local governance mapping in Magway Region would not have been possible without the cooperation and the strategic direction of the General Administration Department, Ministry of Home Affairs.

This report was developed under the leadership and guidance of Christian Hainzl, Team Leader, Local Governance/Local Development, UNDP Myanmar. Several individuals and organizations have made contributions in the production of this report. Paul J. M. van Hoof led the analysis of the empirical data, undertook township-level research and drafted the report. He was assisted during the fieldwork by U Saw Ler Wah. The community-level research and data analysis was undertaken by Myanmar Survey Research (MSR). 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 Anki Dellnas, Mithulina Chatterjee and Marcus Brand. Special thanks to Aye Lwin and Khin Kyaw for their technical contribution to the Local Governance Mapping.

The Local Governance Mapping being undertaken as part of UNDP Myanmar's Local Governance/Local Development Programme is funded by the Government of Japan, Government of Sweden, DANIDA and UNDP.

Acronyms

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



Executive Summary

This report outlines the results of the Local Governance Mapping conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Magway Region in November-December 2014. It attempts to examine the state of local governance in Magway Region. The findings show while many aspects of township management, planning and participation are very similar to other States and Regions in Myanmar, in particular the neighbouring Regions of the Dry Zone, Magway also features a number of governance arrangements and innovations that are unique to the Region.

Based on the perceptions of the people and of local governance actors like government officials, committee members and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the mapping has captured some key aspects of the current dynamics of governance at the frontline of state-citizen interaction including participation in public sector planning, access to basic social services and transparency and accountability in local governance.

In consultation with the Magway Region government, the Local Governance Mapping was conducted in the townships of **Pakokku, Gangaw and Mindon**, which together can be considered representative for the different geographic and socio-economic areas of the Region.

Magway Region

Magway Region is one of the core regions of Myanmar, hosting about seven percent of its population. Its economy is dominated by agriculture but also petroleum production and other extractive industries. Magway Region has not been affected by armed conflict, ethnic tension or major natural disaster in recent years. State authority has not been challenged in the same manner as in other States and Regions resulting in relative stability and well-functioning state institutions. These prevailing conditions allowed the governance reform programme implemented by the Government of Myanmar since 2011 to be executed expediently in Magway Region.

Magway Region's social development indicators such as poverty, education and immunization, safe drinking water and sanitation are comparable to the national averages. It should be noted however that there is considerable variation within the Region, as some parts of Magway do much better than others, with the more remote rural villages lagging behind substantially.

288 people were interviewed as part of this mapping. The feedback from Magway Region residents showed that people feel safer than in other States and Regions, with 99 percent of the respondents stating that safety and security were not a concern for them. This was the highest recorded score of all States and Regions included under mapping.

The freedom of expression and the confidence to speak openly about government and associated issues is an important crosscutting issue providing a context for governance reforms, but also putting the mapping itself into a broader perspective. The mapping found out that more than one-third of the citizens (39 percent) felt free to say whatever they wanted about government, while more than half of the respondents (57 percent) felt in some way restricted to express themselves freely, being anxious of the possible consequences this might have.

While these figures indicate a high level of respect of state authority and a dominant role for the state in public life, respondents in Magway also appeared to appreciate the improvements made by the government in terms of better services. Improvements in roads were noted most often, by 56 percent of the respondents, followed by improvements in education (43 percent) and improved access to electricity (19 percent) and drinking water (18 percent), although significant differences were observed between the three townships and specific local communities. Overall, only 7 percent of the respondents mentioned that government had not made any major improvements over the last three years in their village tract or ward. This indicates that the combined government institutions in Magway are either performing better, that the development activities are more visible or that they inform citizens better about the programmes they implement.

The picture about the major problems in the village tract or ward is also quite diverse. Overall, there are four issues that were mentioned by more than ten percent of the respondents: lack of jobs (20 percent), poor roads (18 percent), poor health services (14 percent) and lack of electricity (12 percent). However, the data also showed that the responses needed to be disaggregated to obtain a clearer understanding of local concerns.

Development planning and participation

The report describes the development funds available at the local level and the manner in which projects are prepared and selected for funding, the ways in which the public can participate in the process and the inter-relations of the various institutions and consultative bodies in this regard. The analysis shows that the various development funds have acted as important catalysts for reform at the township level. This has particularly happened as a result of the mechanisms that have been put in place to involve people in the identification of projects and the overall decision-making process over public funds at the local level. Even though the combined volume of these funds is still rather limited per township, they have already brought about a new way of interaction between government and citizens, while they also act at the same time as a positive incentive to become more responsive to the needs of the people.

On average, there were roughly 3,000 Kyats (3 USD) per capita available in 2013/14 in the three townships from the three main development funds combined: Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF), Rural Development Fund (RDF) and Constituency Development Fund (CDF). The actual per capita figures between the three townships differed however as Pakokku received only 1,700 Kyats per person (1.7 USD), Gangaw 2,100 Kyats (2.1 USD) and Mindon 11,500 Kyats (11.5 USD) per person.

In Magway Region, Township Development Support Committees (TDSCs) seem to work as they were intended by the Presidential Notification of 2013. The TDSCs in the three townships are active and take their role seriously, and the Township Administrators (TAs) have built good working relations with them. In all three townships the mapping revealed that the TA is still taking a leading role in development. In Magway, the TDSCs are playing a role in the prioritisation process at the township level and in progress monitoring and they meet on a regular basis with the TA to discuss development-related problems and solutions in the township. In this Region, the TAs guide the TDSCs by proposing a short list of potential projects that has been compiled by a planning committee composed of government staff only. At the moment, it depends a lot on the discretion of the TA whether or not to accept the advice of the TDSC, making its advisory role rather non-committal.

There are issues with regard to the representativeness and inclusivity of the TDSCs, which affect their legitimacy and the degree to which they are known by the public. The TDSCs are mainly composed of government officials and representatives of the business sector. Their members are from the urban wards and not from the rural village tracts. There is only one female TDSC member in the three townships in Magway Region, meaning that women are underrepresented in these committees. This can be explained by the fact that members of these committees in Magway Region were nominated or selected from the various groups in each of the wards that have an almost exclusively male membership and tend to be close to the government and the local elite. At the moment no feedback mechanism exists between these members and the groups they are supposed to represent. As a result, the TDSCs may not reflect the diversity that exists in society and may not effectively represent the different interests that different groups have within the local community.

Most citizen/interest groups on the township committees realised these limitations and proposed direct elections of the citizens/interest group members the next time these committees will be elected. Such elections could significantly increase the answerability and accountability link between these representatives and the citizens.

From a perspective of effectiveness and efficiency as well as transparency the different funds could be aligned within the same coherent planning framework by which the indicative budget ceilings for the coming year would be made known to the township administrations. With more clarity of the process and higher predictability of decisions the committees would be informed in advance in order to avoid disappointment at the community level when only one of the multiple requested projects is approved. While there is still ample space to improve the planning and implementation process of the various development funds people generally appreciate the efforts made by government to improve service delivery.

Basic service delivery

Although the structural framework for local governance has not significantly changed over the past three years, and actual planning in most departments still takes place at the Region or Union level, several factors have brought about a significant change in service delivery, which is reflected in generally high satisfaction ratings among the population. Among these changes are first and foremost a multiplication of available funds for the various social services, some delegation of decision-making to lower levels of government and attitudinal changes in areas where it is still impossible for township level officials to adjust plans to emerging township priorities or to the plans of other departments. Most township Heads of Departments (HoD) found their superiors to be much more responsive to their suggestions and urgent needs, meaning that proposals are now more often included into the annual plans or justifications are provided if that is not possible.

Both citizens and service providers acknowledge that improvements in service delivery have been made over the last three years. Sixty-three percent of the respondents mentioned that both public and private health services had improved over the last three years, mainly due to improved health facilities, and the improved availability of health staff and medicines. Sixty-nine percent mentioned that primary education had improved due to up gradation in the school facilities and the increased number of qualified teachers. Forty-one percent of citizens mentioned that availability of drinking water has improved in their locality over the last three years. These figures are reassuring, given the short period of time in which these reforms have been implemented and the fact that they came about in a context of still low levels of available funding and an often confusing and changing institutional and policy framework. The findings are positive in the sense that people acknowledge the result of the additional investments by government that have taken place since 2011.

When discussing these changes and needs with government staff directly involved in service provision, it became clear that these improvements are mainly due to additional resources that have been made available by government for basic service delivery. They may also be a result of gradual changes in the planning and delivery mechanisms of these services. At the same time, direct citizen participation in service delivery, either through consultation or through active involvement via a Village Health Committee or Parent Teacher Associations or other forms, remains very limited. While more information is collected at the grass-roots level to feed into the planning system, the actual planning is still done at other higher tiers.

Despite the awareness that a “coordinating” role must be played by the TA and is inherent to the formation of various township committees, horizontal co-ordination between departments remains a challenge in Magway Region according to most HoDs interviewed. Township departments continue to plan and deliver services in a “vertical” fashion, following the instructions from higher levels within their own ministries.

For vertical coordination between the township level of governance and the local communities in wards and village tracts, the joint Village Tract/Ward Administrator – Township Municipal Affairs Committee – Township Development Support Committee – Township Administrator meetings play an increasingly important role. They are often attended by the elected Hluttaw members who can take important matters to the Regional or Union level Hluttaws especially for issues that require extra funding from the Union Government.

Basic healthcare: People in Magway Region use both public and private providers of health services. Respondents were generally satisfied with the level of services available and in particular appreciated the improvements made in recent years. Of 19 health service providers interviewed all except one acknowledged that the provision of basic health services in the three townships in Magway has improved over the last three years mainly due to an increase in both recurrent and capital budgets. As a result, more facilities have been built and more health staff is available. In addition, most of them mentioned that the health facilities are better equipped, that there is an improvement in the supply of medicines (essential drugs), that the costs of health care for citizens have gone down and that preventive health care has improved. In these aspects, the situation in Magway Region reflects trends also found in other neighbouring Regions of central Myanmar.

Within the community, 63 percent of the respondents mentioned that the health services in their village-tract or ward have indeed improved, while 32 percent mentioned that these services had stayed more or less the same. Sixty percent of the respondents said that they were satisfied with the quality of health services in their village tract or ward, 31 percent qualified the services to be “not good, not bad” while 10 percent were not satisfied with the quality of the health care services. The level of satisfaction in Pakokku and Gangaw was higher than in Mindon.

Regarding equity in treatment, almost all respondents (98 percent) and both male and female respondents who made use of public health facilities felt that they received the same treatment as any other person in their village tract or ward, i.e. that there was no discrimination against particular groups within the community.

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

The survey also noticed a big difference in statements of medical staff and patients regarding the payment for essential drugs. While the health staff mentioned that these are always for free (if available), 55 percent of the respondents said that they always had to pay for medicines in a public health facility and 21 percent sometimes, while most medicines should be provided for free. Of the respondents who mentioned that they always had to pay for medicines 90 percent stated that they did not get an explanation from the medical staff on why they had to pay for these medicines. This points to gaps in mutual understanding between the service providers and users.

Primary education: Similar to the health sector the education sector has seen significant increase in human and financial resources and a correspondingly high level of appreciation and satisfaction, both among service providers and users. Ninety-five percent of the education staff interviewed mentioned that primary education has improved over the last three years in the three townships in Magway Region. Most interlocutors identified improved infrastructure (buildings and classrooms) and improved availability of teaching materials as the main factors contributing to this improvement. Teachers believed that further improvements to school infrastructure, accessories, teaching support materials and an increase in the number of teachers would be the most cost-effective ways to further improve the quality of education at primary school in Magway Region.

More than two-thirds or 69 percent of the respondents in the three townships in Magway were of the opinion that primary education in their village-tract or ward had improved over the last three years, while 24 percent mentioned that the quality had stayed more or less the same. Only 6 percent mentioned that the quality had deteriorated. As a result, 82 percent of the respondents with children attending primary school were satisfied, 15 percent qualified it as “not good/not bad”, and only 3 percent were not satisfied. There were however differences between the three townships, with Gangaw recording the highest level of satisfaction (91 percent satisfied) and Pakokku the lowest (75 percent). These observations were confirmed during the community dialogue session, during which most participants acknowledged the improvements as well, mainly referring to the increased number of teachers and their improved attitude.

In terms of structural and institutional parameters, not much has changed in the organisation of education over the last few years. However, it has become easier for the Township Education Officer (TEO) to recruit local teachers to deal with acute staff shortages, especially in the more remote townships or villages. The TEO can recruit teachers on a daily wage basis. But the need for such daily wage teachers has diminished substantially over the last three years in the three townships due to increased numbers of qualified teaching personnel.

Drinking water: In Magway Region as a whole, access to safe drinking water stood at 79 percent in 2010, near the national average of 82 percent. The needs are significant, and the local population seems to increasingly expect government institutions at the local level to make investments to meet those needs. In most cases, however, households and communities are self-reliant, especially in rural and remote areas, and do not get any assistance for meeting their basic water needs.

Drinking water provision is one of the core functions of government at the local level. In Myanmar, the responsibility is divided between municipalities in urban areas and the Union government in rural areas. The responsibility for drinking water provision is shared by the Department of Rural Development (DRD) under the Union Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development and the municipalities together with the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA), which is part of the Regional Ministry of Development Affairs.

Forty-one percent of the respondents mentioned that the provision of safe drinking water has improved over the last few years, which is much lower than the corresponding figures for health care and primary education. Accordingly, the provision of safe drinking water remains high on the list of needs in most village tracts and wards. Partly as a result of the citizen consultation process through the Village Tract Administrators (VTAs), TAs, the TDSCs and the Township Municipal Affairs Committee (TMACs), an increasingly larger part of the development funds and municipal revenues in the three townships is allocated to address bottlenecks in drinking water provision. In this regard, Magway reflects a very similar situation to that found in other dry zone Regions, in particular Mandalay and western Bago.

The provision of drinking water services in urban areas offers a good illustration of the manner in which the institutional and governance framework in municipalities has changed in recent years. In the municipal areas, i.e. the towns within the townships, providing citizens with access to drinking water is the joint responsibility between the TMAC and the DMA and is regulated by the Magway Region Municipal Law. The Law was revised in late 2013 to provide for the inclusion of citizen representatives in the TMACs. Since municipal affairs fall under Schedule Two of the Constitution, and since municipal revenues are almost exclusively generated locally, the planning and implementation process of public works and the management of municipal affairs are largely delegated to the township level. The DMA differs starkly from other departments present at the township level, which is reflected in relatively high level of decisiveness, effectiveness, responsiveness and speed of implementation.

The municipalities, embodied by the TMACs and the DMA together, are the only bodies at the local level that generate their own income and can decide (with approval from the Regional Minister of Development Affairs) on how to use that income to implement their functions. The TMACs and DMA draft an annual plan based on the estimated revenues for the coming financial year that is submitted to the Region Ministry for approval. It differs a lot per township, based on locally developed priorities and different levels of revenues.

Knowing the estimated budget in advance makes planning and project selection at the municipal level much easier and swift. The TMACs can meet with Ward Development Support Committees (WDSCs) and Ward Administrators (WAs), negotiate priorities and come to agreements at their level. In this way, consultation at the ward level shifts more towards real participation in a decision-making process and motivates citizens to attend meetings and present and defend their case for a certain public investment project. Since approval procedures are much shorter than in sector ministries projects can be implemented much faster which also has a positive impact on the confidence people have in the newly established structures.

Information, transparency and accountability

Small improvements have been made with regard to information, transparency and accountability in Magway Region over the past few years according to the various stakeholders involved in the mapping. The Ward or Village Tract Administration Law of 2012 requires that the VTA/WA be elected from and by the group of 10 household heads. However, the elected VTA/WA is not formally accountable to the local community and reports to the TA, who can assign tasks to the VTA/WA and can dismiss the VTA/WA in case of misconduct. Nevertheless, partly because the developmental role of the VTA/WA has increased and the VTA/WAs have come to be seen as the link between the community at the village tract or ward level and the government at the township level, most of the VTAs/WAs interviewed now feel more accountable to their communities.

Looking at local governance from an aspect of accountability and information management, the newly emerging role of VTA/WA can be highlighted. Partly due to the emergence of the various development funds that require the involvement of communities, in Magway Region the VTA/WA has in practice become more of an “elected representative” of the village tract or ward, acting as an intermediary between the village tract or ward and the township. They inform community members of government plans and programmes and bring relevant village tract or ward problems or needs to the attention of the TA. They do this in addition to their formal role, which mainly focuses on maintaining law and order. In practice, VTA/WAs also play an important role in mediation and settling disputes, which could be seen as an extension of the maintaining law and order functions.

While formally not much has changed in terms of institutional structures and accountability lines at the township and regional level, informally changes are noted, which may be equally important. The relationship between the departments at the township level and their counterparts at the regional level seems to have changed as well. Constructive inputs from below are appreciated and integrated into the planning and the Region is in general more responsive and predictable in behaviour.

The Region and Union-level *Hluttaw* members often participate in meetings at the township level, usually in the combined VTA/WA-TA and development support committee meetings mainly in the implementation of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in which they play an executive and oversight function at the same time. Nevertheless, they play an important role in bringing up issues or needs of the township to the Region and Union level, especially lobbying for additional funds that fall outside regular budget lines or ceilings.

The Magway Region Municipal Law might also provide a new basis for changing the relationships between citizens and local administrations in terms of accountability. The Municipal Law establishes the TMAC in areas designated as municipalities, whose members include two government staff as well as local citizens representing various interests groups in the municipal area of the township. The Law gives the TMAC executive responsibilities. It can determine local taxes and fees on advice from the Executive Officer of the municipality. It can also instruct the Executive Officer to carry out certain works, and analyse draft regulations and notifications. The Executive Officer is a staff member of the DMA and remains directly accountable to the Minister of Development Affairs at the Region level who can overrule any decision of the TMAC. As a consequence of this new law, however, the Executive Officer becomes to a certain extent also accountable to the partially elected TMAC.

Access to information is critical for improving transparency and accountability. While it is left to the discretion of the Heads of Departments and the TAs to decide what information they share with the public, more information is flowing downward from the township administration and departments to the VTAs and to the committee members.

As a result of these changes, the “trust” that people have in their government in the three townships in Magway Region has improved over the last three years. More people think that government will do what it says it will do, and will respect the rights of citizens and the rule of law. Trust in almost all government institutions has improved, most significantly in the now elected VTA/WAs. Reasons provided for the improvement in trust in the VTA/WA were either related to the fact that they listened to people’s needs, organised meetings, brought their problems to the TA, etc. or to the development activities that have been implemented collectively by various government institutions (like new school buildings or roads), which people tend to attribute to the efforts of the VTA/WA.

With regard to handling complaints and redressing grievances, the mapping noted the important role that the VTA/WAs and TAs play in these processes, either as resource persons who can refer a case to the right institution or by resolving or mediating themselves. Most TAs mentioned that the number of cases that were brought to them had increased over time and that many of them were related to recent or old cases of land disputes. The fact that the General Administration Department (GAD) is dealing with these cases and that their number is increasing could mean that there is more confidence of the people that their cases are dealt with in a fair way by government. While ad hoc committees consisting of at least three members investigate more serious cases, the TA still has a lot of discretionary power to rule leaving room for arbitrariness. A further specification and clarification of the procedures regarding administrative complaints and dispute resolution would help to create more legal certainty.

The number and size of Civil Society Organisations in Magway Region is still rather limited and so far they play a marginal role in governance. Most organisations are active in health and education, providing direct support to people in need. Even though their outreach is narrow, their work is appreciated by the development support committee members and government staff. From the discussions with the CSOs, it became clear that many are still rather ambivalent with regard to intensifying their relationship with the government at township level. It also became clear that the way in which CSOs position themselves in the governance process can differ a lot per township, depending on personalities on both the government and the CSO side as well as on the independence of the latter from government.

Conclusions

Even though the process of reforming local governance has only started recently, several early gains in terms of improved performance can already be noticed in Magway Region. While the Union and Region Governments remain dominant in the decision-making process and the legacies of traditional relations between government and society are very visible in Magway Region, basic social services like public health care and primary education have been improving at a high pace which is confirmed by high satisfaction rates among the population. There is still less progress in terms of the representativeness and openness of the institutional framework, and accordingly in terms of accountability and transparency. Still, the VTA/WAs are increasingly acting as an intermediary between the village tracts/wards and the townships. Also, some initial forms of citizens' representation at the township level are emerging to play an active role in the decision-making process with regard to the utilisation of development funds and defining the priority areas for the municipal committees and the DMA in the three townships.

Many of the improvements noticed in Magway Region are symptomatic for trends observed in other States and Regions, in particular the neighbouring Regions of central Myanmar's dry zone, while some improvements appeared to be more Region-specific, or rather a result of localized circumstances or initiatives. Over time, as States and Regions will begin to follow their own region-specific political dynamics, these features of local governance will also develop along a more region-specific path, and will more strongly reflect the socio-economic realities and local conditions. Given its relatively strong economic basis and central location, its capable and motivated government staff and history of continuity and stability, Magway has the potential to show a path in terms of implementing people-centred local governance reforms and of developing models for serving local communities more effectively and more responsively.



1. Introduction

Magway Region is one of the core regions of central Myanmar, hosting about seven percent of its population and contributing significantly to the country's economy through its agricultural produce as well as its oil production. Magway Region has not been affected by any armed conflict, ethnic tension or major natural disaster in recent years. Although it is not free from challenges, with generally low socio-economic indicators and economic development similar to national averages, and is vulnerable to frequent droughts, it has fared rather well due to a resilient agricultural population and the existence of some industries and related employment opportunities. As a result, the governance reform programme that started in 2011 has been implemented expediently in Magway.

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

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

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

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

First, it addresses citizen **participation** in planning and utilisation of **development funds** available at the township level that are made available by the Union and Region Government to tackle practical bottlenecks in service delivery within the communities and are intended to stimulate local development. Together with the municipal revenues generated by the TMAC and the DMA (see below), these funds represent the only budgets available at the township level over which the township has, to a certain extent, discretionary power in terms of utilisation. They are at the same time the only budgets in which people have some say as to how they are allocated and utilised. This report further elaborates on how these consultations are taking place in Magway region and how they help in changing the way in which government operates and relates to its citizens.

Secondly, the report looks at the process of **service delivery** in three key basic service sectors, primary **health care**, **primary education** and the provision of **drinking water**. These sectors (especially health care and education) have seen a substantial growth in budgetary resources over the last few years. Has this increase trickled down to the grassroots levels and has it resulted in improved service delivery in the eyes of those who provide these services to the people and those who make use of these services? Has the way in which these services are provided changed over the last few years and is there more coordination between the various service providing departments at the township level? Again the report presents data from township level mapping in Magway region that sheds some light on these issues and provides some answers to these emerging governance questions.

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



2. Methodology

2.1 Objectives

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

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

2.2 Research tools

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

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

In Magway Region, a representative sample of 288 citizens equally divided over 6 village tracts/wards in 3 townships (Pakokku, Gangaw and Mindon²) were interviewed using the **Citizen Report Card (CRC)** methodology. The questionnaire focused on collecting opinions and experiences of people who make use of services provided by government (such as primary healthcare and primary education) and on the way the respondents interact with government (see Table 1).

In addition, 46 **Service Providers**, including primary school principals and teachers, healthcare facility managers, healthcare staff and Village tract or Ward Administrators (VTA/WA) were interviewed in the same locations, focusing on the service delivery process and on their interaction with citizens who make use of these services. The objective was not to conduct an in-depth technical assessment of the education, health or water sectors as this was beyond the scope of this mapping.³ Instead, these interviews were intended to gain insights in the actual process of service delivery by describing and analysing the way in which service providers and service users interact to realise the actual delivery of basic services.

Similar issues were also discussed during the **Community Dialogues (CD)**, which were held in the same village tracts/wards, in which 214 people from different groups present in the community (including women, youth and elders) participated alongside 108 service providers active in the health and education sector as well as the VTA/WAs and village clerks. The objective of this was to collectively identify issues related to service delivery, state-citizen interaction and community relations to public administration, and to find solutions for some of the problems identified that could be implemented at the community level by these actors themselves.

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

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

3. A number of these studies are currently taking place to inform capacity building initiatives and programme design in Myanmar. In the education sector, the Ministry of Education and UNICEF have developed a Township Education Improvement Plan (TEIP) piloted in Mon State in 2013, and rolled out to all 14 States/ Regions in 2014. A preliminary social assessment has been conducted by MSR for the Ministry of Education to inform the Myanmar Decentralizing Funding to Schools Programme, supported by the World Bank. In addition, a Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) initiated by the Ministry of Education (MoE) has been conducted with the support of development partners.

Township-level Mapping: Background Study on Township Governance

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

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

Mapping level	Activity	Participants	Geographical scope	Outputs
Community	Citizen Report Card (CRC)	288 citizen respondents	6 VTs/Wards in 3 townships	Dataset and reporting on key findings
	Service Provider interviews	6 Village Tract Administrators 5 primary school principals 15 primary school teachers 6 managers of healthcare facilities 10 health care staff	6 VTs/Wards in 3 townships	
	Community Dialogues (CD)	214 citizens 108 service providers	6 VTs/ wards in 3 townships	Reports for each village tract or ward
Township	Interviews and secondary data analysis	Government staff from GAD and relevant departments	Three townships	Background report on key findings
	Focus group discussions	VTA/WAs, TDSC and TMAC committee members and civil society representatives	Three townships	Background report on key findings
Region	Interviews	Government staff from relevant departments	Magway	Qualitative data to inform integrated analysis

In consultation with the Magway Region government **Pakokku, Gangaw and Mindon** townships were selected to participate in the local governance mapping.⁴ Pakokku is the largest township in the Region, easily accessible and more urban in character, while Gangaw is a more rural but easily accessible township of medium size. Mindon is also more rural and one of the smallest township in the Region. Together these three townships represent almost 10 percent of the population in Magway Region.

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

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

Pakokku	Ward No. 6
	Chaik Village Tract
Gangaw	Kyawtaik Ward
	Min Village Tract
Mindon	Pan Tone Village Tract
	Kone Tine Kyin Village Tract

Table 2: Selected townships and village tracts and wards



Figure 1: Magway Region and selected townships

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



3. Introduction to Magway Region and participating townships

3.1 General situation and geography

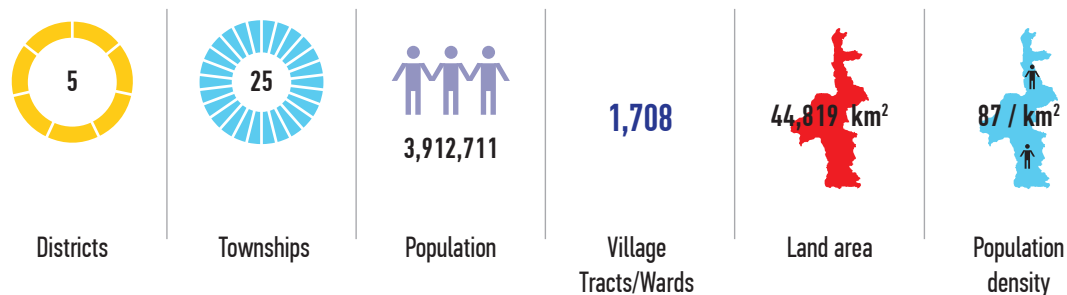


Table 3: Magway Region at a glance



Figure 2: Magway Region and location of sample townships and village tracts/wards

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

Magway Region is the fourth largest constituent unit of Myanmar. With 44,819 km², it covers about 7 percent of Myanmar's area (which is about the same area as Denmark or Estonia). It is divided into five districts and 25 townships. The population of Magway Region is 3.9 million, which makes it the seventh most populous of the States and Regions in Myanmar, at about 9 percent of the total. It does not have an international border but shares a boundary with Rakhine and Chin States, and Sagaing, Bago and Mandalay Regions.

The Region lies geographically at the centre of Myanmar, alongside the mid-stream sections of the Ayeyarwady River which dominates the Region. Only the South Western boundary with Rakhine State has some mountains, rising up to the Rakhine Yoma range. The rest is alluvial flat land which belongs to the major Myanmar eco-region known as the "Dry Zone", due to its relatively low rainfall patterns (on average 840 mm. per annum), which distinguishes it from the southern coastal monsoon climate.

Its main river, the Ayeyarwady (or Irrawaddy), Myanmar's largest river and most important commercial waterway, forms the Region's main economic artery and has played a significant role for its history and culture. The Region's capital city Magway, located on the Ayeyarwady River, has about 300,000 inhabitants. Other major towns are Pakokku and Minbu. Minbu lies opposite Magway across the Ayeyarwady River and was its historical centre during the colonial period.

3.2 Socio-economic background

As in Myanmar overall, agriculture is one of the main sectors of the local economy, providing most of the employment to its residents. The areas near the Ayeyarwady River have traditionally benefited from the vicinity of the country's main route for transportation, communication and trade. Among the important crops found in the Region are sesame and groundnut. Rice, beans and pulses, millet, maize, chili, onions, potatoes, sunflower and tobacco are other main crops. Edible oil is also produced. Livestock and fresh water fisheries are also important. Thanaka (sandalwood) is also one of the famous products of Magway Region.

Besides agriculture, Magway is best known for its position as the country's main petroleum producing area. The oil sector used to be so dominant in Myanmar's economy that it earned the Region the epithet "the oil pot of Myanmar". The oil and gas sector dominates the economy to an extent unmatched in any other State or Region. Oil fields were first discovered in the area between 1887 and 1902, and initially explored by the British Burmah Oil Company.⁵ The Yenangyaung, Chauk and Ayadaw oil fields were among the first to be exploited at an industrial scale. Industries were nationalized after the 1962 military coup, and further discoveries were made in the 1960s and 1970s, with the Mann oil field being the most significant. The Kyaukkwet and Thargyitaung/Sabe oil and gas fields were recent discoveries and rank among Myanmar's most important onshore resources, even though offshore fields have since become far more significant.

Recent years have seen a renewed interest by foreign investors in the sector. In October 2013, 16 Myanmar onshore oil fields were successfully tendered, with many of them situated in

5. For a study on the beginnings of Myanmar's oil industry in Magway Region, see "Oil in Burma, The Extraction of "Earth-Oil" to 1914", Marilyn V. Longmuir (2002). It describes how the early hand-dug wells near Yenangyaung ('creek of stinking water') and the subsequent chain of events in the early 1900s turned Burma's oil fields into "a matter of great Imperial importance" for the British colonial Government. Founded in Glasgow in 1886 as 'Rangoon Oil Company', Burmah Oil enjoyed a monopoly in British Burma until 1901, when the Standard Oil Company started operations. The company operated in Myanmar until 1963, when all industries were nationalized. Based on nationalized assets of Burmah Oil, the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) was later created.

Magway Region.⁶ Magway Region is also crossed by several gas pipelines from its fields to Yangon as well as the new Kyaukpyu-Kunming gas pipeline and the Kyaukpyu-Nanning oil pipeline, connecting the offshore fields in the Bay of Bengal with China. Besides petroleum, there is also some extraction of coal and minerals in the Region.⁷

Compared with Mandalay Region on the eastern shore of the Ayeyarwady River, tourism plays a much lesser role in the local economy. Although pagodas, monasteries, museums and pilgrimage destinations (Buddha footprints) attract some internal visitors, international tourists rarely visit the Region.

Magway Region's social development indicators are comparable to the national averages. About 27 per cent of the population was estimated to be living below the poverty line.⁸ This is comparable to the poverty estimate of 26 per cent for the country as a whole. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), about a fifth of households in Magway Region are not using improved water sources, which is comparable to the national average. See for a comparison of several social indicators between Magway Region and the national average Figure 3. About 16 per cent of households in Magway Region are not using improved sanitation and 10 per cent are practicing open defecation. Children in Magway Region are much less likely than the average Myanmar child to be born in a health facility (only about 17 per cent are). According to all three standard measures of malnutrition (underweight, stunting and wasting), children in Magway Region are almost as likely to be malnourished as the average Myanmar child, with 36 per cent of children being stunted. The primary school enrolment rate in Magway (92 per cent) is also comparable to the national average (88 per cent), as is the primary school completion rate. Close to half (44 per cent) of children attending primary school in the Region, however, are not completing their schooling on time.

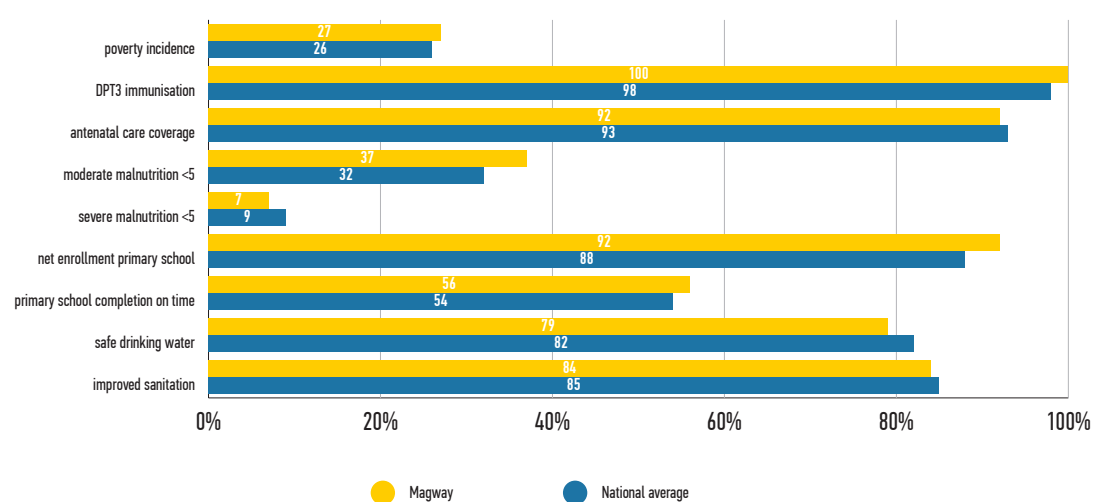


Figure 3: Selection of social development indicators for Magway Region compared to the Myanmar national average

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

6. Ministry of Energy. For an overview of the Myanmar oil and gas sector and its significance for different regions see http://www.slideshare.net/yph1969/myanmar-petroleum-energy?next_slideshow=1

7. In recent years, many farmers have moved to work at Minbu coal mine where there are 14 coal mining companies, employing some 1,000 of coal miners. Other important industries include cement, cotton weaving, tobacco, iron and bronze. Military equipment is also being produced in the Region. Magway is also the only known deposit in Myanmar of medium grade uranium.

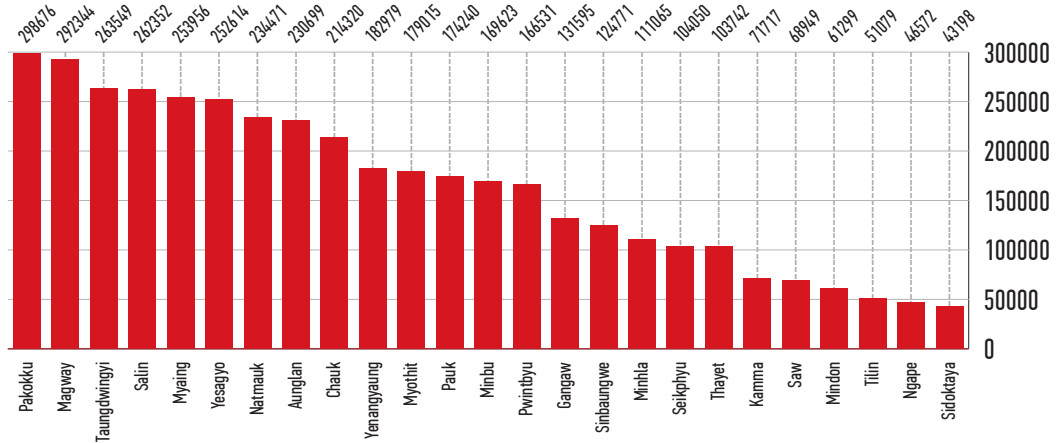
8. This and the subsequent social development indicators are based on "Magway Region: A Snapshot of Child Well-being", UNICEF Myanmar (2014) available at http://www.unicef.org/myanmar/Magway_Region_Profile_Final.pdf

3.3 Demographic profile

Magway region has a population of 3.913 million people,⁹ which is 9 percent of Myanmar's total population and is comparable to countries like Liberia or Lebanon. Its sex ration is 87 meaning that there are 87 males on every 100 females, which is the lowest figure for the whole country. Eighty-five percent of the population lives in the rural areas, which makes Magway the least urbanised region in the country except for Ayeyarwady. The population density is 87 people per square kilometre, which is on the lower end of the spectrum compared to other States and Regions. See for a distribution of the population over the 25 townships in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Magway townships ranked by population size

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



Most of the Region's people are Buddhist Barmars. There are only very small minorities of other ethnic groups, primarily Chins, as well as some Rakhine, Kayin and Shan. During the colonial period, a sizable Anglo-Burmese community also lived in the Region, mainly related to European oil workers.

3.4 Magway Region historical context

Magway's history is closely related to that of other areas of central Myanmar. Its position alongside the Ayeyarwady River has connected the Region to Sagaing and Mandalay upstream, as well as Bago, Ayeyarwady and Yangon downstream, for centuries. During the first millennium the Region was inhabited by Pyu people, a Tibeto-Burman population that dominated the central Myanmar flatlands at the time. One of their main cities, Peikthanomyo in Magway's Taungdwingyi Township, was one of the most prominent ancient settlements in the area.

When the Bamar Kingdom of Pagan emerged in the late 9th century,¹⁰ the Region began to form part of the core areas of the Burmese culture and civilization. After the fall of the Pagan Empire in 1287, which had ruled the areas along the Ayeyarwady for several centuries, it was eventually replaced by the Kingdom of Ava, which became the major kingdom of central Burma for the next century and a half.¹¹ The areas that now belong to Magway Region later

9. All population figures used are compiled by: Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014; provisional results.

10. Pyu settlements continued to exist for the next three centuries but the Pyu gradually were absorbed into the expanding Pagan Kingdom. The Pyu language was still used until the late 12th century. By the 13th century, the Pyu had assumed the Burman ethnicity.

11. Both Pagan and Ava are situated on the southern shore of the Ayeyarwady River in what is today Mandalay Region. In medieval times, the areas left and right of the river formed a cultural and for many period also political and administrative unit.

formed part of the Third Burmese Empire and were ruled by the Konbaung Dynasty, which was the last dynasty that ruled the kingdom from 1752 to 1885.

As a result of the 1826 Treaty of Yandabo, following Burma's defeat in the first Anglo-Burmese war, it lost control of Arakan (now Rakhine and Chin State) to the British. This brought the British Empire to the southwestern borders of Magway. Magway itself was incorporated into the British Empire only later, as a consequence of the Third Anglo-Burmese War of 1885, which resulted in the incorporation of the entire Upper Burma into the British colony and the loss of sovereignty of an independent Burma.¹²

During the British colonial administration, Magway Region was known as Minbu Division. As an area that had been under the direct control of the Burmese state prior to its annexation, the British colonial administration included Minbu Division into what it referred to as 'Ministerial Burma'. The administrative machinery that evolved gradually under British rule was a pyramidal territorial organization comprising Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, Sub-divisional Officers, and Township Officers in charge respectively of division, districts, subdivisions, and townships.¹³ In Magway, all areas were thus administered on the basis of village tracts, towns and townships as they had been set up in the rest of the directly administered areas.

Around 1940, the Division was renamed into Magway Division. During World War II, Magway was occupied by Japanese forces. Its infrastructure and petroleum facilities were severely damaged during the war.

Magway Region has enjoyed a lot of territorial and administrative continuity since the end of the 19th century. After independence in 1947, Magway was integrated as a division into the directly administered areas under central government control, while the system of local administration was largely left intact from the colonial era. The territorial subdivision of village tracts/wards, townships, and districts was retained from the pre-independence period. Parliamentary elections for the House of Representatives took place in 1947, 1951, 1956 and 1960. Attempts to institute local self-government following the Democratization of Local Administration Act of 1953 never reached a stage of full implementation and did not alter the fundamental set-up of government at the sub-national level during the 1950s.¹⁴

Following the 1962 military coup Security and Administration Committees (SACs) were set up at the local level, which were chaired by the regional military commander, and by the (military) Minister of Home Affairs at the centre.

The 1974 Constitution introduced the concept that States and Divisions had the same status. Magway Division thus became one of the 'constituent units' of the 'Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma', made up of 7 States and 7 Divisions. People's Councils were introduced at all levels of government administration where the central government had control. The basic units of villages/village tracts and wards, towns and townships were established in Magway Division along the territorial lines of how they had been set up in Ministerial Burma the 1920s. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) was built up as a mass organisation following the same territorial structure as the state itself, while all other parties were banned. From 1974 onwards, the BSPP's role in state administration was firmly

12. Lower Burma had already been annexed by the British in 1853, as a result of the Second Anglo-Burmese War.

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

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



entrenched in the Constitution itself. In the mid-1980s, the party claimed that over 2.3 million people were involved in fortnightly party cell meetings and other Party activities.¹⁵ In Magway Division, this new structure was established in all areas.

The new structure also foresaw the holding of elections to the various administrative bodies at different levels. For these elections, however, only candidates pre-screened and approved by the BSPP were allowed. While it was not mandatory that a candidate must be a member of the BSPP, in practice most of them were. In Magway Division, such People's Councils were thus set up at the Division level and at the level of village tracts/wards, and townships. At the central level of government, the Pyithu Hluttaw served as the country's legislature, with each of Magway Division's townships represented by at least one elected member.

The participatory elements of the structure were essentially abolished with the suspension of the 1974 Constitution in 1988, when Magway Division, as all other parts of the country, were again placed under direct military control and administration. The territorial organisation remained the same, the dominant role played earlier by the BSPP was essentially substituted by the military in the form of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). In Magway, the 27 May 1990 elections for 485 seats in a new national parliament resulted in the NLD winning all of the 39 seats of the Division. No woman member was elected from Magway Division. However, the 1990 elections were not implemented and did not lead to the formation of a national legislature, nor did they have any effect on governance arrangements in Magway Division. Several of the candidates who had won seats in Magway Division were either arrested or left the country.

In 1993, the military regime began to rebuild direct links with the population and established the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA). It gradually became the largest state sponsored mass organisation (claiming in 2005 that it had grown to 23 million

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

members). USDA branches were set up in townships across Magway Division in all village tracts and wards. Membership was “essentially compulsory for civil servants and those who sought to do business with or receive services from the state.”¹⁶ Division officers of the USDA were often prominent regional businessmen as well as military personnel and civil servants. In 1997, the SLORC was reorganized into the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), which set up a pyramidal structure of similar committees down to the village tract/ward level.

In May 2008, the national referendum on the new Constitution was held. The new Constitution made Magway Division, now renamed as Magway Region, a constituent unit of the new Union of the Republic of Myanmar, equal in status to the other States and Regions. Accordingly, its institutions were set up following the 2010 elections.

3.5 Magway government and institutions

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

Regional legislature and government

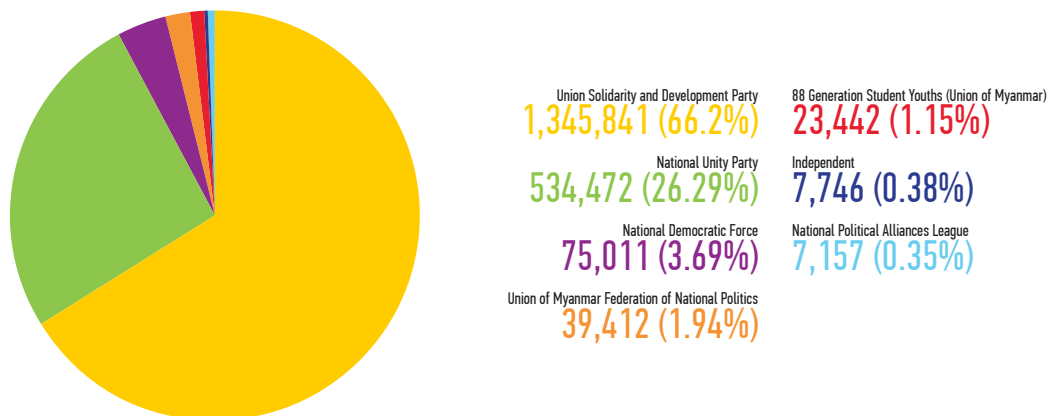
The elections for the members of the Magway Region Hluttaw were contested on the basis of townships, which were each divided in two separate constituencies (Table 4 shows the elections results for the selected Townships). As the Region has 25 townships, 50 territorial constituencies were formed. In addition, one constituency was set up for the Chin ethnic community of the Region, for whom voters registered as Chin were entitled to cast a vote in addition to their territorial constituency vote. Altogether, therefore, 51 members were elected for the Region Hluttaw (see Figure 5 for the votes received by each party in the 2010 Region Hluttaw elections).

Constituency	Party	Candidate	Votes
Gangaw 1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Myint Aung	16,106
	National Democratic Force	Zaw Min Sein	10,924
	National Unity Party	Nyo Twar	9,583
	Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics	Sein Tun	7,521
Gangaw 2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Win Myint Maung	16,874
	National Unity Party	Pae Nyo	4,459
	Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics	Aung Kyi Than	1,806
Pakokku 1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Thein Tun	56,225
	National Unity Party	Aung Thaung	18,717
Pakokku 2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Zaw Moe Thein	50,471
	National Unity Party	Soe Myint	23,587
Mindon 1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Thein Zaw	14,524
	National Unity Party	Kyaw Thaung	6,034
Mindon 2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Thein Aung	13,514
	National Unity Party	Kyaw Nyunt	6,292

Table 4: 2010 Magway Region Hluttaw election results (selected townships)

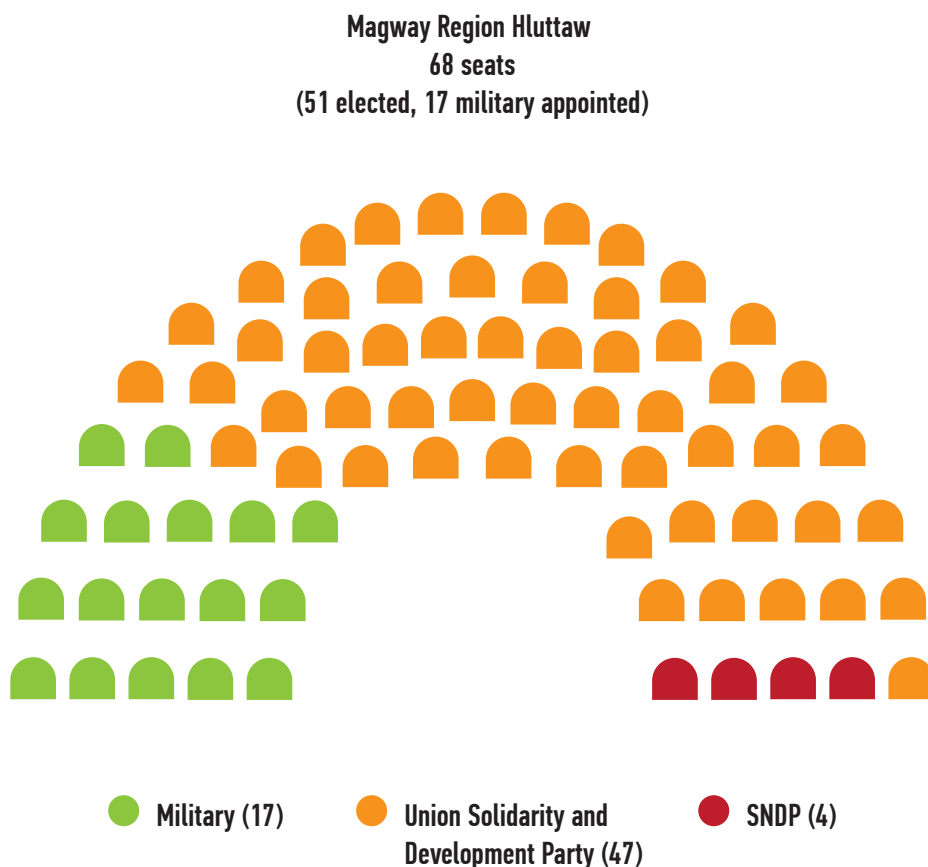
16. Taylor, *The State in Myanmar* (2009).

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



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

Figure 6: Seats in the Magway Region Hluttaw by various parties and the military



In the Region Hluttaw, the USDP holds 47 elected seats (see Figure 6). The military occupies 17 seats. The National Unity Party, which had fielded candidates in 49 of the 51 constituencies, garnering 26 percent of the votes cast, has 4 seats, including the seat for the ethnic Chin constituency. The USDP was the only party fielding candidates in all 51 constituencies, winning one of them (Sidoktaya 2) unopposed.

The term of the Region or State *Hluttaw* is the same as the term of the *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw*, i.e. five years. All *Hluttaw* members are men. The legislative activity of the Magway Region *Hluttaw* has been so far rather minimal. In 2012 and the first half of 2013, only the minimum required Region laws essential for budgetary and planning purposes were adopted.¹⁷ As instructed by the central government, in 2013 a Municipal Law was also passed.¹⁸

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

In addition to the Chief Minister, the Region Government also comprises of 10 Ministers and the Advocate General of Magway Region. The USDP holds all a ministerial portfolios except the Minister of Security and Border Affairs, which is by constitution held by a representative of the military. The single representative elected for the ethnic minority constituency in the Region, i.e. the Chin community, is automatically member of the Region Government.¹⁹ The latter and the Minister of Transport are from the NUP. All members of the Magway Region Government are men (see Table 5).

Name	Function	Party
Phone Maw Shwe	Chief Minister	USDP
Col Zaw Lin Aung	Ministry of Security and Border Affairs	Military
Kyi Min	Ministry of Finance	USDP
Aung Naing	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Breeding	USDP
Thein Tun	Ministry of Forestry, Mines and Energy	USDP
Myint Naing	Ministry of Planning and Economics	USDP
Win Pe	Ministry of Transport	NUP
Win Myint Maung	Ministry of Electric Power and Industry	USDP
Nay Shin	Ministry of Municipal Affairs	USDP
Aung Kyaw Min	Ministry of Social Affairs	USDP
Hla Tun	Ministry of National Races Affairs (Chin)	NUP

Table 5: Magway Region Government

The fact that both the Government and the Hluttaw are dominated by the USDP and the military means that there is no significant difference between the Hluttaw as the legislative and oversight body, and the Region Government as the executive branch. Given that there

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

18. August 2014.

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

is no ‘opposition’ party, the political dynamics in Magway Region are rather characterized by collective action and consensus, with the main ‘opposition’ to the Region government coming from those groups and parties which have so far remained outside the formal state.

Union legislature

For the Union legislature, the Pyithu Hluttaw and the Amyotha Hluttaw, 25 and 12 representatives were elected for Magway Region respectively. For the seats in the Pyithu Hluttaw, each township served as a constituency. Hence, 25 members were elected from Magway Region to the larger one of the two Houses of the Union legislature. 24 of these seats were won by the USDP, one seat (Seikphyu) by the NUP (see Table 6).

Table 6: 2010 Pyithu Hluttaw election results for Magway Region

Party	Constituencies contested	Votes	Percent	Seats
Union Solidarity and Development Party	25	1,367,059	65%	24
National Unity Party	25	441,409	21%	1
National Democratic Force	10	152,158	7%	-
Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics	12	108,189	5%	=
National Political Alliances League	1	40,072	2%	=
United Democratic Party	1	2,668	<1%	=
88 Generation Student Youths (Union Of Myanmar)	1	n/a	n/a	=

On 1 April 2012, by-elections were held for five Magway seats in the Pyithu Hluttaw. These were all won by candidates of the National League for Democracy (NLD), which had not participated in the 2010 elections.²⁰

For the Amyotha Hluttaw, each Region and State is assigned 12 seats. These are elected on the basis of groups of townships. As there are 25 townships in Magway Region, townships were grouped in clusters of 2-3 to form constituencies each, whereas Magway, Taungdwingyi and Yesagyoo counted as single constituencies. The USDP won all of the 12 available seats in Magway Region. The NUP received about 22 percent of the votes, the National Democratic Force 10 percent and the Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics 5 percent (see Table 7).

Table 7: 2010 Amyotha Hluttaw election results for Magway Region

Party	Constituencies contested	Votes	Percent	Seats
Union Solidarity and Development Party	12	1,340,817	63%	12
National Unity Party	12	460,519	22%	-
National Democratic Force	5	206,719	10%	-
Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics	6	101,457	5%	=
National Political Alliances League	1	2,826	<1%	=

By-elections also took place for one constituency in the Amyotha Hluttaw for Magway Region, as the seat had become vacant after the 2010 election. As in most other by-election constituencies, the seat in Constituency No. 4 (Taungdwingyi Township) was won by the NLD candidate.²¹

20. The winning candidates were Myint Thein, Magway Township; Myint Aung, Myaing Township; Paik Ko, Pakokku Township; Aung Myo Nyo, Pwintbyu Township; and Tin Htay Aung, Yezagyoo Township.

21. Aung Kyi Nyunt, NLD.

Governance and reform in Magway Region

Unlike many other States and Regions of Myanmar, Magway has not been affected by any armed conflict, ethnic tension or major natural disaster in recent years. Although it is not free from challenges, with generally low socio-economic indicators and economic development similar to national averages, and is vulnerable to frequent droughts, it has fared rather well due to a resilient agricultural population and the existence of some industries and employment opportunities. However, industrial development has also been a source of social and environmental grievances in the Region, in particular with regard to the extractive industry with the petroleum sector playing such an important role in Magway.

With most of the industries controlled by state-owned enterprises and a close relationship between the local political and administrative elite and the business sector, it is clear that questions relating to transparency and accountability are key among the governance challenges in the Region. The particularity of Magway Region's economy has also informed and shaped the efforts, undertaken since 2012, of reintroducing some forms of popular participation at the local level, in particular the townships and the village tracts and wards. With one party dominating the Region Government and Hluttaw, voices critical of the prevailing power structures have not yet fully come to the fore in the Region in the past three years, at least not within the institutional framework set up by the Constitution and subsidiary legislation.

The degree to which Magway Region will be successful in both promoting its economic performance while at the same time delivering basic services in an equitable and effective manner will depend largely on the progress made in building local governance institutions and processes that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of the local population.

3.6 Introduction to the three townships participating in the study

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

Township	Location	District	Population size	Urban	Rural	Wards	Village tracts	Villages
Pakokku	In the North-East of Region with good connections to Mandalay and Yangon	Pakokku	290,000	95,000	195,000	15	55	264
Gangaw	Northern part of the along the Chin border	Gangaw	133,000	13,000	120,000	4	71	113
Mindon	South West part of the Region, on the Rakhine border	Thayet	60,000	5,000	55,000	4	72	175

Table 8: Main characteristics of Pakokku, Gangaw and Mindon Townships

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

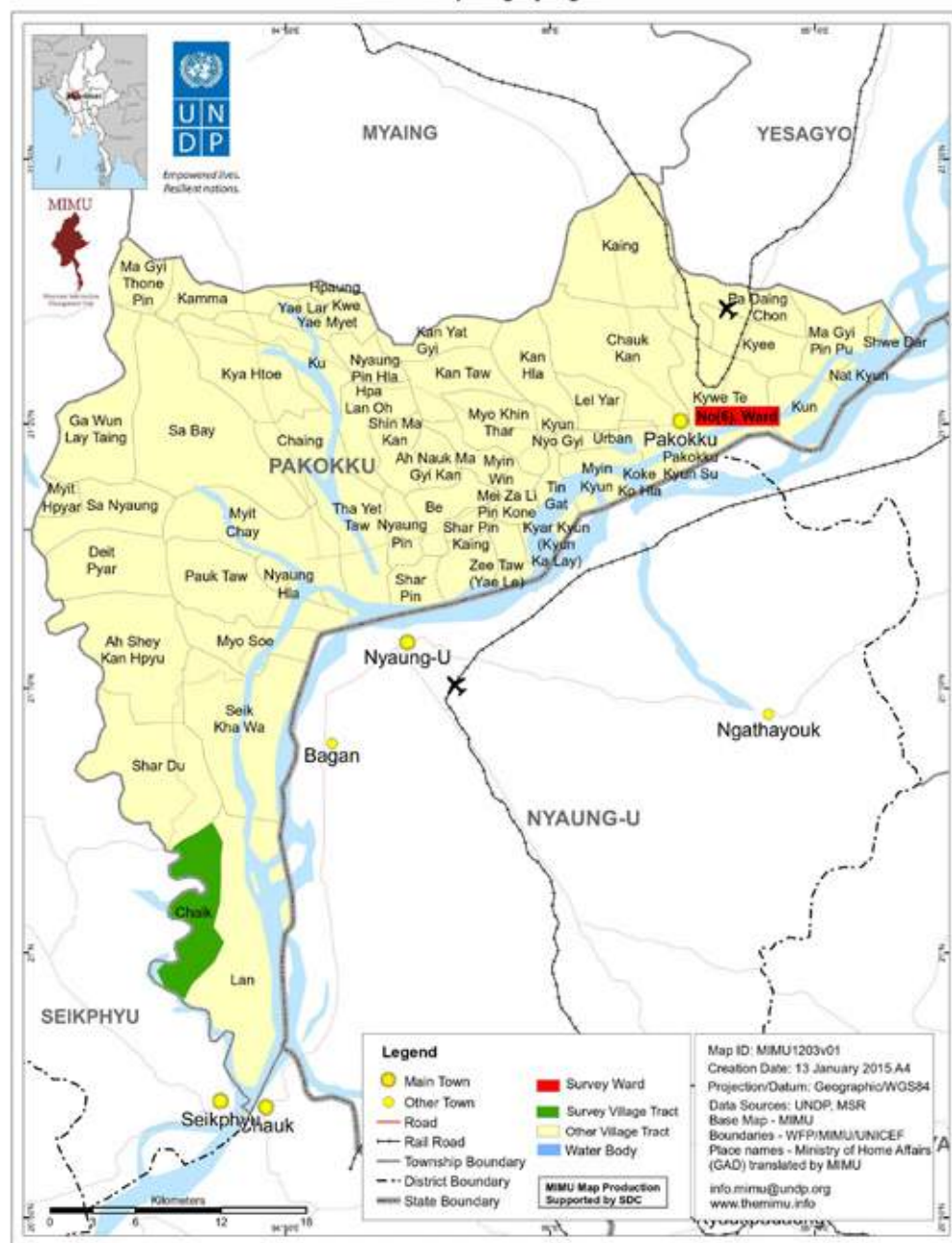
Pakokku

Pakokku Township is the second most important township in Magway Region but in population size it is slightly larger than Magway and therefore the largest township in Magway Region. It is one of the five District capitals of Magway Region and covers 7884 square kilometres. Roughly one-third of its 290,000 people lives in the 15 wards that together constitute the urban or municipal area, while the remaining two-third live in the 55 village tracts consisting of 264 villages (see Figure 7).

Pakokku is situated in the North-East of Magway Region, alongside the Ayeyarwady River, which plays an important role in its economy, both for transport as well as an important source of drinking and irrigation water. It is connected by Myanmar's longest bridge to Mandalay Region on the East side, which makes it an important transportation hub for the northern part of Magway Region as well as for Chin State.

Its economy is mainly agricultural based, producing several kinds of pulse, cereals and rice. Pakokku town has a small industrial area with some light industry.

Figure 7: Pakokku Township



Gangaw

Gangaw is the most northern township in Magway Region and it is the district capital for the 5 northern townships. It is bordered by Chin State in the West and Sagaing Region in the East. Except for the central floodplains along the Myittha River most of the area is hilly and covered with forests. With an average annual rainfall of almost 1000 mm it is much wetter than the southern part of Magway Region (see Figure 8).

Gangaw has a population of 133,000 of which 10 percent or 13,000 live in the municipality and the remaining 90 percent live in the rural areas.

With the completion of Myithar and Yesagyo multipurpose dam projects it is expected that double cropping will become feasible, more job opportunities will be created, and small scale enterprises will emerge, as the projects are designed to generate electric power and provide irrigation water to enhance crop production.

The main economic activities are agriculture, most of which is taking place on small hold farms, and logging. Major crops are paddy rice, groundnut, sesame, sunflowers and legumes.

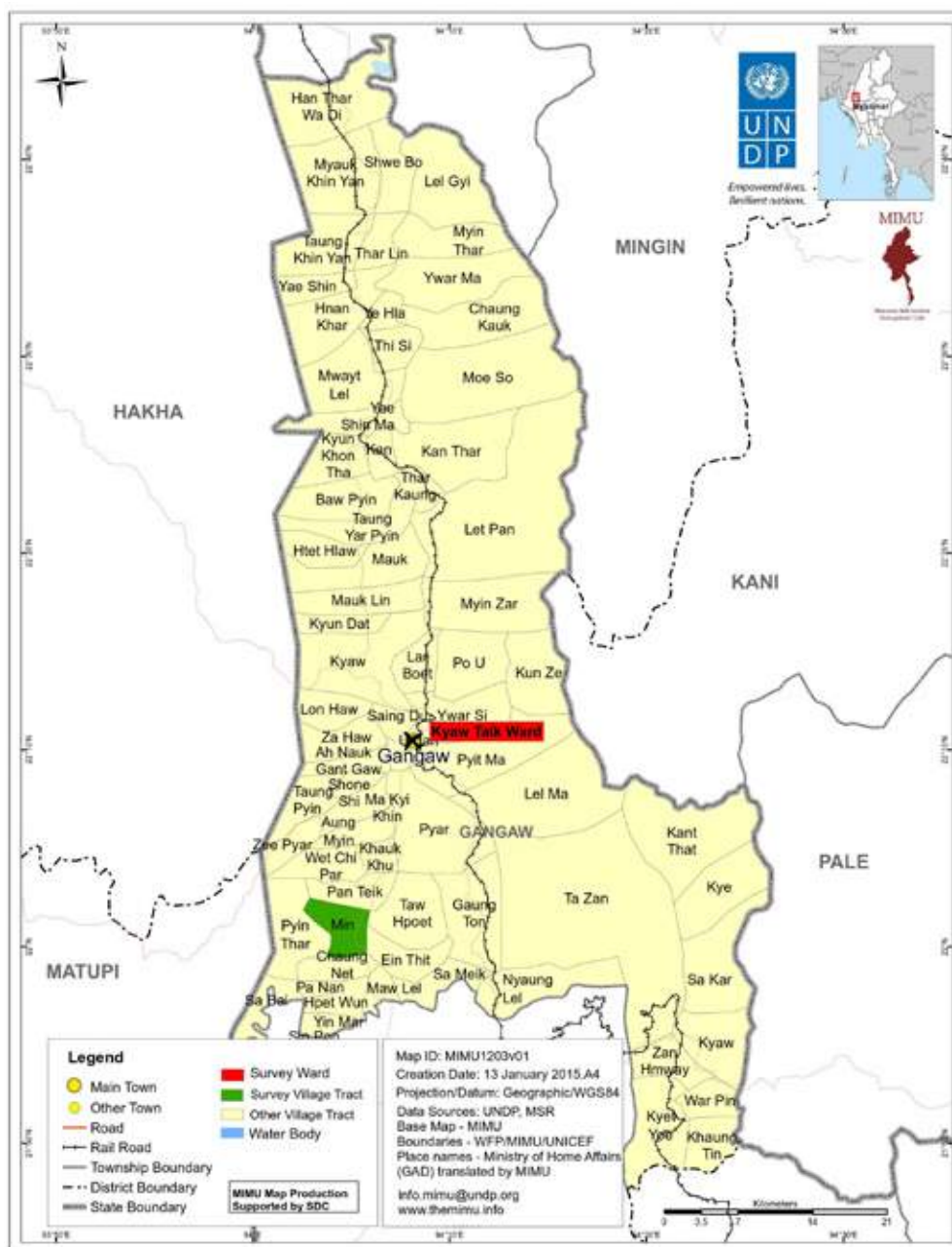


Figure 8: Gangaw Township

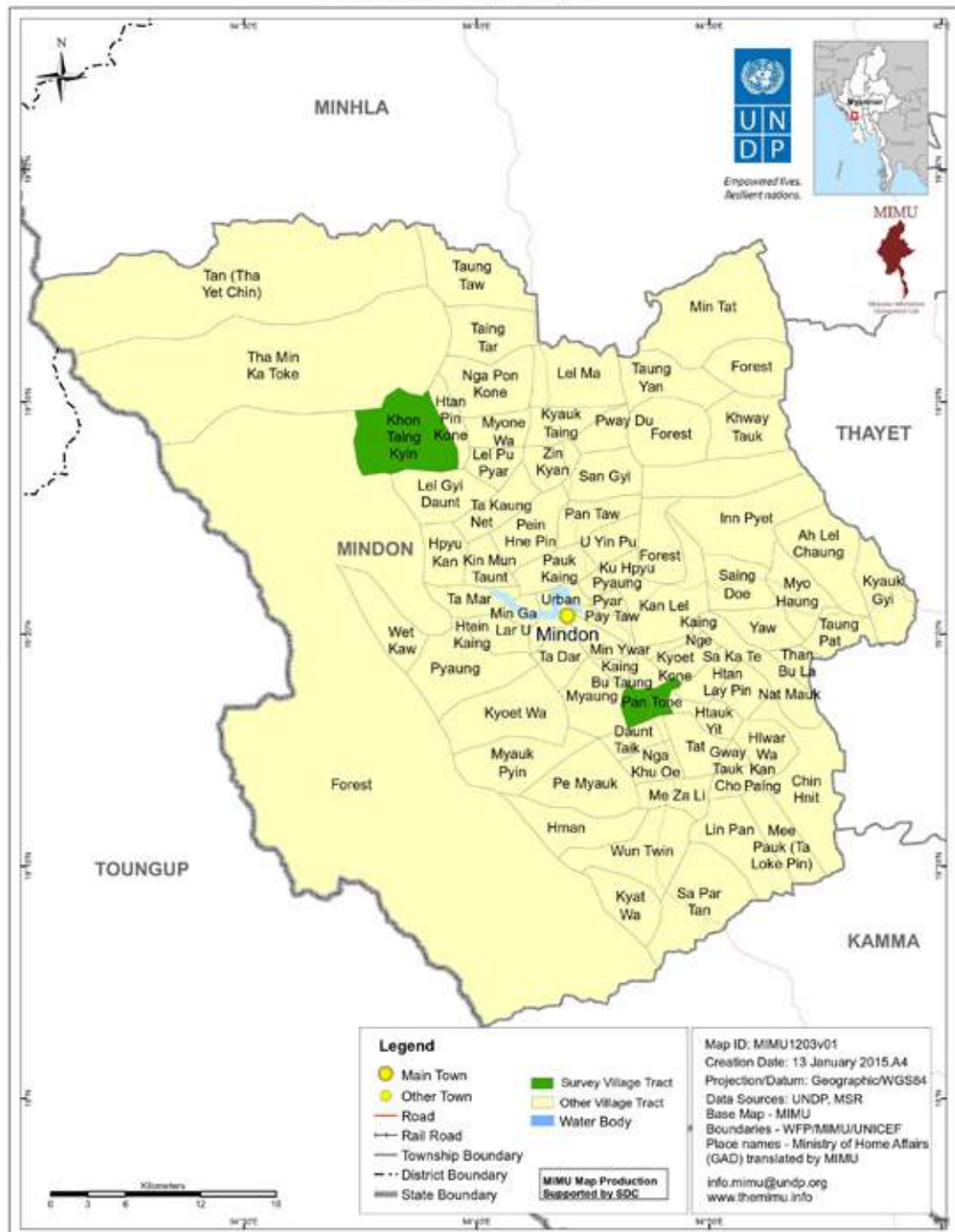
Disclaimer: The names shown and the boundaries used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Mindon

Mindon Township is part of Thayet District and is located in the South East of Magway Region on the border with Rakhine State. It is separated from Rakhine by the Rakhine Yoma range which blocks the township from the monsoon rains making it part of Myanmar's central dry zone. This makes agriculture less intensive and results in a low population density of 23 people per square kilometre as well. With a population of only 60,000 and an area of 2,555 square kilometres it is one of the smallest townships in Magway Region. Out of these roughly 5,000 live in the small rural town of Mindon, consisting of 4 wards. The remaining 55,000 people live in 72 village tracts with 175 villages (see Figure 9).

Its economy is almost purely agriculture-based, major crops are rice, millet, maize, sunflower, beans and pulses, tobacco and sesame. Some timber production is taking place in the eastern mountains. Recently, several oil-drilling concessions have been distributed among interested oil companies who have started exploring the area.

Figure 9: Mindon Township







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

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

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

4.1.1 Citizens views on improvements in their village tract or ward

Regarding the situation in their village tract or ward, the respondents were asked “what has been the most important improvement made by the government in your village tract or ward over the last three years”.²² The responses are presented in Figure 10. Improvements in roads were the ones noted most by 56 percent of the respondents. Improvements in education was mentioned by 43 percent of the respondents, followed by improvements in electricity and access to drinking water (19 and 18 percent respectively). Improvements in health services were mentioned less often (14 percent). Only 7 percent of the respondents mentioned that government has not made any major improvements over the last three years in their village tract or ward. Compared to other States and Regions this figure is very low (usually around 40 percent) meaning that government has achieved more in Magway Region or that its achievements are more visible or better communicated to its citizens.

Majority (43-56%) Magway citizens view improvements in roads and education and only a small percentage (7%) did not think that government has not made any improvements over the last 3 years.

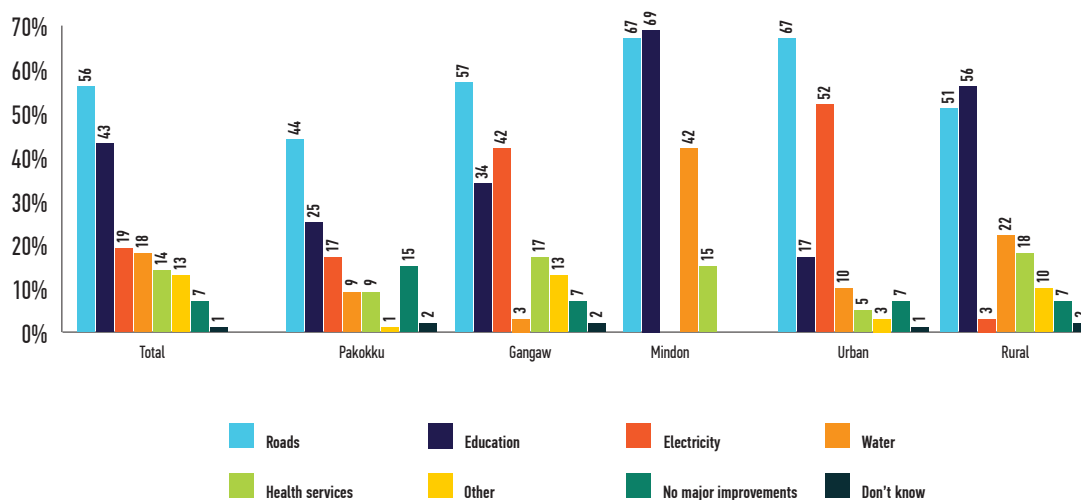


Figure 10: Improvements made by the government in the village tract/ward over the last three years for the three townships and urban/rural

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n=288. More than one answer possible.

The differences per township are rather large. In Mindon, improvements in roads, education and water were mentioned more often, while in Gangaw improvements in electricity stood out.

Comparing the urban and rural respondents shows that while both mention roads quite often, urban respondents mentioned electricity more often (52 percent) while rural respondents mentioned improvements in education more often (56 percent). Based on these

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

figures it seems that over the last few years, rural areas have caught up with the urban areas in education, while at the same time the urban areas made progress on improved electricity connections.

During the Community Dialogue sessions the following major improvements that have been implemented over the last three years in the village tract or ward were noted (see Table 9).

Table 9: Major improvement in village tracts or wards as mentioned by citizens and service providers in the six village tracts or wards

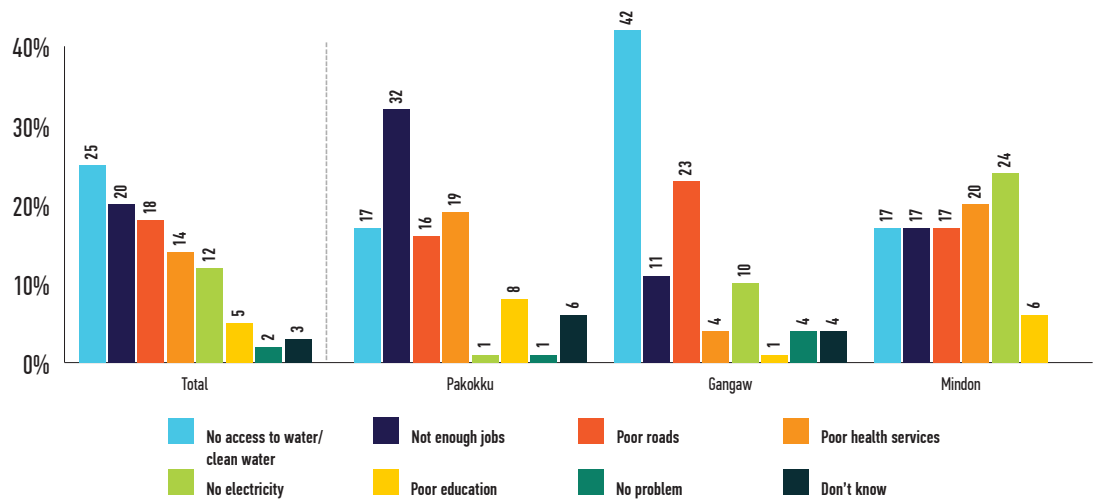
Village Tract/Ward	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
No. 6 Ward Pakokku	A new school was built	Electricity was installed	A new female ward administrator was elected
Chaik VT Pakokku	Better inter-village roads	A train station was built	A new school was built
Kyawtaik Ward Gangaw	Access to electricity	The primary school was upgraded to post primary school.	Road conditions are better
Min VT Gangaw	A station hospital was opened	Roads and bridges have been built	A mobile phone tower was built
Pan Tone VT Mindon	Better road conditions	Better conditions of school buildings.	Increased numbers of education and health staff
Kone Tine Kyin VT Mindon	Better inter-village roads.	More accessible water supply	No need to provide anything on Township officials' visits

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

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

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

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, and December 2014. n=288.



Access to clean drinking water was mentioned most often by 25 percent of the respondents, followed by lack of jobs (20 percent), poor roads (18 percent), health services (14 percent) and lack of electricity (12 percent). However, the data also show that the responses need to be disaggregated to obtain a clearer understanding of local concerns. Very high figures for highlighting a problem in one locality can skew the overall result for the total in the three townships, even though it constitutes a serious problem only in one or two of them. As can be seen from figure 11, there were significant differences between the three townships. In Pakokku, lack of jobs was mentioned most often by 32 percent of the respondents, which is normal for a more urban setting in which the basic social services are fairly well covered, while poor health services score relatively high as well. In Gangaw, lack of clean water was mentioned by 42 percent of the respondents followed by road infrastructure with 23 percent, while in Mindon, lack of electricity scored high (24 percent) followed by poor health services (20 percent). The differences in response between male and female respondents were minimal.

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

A similar difference in development priorities emerged at the community level during the Community Dialogue meetings (see Table 10). The three most important problems mentioned are similar to the ones raised by the individual respondents and different across the townships and village tracts and wards.

Village Tract/Ward	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
No. 6 Ward Pakokku	A new school building	Not enough job opportunities	Improved water supply
Chaik VT Pakokku	Access to electricity	High school	A Rural Health Centre
Kyawtaik Ward Gangaw	Insufficient water for domestic use	Some roads are in a bad condition	Limited job opportunities
Min VT Gangaw	Access to electricity	High school	Houses at the hospital
Pan Tone VT Mindon	Access to electricity	Not enough job opportunities	The condition of health care centre is not good
Kone Tine Kyin VT Mindon	A Rural Health Centre	Access to electricity	A bridge to cross the stream in the rainy season

Table 10: Most important development challenges for each village tract or ward emerging from the Community Dialogues

Source: Local Governance Mapping, CD meetings Magway Region, December 2014.

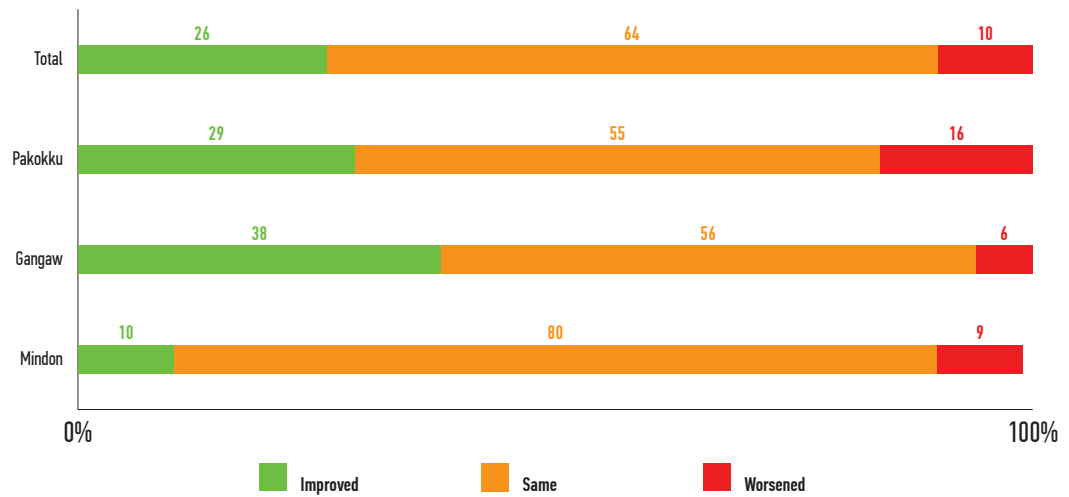
Livelihood situation

The food and income situation for most households of the respondents in the three selected townships has not changed much over the last three years (see Figure 12).

For 10 percent of the respondents the food situation has worsened and for 26 percent it has improved, while for the majority (64 percent) it stayed more or less the same. All three townships show a similar pattern except that in Gangaw a slightly larger part of the respondents mentioned an improvement of their food situation (38 percent) compared to the percentage of households that recorded a deterioration (6 percent).

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

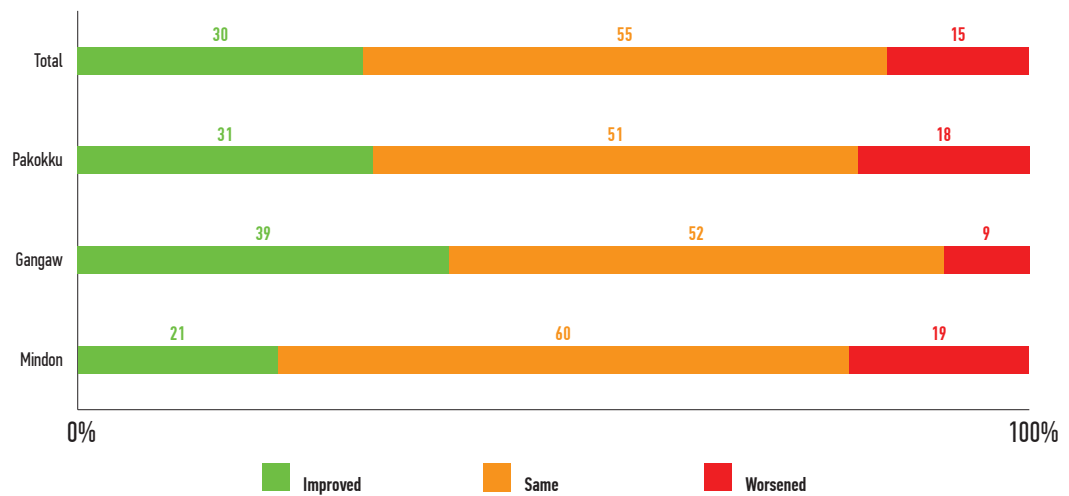
Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n=288.



A similar pattern emerged with regard to changes in the household income situation of respondents, except that 5 percent more respondents mentioned that their household income situation had deteriorated over the last three years, while also 4 percent more mentioned an improvement (see Figure 13).

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

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n=288.



39% people see their region or union government followed by 32% who see their VTA/WAs as actors in resolution of their village/ward problems.

When people were asked about the actors responsible for resolving their problem, as is shown in Figure 14, most people (39 percent) expect the Region or Union Government to solve the problem, but the VTA/WA is also expected to play an important role (32 percent) specially in the more rural townships and despite the fact that his ability to solve them is very limited, which could potentially lead to frustration and friction between the VTA/WA and the community. The reliance on the Region or Union Government stands out as significantly above the level mentioned in other States and Regions, where people often tended to pin their hopes more on local government representatives.

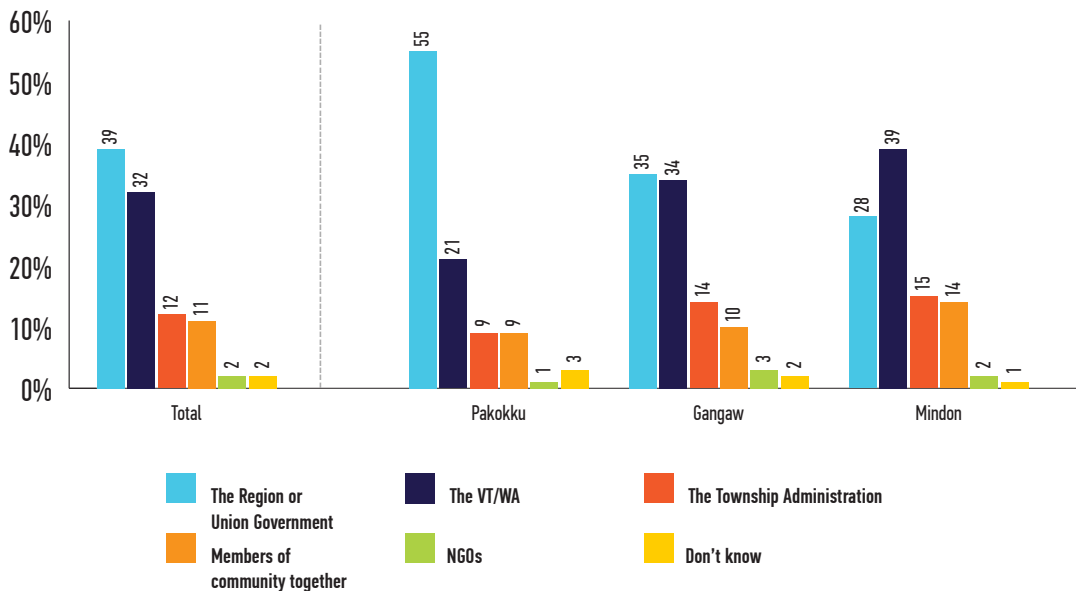


Figure 14: The person or institution who is according to the respondents first of all responsible for solving the problems in the village tract or ward

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n= 288.

When asked what government is doing to tackle these problems the respondents gave the following responses (see Figure 15). The fact that almost 2 out of 3 respondents believe that government is not doing anything to resolve the most important problems could also mean gaps in expectations.

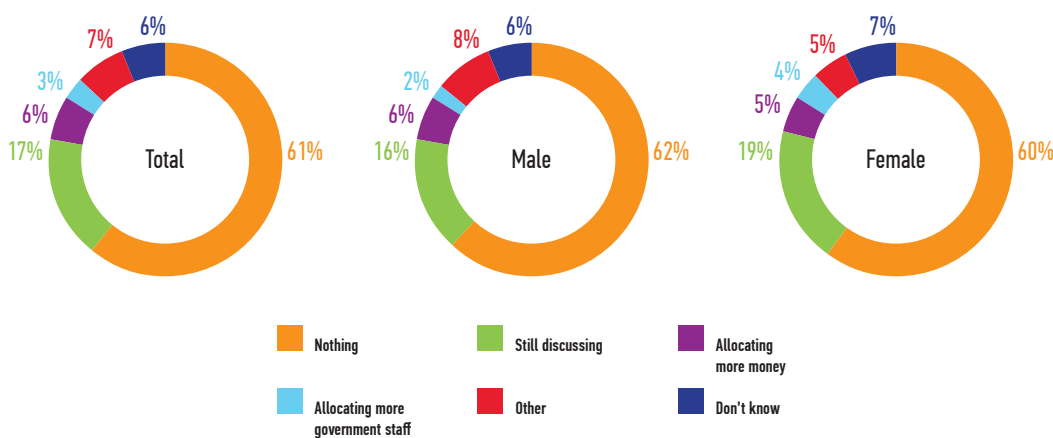


Figure 15: Action taken by government to resolve the most important problem in the village tract or ward according to the respondents

Source: Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n= 288.

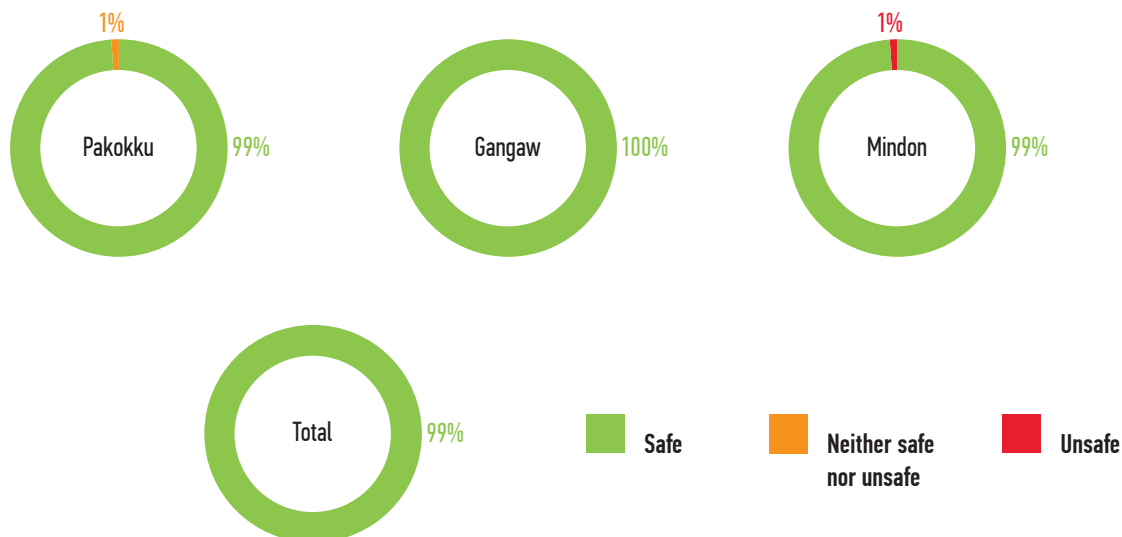
4.1.3 Perceptions on safety and security in Magway Region

On the question whether respondents feel safe in their village tract or ward all except 2 respondents or 99 percent mentioned that they felt safe, which is the highest score recorded in all States and Region participating in the research (see Figure 16).

99% mentioned that they felt safe, which is the highest score recorded in all States and Region with 30% even noticing an improvement.

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

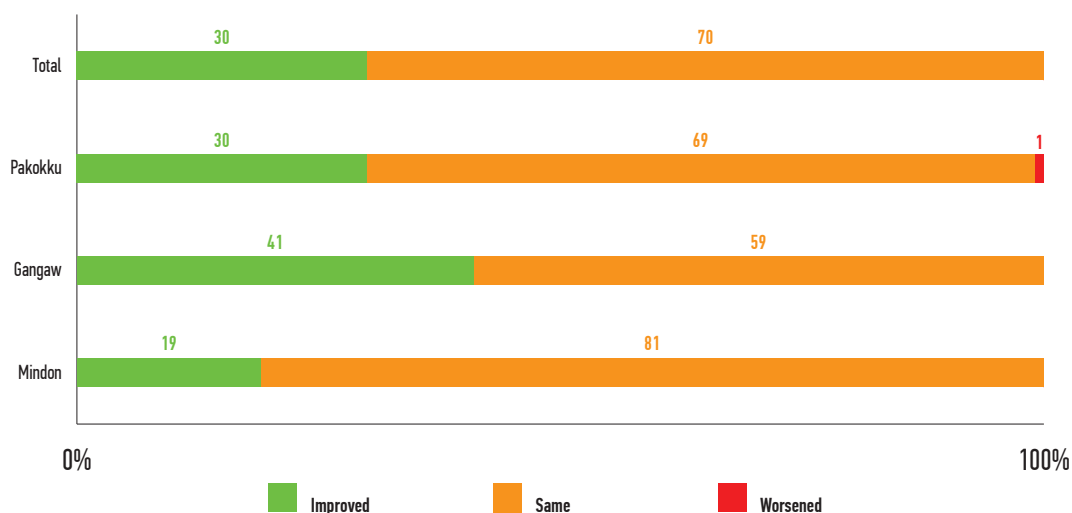
Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n=288.



Two-third of the citizens interviewed (70 percent) reported that the safety situation in their immediate area of residence had stayed more or less the same over the last three years, while 30 percent had noticed an improvement in the safety situation (see Figure 17). Gangaw recorded a slightly higher score in number of respondents saying that the safety situation had indeed improved (41 percent).

Figure 17: Perceived changes in the safety situation over the last three years in the village tract or ward in which the respondents live in the three townships

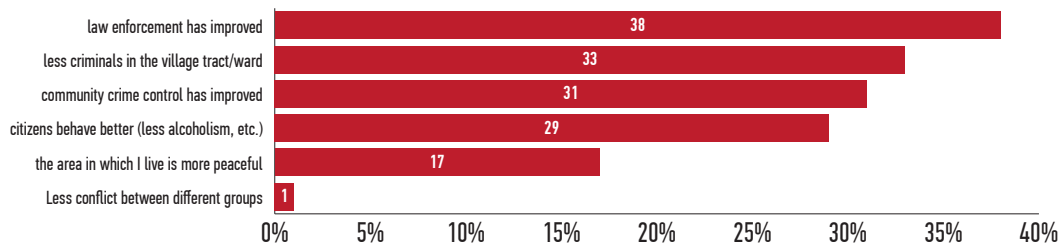
Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n=288.



According to the 68 respondents who stated that the safety situation has indeed improved, the most common reasons given were related to the local situation in their immediate surroundings like improved law enforcement and reduced criminality in the village tract or ward, while issue related to an improved national or regional peace situation were mentioned less frequently (see Figure 18).

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

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



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

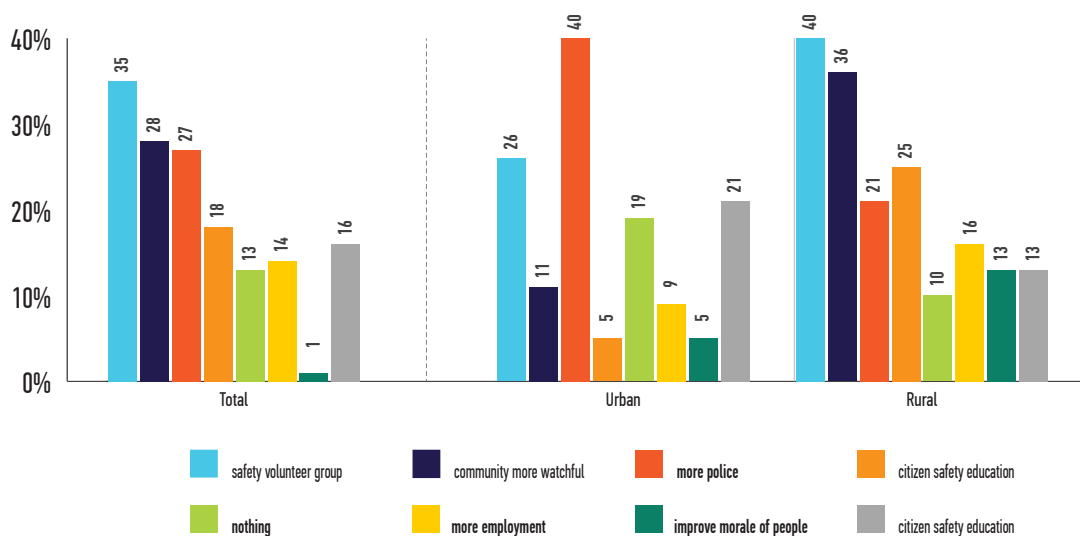


Figure 19: Respondents suggestions on possible actions to be taken to further improve the safety situation in their village tract or ward split according to urban and rural respondents

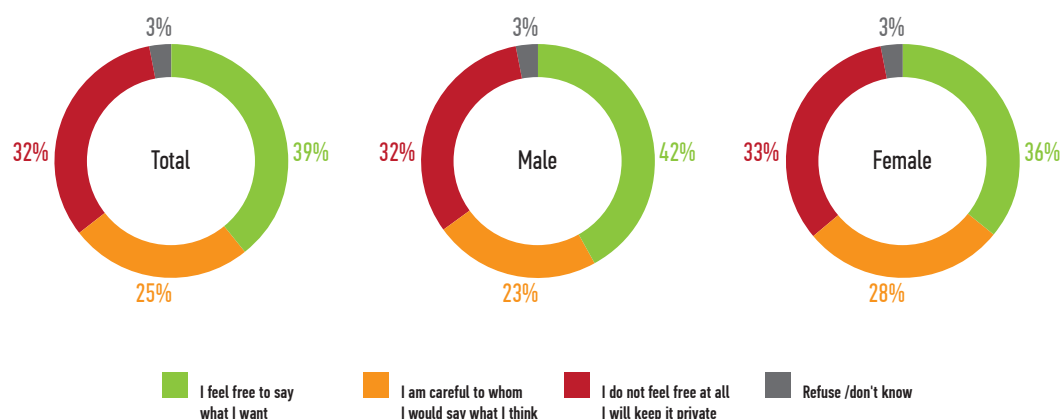
Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n=288.

Another aspect of safety, which the mapping addressed, is the perception of freedom of expression. The mapping asked the respondents whether they felt free and safe to express their opinion about government in public. On this aspect of safety the scores were less positive. Only 39 percent of the respondents mentioned that they felt free to say what they want about government while 57 percent feel in some way restricted to express themselves freely, being afraid of the possible consequences this might have (see Figure 20). This indicates that people still don't have full confidence in government respecting rule of law and basic human rights. The differences between male and female respondents were minimal.



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

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



The data above shows that there are significant differences between townships as well as within each of the townships between village tracts and wards. Since only one village tract and one ward were included in this mapping in each township, it is not possible, based on this data, to say whether other village tracts and wards have similar priorities or whether they will present different felt needs. What one can conclude from these individual and collective responses and the interviews with key informants is that the needs and problems of people can differ significantly per township or even per village tract or ward. Thus tailor-made solutions and responses are required if government wants to become more responsive to these needs and become more “people-centred”. If so, it will be critical for government in general and the various ministries and departments in particular to be able to assess and record these different needs on the basis of transparent and equitable criteria. This needs to be followed by putting the necessary systems in place that enable it to respond to each of these issues fairly, systematically and adequately while at the same time adhering to priorities defined at the national level. Experiences from other countries show that in societies that are becoming more and more complex and with big local differences, it is impossible to plan and respond adequately at the Union level exclusively. Further below, this report will examine whether the township administration (GAD) and the various departments at the township level have the necessary instruments, whether they have sufficient capacity and most of all whether they possess at least a minimum level of autonomy to make them more responsive.

4.2 Development planning and citizen participation

One of the objectives of the administrative reform programme of the Government of Myanmar is to transform the development process in Myanmar and make it more “people-centred”. What this means in the Myanmar context is in general described in the **Framework for Economic and Social Reforms of January 2013** which mentions: “The Government of Myanmar attaches high priority to developing a participatory process of local budgeting, which should reflect local priorities and needs while corresponding with national policy directions”,²³ and “....new forms of public participation are emerging as citizens seek opportunities to actively participate in shaping the policies that affect their lives”.²⁴ To facilitate this process, new consultative structures at the township and village

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

24. *ibid* p 37.

tract or ward level have been established following Notification 27/2013 of the President in February 2013.²⁵ As a result, the **Township Development Support Committees (TDSC)** and the **Ward/ Village Tract Development Support Committees (W/VTDSC)** were established in March 2013.²⁶ The **Township Municipal Affairs Committees** were established at the township level at the end of 2013 after the adoption of the Municipal Law by the Magway Region Hluttaw in October 2013.²⁷

As a result of reforms at the Union level, the planning and budgeting processes at the Region level and below are gradually changing as well. There are **four main planning and budgeting processes** that affect service delivery at the township and in which people could be involved. While these processes are more or less similar across the country, there are differences between the various States and Regions and across various townships within States and Regions that affect the level of involvement of people in these processes. In the following paragraphs an overview is presented as to how planning and budgeting is implemented in Magway Region and in what way and to what extent people are involved in these processes.

The first type of planning and budgeting process that takes place at the township level is the **planning and budgeting of community level activities related to the various development funds** that are made available either by the Union or Region/State level Governments to the township. These funds are managed by the GAD. The details of the related planning process and the implementation in the three townships are described later.

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

Thirdly there is a **municipal planning and budgeting process**, which in its present form still is fairly new. It is similar to the sector planning process and is implemented by the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA), a newly created department/organisation that exists in each State and Region falling under the Ministry of Development Affairs, but has no parent Ministry at the Union level. Since the revenues for the DMA are generated at the township level on the basis of taxes and fees set by the TMAC, the planning and decision-making process is slightly different from the sector departments however. The details of this planning process are described in section 4.3 dealing with the governance arrangements for drinking water provision.

Finally there are elements of an emerging fourth type of planning- **township development planning process**, which if fully in place would take a more comprehensive analysis of the whole township into perspective. The 'township plans' that are currently available are compiled by the Township Planning Officer and the Township Planning and Implementation Committee (TPIC) in those township that have an active functioning TPIC. They often have a 2.5 year perspective (until the next national elections in 2015) or 5 year perspective and are

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

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

27. See Magway Development Affairs Law; Magway Region Hluttaw adopted in January 2013 and revised in October 2013 (to accommodate citizens participation).

at present merely a **compilation of the individual sector plans**. No budget is available at the township level for their implementation and they are not used to inform the actual planning process of the sector ministries yet.

4.2.1 Planning, implementation and monitoring of development fund projects

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

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

The Poverty Reduction Fund

In Magway, the Region Government allocates a basic amount of at least 40 million kyat (40,000 USD) to each township of the 1 billion kyat (1 million USD) it receives as part of the PRF funds from the Union level, and this amount is topped up by using Regional Funds. This helps the townships to draft a reasonable realistic list of proposed projects and makes prioritising useful. The Regional Government in Magway has also respected the selection of projects made at the township level.

The Poverty Reduction Fund was established as a Presidential initiative in 2012 to address rural development and poverty, and is therefore only available for infrastructural projects in village tracts. It was initiated in the 2012-13 financial year and since then each State/Region has received one billion Kyats (1 million USD) each year during its first two years. For the financial years 2014-15 and 2015-16 the allocation per State/Region differs depending on the poverty situation and needs of each State/Region as assessed by the Union Government. Magway still receives one billion Kyats (one million USD) per year, while Rakhine and Kachin receive the highest amount of 15 billion Kyats (15 million USD) per year. The Region Government can top up the fund with additional allocations. These amounts differ depending on the revenue situation of the Region Government. The funds were initially both budgeted and executed under the GAD, because State and Region government institutions were newly formed and were considered unable to manage these funds. Starting from the financial year 2013-14 the funds are budgeted and transferred directly to the State/Region “administrative organization” budget category. The management and administration of the fund is still “delegated” to the GAD Executive Secretary and falls therefore under the GAD’s responsibility.²⁸

Projects under this fund can be submitted by village tracts for school and health facility renovation, road improvement or bridges, the improvement of water facilities and electricity (usually solar power). The projects are small (between 2-3 million Kyats each, 2,000-3000 USD) and should be implemented by the village tract community themselves under supervision of the VTA and the Township Administration. All proposed project should be outside the national plan meaning that they should not be included in any of the sector ministries’ capital expenditure plans for the township. In practice, the sector ministries can also propose small community projects that were either too small to be included in their own plans, that were rejected by the Regional or Union level Ministries or that have emerged since they submitted their own plans.

While the normal annual governmental planning cycle starts in September of the preceding year, the planning and implementation cycle of the development fund projects is much shorter and enables the township administration to be more responsive to urgent needs. In Magway Region, the GAD at the Region level requests each of the 25 townships to submit project proposals before July of each year. While exact budget ceilings are not allocated per township, each township will at least receive 40 million Kyats, around 40,000 USD (1 billion Kyats- 1 million USD- divided over 25 townships, regardless of population size or need) while

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

the extra amount depends on the extra allocation and the selection of proposed projects at the regional level. Each township will therefore submit proposals for a total amount between 80 and 100 million Kyats, 80,000-100,000 USD. After receiving the project proposals from all townships, the Magway Regional Cabinet meets, discusses the proposals and decides on the allocation. The GAD informs the townships of the decisions made by the Regional Chief Minister. The GAD administers the project, transfers funds in two quarterly tranches to each of the township GADs accordingly and monitors progress on behalf of the Region Government. According to the Deputy Regional Director of GAD in Magway, the Region Government usually respects the prioritisation of projects made by each township.

At the township level, approved projects are announced during the combined monthly TDSC-TMAC-VTA/WAs meetings while the GAD finance officer informs each VTA individually in writing on the financial details of their approved projects. Implementation of projects takes place during the dry season after crops are harvested and should be completed within six months, i.e. between October and April. The TA is drawing officer for the fund, while the Deputy TA is controlling officer.²⁹ The GAD office distributes the available funds in two instalments to the VTAs pending the submission of progress reports. The VTAs submit progress reports during each TDSC/TMAC/VTAs meeting. In the three townships included in the mapping most of the projects for 2014-15 were already well on track at the end of December 2014.

The TA is responsible for administering and monitoring progress but is assisted by the Township Management Committee (TMC) and TDSC members who conduct regular inspection tours. A selection of completed projects is checked during the annual audit of the GAD.



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

The Rural Development Fund

Apart from the PRF, there is a small GAD operated Rural Development Fund available in Magway Region. It is a regional fund, and exists also in some other States and Regions. This fund is also sourced by part of the revenues that are collected by the GAD at the township level on behalf of the Region Government (like land, mineral and excise tax). However, the total amount can differ substantially each year as it seems to be used as a closing entry (where the Region government first allocates budgets to its regular budget lines and any 'left over' is allocated to top up the RDF, which is why the total amount available can differ per year) by the Region Government. The allocation criteria and the selection process are the same as for the PRF and are in practice often combined in a Rural Development and PRF at the township level, even though the funding sources and budget lines are different.

The Constituency Development Fund

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was established by the Union legislature in 2013. Townships form single-member constituencies for the election of members of the *Pyithu Hluttaw*, the lower chamber of the Union legislature, and are divided in two constituencies for the election of members to the Region *Hluttaws*.³⁰ Several townships form *Amyotha Hluttaw* constituencies in Magway Region. Representatives from the two houses of the *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw* and Region *Hluttaw* are allowed to select township development activities in their constituencies to a maximum of five million kyats (5,000 USD) per project.

The CDF is now budgeted as current revenue and expenditure under the State/Region *Hluttaw* budget. Priorities for these projects include improved water supply, renovations of rural roads and bridges, renovations of school buildings, renovations of buildings related to health and other township needs. The implementation of CDF projects is to be done by Township Development Implementation Bodies consisting of the four *Hluttaw* representatives for a township, members of the TDSC and TMAC and several ex-officio members from the GAD and other departments (usually DRD and DMA).³¹

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

As a result of the budget ceilings per township being known beforehand, the prioritisation of project takes place at the township level and the total number of proposed projects per township do not exceed the budget ceiling. The approval at Regional level is therefore much more of a formality as compared to the selection and approval process for the PRF/RDF funds, meaning that the CDF is in practice much more controlled by the various actors at the township level. This is often used to fund projects that were rejected or too small for funding by the sector ministries. They also include projects for which the PRF/RDF funds are not available or that require urgent attention like the repair of a school roof. This would

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

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

otherwise take at least a year to be implemented by the sector ministries as they can only include such emergency repairs in their next annual plan.

If one looks at the amounts that were actually available for each of the three townships under these three development funds (see Table 11 and Figure 21), one can notice that the average amount available per village tract or ward in 2013/2014 was 6.6 million kyat (6,600 USD) or 3,037 kyat (3.037 USD) per capita. The differences per township were however huge, mainly as a result of differences in population size. On average, over 2013/14 Mindon received 11,567 kyat (11.567 USD) per citizen from the various development funds, which is almost seven times the amount that Pakokku received per citizen (which was 1,720 Kyats, around 1.7 USD). From interviews held with the Region Government it did not become clear if these differences were the result of a specific policy to support the smaller or more remote townships, or more the result of allocating similar amounts to each township. This results automatically in the smaller townships (in terms of population) receiving a higher amount per capita.

Per capita availability in Magway of Poverty Reduction Fund, Constituency Development Fund and Rural Development Fund comes down to 3 USD (approx.) varying from 11.5 USD in Mindon township to USD 1.7 in Pakokku.

	PRF in MK	CDF in MK	RDF in MK	Total in MK	Number of VT/wards	Per VT/ward in MK	Citizens	Per capita in Kyat
Pakokku	69	100	330	499	70	7.1	290,000	1,720
Gangaw	51	100	133	284	75	3.8	133,000	2,135
Mindon	58	100	536	694	76	9.1	60,000	11,567
Total	178	300	999	1467	221	6.6	483,000	3,037

Table 11: Overview of Development Funds for the three townships for the year 2013/14

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

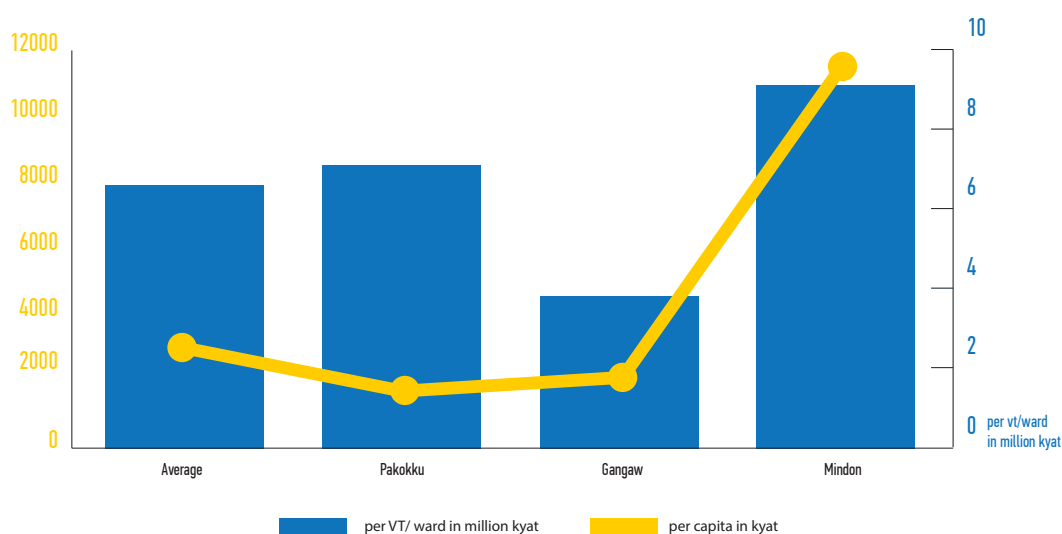


Figure 21: Overview of Development Funds (PRF, RDF and CDF combined) for the three townships per village tract or ward and per capita for the year 2013/14

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

The mapping tried to conduct a check of the type and number of projects that were funded by these different development funds in 2013/14 in the various village tracts and wards by interviewing a selection of VTA/WAs in each township. While indeed 2-3 projects were implemented in each of the wards and village tracts, the VTA/WAs were often not aware from which fund these projects were financed. The situation is even more complicated because similar projects were implemented by the Department of Rural Development and the DMA at the village tract and ward level respectively. This made it difficult for the VTA/WAs involved to distinguish from the project funded by the various development funds.

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

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

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

For project proposals, in Pakokku and Gangaw the TDSC and the VTAs are playing an active role visiting village tracts to collect project proposals. In Mindon a special planning committee is established consisting of various government staff members (from GAD, DRD, TPO) who visit the village tracts in teams of two and meets with the VTDSC and VTA to discuss proposals for the PRF and RDF.

In Magway Region, the mapping noted a slight difference between the three townships in the way project proposals are collected. While in Pakokku and Gangaw the TDSC and the VTAs are playing an active role visiting village tracts to collect project proposals, in Mindon a special planning committee is established consisting of various government staff members (from GAD, DRD, Township Planning Officer) who visit the village tracts in teams of two and meets with the VTDSC and VTA to discuss proposals for the PRF and RDF. For collecting proposals for the CDF (the smaller projects as stated by the TA) the TDSC and TMAC are actively involved. In all cases the VTA plays an important role in collecting the initial project proposals. Most VTAs generally consult their W/VTDSCs and/or the group of elders and respected people (i.e. generally men) and/or the 10/100 household heads in the village tract.³²

For the identification and later on monitoring of projects under the various development funds the TMC and TDSCs in Pakokku and Gangaw and the planning committee in Mindon split themselves up in sub-committees of two to three members each (see Figure 22). Each of the sub-committees visits a selection of village tracts/wards to meet with the W/VTDSC and the VTA/WA to discuss and identify potential projects, visit the actual project sites, take pictures and reach consensus on the proposed project for each village tract or ward.

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

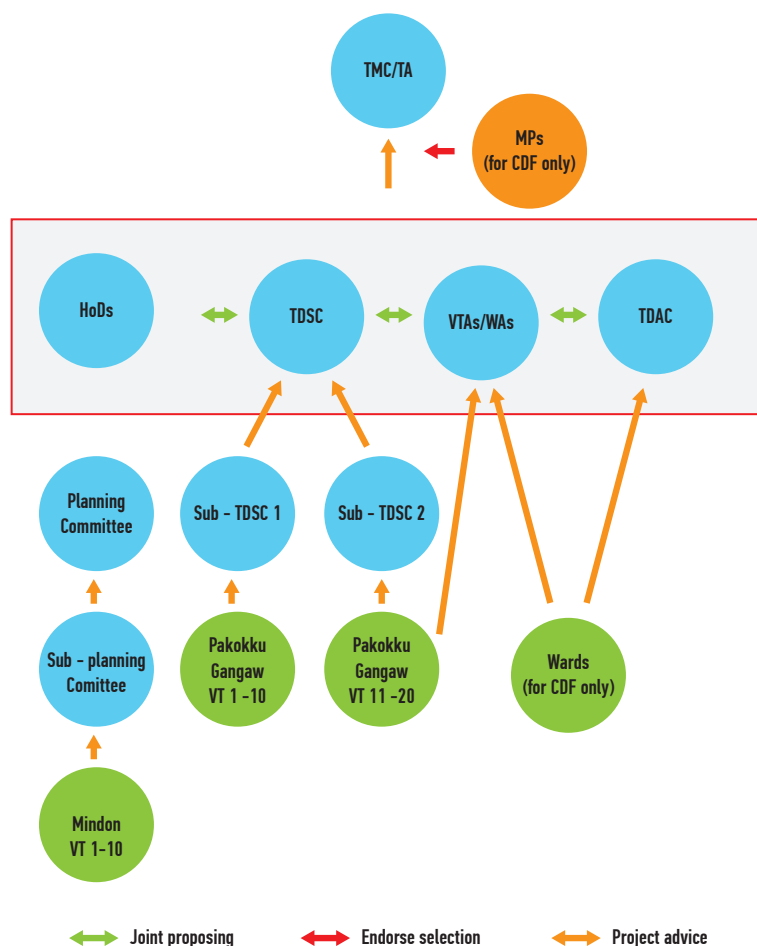


Figure 22: Schematic presentation of different consultation processes for the PRF, RDF and CDF projects in Magway Region

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, interviews with key resources persons. Note that for Mindon the TDSC was not involved in the project selection for the PRF and RDF funds.

In Magway it is common to ask each village tract to submit five project proposals. The sub-committee takes these proposals to the township level. If required, engineers from the DRD or DMA assist the communities with making more detailed designs and cost calculations for the proposed projects. If the proposed project exceeds the maximum amount of 5 million Kyats (5,000 USD) it is either split in two (the second part being implemented the year after) or referred to one of the sector departments.

While most VTA/WAs consult their W/VTDSC a few organise one or more meeting for all community members to discuss their needs and priorities. For the time being, however, direct consultation of community members in the village tract or ward about their preferences is not taking place in Magway Region. At the community level, opinions were mixed on the extent to which citizens were actively involved in project selection.

When the VTA/WA organises a village or village tract meeting to consult the community, usually not many people attend and contribute actively, a phenomena that is equally common in developed countries. Fifty-two percent of the respondents do not participate on a regular basis in village, village tract or ward meetings, which is similar to the percentage of people not attending on a regular basis in other States and Regions. Urban respondent participate less than rural respondents (71 percent of the urban respondents do not participate regularly vis-à-vis 43 percent of the rural respondents), while younger people tend to participate less than older people as well. There was not much difference between female and male respondents in Magway in terms of active participation in village meetings. When those who did not attend were asked why they did not attend these village meetings, 52 percent of the respondents mentioned that they were not invited, did not know about these meetings

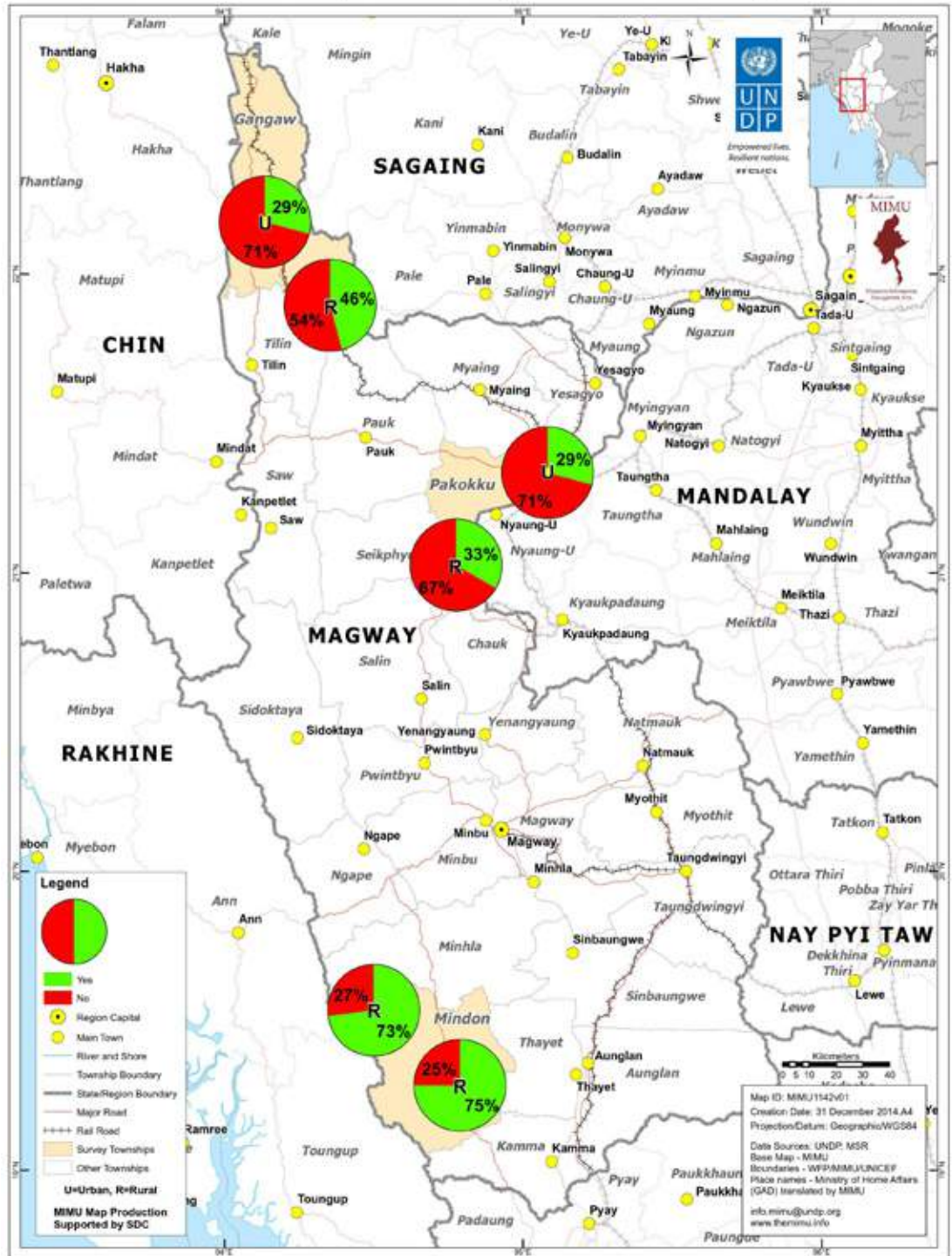
About 48% participate in village tract/ward meetings, with rural people (43%) participating more than urban people.

or mentioned that such meetings were not held in their village or ward. About 42 percent also mentioned that they did not have time to attend. In Mindon, 16 percent of the female respondents mentioned that their husband or the head of household did not allow them to attend.

Figure 23 shows that participation in such meetings is slightly higher in the rural areas as compared to the urban areas and slightly higher in Gangaw and Mindon compared to Pakokku.

Figure 23: Citizen Participation in Village Tract/Ward meetings

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014.



During the Community Dialogue sessions it became clear that community members were in general quite satisfied with the way in which they are involved by their leaders in the decision-making processes such as elections and project selection. They also appreciated that the VTA/WAs actively stimulate people to participate. In this sense it seems that Magway Region is more progressive and advanced than other States and Regions included in the survey (see Box 1 and 2 below).

Community members expressed satisfaction with the way in which they are involved in the decision-making processes like elections and project selection and that the VTA/WAs actively stimulate people to participate.

Box 1: Examples of active involvement in decision-making at the community level as mentioned during the Community Dialogues

- Form committees through votes.
- Conduct meetings for building a school.
- Consult with community before building roads.
- Election of village administrator was done through community votes.
- Provide detailed budget information about village activities.

Pan Tone VT, Mindon

- Projects such as building or maintaining roads are selected through mass meetings where the ward administration and supportive committee members attend.
- The electricity committee was formed when electricity was installed in the ward.
- The ward administration and the school committee cooperated in constructing a new school building and upgrading school buildings.

Kyawtaik Ward, Gangaw

- Villagers had a chance to elect the VTA.
- 100/10 household heads and development committee members were elected by the community.
- To connect pipes for water supply, the VTA discussed with the community.
- To build roads, village administration asked for advice of the people.
- To renovate the pond for household water use, village administration asked for advice from the community.

Kone Tine Kyin VT, Mindon

Source: UNDP, Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014.

Box 2: Examples of limited involvement in decision-making at the community level as mentioned during the Community Dialogues

- The VTA, the VTDC and village elders are involved in identifying and prioritising the projects for the village.
- Actions that enhance the direct involvement of people are still needed to develop.

Min VT, Gangaw

Source: UNDP, Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014.

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

In Pakokku and Gangaw the combined TDSC-TMAC-VTA/WA-TA meeting discuss all proposals for the PRF, RDF and CDF funds and make a selection and prioritisation. In Mindon, the planning committee (referred to earlier) makes a pre-selection of projects beforehand (except for the CDF project proposals) and presents this for approval to the combined meeting. In all three townships, the GAD has a final say in the selection of projects but usually respects the decisions taken collectively during the combined meetings. This list was submitted to the GAD at the Regional level for further selection and approval.

The township committees in Pakokku use the old list of proposals from the previous year and focused on those projects that could not be implemented the year before due to lack of funds.

During 2014 selection of projects for the PRF fund in Pakokku, the committees didn't visit the village tracts to collect new proposals but decided to use the old list of proposals from the previous year and focussed on those projects that could not be implemented the year before due to lack of funds. These projects were complemented by several emergency repairs that had appeared during the year.

In all townships close coordination is taking place with the Heads of Departments. The more structural investments and maintenance works that can be planned in advance are included in the departmental plans, while the smaller and more urgent works are shifted to the project funds as they are implemented within a few months after approval. Unfortunately, the Heads of Departments often haven't seen their approved departmental investment plans and capital budget for their townships when the plans for the development fund projects need to be submitted, but according to the TA there is enough flexibility to make last minute changes if really necessary.

The Region Government's allocation of a basic amount of at least 40 million kyat (40,000 USD) to each township out of the PRF allocation of the 1 billion Kyats (1 million USD) and the additional resources from the Region Government helps the townships to draft a reasonable and realistic list of proposed projects and makes prioritising useful. This is notably different from other Regions (e.g., Mandalay) where the Region Government decided not to allocate on an equal share. According to the various stakeholders involved, the Region Government in Magway considered the selection of project made at the township level in its approval.

While the TDSCs are active and play an important role respected by the TA, there are however some questions on their functioning in general. The public representatives on the TDSCs and TMACs in the three townships are elected according to a combination of area and group representation. Each ward or village tract nominated one or more representatives (usually a 10/100 household head or a member of the group of Elderly and Respected People) and this group of nominees chose 4 or 5 people (from different interest groups like business men, CSOs, farmers) among themselves to become member of the TDSC. For the TMAC only the wards nominated potential candidates. Each TMAC has at least one citizen member among others who is an (retired) engineer to ensure that there is sufficient professional knowledge in the committee.

TDSC in Pakokku has one female member (representing the CSOs in the townships), which is exceptional as most committees across the Region and the whole country are exclusively male.

Only the TDSC in Pakokku has one female member (representing the social sector in the township), which is exceptional as most committees across the Region and the whole country are exclusively male. Committee members were divided over the suggestion whether or not a minimum quota for female committee members should be introduced to ensure more active female representation in the committees. As a result of the election process, and the lack of women in the committees, the township committees do risk missing the diversity and the varied interests that different groups do have within society. This is likely to impact adversely on their legitimacy as was mentioned several times especially by people not feeling represented or involved in these committees like the Civil Society Organisation.

The CSOs in Gangaw e.g. mentioned that: “the TDSC/TMAC members hardly have contact with the people they represent and these committees are not considered to be representative for the people in this town. The TMAC is composed of people favoured by the township authority and are close to inner cycle of authority. The TDSC is working hard to get along well with the persons who have authority and committee members are afraid of speaking up for the interests of the people. As a result, people are unaware of the establishment of these committees and people participation is minimal in Gangaw. The perception of people on having this sort of committees is good but they are not representing the people and as a result the people’s needs are not addressed”. Also in Pakokku, the group of CSO representatives (about 35 participated) mentioned that the selection of members of the TDSC and the TMAC was not based on clear procedures and therefore not transparent. As a result, the interlocutors claimed “the members are all friends of the TA and are not known by the people. For example, the woman who represents the social sector on the TDSC is not known to the CSOs and was not elected by the CSOs to represent them and they have never met with her.”

The election process of the township committees is an issue that requires attention to be able to truly represent people’s concerns and for people to become aware of their role.

It is therefore not surprising that 95 percent of the people who were interviewed as part of the CRC exercise had indeed never heard of either a TDSC or TMAC in their township. When this issue was discussed with the various committees they did acknowledge this issue and they mentioned that it needs to improve. A question therefore arises as to how these committees can represent the interests of citizens if these citizens in most cases don’t even know of the existence of these committees, don’t know who its members are and are not aware of whether or how these committees represent their interests. The explanation provided by the various TDSC and TMAC members was that the initial establishment and elections were done in a rather hasty way and people were not yet aware of the potential significance of these new committees. In order to improve their representativeness as well as peoples’ awareness about these committees it was several times suggested during discussion with the members to hold full elections involving all citizens when electing the next committees after the end of the present term. The VTA/WAs interviewed, either as a group or individually, welcomed the establishment of the TDSC as a mechanism for consultation, but also suggested to hold direct elections of its members in order to improve the link with the people and to make these committees better known to everyone.

Regarding the allocation of the CDF the Hluttaw members as elected representatives of the people play an important and usually active role both in the selection and monitoring of projects. When visiting their constituencies they meet with citizens and VTA/WAs to discuss community issues and propose potential small community projects for the CDF. During the combined VTA/WA-TDSC-TMAC-TA meeting when the CDF is discussed the elected Hluttaw members participate actively and propose and select together with the other groups present potential projects for funding under the CDF. The elected Hluttaw members have in theory the last say at the township level and if they want they could push their project proposals through. In practice however they manage to find solutions that are acceptable to everyone.

As these are the first years in which citizens or stakeholder groups are being consulted by government through the Township Committees, it provides a starting point for people’s involvement in planning and improving service delivery.

In conclusion, it should be acknowledged that after years of top-down decision-making, this is only the first year in which government consults citizens or stakeholder groups, through these committees, and from that perspective one could be impressed by the improvements that actually have taken place during this short period of time. Of course, it will take time for all parties involved to play their new role effectively.

While the total combined budgets of the development funds per township are still rather small, the planning and implementation of development fund projects could play a very important role in the ongoing reform process at the township level.

Box 3: Collaborative Planning:

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

In practice, there is still ample space to improve the planning and implementation process of the utilisation the various development funds. There are three development funds available in Magway at the moment that are more or less similar in terms of type of activities that are eligible for funding as well as planning and implementation. At the same time the DRD and the DMA have their own funds to implement similar activities as well (see below). The management of these parallel funds may be confusing for the various stakeholders involved at community, township and even regional level, which hampers proper financial monitoring. Only a few people know which projects are funded by each fund, resulting in limited transparency and increased risks of mismanagement. From a perspective of effectiveness and efficiency as well as transparency these different funds could be aligned within the same coherent planning framework by which the indicative budget ceilings for the coming year would be made known to the township administrations. With more clarity of the process and higher predictability of decisions the committees would be informed in advance in order to avoid disappointment at the community level when only one of the ten requested projects is approved.

4.3 Access to Services

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

In Myanmar, most of the basic social services (like education, health care and drinking water) are provided by de-concentrated sector ministries at the township level and below, sometimes complemented by NGOs, private sector and/or religious organisations. It is therefore important to describe and analyse the planning and organisation of service delivery at the township level. This section looks at three basic social service sectors (primary health care, primary education and household water provision) and describes how they are organised. It explains how state service providers interact with citizens and respond to their needs within the three selected townships in Magway Region both in terms of planning as well as actual

service delivery. The mapping looked at these sectors from a governance perspective and not at the quality of these services from a technical perspective. The picture described below therefore presents only a partial overview and should be seen as complementary to the more in-depth and sector analyses that are taking place at the moment in each of these sectors.³³

Before presenting the findings per service sector, a description of how service delivery and the related planning are organized at the township level is given. Depending on the size of township, most Region or Union Ministries or Departments have their own office and representation at the township level, often in different locations, while some only have offices at the district level. All Heads of Departments in the township are accountable to their supervisor at the district or Region level, while all (except for the DMA) receive their budget and plans from the District or Region level departments. The mandates and levels of authority and discretion of the Heads of Departments differ per ministry, but are in general limited to implementing tasks and plans that are handed down from the union ministry downwards.

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

Increasingly Head of Departments do mention that while there are no formal changes in the planning system, the responsiveness of both Region- and Union-level departments to the people's needs has increased substantially over the last few years. Suggestions such as the locations of newly planned Rural Health Centres or extra classrooms or tube wells are appreciated and are often integrated into the annual plans of the department. It is still considered to be a slow and bureaucratic process, but at least most Head of Departments at the township level have the impression that their voices are heard and responded to.

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

The allocated recurrent budget for each sector department is usually approved at the start of the financial year (April to March) while the actual transfers follow in four tranches. The capital budget is approved in June/July, 3-4 months into the financial year. Neither the recurrent and nor the capital budgets contain any explanations or justifications. This makes it very difficult for township level officers to explain their budgets to the various committees and to the public in general.

33. See for a general overview of government spending on the social sectors: UNICEF, 2013; Snapshot of Social Sector Public Budget Allocations and Spending in Myanmar.

See for the health sector among others: SDC, 2013; Health Assessment in Southeast Region of Myanmar, August 2013.

See for the education sector among others: MDRI, 2013; A Preliminary Assessment of Decentralization in Education: Experiences in Mon State and Yangon Region, December 2013 and JICA, 2013; Data Collection Survey on Education Sector in Myanmar, Final Report, February 2013.

Both the VTA/WAs as well as the TDSC and TMAC committee members interviewed in Magway region highlighted that decisions on resource allocations take too long as too many steps need to be taken before approval is obtained. Both groups pleaded for decentralisation and more delegation of decision-making to lower levels of government.

With the gradual expansion and improvement of service delivery and of development support activities by key departments at the township level, the **need for horizontal co-ordination** has increased over the last few years. At the same time, vertical coordination is required between the township administration and the VTA/WA and other government representatives at the village tract and ward level on the one hand and administration at district and region government level on the other hand. Good horizontal and vertical coordination could improve both the effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery. The structural limitations make it even more important to ensure that the limited resources are used the most optimal way. The Government has realised this need and intends to improve coordination between the departments through the establishment of the TMC and a more participatory township planning process. Such TMCs have been established across Magway in all townships.

While the TMC has a coordination and information sharing role, it can only manage township affairs through discussion and consultation since it cannot instruct any of the Head of Departments. In addition, it is in practice the discretion of the TA to decide which matters require discussion in the TMC and which matters he can decide upon by himself. Similarly, it is up to the Heads of Department to decide whether he/she shares the departmental annual plan with other members in the TMC. It is however increasingly common that all departments send a copy of their annual plan to the Township Planning Officer (TPO) who puts them all together in an effort to compile a 'township development plan'. As in all other Regions and States, the Township Medical Officer is not a member of the TMC and often does not attend Head of Departments meetings either, limiting the ability of the Ministry of Health to coordinate with other departments.

As the main government institution at the township level, the GAD in general and the TA and Deputy TAs in particular, are responsible for general administration, peace and security. In addition, they also have a role of both horizontal and vertical coordination of all government activities at the township level and below.

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

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

As a result of these changes, one of the more experienced TAs in Magway region mentioned that his role is now much more complex, but also more rewarding. In the past he only had to follow instruction, but now he can act more on his own behalf and really achieve something for the township.

Despite the awareness that a "coordinating" role must be played by the TA and is inherent to the formation of various coordinating and development support committees (see annex 3), horizontal co-ordination between departments remains a challenge in Magway Region according to most Heads of Departments interviewed. Township departments continue to plan and deliver services in a "vertical" fashion, following the instructions from higher levels

within their own ministries. They therefore also continue to collect their own baseline data according to their own definitions and requirements, resulting in large differences in very important and basic statistics, which makes integrated planning and coordination almost impossible.

For vertical coordination, the joint VTA/WA-TMAC-TDSC-TA meetings are very important which are often attended by the elected Hluttaw members as well. They take important matters to the Regional or Union level Hluttaws especially for issues that require additional funding from the Union Government. An elected member for Mindon has for instance lobbied to get Mindon connected to the national electricity grid, apparently with some success.

The establishment of coordinating and support committees at the township level is a good starting point for improved service delivery and people's involvement in planning. This needs to be strengthened over a period of time.

4.3.1 Basic health care services

After decades of stagnation in the budget for public health, Myanmar's national health budget has increased over the last three years from 92 billion Kyats (92 million USD) in 2010-2011 to 652 billion Kyats (652 million USD) for 2014-2015.³⁴ While this is a substantial increase, government expenditures on health as part of total government spending at present still only amounts to 3.38 percent of the total government budget, or only 0.76 percent of the total GDP. This is approximately half of the average share of public expenditure spent by countries in the region on health care. This section aims to shed some light on how the recent 600 percent increase in the health budget has trickled down to the lowest level of health care provision at the village tract or ward level and how people are experiencing changes in the health care services. As a consequence of the legacy of public sector neglect, the provision of health care by the private sector is more substantial with private expenditures for health care ranking much higher in Myanmar than elsewhere in the region. Accordingly, 60-70 percent of the health spending in Myanmar is paid for directly by the people to private sector health service providers according to the Ministry of Health.³⁵

Besides increasing the public health budget, the Government of Myanmar realises that more structural measures are required to improve the quality of public health care. In the FESR it is mentioned that "the government also recognizes the importance of quickly updating its overall health strategy, reviewing current health policies and strengthening the National Health Law".³⁶ According to the WHO, the Ministry's National Health Plan 2011-2016 takes account of the prevailing health problems in the country, the need to realize the health-related goals of the MDGs, the significance of strengthening the health system and the growing importance of social, economic and environmental determinants of health.³⁷ The National Health Plan has 11 priority programme areas, but does not mention or propose changes in the way health services are provided in Myanmar, in particular at the local level. In August 2013, the President announced some measures to further de-concentrate major Union ministries. One of these included that the Health Ministry is to continue training nurses and midwives at central level but to make coordination with State and Region governments in assigning them to their home regions; and the State and Region governments to appoint medical staff in remote regions through vacancy announcement in newspapers.

34. Myanmar Times 5 December 2014.

35. Based on 2010 health figures see: Myanmar Times 5 December 2014.

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

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

Basic Health Care Service provision in the three townships in Magway Region



As elsewhere in Myanmar, primary health care in Magway Region is partly provided by private health facilities (like private clinics, dispensaries, traditional doctors and auxiliary midwives) and partly by the Ministry of Health, often with support from various international Non-Governmental Organisations (see Table 12).

Table 12: Non-Governmental Organisations active in health in the three townships

Source: MIMU: Overview of the December 2014 Who, What, Where and VT MAP Magway Region.

Township	UN organisations and (I)NGOs active in health services
Pakokku	Association of Medical Doctors of Asia, Myanmar Red Cross, International Pregnancy Advisory Services, Marie Stopes International, Myanmar Health Assistance Association, Leprosy Mission Myanmar, Save the Children in Myanmar, United Nations Children Fund, United Nations Population Fund, World Health Organisation
Gangaw	Marie Stopes International, Population Services International, Save the Children in Myanmar, World Health Organisation
Mindon	Myanmar Red Cross, Population Services International, Save the Children in Myanmar, United Nations Population Fund United Nations Children Fund, World Health Organisation

Table 13 presents an overview of the public health facilities available in the three townships in 2014, while in Table 14 some key health indicators are presented.

Table 13: Key health service data for government operated facilities, Magway Region townships

Source: Township Health Profiles, Magway Region, 2014.

	Pakokku	Gangaw	Mindon
Population	290,000	133,000	60,000
District hospitals	1 (200)		
Township hospital		1	1
Station hospitals	4	5	2
Maternal Child Health Centres	1	1	1
Urban/Rural Health Centres (RHC)	8	7	3
Sub-rural health centres	34	36	19
Number of healthcare staff approved	549	210	93
Number of healthcare staff appointed	383	162	71
Number of vacancies	166	58	12

Table 14: Basic healthcare indicators, Magway Region townships

Source: Township Health Profiles, 2014.

	Pakokku			Gangaw			Mindon		
	2012	2013	2014	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
Home deliveries by health staff	54%	54%	50%	74%	62%	67%	58%	49%	37%
Antenatal care coverage	67%	97%	85%	78%	85%	93%	96.5 %	100%	98.9%
Infant mortality rate/ 1000 live births	10	19.7	9.2	4.6	5.8	9.3	28.3	9.6	21.1
Under 5 years mortality rate/ 1000 live births	16	33	10.3	9.8	8	8.9	31.3	12.4	29.1
Maternal mortality rate/ 1000 live births	0.4	0.6	0.02	1.7	0.5	1.5	0	1.38	1.32
Children under 5 moderately underweight	0.23	2.32	0.026	--	1.4	1.2	--	--	--
Children under 5 severely underweight	0.006	0.04	0.002	--	0.04	0.009	--	--	--
Immunization BCG	108%	94%	82%	93%	85%	122%	--	98%	89%
Number of outpatients	18895	24195	28858	5010	6086	14799	2422	1952	3454
Number of inpatients	10203	13352	15010	2078	2439	3935	902	815	1377
Deliveries	820	1142	1699	220	261	328	112	88	189

It is difficult to draw any conclusions from the above figures as numbers are small and the timeframe of three years is very short. The reliability of these data also needs to be validated. The significant increase in number of out- and inpatients in each of the township is however an indication that the use of public health facilities has increased over the last few years in Magway region.

All except one of the health service providers interviewed³⁸ were of the opinion that the provision of health services in the three townships has improved over the last 3 years.

Box 4: Health care improvements observed by health care providers

The most important reasons for these improvements were according to them:

- Increase in both recurrent and capital budgets over the last few years;
- Better and more equipment and medicines available (79 percent);
- More attention for preventive healthcare (73 percent);
- An increase in health staff (53 percent);
- Reduction in the costs of health care for citizens (42 percent).

38. Three Township Medical Officers (TMOs), six health facility managers (one township hospital, one station hospital, one Maternal and Child HC, one RHC, two SRHCs) and 10 health staff (three lady health visors, six midwives and one nurse).

Despite the increase in number of health staff, two out of six health facility managers last year experienced a structural shortage of medical staff at their facility (one or more vacancies longer than 3 months), while six out of eight health staff mentioned there was at the moment no shortage of medical staff at their facility.

Generally speaking, there is sufficient supply of medicines and medical supplies in the health facilities covered in the mapping. Eighty-three percent of the health managers said they always had enough stock of essential drugs. When shortages in medicines were reported to the TMO, they were almost always successfully resolved. Shortage of desks, chairs and beds were more common and these shortages were regularly brought up during inspection visits but hardly ever resolved.

All health facility managers and health staff were of the opinion that all health workers in their facility were properly qualified for their job and received regular in service training, which was confirmed by 80 percent of the health staff. All health workers interviewed mentioned that they treated everybody in the same way irrespective of ethnicity, gender and wealth or (dis)ability. Sixty percent of the health workers mentioned that they received a fair salary which was usually paid in time.

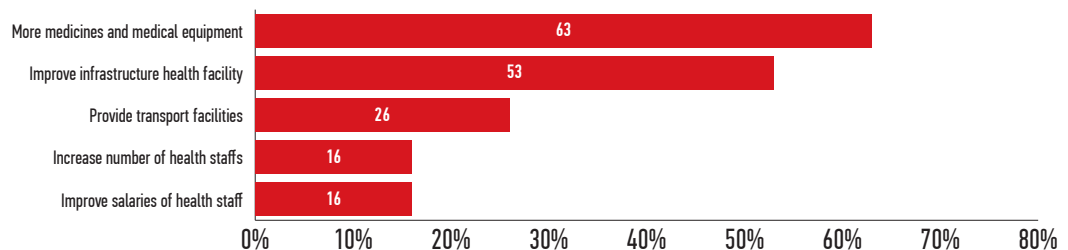
Basic output indicators for the monitoring of healthcare facilities are also in place. Township health administrative staff in Magway Region visits rural health centres on a regular basis to provide oversight and check performance based on key health indicators. All healthcare facility managers interviewed mentioned that they had received at least one (but usually 3-4) inspection visits last year either from the Health Assistant or from the TMO who conducted routine inspections, carried out stock checks, provided in-service training and conducted audits. All six health facility managers qualified the support they received from their supervisors at the township level as good.

Regarding payment for essential drugs, three managers and all health staff stated that patients never had to pay for those drugs, while three facility managers mentioned that patients do had to pay if essential drugs were out of stock. All health staff mentioned that they adhered to the Code of Conduct and didn't sell medicines to patients that should be provided for free.

While the overall health provision situation has improved, there are, according to the service providers several ways in which public health services in these three townships can improve further (see Figure 24).

Health staff mentioned that they adhered to the Code of Conduct and didn't sell medicines to patients that should be provided for free.

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



Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. N=19. More than one answer was possible.

Organisation and administration of public basic health care services

In most townships in Magway Region, the TMO plays both a medical and an administrative role, being responsible for staff planning, quality supervision of all health facilities, the distribution of medical supplies, as well as for collecting health baseline data. The TMO can recruit support staff for the various health facilities directly if there is a vacancy, but is not in charge of hiring and firing or the transfer of medical staff between health facilities. An overview of the more specific tasks of the TMOs is provided in Figure 25.

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

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

While salaries are paid from the recurrent budget and are usually paid out in time, there is very limited operational budget available for the senior staff to actually carry out their duties and functions which contributes to an inefficient use of manpower. While the TMOs are for example supposed to supervise and visit the Rural Health Centres on a regular basis, there is no, or in some cases, only a very limited budget for travel or transport available. This compels the staff to pay for these travel costs from their own pockets.

This lack of operational budget combined with a highly centralised decision-making structure in most departments has a serious negative impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and on the optimal use of the limited manpower available.

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

Planning and budgeting

One major change in the planning process has been the delegation of the procurement of medical supplies from the Union to the Region and district level. This is now handled and managed by the Region DoH with the intention of thus providing for a more efficient allocation. As a result of these changes, the TMO can now transfer medical supplies between RHCs in order to deal with acute shortages.

The TMOs also noted that the flow of information to and from the Regional level has improved and is moderately better and financial and budget issues are more transparent.

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

One major change recently is the delegation of procurement of medical supplies from the Union to the Region and district level. This is now handled and managed by the Region Department of Health (DoH) rather than at the Union level, with the intention of thus providing for a more efficient allocation. As a result, the TMO can now transfer medical supplies between RHCs in order to deal with acute shortages. The TMO is not involved in the planning and implementation of capital investments (new RHCs, renovations, etc.), which is all dealt with by the DoH at the Region and Union level.

While the formal planning and delegation within the Ministry of Health hasn't changed much, the TMOs interviewed mentioned that the Ministry of Health nowadays is much more responsive to the needs of the TMOs and to the suggestions made by the TMOs. The TMOs also noted that the flow of information to and from the Regional level has improved significantly. As a result, financial and budget issues are now more transparent than before. At the same time, the TMOs are not always provided with copies of the investment budget available for their township and are informed on an ad hoc basis about new construction projects.

As elsewhere in Myanmar, the TMO is not part of the TMC. Most of the TMOs interviewed mentioned that it would improve the coordination with other departments if they were members of the TMC. The TMOs provide the TPO and the GAD with the annual budget and health plans but this is not mandatory and they are not discussed during the Heads of Departments meeting.

People's views on health services

Regarding the use of public or private health facilities, 164 respondents (or 57 percent) stated that they usually make use of public health facilities ((Sub) Rural Health Clinics, station and township hospitals), while 112 respondents (or 39 percent) said that most of the time they make use of a private health facility (see Figure 26). In these townships of Magway Region, the use of public health facilities is higher as compared to many other States and Regions, in which the majority of respondents (usually between 40-60 percent) indicated that they use private facilities.

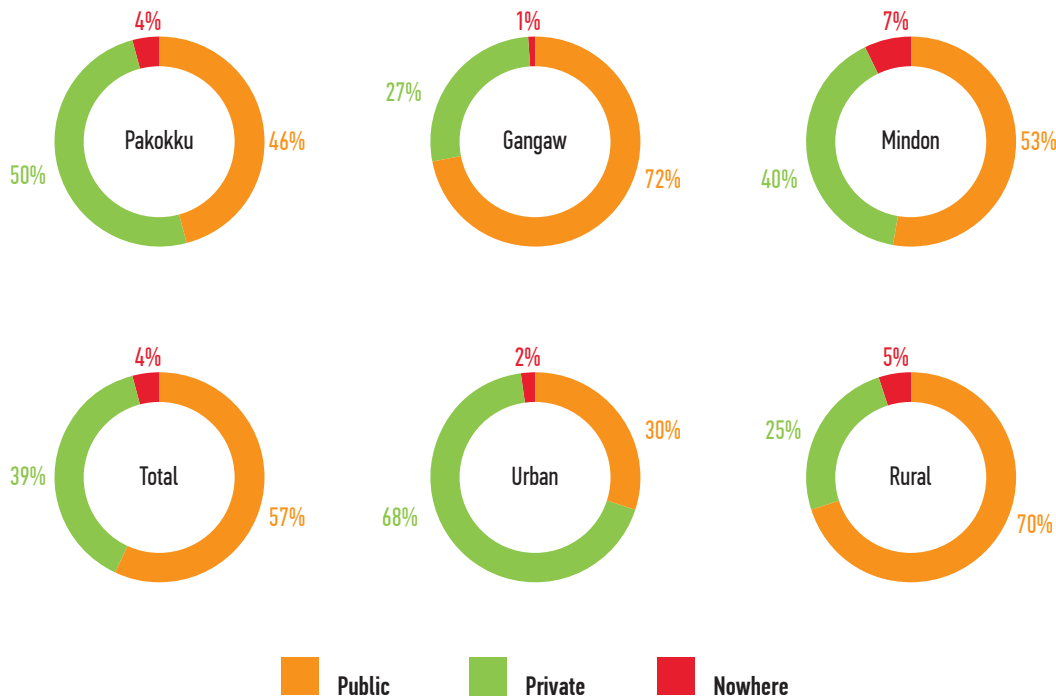


Figure 26: Use of public vs. private health facilities in the three Magway Region townships

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n=288.

As Figure 26 shows, there were big differences between urban and rural respondents regarding the use of public or private health facilities. Of the urban respondents, only 30 percent of the respondents said they made use of public facilities, while 70 percent of the rural respondents said they made use of the public facilities.

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

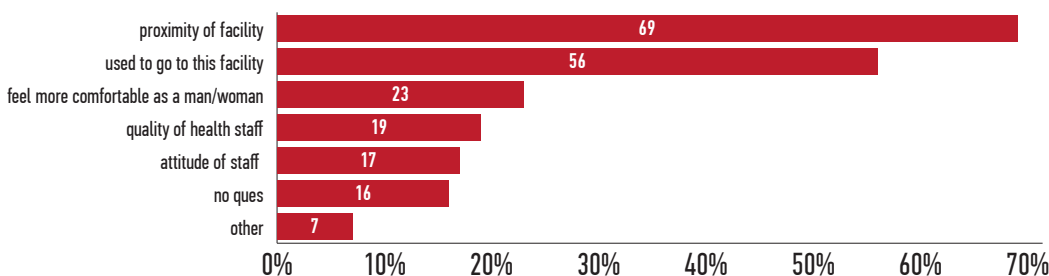


Figure 27: Reasons for using a private health facility

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n=112. More than one answer possible.

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

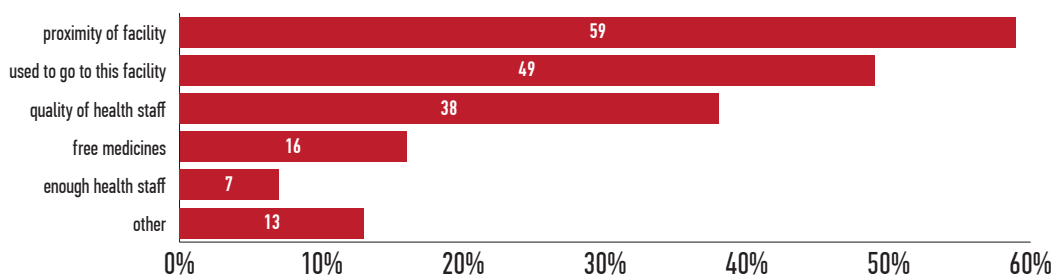


Figure 28: Reasons for using a public health facility

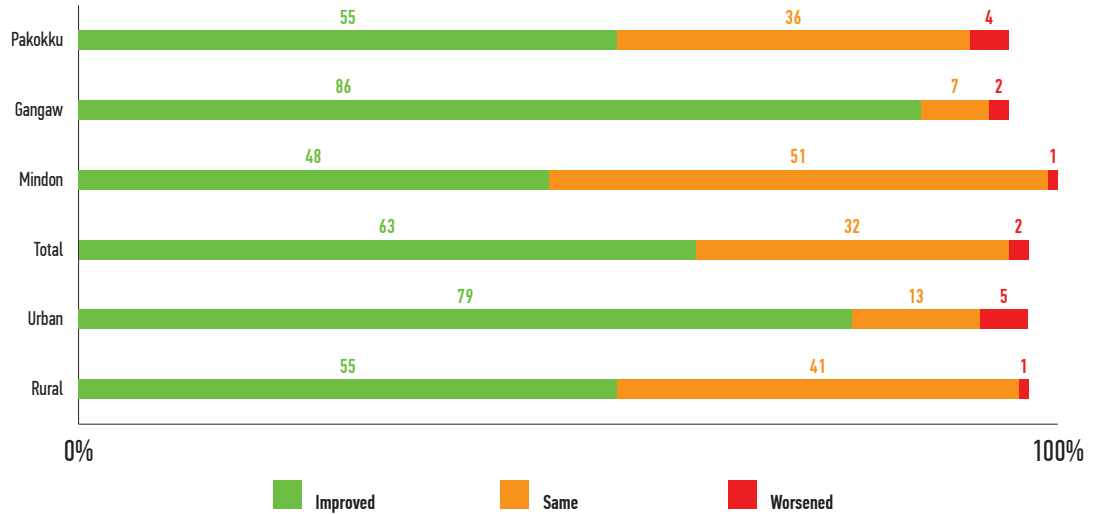
Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n=164. More than one answer possible.

It is important to note that cost considerations were only mentioned by 16 percent of the respondents using a public health facility as a reason for choosing to go a public health facility.

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

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

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n= 288. More than one answer possible.



63% people indicated that the health services in their village-tract or ward have improved. Gangaw saw improvements in infrastructure and Pakokku reduction in health care costs. The perception remained the same between men and women; and urban respondents felt greater improvements in their area.

Sixty-three percent of the respondents mentioned that the health services in their village-tract or ward have indeed improved, while 32 percent mentioned that the quality of the services had stayed more or less the same. Only two percent mentioned that the quality of health services had deteriorated over the last three years. Compared to other States and Regions included in the research these figures are slightly better. Respondents in Gangaw were most positive about the changes in health services with 86 percent mentioning that it had indeed improved. Urban respondents were more positive as compared to rural respondents, while there was not much difference between male and female respondents. Of those respondents who mentioned that the situation had improved, the main reasons mentioned are presented in Figure 30.

These improvements are more or less similar to those mentioned by the health staff, showing that citizens are monitoring their health services quite well. There were slight differences between the respondents of the three townships, with those in Gangaw mentioning the improvements in the infrastructure more often, while in Pakokku the reduced costs of health care services were mentioned more often.

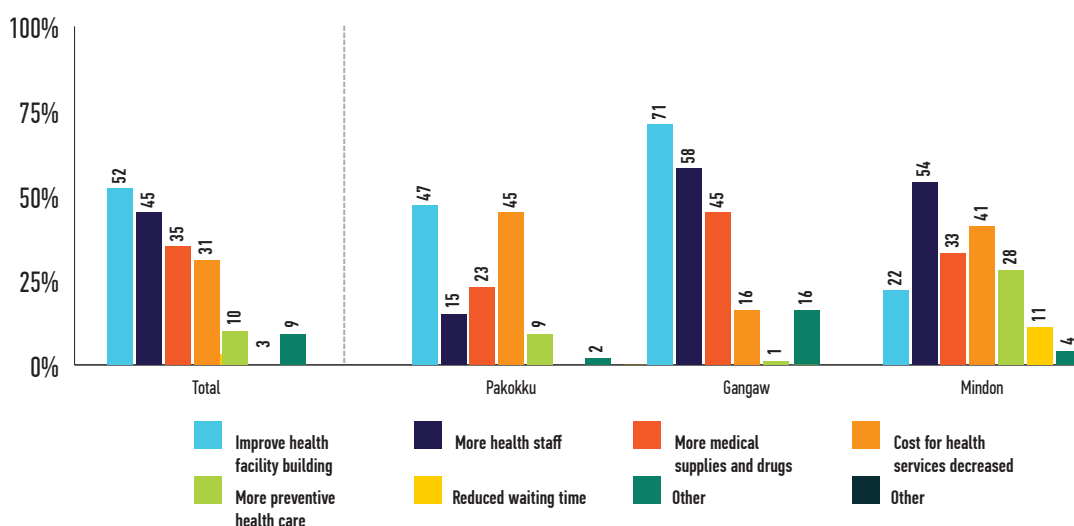


Figure 30: Reasons for improved health care as mentioned by respondents who were of the opinion that health care had improve in their village tract or ward

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n= 181. More than one answer possible.

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

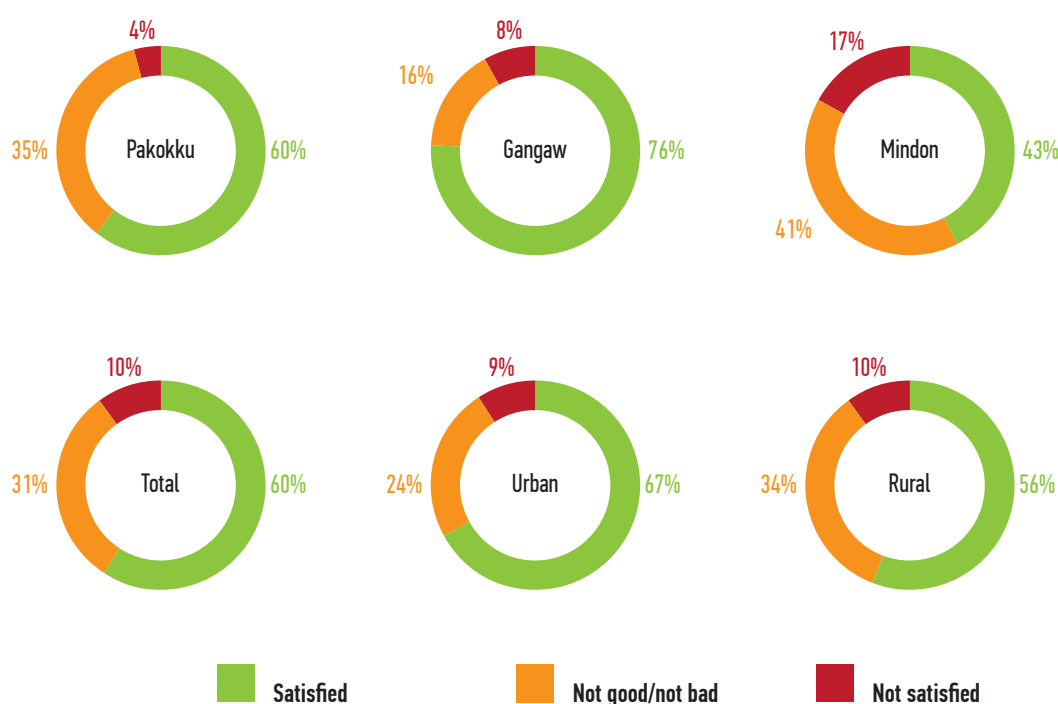


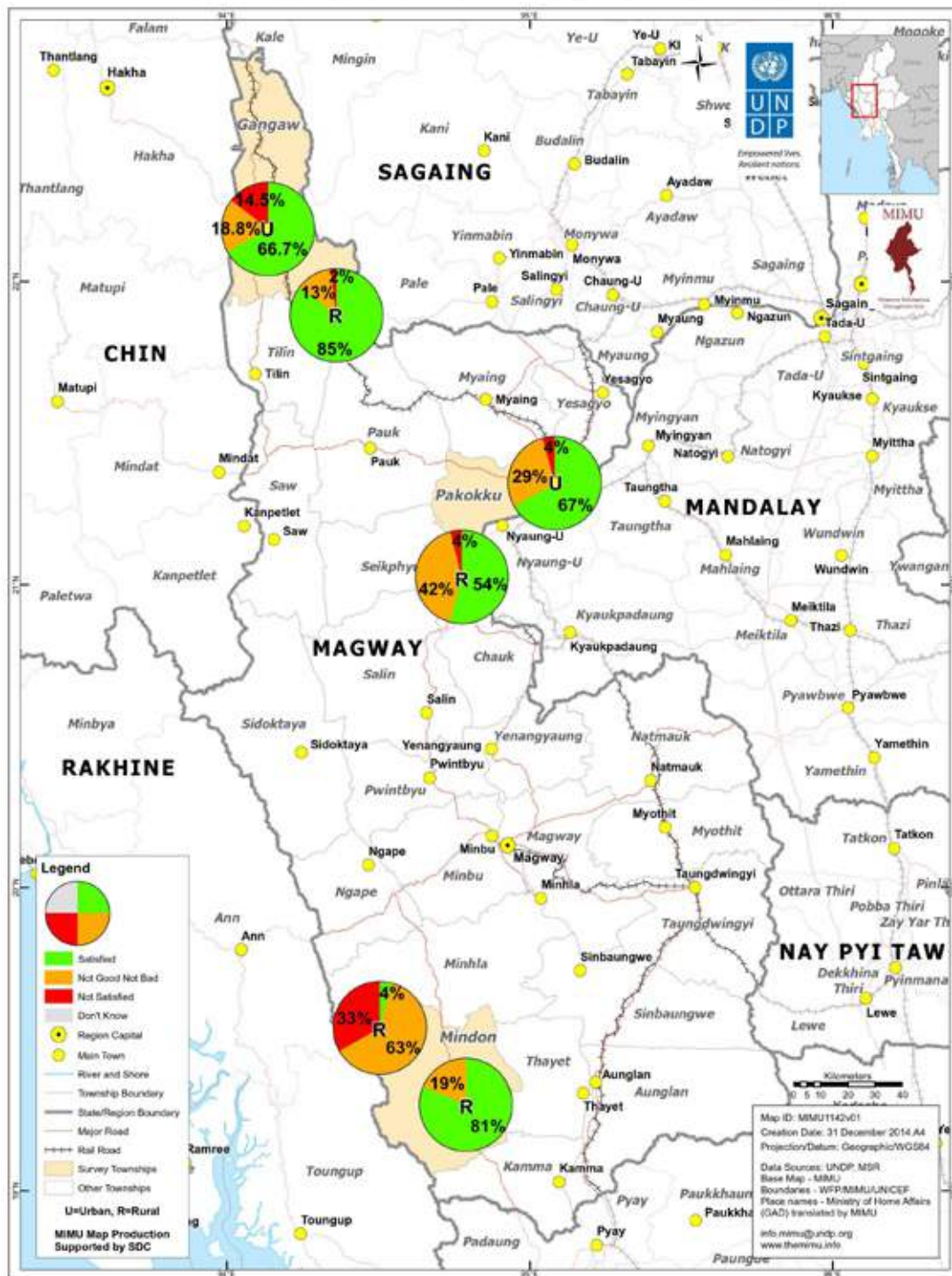
Figure 31: Overall level of satisfaction with health care services in village tract or ward

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n= 288.

Sixty percent of the respondents (62 percent of the female and 58 percent of the male respondents) said that they were satisfied, 31 percent qualified the services to be “not good, not bad” while about 10 percent were not satisfied with the quality of the health care services. The levels of satisfaction were lower in Mindon as compared to the other two townships (see also Figure 32).

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

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014.



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

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

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

- There is enough health staff for the village.
- Treatment given by health staff is good.
- Health staff makes home visits whenever they are requested.
- Health staff provide health talks and provide preventive care.

Pan Tone VT, Mindon

- We have one Station Medical Officer (doctor).
- There is more health staff.
- Patients get free medicines.

Min VT, Gangaw

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

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

- Insufficient health staff.
- There is no Rural Health Centre in the village tract.
- Bad inter-village roads in the rainy season.
- Need to provide medicines free of charge.

Kone Tine Kyin VT, Mindon

- Not enough essential drugs and emergency drugs.
- Insufficient health staffs.
- No ambulance.
- No health centre in the village tract.

Chaik VT, Pakokku

- Not enough qualified doctors.
- We have to pay more than necessary for health services.
- Insufficient buildings and beds.
- No immediate treatment provided.
- Some drugs (rabies and antidotes for snake venom) are not available.

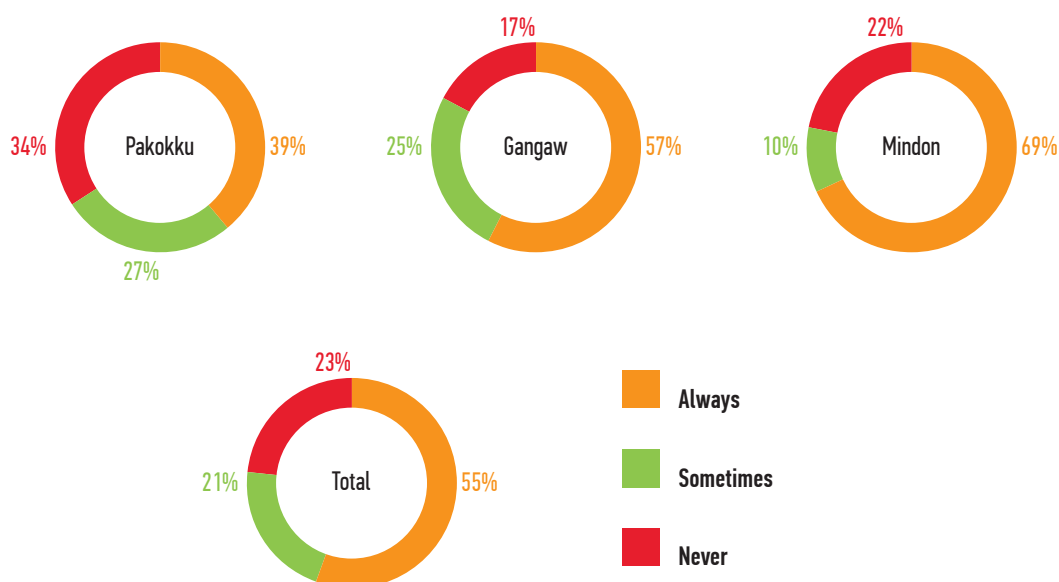
Ward 6 , Pakokku

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

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

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

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n=164.



55% of the citizens said that they always had to pay for medicines in a public health facility and 21% sometimes. It varied from 69% in Mindon to 39% in Pakokku.

Whether this had to do with a lower availability of essential drugs in more remote townships is not clear.

Fifty-five percent of the respondents said that they always had to pay for medicines in a public health facility and 21 percent sometimes, while most medicines (i.e. essential drugs, if in stock) should be provided for free. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents using a public health facility in Mindon said they always had to pay for medicines compared to only 39 percent in Pakokku. Whether this had to do with a lower availability of essential drugs in a more remote township is not clear from the mapping. Of the respondents who mentioned that they always had to pay for medicines 90 percent stated that they did not get an explanation from the medical staff as to why they had to pay for these medicines. These statements do not appear to be consistent with what the health facility managers and the TMOs had reported.

In 2013, the MoH made generic (non-specialist) drugs available to patients at public health facilities free of charge. The six public healthcare facility managers interviewed all confirmed that they adhered to the regulations from the Ministry regarding the provision of essential drugs and that health staff at their facility refrained from selling drugs that should be for free.³⁹ Only if essential drugs were out of stock patients were charged to pay for replacing the medicines. In addition, all facility managers mentioned that essential drugs were almost always available, while they mentioned that they always provide an explanation to the patients in case they deviate from the regulations.

These discrepancies between what patients and health staff are saying indicate that there may be shortcomings in the distribution mechanisms and regulations of essential drugs. This is also understandable in the shifting context of Myanmar. It is however not a specific problem for Magway Region since similar patterns emerged in the other States and Regions as well. While the mapping results cannot be used as direct proof of mismanagement of healthcare resources, they highlight the rules related to the distribution of drugs and medical supplies are not always clearly formulated and communicated, and there are some specialist medicines in circulation that are not subsidised by the MoH. In addition, health staff often assists patients with non-government supplied medicines once their regular stock is depleted, and charge people for the actual costs.

At the very least, these results are indicative of a poor articulation and understanding on both sides on the rights of patients. This points to gaps in mutual understanding between service

39. See Volume I, Chapter 3: Emerging Local Governance in Myanmar for details on existing practices related to drug supplies and patient entitlements.

providers and users, which, may lead to erosion of trust between citizens and the public sector, and at worst, could lead to unchecked corruption in the delivery of basic services. In either case and even if there is no mismanagement of drugs, such lack of clarity may lead to allegations of misuse because people are told that in general drugs provided at the health facility should be free of charge. In order to find out what is exactly going on and what could possibly be done to prevent this from happening in future would require a more detailed analysis of these discrepancies.

When discussing this issue at the Regional level, the staff of the Ministry of Health admitted that occasionally essential drugs are sold to patients that should be provided for free and that it is very difficult for patients to know which medicines should be provided for free and which not. In order to reduce this problem it was suggested that the Ministry should conduct more inspection checks to all health facilities to collect evidence and where necessary sanction staff members who violate the rules. A more active role of the Village Health Committees in monitoring health staff on these aspects of their performance was not seen as a possible solution as they would not have the capacity nor the authority to do so.

More reassuringly, on equity in treatment, almost all respondents (98 percent), both male and female, who made use of public health facilities felt that they received the same treatment as any other person in their village tract or ward, i.e. which could indicate that there was no discrimination against particular groups within the community.

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

Finally, respondents made the following suggestions to further improve health care services in the village tract or ward (see Figure 34). The suggestions are similar to those made by the health staff, but focus more on improving the number, the quality and the attitude of health staff and less on furniture and equipment.

TDSCs and TMACs members in the three townships meet on a regular basis with the TMO to discuss health related issues, either directly or during the monthly combined committee meetings.

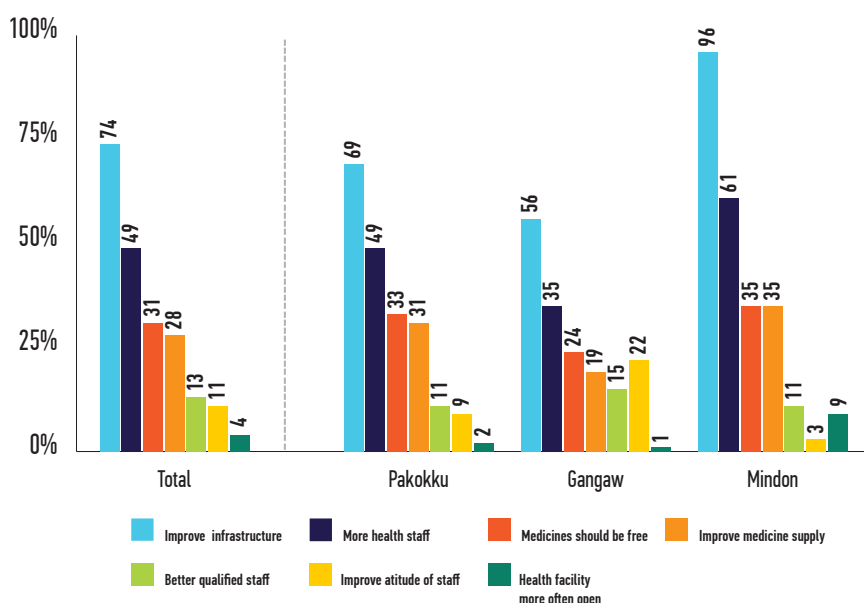


Figure 34: Possible improvements to be made to further improve health care services in the village tract or ward

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n=288.

4.3.2. Primary education

Similar to public health care, the quality of primary education has been very poor in Myanmar for decades if compared to internal standards and performance improvements in other countries.⁴⁰ The Government of Myanmar has recognized this deficit and has started to address this backlog first of all by gradually increasing the education budget from 310 billion Kyats (310 million USD) in 2010-2011 to 1,142 billion kyat (1.142 billion USD) for the current year 2014-2015, which constitutes an increase of 368 percent within five years.⁴¹ Despite this increase, the Government's planned expenditures on education are still only 5.92 percent of the total government's budget for the year 2014-2015, which remains low compared to other countries in the region. As a result, in the current fiscal year Myanmar spends a mere 1.33 percent of its GDP on education while other countries in the region spend on average approximately 3 percent of their GDP on education, with Thailand leading the group with more than 5 percent.⁴²

Currently roughly half of Myanmar's children (2011 figures) do not complete primary school.

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

- 1) The relevant ministries, administrative bodies and schools are not fully serving their intended functions without appropriate coordination and demarcation of roles to serve for a unified and coordinated purpose;
- 2) The existing laws and policies have become outdated and do not reflect the realities of the education sector today.⁴³

The Constitution of Myanmar guarantees that "the Union shall provide a free, compulsory primary education system." However, there is no overarching policy document that presents the strategy and concrete approach of how government wants to transform the sector. Together with "national health", a number of education-related responsibilities are listed in Schedule One of the Constitution.⁴⁴ A recent study has found that the inclusion in Schedule One is held as "meaning that the State and Regional *Hluttaw* cannot enact any legislation in that sector. Nor is there formal provision for the State governments to have a role in education, or practical means for them to do so".⁴⁵ In Magway, this view clearly prevailed as was confirmed during interviews with education sector stakeholders and the township administration.

The government's review of the school system began in 2012. The first phase of the review, known as the "rapid assessment," included a quick look at the current situation to identify priority areas for reforms. Reports for the second phase, which examined the initial

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

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

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

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

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

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

recommendations in more detail, have been reported to be completed. The third and final phase of the review will see the development of an education sector plan through 2021. However, some quarters of the population including civil society and ethnic groups have expressed concerns.⁴⁶

The local governance mapping explored how local service providers and users in the three townships in Magway Region see the quality of primary education and how they appreciate the manner in which it is delivered. The results of these findings are presented in the following section.

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

In line with the national trend, both the investment as well as the recurrent budget for primary education in Magway has increased a lot over the last three years (see Table 15). The increase was mainly caused by a surge in the number of schools and teachers and by a gradual improvement in the salary of teachers.

	Capital	Recurrent	Total
2013/14	9.4	107	116.4
2014/15	10.1	109	119.1
2015/16 estimated	12.9		

Table 15: Magway Regional budget for primary education in billion Kyats

Source: Interview with Director Primary Education Magway Region.

As a result of the additional budget available and the increase in teaching staff, enrolment rates for primary education have gone up in Magway Region and the average size of classes has gone down as well. In 2014/15 the ratio was one teacher for 18 students. By the end of the year the remaining group of teachers on a daily wage basis will either qualify as teacher or be replaced by a qualified teacher. At that moment the 1+4 system will be fully operational in all primary schools in Magway meaning that every primary school will have at least one headmaster and four qualified teachers. According to the Regional Director for Primary Education the priorities for the coming years will be to improve the quality and motivation of teachers (e.g., by introducing a revised pension scheme) and to enhance the involvement of parents in the education of their children. In addition the Ministry will introduce a performance management system in which the headmaster will assess each teacher at his/her school every year, which will have implications for the possible promotion or transfer of teachers.

Recurrent budget for education within the three townships have increased as well over the last three years, especially between 2013/13 and 2013/14 (see Table 16). This was mainly the result of an increase in salaries of teaching staff, a further increase in the number of teachers and more money being available for teaching materials and stationary. All three TEOs mentioned also a substantial increase in investment budgets, resulting in more schools being built or upgraded.

46. The Irrawaddy, 2014.

Table 16: Changes in recurrent budgets for education in the three townships in million

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping December 2014. Interviews with TEOs in the three townships. Note that these budget include the recurrent budgets for middle and high schools as well.

	Pakokku	Gangaw	Mindon
2012/13	1,432	1,233	429
2013/14	2,923	2,512	876
2014/15	3,371	2,575	1009

Looking at the figures provided by the TEOs for primary education in the three selected townships (see Table 17), the teacher-student ratio is well below the national guidelines of one teacher per 40 students and has gone down significantly over the last three years. Note that Mindon has a large number of small villages with small primary schools resulting in a low teacher-student ratio.

Table 17: Key education data for government operated facilities in the three townships in Magway Region

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

	Pakokku	Gangaw	Mindon
Population	290,000	133,000	60,000
Primary schools	192	65	118
Primary school students	24,303	12,245	4525
Primary school teacher: student ratio	1:22	1:22	1:13
Primary school teachers appointed	1109	552	331

Compared to the other Regions and States there are only a few (1) NGOs active in the education sector in the three townships included in the survey (see Table 18).

Table 18: (International) Non-Governmental Organisations active in the education sector in the three townships

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

Township	UN organisations, (I)NGOs and CBOs active in education
Pakokku	Save the Children, United Nations Children Fund, World Food Organisation
Gangaw	Non listed
Mindon	Non listed

Almost all education staff interviewed (three TEOs, five headmasters and 15 teachers), mentioned that primary education has improved a lot over the last three years in the three townships in Magway Region. Most interlocutors identified improved infrastructure (buildings and classrooms), the improved quality of teaching (better and more trained teachers), better teaching material and improved cooperation between parents and teachers as the main factors contributing to this improvement (see Figure 35).

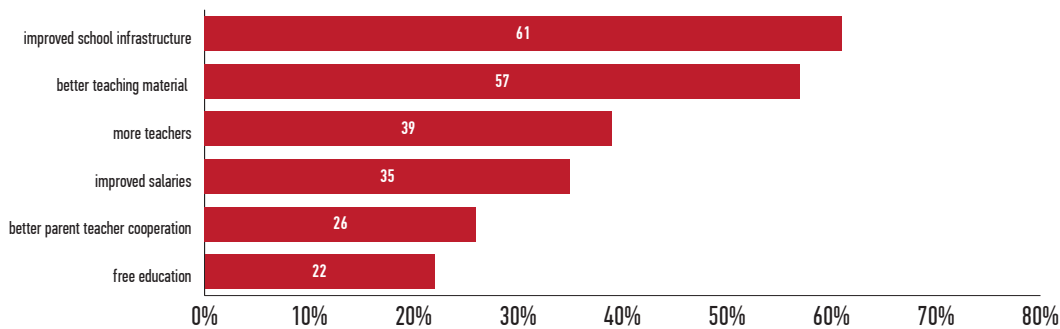


Figure 35: Main reasons why education has improved over the last three years according to the teaching staff interviewed

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. More than one answer was possible.

While primary education has improved in all schools, two out of five headmasters experienced a shortage of teachers and two mentioned poor basic school infrastructure (especially toilet facilities) as challenges during the 2013-2014 school-year, which was confirmed by the teachers. The majority of headmasters had reported low-cost problems, such as the need of more school chairs, desks and textbooks, to the TEO and these were for the most part successfully resolved, indicating that the responsiveness of the Ministry of Education to the needs of the actual teaching staff has improved. Teaching staff made several suggestions to further improve the quality of primary education (see Figure 36). They are more or less the same as what has improved already over the last few years, indicating that the Ministry of Education is on the right track and needs to do more of what it has been doing already over the last three years.

Not discounting the improvements already made and responsiveness of the Ministry of Education to local challenges, teaching staff suggested more teachers, better teaching material, and the need for improving parent-teacher cooperation.

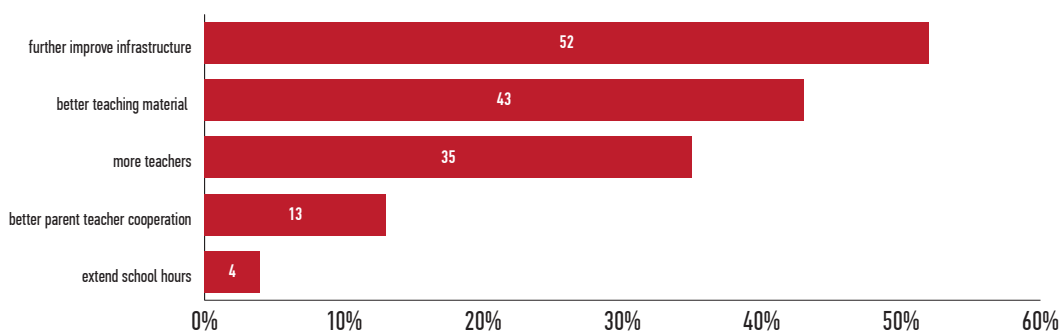


Figure 36: Suggested improvements by teaching staff to improve the quality of primary education

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. More than one answer was possible.

Teachers believed that they adhered to the Code of Conduct of the Ministry of Education, that they are punctual, report honestly on their performance to the education office at the township level, listen to the parents and take any complaints from parents about their children's education seriously. The teachers were divided about the quality of education they are able to provide. Sixty-seven percent mentioned that their school was doing as good or even better than other similar schools in the area in providing good quality education, while the other 33 percent were either not sure or mentioned that their school was not doing as well as others. According to the education staff, every child is treated in the same way, but there are no special facilities or programmes for children with learning problems like physical disabilities.

The concept of performance management was understood by education staff as timely reporting on basic indicators. Standards and practices for monitoring are fairly well established for primary schools, for which there are regular inspection visits. The Assistant and Deputy TEOs typically conduct there at least twice a year, but more usually four times

a year). The objective is to conduct routine inspections, evaluate personnel and audit stock, and collect data on 12 basic output indicators for primary schools (seven relate to quality, five to physical infrastructure). Though inspectors are supposed to inspect personnel, no data is collected with respect to staff performance yet (i.e. teacher absenteeism, or quality of teaching). The TEOs would welcome the improved performance management system suggested by the Regional Director as this would make it easier for them to monitor and improve the actual quality of education.

All schools had a Parent Teacher Association (PTA). These PTAs are mainly involved in implementing small maintenance works and in collecting donations from the parents.

The organisation and administration of primary education.

The administration of primary education at township level in Magway Region is in line with standard procedures within the Ministry of Education (see Figure 37).

Figure 37: Key characteristics of township primary education administration in Magway Region.

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

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

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

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

According to the TEOs interviewed, not much has changed in the organisation of education over the last few years, although it has become easier for the TEO to recruit local teachers to deal with acute staff shortages, especially in the more remote townships or villages. The TEO can recruit teachers on a daily wage basis (these are unqualified teachers who are not part of the civil service, they do not receive any additional benefits like pensions, and are not paid during school holidays). The need for such daily wage teachers has however reduced substantially over the last three years in the three townships of Magway Region. The TEOs mentioned however that while their responsibilities and autonomy hasn't changed much, the Ministry of Education now welcomes suggestions made by the TEOs and responds to their needs much faster.

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

Planning and budgeting of primary education in the three Magway Region townships

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

Box 7: School construction process

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

The coordination is mainly around practical aspects of educational activities such as anti-drug campaigns that are carried out jointly with the TMO at primary and secondary schools. In Magway, this also relates to education about human trafficking, and traffic rules which are coordinated with the Women Affairs Association, the Social Welfare Department or the Information Technology Department.

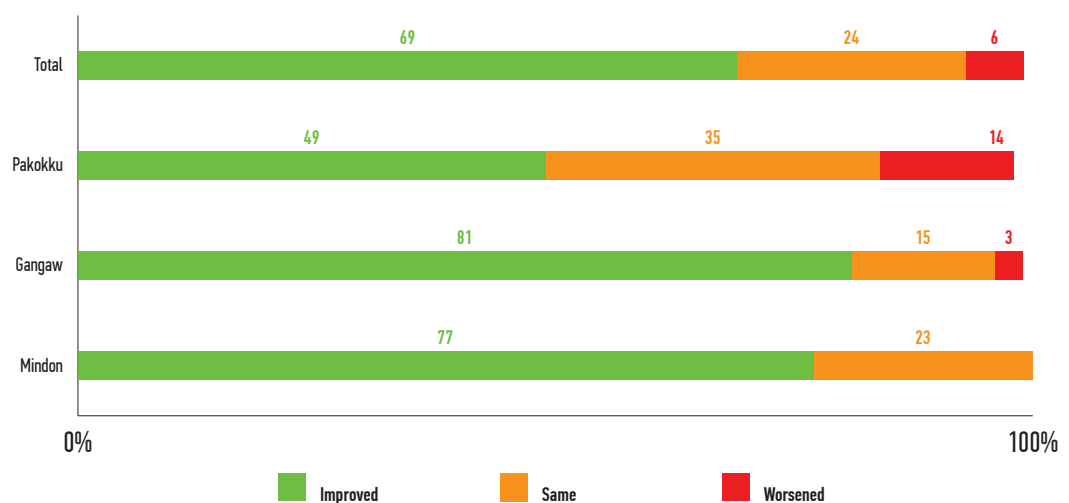
People's views on primary education

As in health care, more than two-thirds or 69 percent of the respondents in the three townships in Magway were of the opinion that primary education in their village-tract or ward had improved over the last three years, while 24 percent mentioned that the quality had stayed more or less the same. Only 6 percent mentioned that the quality had deteriorated (see Figure 38).

69 % of the citizens in the three townships in Magway felt that primary education in their village-tract or ward had improved over the last three years owing to a new or upgraded school, more teachers and better teaching system.

Figure 38: Perceived changes in the quality of primary education at village tract or ward level, over the last three years.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n=288.



Similar to the perceived improvements in health care, Gangaw recorded the highest number of respondents mentioning that primary education had improved over the last three years. Pakokku, which is more urban, recorded a lower score, which could be explained by the fact that the quality of education was already better a few years ago as compared to Gangaw and Mindon. There was no significant difference in response between male and female respondents, while slightly more rural respondents mentioned an improvement (72 percent) compared to urban respondents (64 percent). The main reasons for improvements as mentioned by the respondents who stated that education had improved (199) are presented in Figure 39.

Most of the respondents mentioned the improvements in infrastructure as the main reason for the improvement in education. Of the few respondents (16) who mentioned that primary education had worsened over the last three years, 56 percent attributed this to poor maintenance of the school buildings.

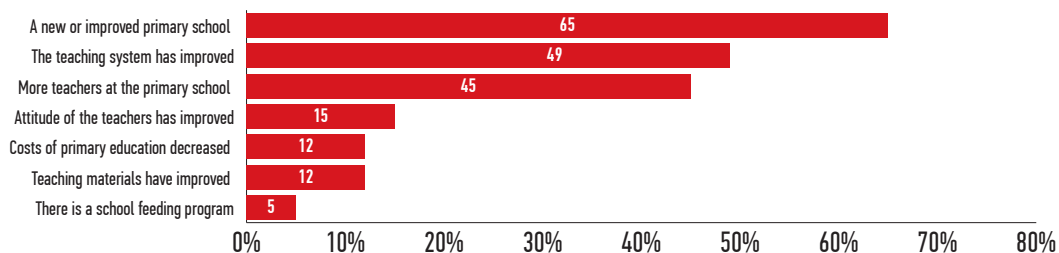


Figure 39: Reasons why according to the respondents primary education has improved

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n = 199.
Note that more than one answer was possible.

Respondents with children attending primary school (74) were asked about their satisfaction with the quality of education. Eighty-two percent of the respondents with children attending primary school were satisfied, 15 percent qualified it as “not good/not bad”, and only 3 percent were not satisfied (see Figures 40 and Figure 41). Compared to other States and Regions this is a very high score. There were some differences between the three townships with Gangaw recording the highest level of satisfaction (91 percent satisfied) and Pakokku the lowest (75 percent). Female respondents were slightly more satisfied with the quality of primary education of their children (93 percent satisfied) than male respondents (76 percent satisfied).

82% of citizens with children in primary school were satisfied with education in their village tracts/wards.

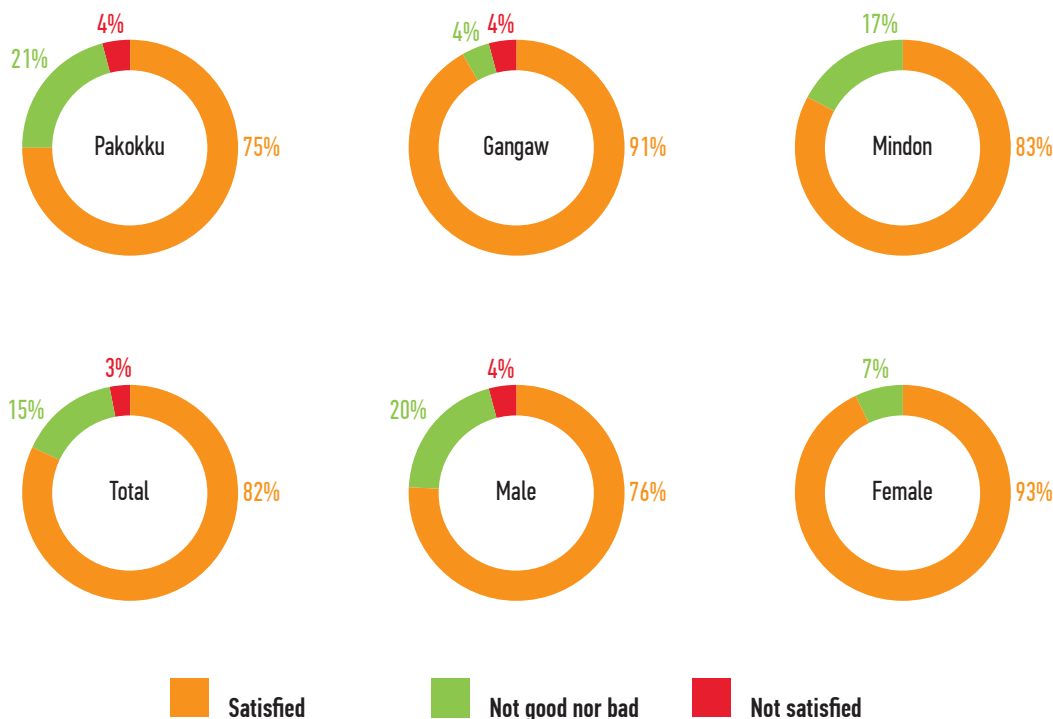
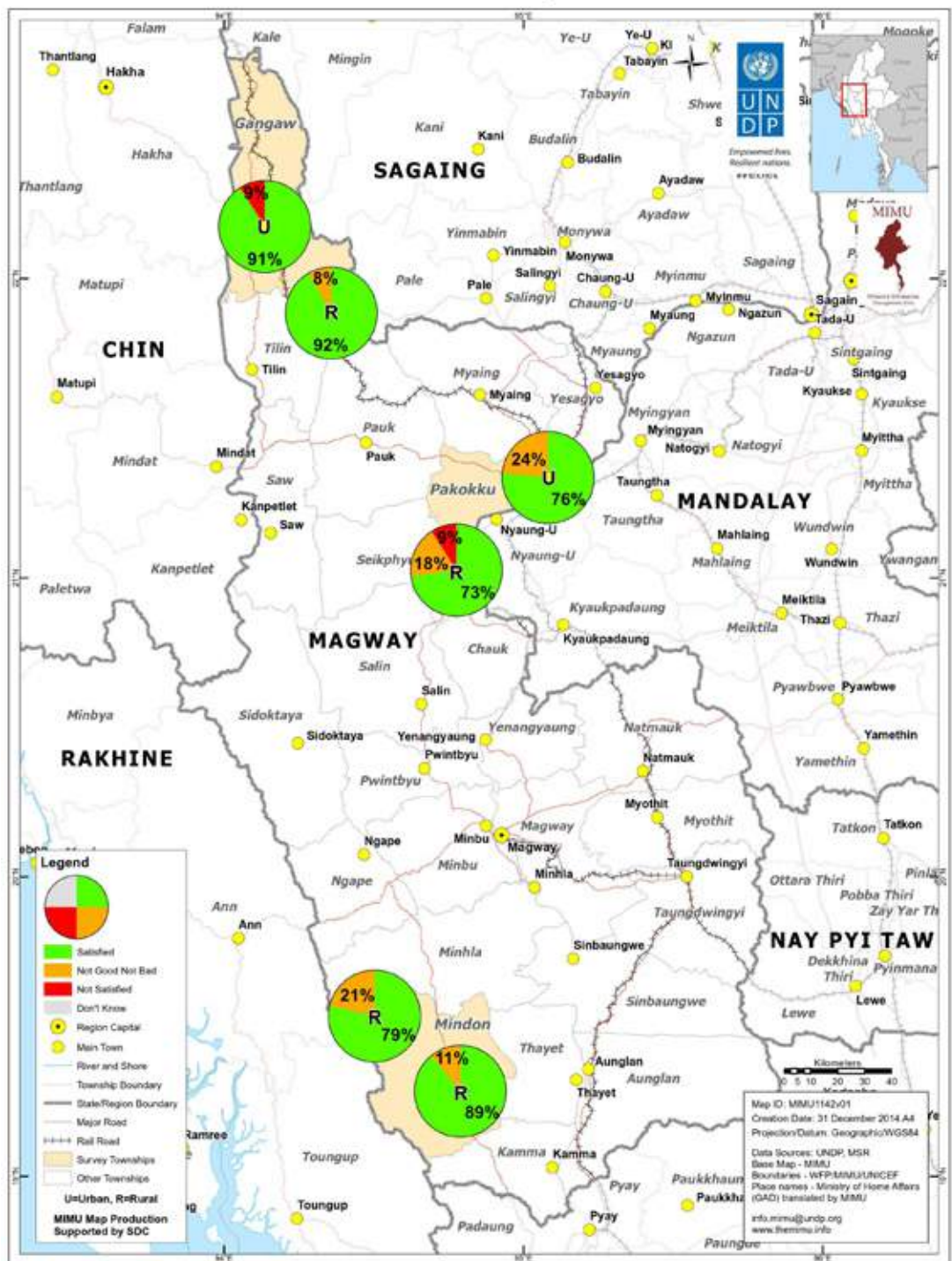


Figure 40: Overall satisfaction with the quality of primary education for respondents with primary school-going children

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n = 74.
Note that more than one answer was possible.

Figure 41: Overall satisfaction with the quality of primary education for respondents with primary school-going children

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n = 74.



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

Respondents with children attending a primary school were in general satisfied with the attitude of teachers. Ninety-nine percent of these respondents mentioned that in general the teachers at the primary school were observing regular working hours (i.e. they are present when the school is open), and 95 percent said that the teachers are polite and friendly to the parents and their children.

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

Source: UNDP, Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014.

Teachers are working harder than before.

- School buildings are in good condition.
- More teachers have been employed.
- Parents pay more attention to their children's education than before.
- More schooling materials have been provided compared to the past.

Kyawtaik Ward, Gangaw

- Primary education is free.
- There is more parents' interest on their children's education.
- Increase number of teachers.
- Renovate old buildings and build new building.
- Teachers teach full time at school.

Pan Tone VT, Mindon

- Sufficient number of teachers at the primary school.
- Teachers have become good at teaching.

Ward 6 Pakokku

Perceptions on many other issues in education were also gathered from the citizens.

Twenty six percent of the parents mentioned that teachers were providing extra tuition after school hours for extra payment. Of these parents, 79 percent mentioned that this should not happen as teachers should receive a decent salary for their regular teaching activities and should integrate this extra teaching into their normal practice.

On the question of gift-giving, i.e. whether respondents had to pay or provide a gift to the teachers, school principal or the school, for the education of their child/children, 81 percent of the respondents with children at school said that they never had to provide a gift, while 19 percent mentioned that they 'sometimes' had to provide a gift. Of those who said that they always or sometimes paid or provided a gift 21 percent felt they were obliged to do so while the others felt they did this on a voluntary basis.

Ninety-nine percent of the respondents with children at primary school felt that their child was treated in the same way as all the other children. According to 70 percent of the respondents, different needs of boys and girls (like separate toilets) were always taken care of by the schools. In Pakokku, the number of respondents who mentioned that these interests were not always taken into account was higher than in the other two townships (25 percent compared to 13 and 4 percent). Government is not yet actively discussing education-related matters with the parents of children attending school. Eighty-five percent of all the respondents with children at a primary school had never been involved in such a meeting.

During the discussions in Community Dialogue the citizens or parents provided further feedback on the challenges about primary education than in the individual interviews.

Box 9: Examples of challenges in primary education as mentioned by the communities during the Community Dialogues

Teachers have to teach more carefully in order to raise the quality of students for them to pursue higher level education:

- No fail policy should be changed.
- It is too hot to study in second storey rooms in summer.

Min VT, Gangaw

- Bad teacher to student ratio.
- Insufficient latrines.
- Insufficient furniture (tables, chairs).

Chaik VT, Pakokku

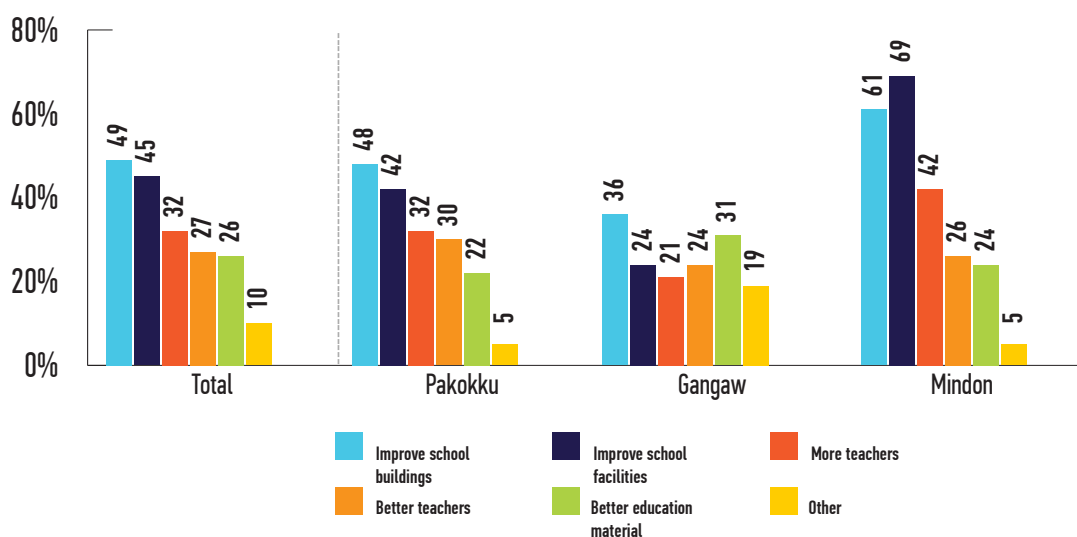
- Classrooms are not good.
- Bad state of roofs and walls.
- Insufficient school toilets.
- Not enough clean drinking water.
- Insufficient teachers.
- No electricity at the school.
- Not enough drinking water.
- Insufficient latrines.
- Teachers are late for school.
- Teachers are absent to inform parents about the condition of children.

Kone Tine Kyin VT, Mindon

Respondents were finally asked whether they had any suggestions as to how primary education in the village tract or ward could improve further. The responses are presented in Figure 42 below.

Figure 42: Suggestions made to improve quality of primary education

Source: UNDP, Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014.



Additional improvements to the school infrastructure and teaching facilities (furniture, etc.) were mentioned most often, while increasing the number of teachers followed, especially in Mindon and more so by respondents in the rural areas as compared to the urban areas, where better education material was mentioned more often.

4.3.3. Drinking water

Access to safe drinking water can be defined as having access to a private or public tap, a deep well, a protected hand-dug well or a protected open water source all within 30 minutes walking distance. As per this definition, access to safe drinking water stood at 79 percent for Magway Region as a whole in 2010, which is slightly above the national average of 69 percent.⁴⁷

This aggregate figure does not allow any conclusions for the availability and accessibility of drinking water at the local level in different parts of Magway Region as this depends very much on local conditions. Providing safe and equitable access to drinking water is a core responsibility of government at the local level. The government authorities in Magway Region have begun to invest more resources in this sector.

The responsibility for drinking water provision is shared by the DRD and DMA⁴⁸ (see Figure 43). These departments were only established in late 2013 at the Region Government level and are still in the process of being set up in most townships. The main reason of creating these departments was to improve service delivery related to water, electricity and infrastructure to the rural areas as they were in past often neglected. They are organized differently in urban and rural areas, an additionally fall under different competencies under the 2008 Constitution. The DRD falls under the Union Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, while the DMA is part of the Regional Ministry of Development Affairs, which administratively and financially supports the municipal committees in the towns. Both departments have a multitude of responsibilities including the provision of safe drinking water. The DRD focusses on the rural areas of a township (village tracts), while the DMA is responsible for drinking water provision in the municipal area (wards).

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



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

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

Figure 43: Administrative set up of water provision

Source: Township Development Affairs Organisation and Department of Rural Development, Magway Region.

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

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

The DRD separated from the DMA in 2013, but in most cases inherited the least number of staff and it started in most townships with a relatively small budget that is increasing fast however. The Ministry under which it falls at the Union level allocates staff and budgets to each of the townships. It is responsible for the construction of roads and bridges, drinking water provision, housing and electricity provision in the rural areas.

Similar to Education and Health Care, Rural Development falls under Schedule 1 of the Constitution, meaning that budget allocation, planning and decision-making is all taking place at the Union Level Department. Thus no Regional Budget is available for the Department and the Region Government is not involved in the planning process at all (except that they receive a copy of the annual plan and budget).

Since there was in most townships no reliable and updated overview of available facilities (i.e. roads and bridges, water facilities and electricity supply) in all the village tracts in each township, the DRD has started last year with conducting a baseline study of facilities available in each village. Based on this overview and consultations that were held with

VTDCs and VTAs, the DRDs drafted their first full year annual plan for 2014/15. As in other sector Ministries this means that the DRD identifies projects, makes cost calculations and submit a long list of proposed projects to the Regional office, which submits it to the Union level Department. No indicative budget ceilings were provided beforehand with the result that most Township DRDs submitted enough projects that would take 10 times their actual allocated budget to implement. For 2015/16, the Regional Director of DRD in Magway received proposals from all townships to the amount of 200 billion kyat (200 million USD), while the expected allocation for the whole Region will most likely be close to 27 billion kyat (27 million USD). The disadvantage of this way of working is that a lot of energy is spent on preparing project proposals that are in the end not implemented while at the same time expectations are raised at the community level when the DRD collects proposals. If throughout the year only 10 percent of the proposed project are actually implemented, there is a high risk that people at the community level get frustrated as they don't see any benefits from active participation which will also result in demotivation of DRD staff members who constantly have to explain that not enough money is available. The Deputy Director of the Regional DRD in Magway acknowledged this problem and the potential risk related to creating big expectations, but added that the Ministry at Union level usually selects at least those project that were of highest priority on the list of each township.

While the collection and preparation of project proposals in Magway is similar to such processes in other States and Regions, the TDSCs at the township levels are actively involved in the process as they are requested to provide advice on the draft list of proposals made by the Head of DRD at the township level, which does not happen structurally in other States and Regions.

For Magway Region the total capital budget for 2013/14 was 5.3 billion kyat (5.3 million USD), while for 2014/15 the capital budget is 20.9 billion kyat (20.9 million USD), a 400 percent increase and the recurrent budget is 847 million Kyats (847,000 USD), i.e. totally almost 22 billion Kyats (22 million USD).⁴⁹ This increase can partly be explained by the enhanced implementation capacity of the department at township level, partly by the fact that 2013/14 was in practice only half a year, but it is also the result of the increased attention government is paying to development in the rural areas. The relative low allocated recurrent budget as compared to the allocated capital budget can be explained by the fact that DRD, contrary to

	Water supply		Roads & bridge construction		Rural Electrification		Total	
	13/14	14/15	13/14	14/15	13/14	14/15	13/14	14/15
Pakokku	28	148	158	1,073	88	131	275	1354
Gangaw	3	91	0	344	30	25	33	460
Mindon	27	208	177	101	0	119	205	429
Magway Region	645	3,465	4,372	14,508	331	2,986	5,349	20,960

Table 19: DRD capital budgets for the years 2-13/14 and 2014/15 for the three townships (in million kyat)

Source: Regional Deputy Director of DRD in Magway.

49. Information provided by the Regional Deputy Director of DRD in Magway.

the DMA, doesn't implement any of the project activities itself. Once approved by the Union Ministry, similar township projects (like the digging of tube wells or the provision of solar panels) are grouped per district and go for tendering by the Regional tender board. Looking at the rural development budgets for 2013/14 and 2014/15 for the three townships (see Table 19) similar increases in budget per township can be noticed as well. In Pakokku and Gangaw, roads and bridges received the largest allocation in 2014/15 while in Mindon water supply received the largest share of the budget.

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

Magway Region adopted a new Municipal Development Organisation Law in January 2013 and revised it again in October 2013 to be in line with Presidential Notification 27/2013, and as provided for in Schedule Two of the Constitution.

Magway Region adopted a new Municipal Law in January 2013⁵⁰ and revised it again in October 2013 to be in line with Presidential Notification 27/2013, and as provided for in Schedule Two of the Constitution. The Regional Municipal Law provides the legal basis for the formation and composition of the Township Municipal Affairs Committee (TMAC) as well as a description of its mandate and responsibilities and its relationship with the DMA in particular at the township level. The main modification in this revision of the Law was the inclusion of citizen representatives in the TMACs.

Since the Ministry of Development Affairs and the DMA falls under Schedule Two of the constitution, i.e. under the responsibility of the Region Government, and since revenues of the DMA are exclusively generated locally, the planning and implementation process of public works and the management of municipal affairs is more or less completely delegated to the township level. In that sense, the DMA differs completely from all other departments present at the township level, which is reflected in, relatively high level of decisiveness, effectiveness, responsiveness and speed of implementation as described below.

The tasks and responsibilities of the TMAC and the DMA range from urban planning, water supply and sanitation, urban power supply, the management of markets, slaughter houses, business licencing, slow-moving vehicles, construction and maintenance of roads and bridges, inspection of construction works, traffic regulation, road names and building numbers, eviction of squatters, construction of parks and recreation centres, cemeteries, garbage collection and public health as well as other typical municipal functions and duties. Sources of revenue include; licenses from buildings, animal slaughter houses, street vendors and markets and other businesses (contributing on average to 75 percent of its income). Other revenues include income from power supply, various taxes (like building tax, water supply tax, street light tax, waste and sanitation tax, public sanitation tax, and tax on vehicles) and penalty fees. Under the Municipal Law, the TMAC is a statutory body with a legal personality meaning that it can sue and be sued and enter into any type of legal transaction.

The TMAC in each of Magway's Region's municipalities consists of 7 members, three ex-officio members (GAD (TA or Deputy TA), Head of DRD and the executive officer of the DMA who is secretary of the committee) and four members from the public who represent the wards and specific groups in society (like professionals, business sector, social sector, etc.) of whom at least one should have an engineering background. One of the citizen members is chairperson of the TMAC. The citizen members receive a monthly allowance of 180,000 Kyats (180 USD) for the ordinary members and 200,000 Kyats (200 USD) for the chairperson, which is similar to the salary of a senior government official at the township level.

The DMA and TMAC embody the municipality, which is the only body at the local level that generates its own income and can decide (with approval from the Regional Minister of

50. Magway Regional Hluttaw, 2013; Magway Municipal Affairs Organisation Law.

Development Affairs) how to use that income to implement its functions. The TMAC and DMA draft an annual plan based on the estimated revenues for the coming financial year that is submitted to the Regional Ministry for approval. It differs considerably per township, based on locally developed priorities and revenues. Before 2013, the Ministry of Development Affairs stipulated what percentage of the revenues should be spent on each of its functions (like 30 percent on roads, 30 percent on water supply, 5 percent on street lightning, etc.). With the adoption of the new Law this condition has been lifted and each DMA/TMAC can decide on how to spend its money according to its own priorities. As a result e.g. one township in the Region (not included in the mapping) is spending 80 percent of its revenue on improving water supply as a result of a consultation process, which identified it as the most important priority.⁵¹ The only restriction is that the operational costs of the DMA (including staff salaries) should not exceed 35 percent of the planned expenditures. Once approval is obtained, the DMA and TMAC are in charge of implementing all activities, making regular adjustments throughout the year based on the actual revenues received. For temporary cash flow shortages the Ministry is able to assist with low interest short-term loans. For bigger investments that surpass the capacity of the TMAC/DMA it can either request via its elected Hluttaw members or the Region Ministry an extra contribution from government (supplementary budget) or a low interest loan from the Union Government for which the Ministry acts as a guarantor.

In Magway Region, on instructions from the Ministry of Finance, all revenues earned at the township level are transferred to a Regional account and the same amount (minus 6 percent) is again available for the township as its budget for the current year. The adoption of this process was not clear from the discussions with the Deputy Director in the Ministry in Magway but it is most likely to do with increasing the control over cash flow by the Ministry of Finance. The six percent that is kept as reserve by the Ministry at Regional level is used for emergencies or topping up the budget of poorer townships with lesser revenues. If one looks at the actual balance sheet of the Region and the three townships for 2014/2015, this transfer of money to poorer townships (like Mindon) is however not visible (see Table 20 and 21).

Year	Revenues	Operational budget	% of total	Capital budget	% of total	Total expenditure/budget
2010-2011	5,342	2,235	45%	2,729	55%	4,965
2011-2012	5,944	2,350	58%	1,717	42%	4,077
2012-2013	6,884	2,889	44%	3,683	56%	6,573
2013-2014	6,659	3,164	49%	3,307	51%	6,471
2014-2015*	6,684	4,189	61%	2,650	39%	6,840
2015-2016*	7,055	3,991	57%	3,062	43%	7,053

Table 20: Revenues and budgets of Magway Region Ministry of Development Affairs 2010/11 until 2015/16 (estimated) in million kyat

Source: Regional Ministry of Development Affairs Magway Region, December 2014. * Estimated figures

51. According to the Deputy Director Regional Ministry of Development Affairs, Magway.

A few conclusions can be drawn from these figures:

- Magway Region has a total urban population of 591,000 in 2014 according to the recently held census. This means that the per capita revenues that have been generated were between 9,500 kyat (9.5 USD) in 2010/11 and are expected to be 12,000 kyat (12 USD) in 2015/16. Since the budgets/expenditures were more or less the same as the revenues (although they do match better over the latter years) the expenditures per capita have also been around 10,000 Kyats (10 USD) over the years. Note however that until 2013/14 also all rural expenditures were included in this budget, which implies that much more money is available for the municipality in each township since 2013/14.
- The operational budget has always been above the target of 35 percent and increased sharply in 2014/15 to 61 percent after the split between DRD and DMA, effectively reducing the capital budget to below the amount available in the 2010/11 financial year. This doesn't necessarily mean that fewer projects have been implemented since 2013/14 if they were implemented directly by the extra staff that has been engaged over the last few years. More detailed research is required in order to assess whether this has been the case or whether the DMAs operate less efficiently than before.

Table 21: Estimated revenues and budgets of the DMAs in the three townships for 2012/15 in Magway Region in million kyat

Township	Revenues	Operational budget	% of total	Capital budget	% of total	Total budget	urban population	budget/capita
Pakokku	889	468	52%	430	48%	898	95,000	9,453
Gangaw	175	87	48%	93	52%	180	13,000	13,846
Mindon	68	36	54%	31	46%	67	5,000	13,400

Source: Regional Ministry of Development Affairs Magway Region, December 2014.

From these figures the following conclusions can be drawn:

- While the revenues vary between the three townships, the funds available per capita are similar across the townships and close to the regional average.
- Mindon, which is one of the poorest townships is the only one for which the budget is lower than the revenues Pakokku gets 7 million Kyats (7,000 USD) extra and Gangaw 5 million Kyats (5,000 USD), while Mindon gets 1 million Kyats (1,000 USD) less than its estimated revenues. This is contradictory to the principle that "richer" townships support the "poorer" ones, while the 6 percent reduction is also not reflected in the figures.

Regarding the implementation of works, the TMAC/DMA can implement or outsource activities that have a total estimated cost of less than 5 million Kyats (5,000 USD), while they have to tender for any project above that amount. The tender is implemented at the Township level (TMAC + an engineer are the tender board), but the conclusions of the tender need to be endorsed by the Regional Minister of Development Affairs before the contract can be awarded.

One year after the adoption of the new Magway Municipal Law and the establishment of the TMACs in Magway they seem to have settled in an operational mode that is similar across the three townships. The TMACs in the all the townships have the executive responsibilities according to the law but are in practice still more advisory to the executive officer of the DMA. They meet often only as part of the bi-monthly combined VTA/WA-TDSC-TMAC-TA meetings, or have a separate meeting to discuss the quarterly report of the DMA. In Pakokku, the chairman of the TMAC meets with the Executive Officer at least once a week to discuss progress and if necessary assign tasks to other members regarding the monitoring

of projects that are being implemented. They are not actively involved in the financial affairs of the DMA and in practice focus mainly on the identification of projects that should be included in the DMA's annual plan.

Box 10: Project identification

Regarding the identification of projects, the Deputy Director at the Regional Ministry of Development Affairs in Magway mentioned that from this year onwards, each of the WDSCs through their WAs are requested by mail to submit 5 project proposals to the DMA at the start of the annual planning process. These proposals are discussed between the WDSC/WA and some of the TMAC members to assess their viability and costs. After submission, the TMAC /DMA should include at least one but preferably two or more projects in the DMA's annual plan. Several WAs in each of the three townships were interviewed and at least for the 2015/16 annual planning process they hadn't received such a letter, but they had submitted proposals. They also mentioned that the TMAC members didn't visit them often enough (sometimes only once a year).

Both the DMAs as well as the TMAC members that were interviewed in the three townships were however happy with the way the TMACs are operating at the moment and the legal framework that has been created. As a result, decisions are taken jointly between TMAC and DMA with regard to the projects to be included in the annual plan. TMAC members have direct contact with WAs and community members and will listen to their needs and complaints and in addition explain to the people why they have to pay certain taxes or levies.

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

Knowing the estimated budget in advance makes planning and project selection at the municipal level much easier and realistic. The TMAC can meet with WDSCs and WAs and negotiate priorities and come to agreements at their level. This makes the TMAC quite powerful but also enhance the decision-making process since people know that at least 2 out of the 5 projects they propose for their ward will indeed be implemented during the next year. In this way, consultation at the ward level shift more towards real participation and will motivate citizens to attend meetings and present and defend their case for a certain project. In addition giving people a say in the selection of activities and implementing them accordingly will in the end improve tax compliance as well, since people start to understand the relationship between paying taxes/fees and the services they receive in return. Since approval procedures are much shorter than in sector ministries projects can be implemented much faster which can also have a positive impact on the confidence people have in the newly established structures.

During discussions with the TMAC members in the various townships it became clear that the fact that the TMACs have a legal framework that defines their mandate and defines their relationship with the DMA is of great support to the citizen members on the Committee. They saw the present law as being sufficient to do their job, but most of them stressed that they would prefer a direct election system in which all citizens are involved as this would

improve their legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens and their authority over government staff. In addition, direct elections could also reduce the risk of elite capture, which certainly exists at the moment. Citizen members of the various TMACs belong in practice to the local elite and are very close to government. Since the TMAC has both an executive and controlling function, it is quite easy for the citizen committee members to collude with government staff to misappropriate funds intended for the development of the municipality.

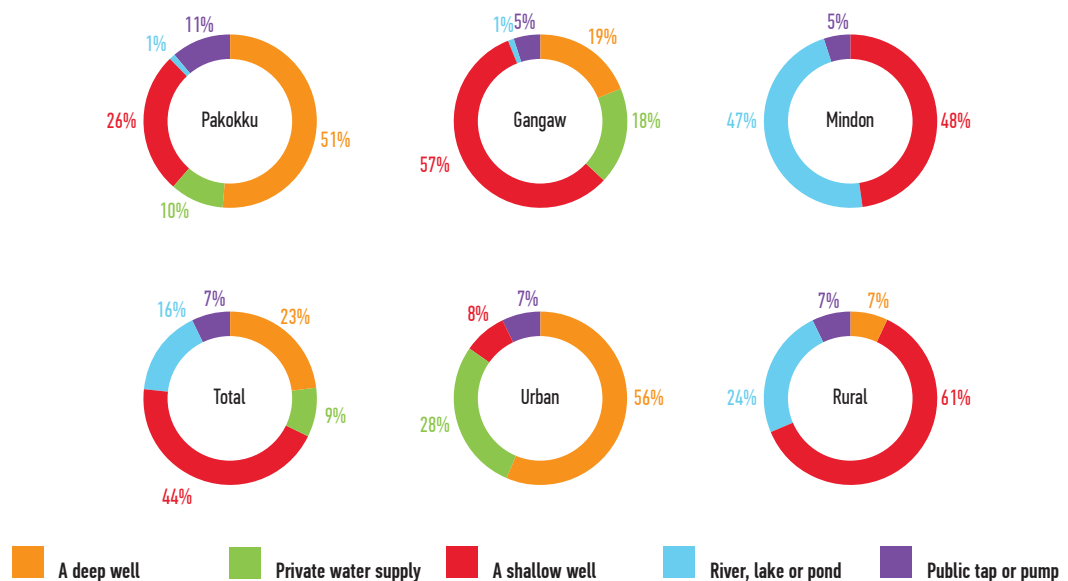
With the support of TMACs, the improvement of drinking water provision has moved higher up the list of priorities of the DMAs in all three Magway Region townships, which is a result of the improved consultation practices and increased responsiveness of the DMA to the needs of the municipal population. It will be worthwhile to monitor their performance closely over the coming years, especially from the perspective of whether their executive and oversight function can remain combined or should be split, giving the oversight function to a separate body at the municipal level. In addition, certain aspects of the way in which the TMACs operates (legal framework, executive responsibilities, DMA partly accountable to TMAC) could be considered for the rural areas and the operations of the TDSCs and DRD as well.

Citizens' perspectives on safe drinking water provision

Forty-four percent of the respondents interviewed said that they got their water from a shallow well and 23 percent from a deep tube well, 16 percent from an open water source (river or pond), 9 percent from a private water connection and 7 percent from a public tap or pump (see Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: Main source of drinking water source of households in the three townships

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. November 2014.



The differences between the three townships were however big as a deep tube well was most important in Pakokku (51 percent), a shallow well in Gangaw (57 percent), while an open water source and shallow well were the most important water sources in Mindon. Similar differences were noted between urban and rural respondents, with more urban respondents having access to a deep tube well or a private water connection and rural respondents relying more on shallow wells and open water sources.

Regarding the time required to get to the water source, most people (60 percent) spend between 5 and 15 minutes to get to the water source, while 36 percent spend less than 5 minutes to get to the water source (see Figure 4.5). People in Mindon spend in general more time to get to the main water source than in the other two townships.

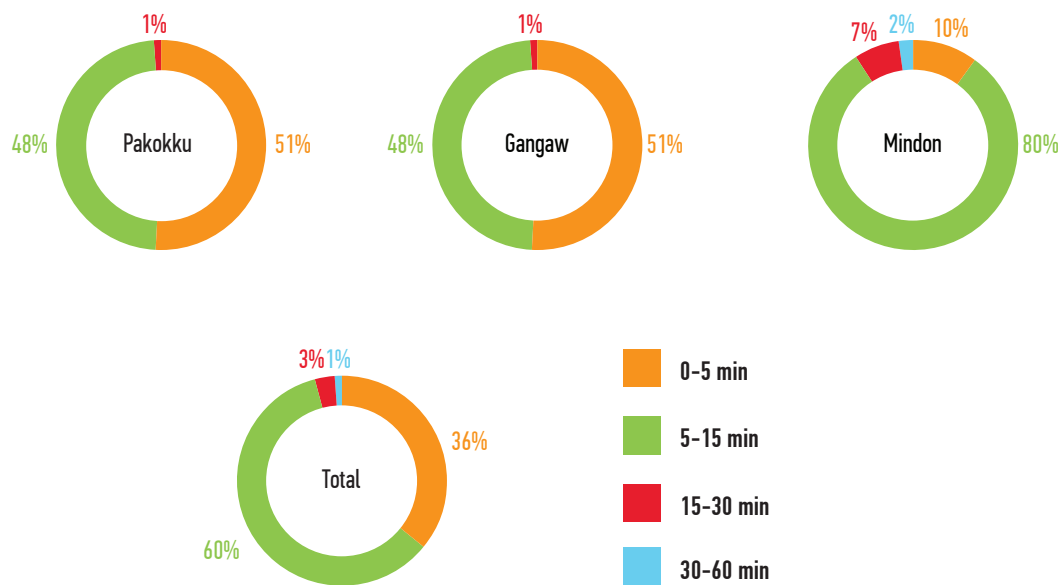


Figure 45: Time required to get to the main water source in minutes

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014.

Regarding the quality of their drinking water, 72 percent of the respondents mentioned that it was good, 27 percent mentioned that it was acceptable and the remaining 3 percent found the quality poor. Regarding access to safe drinking water, the respondents were asked whether the drinking water situation has improved in their village tract or ward over the last three years (see Figure 46).

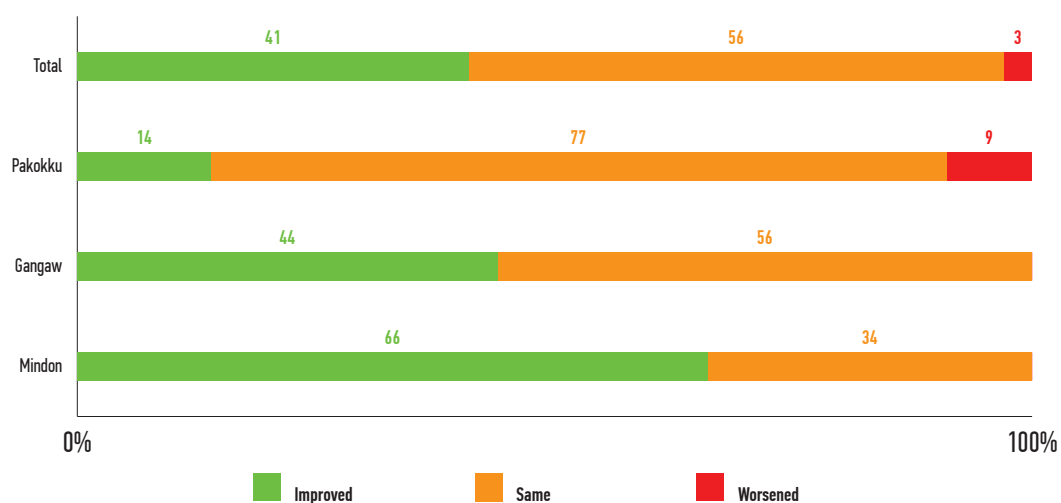


Figure 46: Perceived changes in the provision of clean drinking water in the village tract or ward over the last three years

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014.

Forty-one percent of the respondents mentioned that the provision of safe drinking water has improved over the last few years, which is much lower than the figures for health care and primary education. Fifty-six percent mentioned that they had experienced not much of a change, while 3 percent mentioned that the situation has worsened.

As shown in Figure 46, these responses are highly affected by the positive figures for Mindon, where 66 percent of the respondents mentioned an improvement in access to drinking water.

The main reasons mentioned by the respondents who noticed an improvement in water provision (118) were:

- The water source is nearer (43 percent).
- New taps or pumps have been installed (42 percent).
- The water source is protected/cleaner (40 percent).

Box 11: Water access improving

In the dry zone of Magway, water is a rarity and running water a luxury. But this is starting to change. Villagers recount that ‘it is hard to forget the time when water was short’ as work proceeded to install metered water supply in these villages in Magway region. People used to spend whole day fetching water, but the installation of running water had changed their lives. In 2014, the Department of Rural Development working with UNICEF and communities launched a project to introduce metered water supply to 110 dry zone villages, the majority in Magway.

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

- The water source got polluted (50 percent),
- An increase in distance to their water source (50 percent).⁵²

Hardly any of the respondents (only 8 percent) had ever been involved in a meeting with government staff about the improvement of water provision in their respective village tract or ward. Most of the people who were involved in such a meeting (20 out of 25) lived in Mindon.

With regard to the provision of drinking water in the three townships, it seems that government is becoming more responsive.

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

Concluding remarks on service delivery

The figures from Magway Region on both health and primary education are encouraging, as they show that frontline service providers and people see that improvements are being made at the community level. Given the relatively low starting point, the changes seen in service delivery at the local level are impressive, in particular since they took place in a context of continued political uncertainty and an ongoing transition towards democratic governance. In Magway, administrative structures can build on long periods of continuity.

52. However, one has to be cautious using these figures as an indication for the actual quality of primary education or primary health care in Magway Region or in Myanmar at large. Myanmar continues to perform poorly on a number of international rankings both for primary education and health care, particularly when viewed against global standards set through initiatives such as Education for All. In education, enrolment rates are still low, and completion rates from primary school remain poor. In health, Myanmar has improved on most MDG indicators but still lags behind as compared to other countries in the region (e.g. the ‘under-5 child-mortality’ rate is 52.3 compared to 28 as average for the region, maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live birth) is 200 compared to 150 as average for the South-East Asia Region). Most recent figures (2012) are from the MDG global data base (www.Mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx) for Myanmar on progress regarding the achievement of the MDGs.

In some respects, Magway has found arrangements that could be seen as model innovations for other States and Regions (e.g. the involvement of TDSCs in the planning process of the DRD or the systematic inclusion of WDSCs in the planning process of the DMA). The improvements in health and education are clearly appreciated by much of the population and attest to laudable efforts by the administrative personnel involved. If further improvements in terms of service delivery are possible, they are likely to result not only from continued increases in finances and better administrative capacity, but also more representative committees, more inclusive consultation and planning processes, and in particular enhanced transparency and accountability of decision-makers towards end users, which is addressed briefly in the next section.⁵³

4.4 Information, Transparency and Accountability

Transparency of government and accountability of office bearers are critical elements for a well-functioning and sustainable democratic society. The need for the rule of law and people-centred service delivery in public administration has become a priority in public discourse. The FESR has underlined the need for a clean government and effective and transparent use of public financial resources. At the same time, while administrative accountability, (the answerability to higher levels within the administration), and the related reporting and accounting mechanisms as well as the minimal internal checks and balances are fairly well developed and implemented in Myanmar, they cannot prevent mismanagement or corruption if they are not complemented by effective political and social accountability mechanisms.

At the same time, there are changes in the government-citizens interaction at the township level and below that contribute to a restoration of basic mutual trust between the citizens and the state. It is indicated below.

4.4.1 Aspects of Institutional and Social Accountability

Changes in accountability at the township level

The government institutions at township level (both administration and departments) are an integral part of the Region or Union government in Myanmar, and do not form a separate tier of government that is primarily accountable to the people in that particular area, either directly (social accountability) or indirectly via elected representatives (political accountability).

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

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

53. However, one has to be cautious using these figures as an indication for the actual quality of primary education or primary health care in Magway Region or in Myanmar at large. Myanmar continues to perform poorly on a number of international rankings both for primary education and health care, particularly when viewed against global standards set through initiatives such as Education for All. In education, enrolment rates are still low, and completion rates from primary school remain poor. In health, Myanmar has improved on most MDG indicators but still lags behind as compared to other countries in the region (e.g. the 'under-5 child-mortality' rate is 52.3 compared to 28 as average for the region, maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live birth) is 200 compared to 150 as average for the South-East Asia Region). Most recent figures (2012) are from the MDG global data base (www.Mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx) for Myanmar on progress regarding the achievement of the MDGs.

Informal changes were noted by government staff active at the township level. As a result of the reform process, the relationship between the department at the township level and their counterparts at the Regional/Union level seems to have changed slightly. Constructive inputs from below are more appreciated and integrated into the planning of the Region/Union ministries. They are more responsive to the needs expressed by the township level staff and more predictable in behaviour, adhering to priorities defined at lower levels.

At the township level and below similar changes are taking place. The VTA/WAs, as elected office-holders responsible for their village tract or ward, the TMAC and the support committees (TDSC and W/VTDSCs) can submit questions to the Heads of Departments or the TA. Nevertheless, also here government staff is in general more inclined to listen and explain matters and they increasingly respond to issues raised from “below”.

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

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

These new roles (both developmental and coordination) stretch the capacity of the GAD at the township level (in terms of number of staff, competencies and resources). The TAs interviewed in the three townships acknowledged the importance of these extra tasks and of involving citizens more actively in governance and service delivery.

Box 12: Magway Municipal law

The new Magway Region Municipal Law might create a precedent in establishing new relationships between citizens and local administrations. The Law gives the TMAC executive responsibilities and a statutory foundation in Region law. The TMAC can, on advice from the Executive Officer of the DMA, determine local taxes, fees and levies. It can also instruct the Executive Officer to carry out certain works, and analyse draft regulations and notifications of the DMA. The Executive Officer remains directly accountable to the Minister of Development Affairs at the Region level and the Minister can overrule any decision of the TMAC. As a consequence of this new law, the Executive Officer of the DMA becomes to a certain extent also accountable to the TMAC. Since this law is still fairly new, it will be interesting to see how all parties deal with these rather complicated and multiple accountability lines in practice in future.

Changes in accountability at the village tract or ward level

The *Ward or Village Tract Administration Law of 2012* is not very clear about the formal accountability of the Ward or Village Tract Administrators. Certain basic criteria have been laid down for becoming a VTA/WA. The VTA/WA is elected from and by the group of 10 household heads (in practice many different election procedures were applied). The TA appoints the VTA/WA, and provides him/her with a monthly subsidy and can assign functions to the VTA/WA. The VTA/WA reports to the TA and in case of misconduct, the TA can dismiss a VTA/WA.

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

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

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

In Magway Region, this formal mandate of the VTA/WA, which originally dates back more than a century, may be significantly different from the role the VTAs and WAs play in practice and how members of the community perceive this function. Partly due to the emergence of the various development funds that require the involvement of communities, in Magway Region, as in several other States and Regions the VTA/WA has in practice become more of an “elected representative” of the village tract or ward, acting as the intermediary between the village tract or ward and the township (informing community members on the one hand and bringing relevant village tract or ward problems or needs to the attention of the TA). This is in addition to his/her formal role as mentioned in the *2012 Law* being in charge of maintaining law and order, while also playing an important role in mediation and settling disputes which could be seen as an extension of the maintaining law and order functions (see Figure 47).

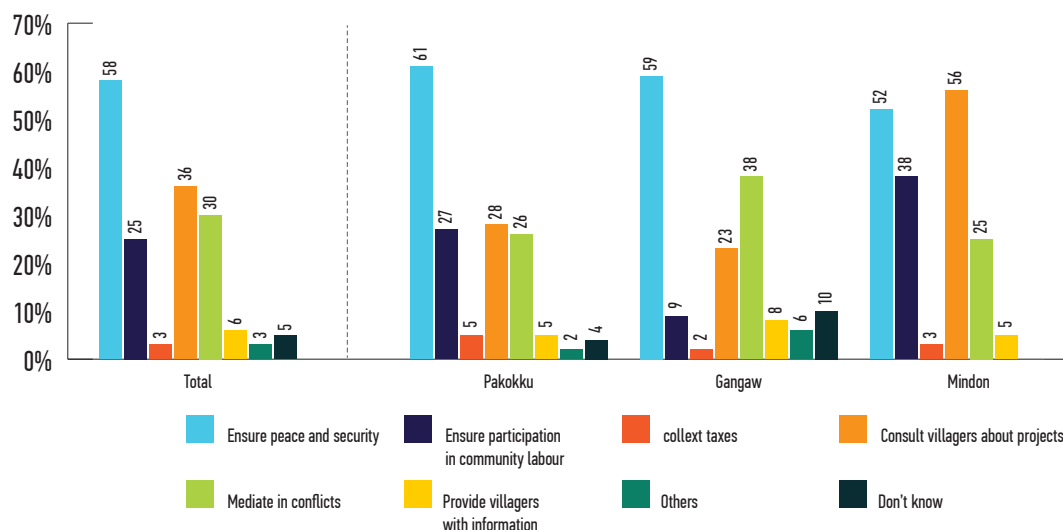


Figure 47: Functions of the VTA/WA according to the respondents

Source: Local Governance Mapping Magway Region December 2014. n = 288. Note that more than one answer was possible.

Only 5 percent of the respondents could not mention any function at all, while other respondents could mention one or more functions. “Ensuring peace and security” (one of the legal functions) and “consult villagers about projects” (one of the functions not mentioned in the law) were mentioned as the most important functions by 58 percent and 36 percent of the respondents, followed by “mediating in conflicts” (also not mentioned in the law) with 30 percent. Female and male respondents provided similar answers, while older people stressed the formal functioning more. In Mindon, the function of “consulting villagers about projects” was mentioned most often by 56 percent of the respondents.

The VTA/WAs of the six village tracts and wards interviewed also emphasized their bridging role. “Maintaining peace and security” was mentioned by all VTA/WAs as an important function followed by “bringing the needs of the people in the village tract or ward to the attention of the government at township level”, “consulting villagers about development projects” and “mediation in conflicts or resolving problems”. Also during the Community Dialogue sessions in which the VTA/WAs participated they showed that they felt to be the link between their village tracts or wards and the township and that they are at least informally accountable to the people in their community. On the one hand, VTA/WAs are integrated into the government machinery (since they report to the TA, receive instructions from the TA, and are remunerated by the GAD) while on the other hand they are elected by, and feel part of and responsible for the wellbeing of the community. The VTA/WAs are therefore often caught between the genuine demands and needs of their communities that they bring to the attention of the government at township level and the limited ability of the township government to address all issues at the same time, which is often blamed on the VTA/WA by the community. In one meeting held in Pakokku with seven VTA/WAs, they were asked to express their job satisfaction by scoring between 1 (very low) and 10 (very high). The average resulting score was 4.5 with none of them scoring above six, indicating that their job satisfaction was indeed rather low.

From the interviews that were held with 6 VTA/WAs as well as the three focus group discussions in which another 19 VTA/WAs participated showed that since they are now elected (either through secret ballot by all male and female community members (2 out of 25) or by the 10 household heads from among their group (23 out of 25), most of them do feel (more) accountable to their community.

47% noticed a difference in response and communication of VTA/WAs after initiating the process of their selection through election, while 42 % noticed no difference. More urban people (59%) observed this difference compared to rural citizens (40%).

The respondents were divided over the question whether or not it made a difference in the response of the VTA/WAs after they were elected (directly or indirectly). Forty-seven percent noticed a difference, while 42 percent discerned no difference. While the difference between male and female respondents was limited, the difference between urban and rural respondents was significant. Fifty-nine percent of the urban respondents noticed a difference compared to only 40 percent of the rural respondents (see Figure 48). This could be related to the fact that even while they are elected, they are formally only answerable to the TA and not to the community members.

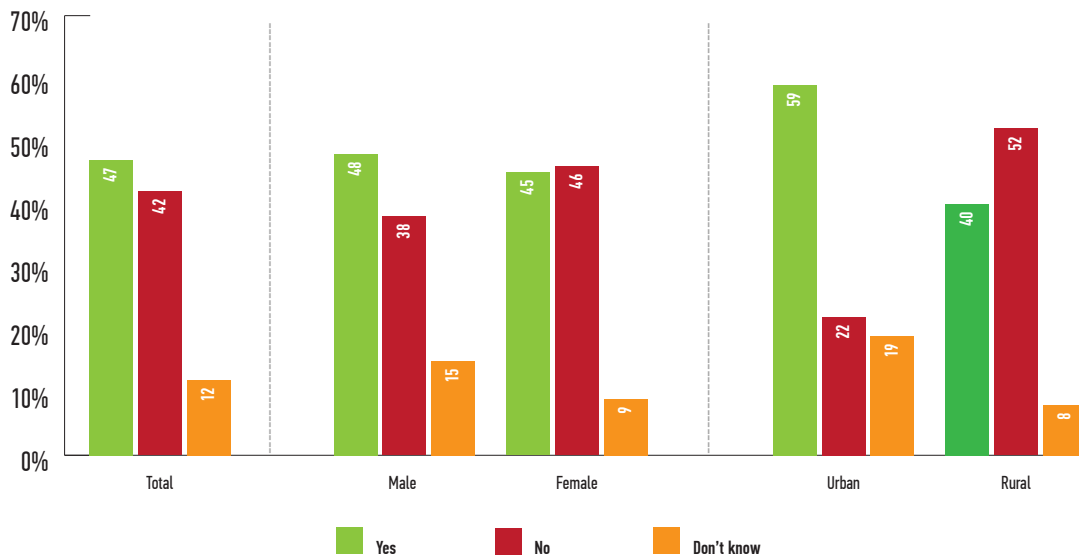


Figure 48: Perceived changes in response and communication of VTA/WAs after being elected

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n= 288.

The 144 respondents who did mention that they had noticed a difference were asked to mention what had changed (see Figure 49).

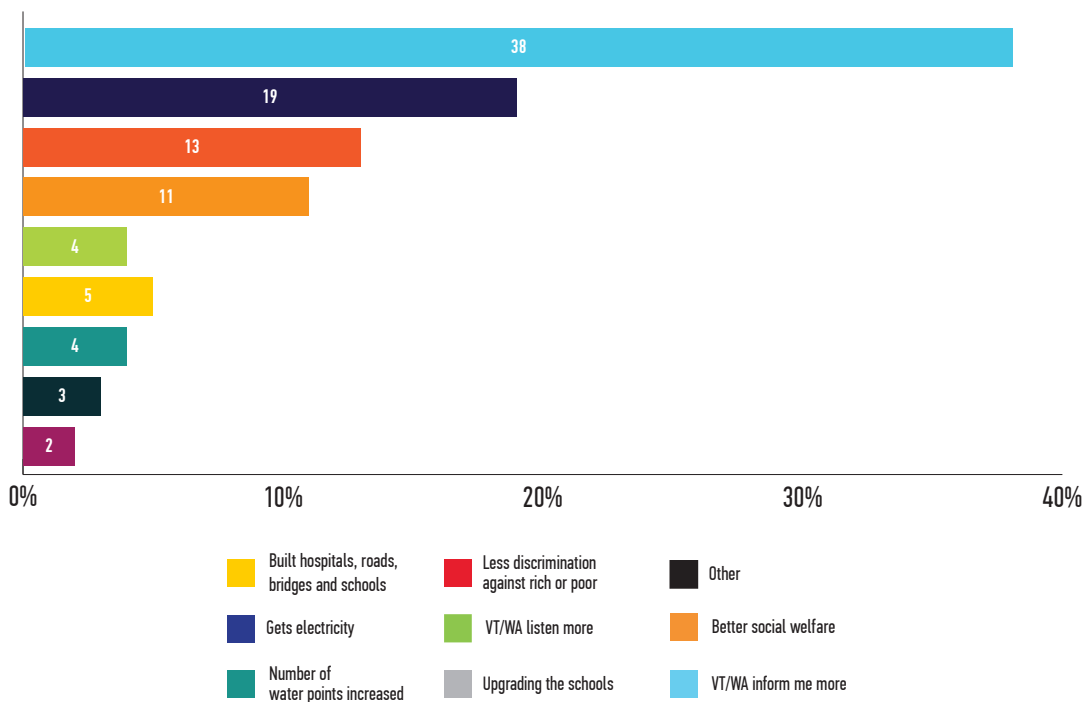


Figure 49: Difference in VTA/WA behaviour or situation in the village tract or ward after the VTA/WA was elected

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n= 144.

One should note that most of the arguments that were mentioned were not so much related to the fact that the VTA/WA was now elected but more to the additional funds available for development activities in general.

Grievance redressal

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

The most common complaints are about land and agriculture related issues. Land conflicts between tenants and absentee landlords are common as well as new or old cases of land grabbing. Also conflicts over water resources for agriculture are common in the dry zone. Others are related to social issues and personal matters linked to resources like inheritance

disputes. Some complaints are resolved and dealt with at the village level by VTAs. In case a complaint is beyond their capacity, they refer it to the township GAD or to the police and courts for further action.

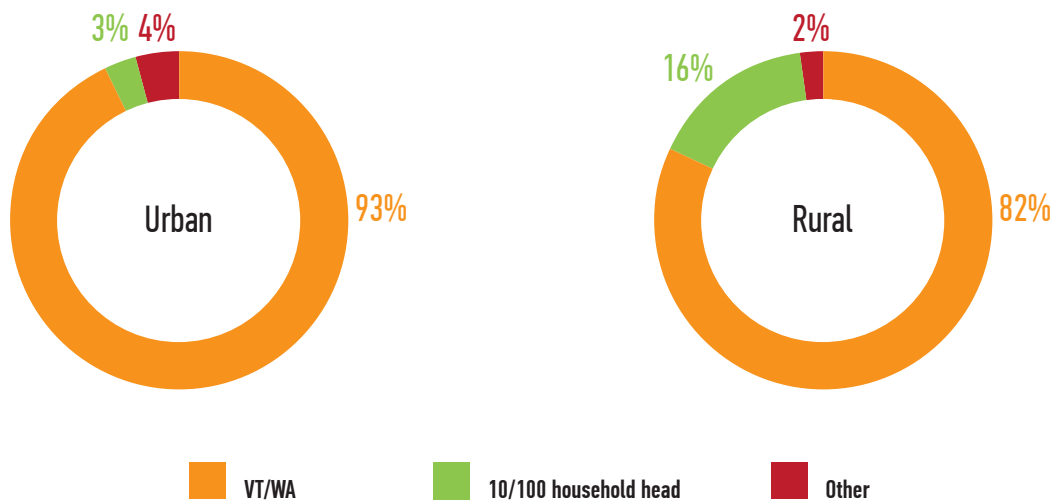
There are mainly three kinds of land disputes: inheritance, rent and ownership disputes. Since the new land law has become effective in 2012, the value of agricultural land has increased and therefore the number of disputes as well. Absentee landowners have started to increase the rent they are asking from their tenants, while it has become more important to have proof that a certain piece of land is yours if you want to use it as a mortgage for a loan. As a result of the increased number of land registration requests and the number of disputes has increased.

For land holding disputes, the initial step is to file a case at village land management committee. The village committee consists of a chairperson (farmer representative), the Village Administrative clerk (GAD), the VTA and 5-6 citizen members. They review the cases that are brought to them and take decisions. If one is not satisfied, he/she can appeal to the Township Land Department, which will review the case in the Township Farmland Management Committee. They review the track record to ascertain whether the land under dispute is registered or not. If it is registered, they resolve the dispute. If the piece of land is not registered, the parties have to start the process afresh. If a person is still not satisfied with the decision, one has a right to appeal to the Region level for the final resolution within 30 days.

For most citizens, the VTA/WA is the first person to approach to resolve civil cases like quarrels, domestic issues or land disputes (see Figure 50).

Figure 50: First person to approach to resolve a possible dispute

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014.



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

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

CSOs in Gangaw had a different opinion on grievance redressal and complaint mechanisms. They mentioned that: “Most of the complaints relate to land, health care and water provision for agriculture. Complaints are made through visiting the concerned government officials in person, but we stop doing that simply because our complaints are not resolved. We therefore no longer report complaints because authorities do not like to hear complaints”.

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Civil Society

Box 13: Trust in Government

In the Community Dialogue session, participants were asked about the level of trust people have in their Government. “Trust” was defined as: Is your Government reliable in terms of actually doing what it says it will do, is it respectful to its citizens and are you confident that it acts with the interests of its citizens in mind? If trust levels are high, people will see their state and government as legitimate institutions and will respect its rules and regulations even if they don’t benefit from them individually (like taxation) as long as they believe that their society as a whole benefits from these rules and regulations.

While it is difficult to quantify the level of trust one has in one’s government, the participants were asked for factors that either influence (positively or negatively) the trust people have in their government. Some of these factors from all the Community Dialogues are listed below.

Government activities or behaviour that influence the level of trust positively	Government activities or behaviour that influence the level of trust negatively
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More business opportunities (people can sell their own product). • Allows agricultural loan. • Accepts requests of citizens. • People can now be involved in various committees resulting in needs of people being heard by the government. • The WA mediates disputes in the ward. • The WA submits the needs of people to township management. • The WA promulgates information more than before. • The WA carries out his duties, ignoring his own business even if it is urgent. • Increased number of the teachers. • Salaries were increased. • Freedom of expression. • The government is more transparent than before. • Roads and bridges have been being built. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seize the community’s land and didn’t return to owners. • There is still corruption. • Do not monitor and supervise for selling of low quality liquor. • Do not provide solar energy electricity although the authorities have agreed to do so. • The government could not provide all of the medicines, which the community need. • The government could not create many job opportunities. • The government is biased and discriminatory in regard to recruiting staff and distributing mobile phone SIM cards. • Oppressed media. • No amendment of some articles in the Constitution. • There is transparency in township level administration but not in higher level government. • The government should keep its promise.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014.

It is interesting to see that both local and national issues were highlighted as well as the more tangible development efforts but also less tangible governance issues (corruption, openness, etc.). In most communities (five out of six village tracts/wards) the participants raised both positive and negative factors and as a result they rated the present level of trust as “not good-not bad”. In one community no consensus could be reached as government staff rated the level of trust as “good”, while the community members rated it as “bad”.

Looking at the trends in “level of trust” within various government institutions, the following picture emerged. Note that 12 “scores” were recorded - two for each community, one from government staff and one from community members (see Table 22).

Table 22: Changes in level of trust over the last three years in various government institutions as recorded during the six Community Dialogues

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014.

	Improved	More or less the same	Deteriorated
VTA/WA	11	1	0
TA and township departments	7	5	0
Region Government	8	4	0
Union Government	9	2	1
Courts	6	5	1
Police	4	6	2

Trust in almost all government institutions has improved, the most in the VTA/WA and the least in the courts and the police, which stayed overall more or less the same according to the participants. Reasons provided for the improvement in trust in the VTA/WA were either related to the fact that they listened to people’s needs, organised meetings, brought their problems to the TA, etc. or to the development activities that have been implemented collectively by various government institutions (like new school buildings or roads), but which people tend to attribute to the VTA/WA.

The most important improvements noted for the TA and the Region and Union level Government were more or less similar and relate to increased responsiveness to the needs of the people on the one hand, but not doing enough yet on the other hand.

Regarding the trust in the judicial system, both the court and the police, the negative sentiments and perceptions dominated the discussions. Some examples that were provided are:

- “There is no change because there is still corruption in the system and it takes too long to pass a judgement.”
- “The courts favour the rich. Money determines winning of the case.”
- “If there is a problem, I don’t go to the court because both of my money and time is lost.”
- “The police force is not very knowledgeable about the law. They cannot solve the problems.”
- “Without money, the police force does not provide any services.”

4.4.2 Transparency and access to information

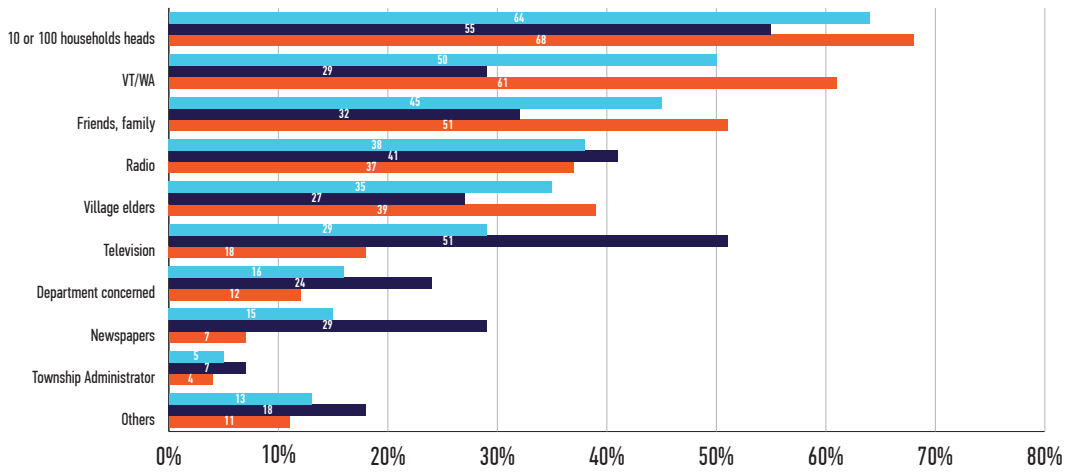


Figure 51: Ways in which respondents are informed about new laws or directives from government in urban and rural areas

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

Easy access to information by citizens is a prerequisite for a government to become more transparent and accountable to its citizens. In Magway Region, the traditional hierarchical channels of official information provision (the 10/100 household heads, the Village Elders and Respected People and the VTA/WA)⁵⁴ continue to play an important role in the information flow from government to citizens as is shown below in Figure 51. Television and newspapers play a more important role in the urban areas, while in the rural areas face-to-face contact with 10/100 household heads and other people in the village tract play a more prominent role.



54. See footnote 34 for a more detailed description of these groups.

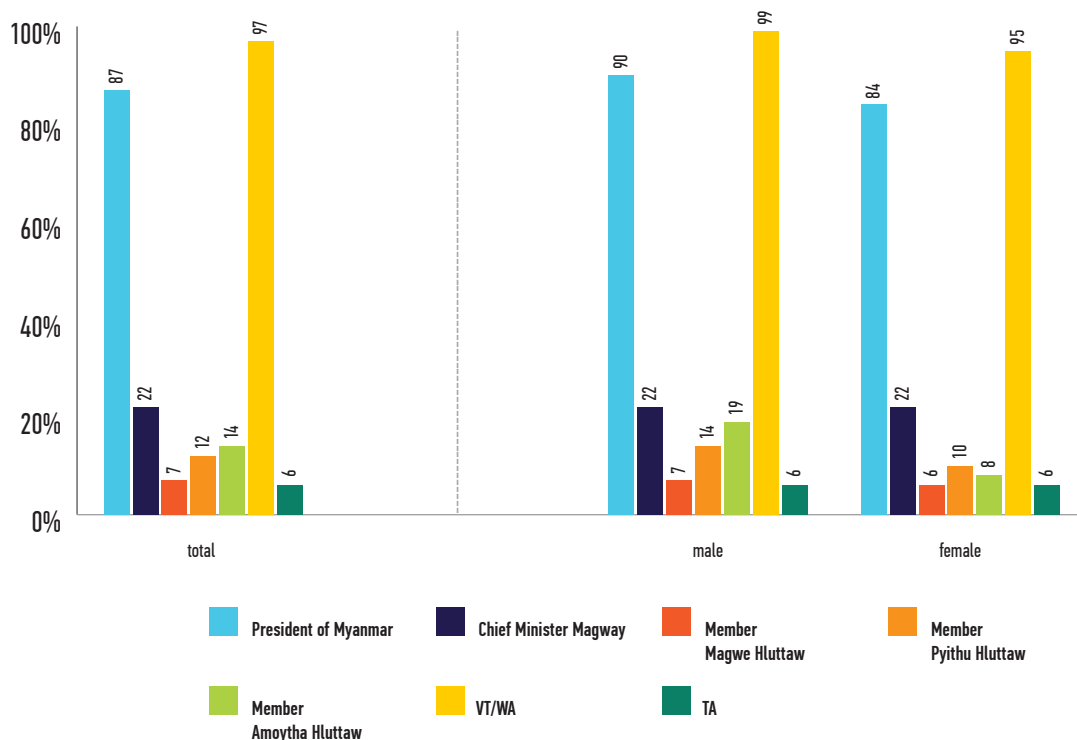
73% received information via the 10/100 household heads, 62% via the VTA/WA, 53% via friends or relatives, and approximately 46% via the media through TV, radio or newspapers.

The same pattern emerged regarding the way in which respondents were informed about the national elections in 2010. Seventy-three percent received information via the 10/100 household heads, 62 percent via the VTA/WA, 53 percent via friends or relatives, and approximately 46 percent via the media through TV, radio or newspapers.

To understand people's familiarity with government, they were also asked to mention the name their VTA/WA, the name of the President of Myanmar, and the name of their elected representative in the Region *Hluttaw* (see Figure 52).

Figure 52: Knowledge of the names of various government representatives

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n= 288.



More men knew the names of the government representatives than women.

Eighty-seven percent of all respondents knew the name of the President of Myanmar, and 97 percent knew the name of their VTA/WA, while knowledge about their elected representatives at Region and Union level and of important government officials at the Region or Township level was very limited. Male respondents had a slightly better knowledge of the names of these government representatives than female respondents.

Citizens' knowledge of what is happening in government institutions and processes at the township level is very limited. As mentioned earlier, only 6 percent of the respondents had heard about the newly established support committee at the township level (TDSC) or the municipal committee (TMAC). If these committees are intended to represent the interests of (groups of) citizens and the government wants to use them in order to involve citizens more actively in planning and decision-making, and if these committees themselves are to become more accountable to the communities they supposedly serve, there is clearly a need to raise more awareness about their existence, and their role and functions, as well as their actual discussions and deliberations.

Thirty-seven percent of the respondents were aware of the existence of a Ward or Village Tract Development Support Committee (W/VTDSCs) in their community. Among the younger people (between 18 and 30) this level of knowledge was low (only 15 percent knew the W/VTDSC). In addition, only 9 percent of the respondents had voted or were involved in the election of the W/VTDSCs members. It could be that since these committees are still rather new, people might know that there is a committee in their community, but that they are not aware of its new name yet. At the same time, the much higher recognition of the development support committee at the village tract or ward level compared with similar committees at the township level indicates that people are much more familiar with the village tract and ward level bodies than those at higher levels.

People have limited awareness of what the government is actually doing in their village tract or ward. The mapping asked people whether they know that government is spending money in their village tract or ward. The results are presented in Figure 53.

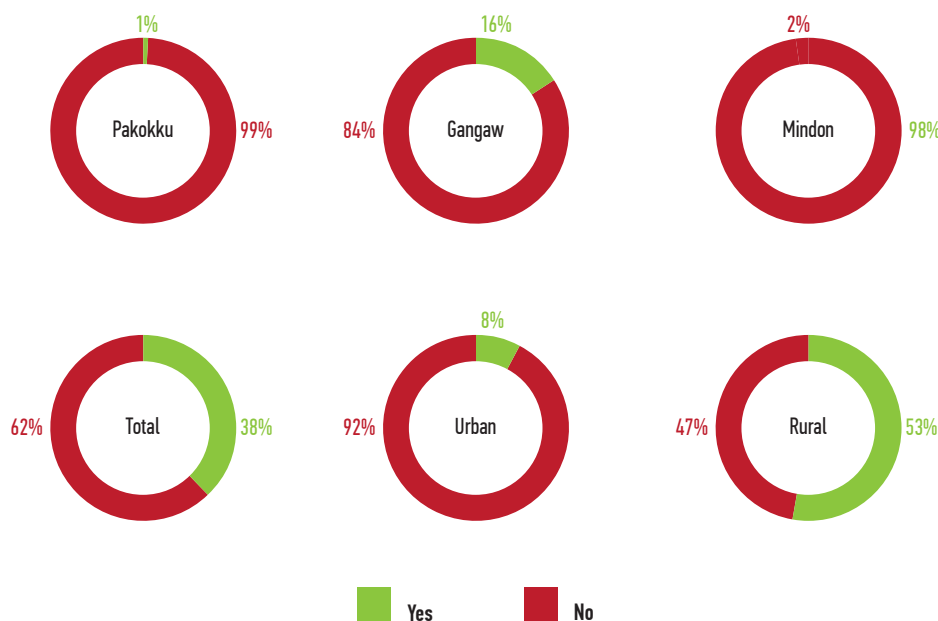


Figure 53: Awareness of respondents of government spending money in their village tract or ward

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n= 288.

As Figure 53 shows, the differences in awareness between the townships are very big, with Pakokku and Gangaw having a very low awareness level compared to Mindon.

There was also a difference between the townships in the satisfaction level of the VTA/WAs that were interviewed (either individually or as a group). Especially in Mindon and Pakokku the group of VTA/WAs expressed concern about the information provided by the GAD and the various departments. They said that they were not fully informed in advance about projects that are planned for their village tract or ward. For larger infrastructure projects they often don't know who the contractor is or what the building specifications are, while they are obliged to report on their progress during the VTA/WA-TDSC-TMAC-TA combined meetings.

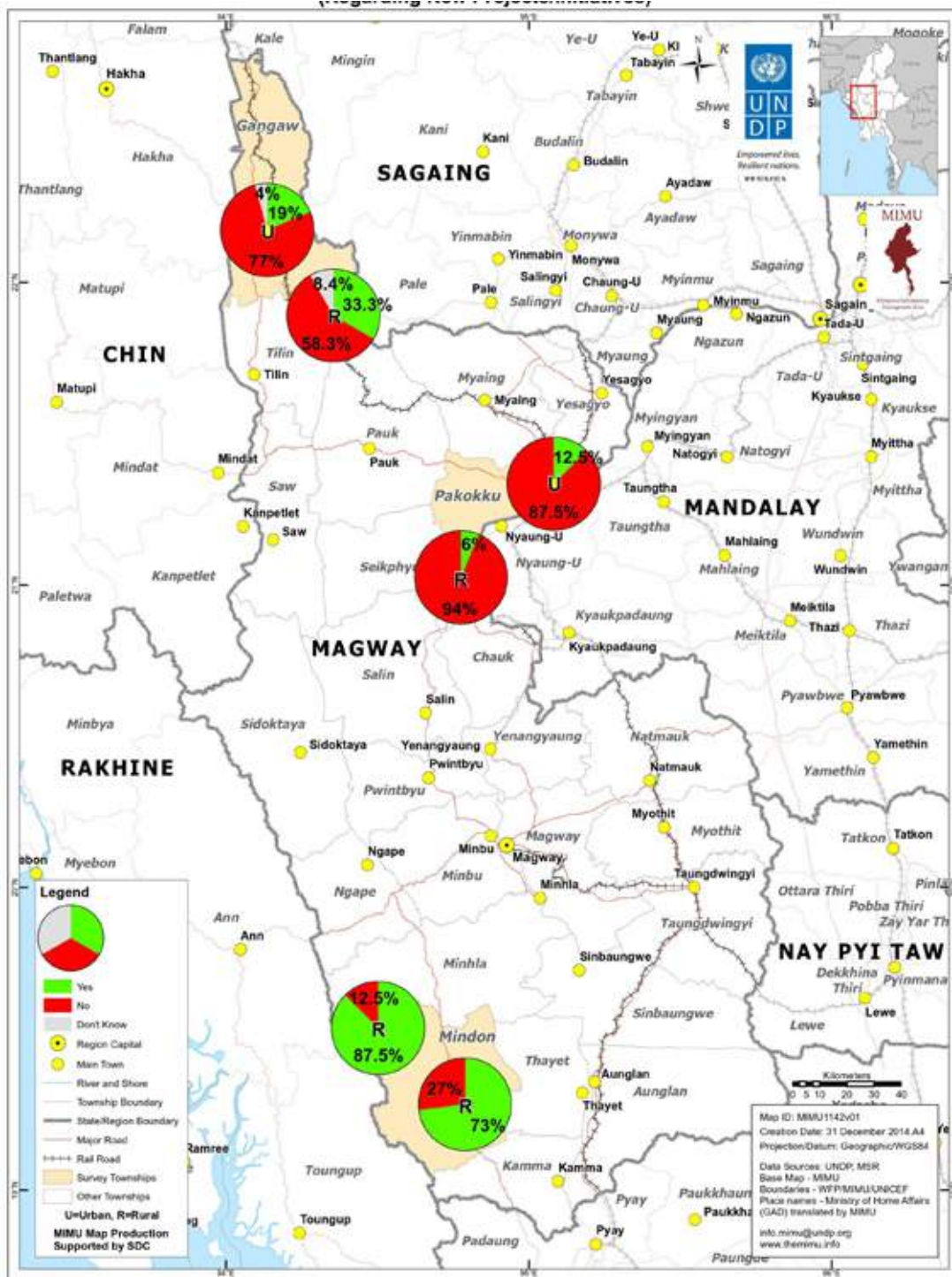
The most important means of receiving information from the township level government staff is either directly from the TA, which is now much easier as every VTA/WA in Magway has a mobile phone, or by sharing information during the combined VTA/WA-TDSC-TMAC-TA meetings.

The opinion of the government staff at the township level as well as the VTA/WAs was that they are informing citizens well enough about important government directives or news and

about planned projects in their villages, either through notice boards and or via the VTA/WA or W/VTDC members. This however stands in contrast with the views of citizens. Fifty nine percent of the citizens interviewed mentioned that the information provision by the township government about important government information and new projects was not enough (see Figure 54).

Figure 54: Level of satisfaction with information provision by township government

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n = 288.



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

These perceptions of individual respondents were confirmed during the community dialogue (CD) meetings by both citizens as well as by service providers in these communities. Both positive and less positive examples were shared (see box 7 and 8). Information from the CD sessions suggests that a lot depends on the ability, willingness and active attitude of the VTA/WA to share information either directly with citizens and/or via the 10/100 household heads.

CSOs and NGOs in the three townships also acknowledged that there were improvements in information provision by government, but that there is still a lot of room to improve the transparency of decision-making in government.

Box 14: Examples of good information supply as mentioned by the communities during the Community Dialogues

Source: UNDP, Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014.

- VTA conducts a meeting twice a month.
- The community is informed through 10/100 household heads and VTA.
- Information was shared by posting signboard in the middle of village.
- VTA shared information about detail budget planning to the community.

Pan Tone VT, Mindon

- Village organizer informed the villagers about the election.
- Meetings were held with the community about the road project.
- VTA shared information about new rules and regulations to the community.
- VTA holds a meeting with the community once a month.
- VTA discussed about the development projects with the community.
- VTA shared the information to the community members who are in the mountain ranges through 100/10 household heads.
- VTA used loudspeaker to share the information before. Today village organizer disseminates the information.

Kone Tine Kyin VT, Mindon

Box 15: Examples of poor information supply as mentioned by the communities during the Community Dialogues

Source: UNDP, Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014.

- Only one meeting is convened on every fifth day of a month to share the information.
- There is no other means used to share information.
- People attend this regular meeting erratically as they are struggling for their living.

Min VT, Gangaw

- People do not get enough information about the development projects in the ward.
- Fewer meetings are organized compared to the past.

Kyawtaik Ward, Gangaw

In order to understand and if possible overcome these bottlenecks, these findings need to be placed in the historical context of Myanmar. Government and administrative information has not been shared freely with the public in the recent past, and focused more on informing people about their duties than on their rights. Only very recently has there been a certain break with the past as evidenced by important examples such as the unprecedented publication of the national 2012-13 budget.⁵⁵

In the past, government officials were not required to explain or justify decisions made by government to the public, while government officials at the township level were themselves often not informed by their superiors about departmental plans. They were neither provided with an explanation for decisions taken. Such attitude tends to “disempower” lower ranked

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

government officials and inhibits them to become more proactive. It still depends a lot on the discretion and attitude of the TA and other senior officials as to what type of information is shared with the population of the township and in what way such information is communicated. Citizens on the other hand were not used to ask for information and explanations and are still reluctant to do so at present. These general trends were confirmed by the situation observed in the three selected townships in Magway Region.

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

4.4.3 Civil society's role in enhancing transparency and accountability

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

Similar to government, most CSOs are still in the beginning of a transformation process and adopt in general a wait-and-see attitude. The size and outreach of civil society organisations (CSOs) operating at the township level in Magway Region is still limited while the numbers are increasing. Most organisations are active in health or education, free funeral services, youth activities or providing direct support to people in need. In character they are better described as community-based organisations (CBOs) than as well organised non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Most are volunteer organisations receiving donations from the public while only a few receive funds and support from (I) NGOs or donors. Even though their outreach is limited, it became clear from the interviews that their work is appreciated both by committee members and government staff. Next to that there are branch organisations of the government-related associations like the Mother and Child Welfare Organisation, the Nurse Association, etc. So far they have not been mapped systematically, partly because most of them are rather hesitant to provide such information at this stage. As a result, there is not much information available on their membership, their outreach, their organisation, their funding sources, etc.

There was a large difference between the three groups of CSOs in the three townships in the way they described and assessed their relationship with government. In Pakokku, the CSOs could be described as critical but constructive. They acknowledged that communication with government has improved over the last few years, but that transparency still needed to improve a lot (like the election of the TDSC and TMAC members as described earlier). They do meet occasionally with government to resolve specific issues (like land grabbing with the TA, the corrupt attitude of medical staff with the TMO) or to obtain permission to conduct activities like literacy trainings. This cooperation is now much better than in the past since decisions can be made by the TA at the township level. Also at the village tract or ward level, they try to involve the VT/WA as much as possible in their work since the VTA/WAs play an important role in motivating community members. They would however like to cooperate

more actively with government since they feel that government isn't using their capacities with regard to civic education enough.

In Mindon, as a small rural township, there were fewer CSOs and they all had strong government relationships (like the TA is patron of the Red Cross, the wife of the TA is chairperson of the Women and Children Welfare Organisation, etc.). The main focus of most CSOs is on improving welfare of the citizens and they have in general a good relationship with government. Informal contacts with people within government are used to coordinate activities. It seemed that their relationship with citizens on the other hand was not that strong as they complained about the lack of cooperation from the public in their activities.

Another group of CSOs in Gangaw was critical and less constructive. In their views not much had changed over the last few years in the way government operates. As mentioned earlier they were critical about the election and functioning of the TDSC and TMAC, who are, according to the CSOs, weak in collaboration with the wider public as its members are selected from the older generation only. In addition, they were of the opinion that corruption within government still existed as before (giving the example of essential drugs being sold to patients) and that complaining would not help, as government would not listen anyhow. Some CSOs had tried to register but had given up because they were rejected several times based on what they considered bureaucratic arguments (e.g. forms not filled out correctly).

While in general CSOs appear to have more space to operate and are more appreciated by the government for the work they are doing to improve the welfare of citizens, it seems that the way this works out in practice in each township depends a lot on the personalities of the main players on both government and CSO side as well as on the way CSOs have positioned themselves in the local community.

CSOs in Mindon appear to have good relationship with government but face challenges of cooperation with public. CSOs in Gangaw faced challenges with the government in many aspects including in their registration and also expressed concern about the election and functioning of TDSC and TMAC.



5. Conclusions

Over the past year three years and in particular during the last one and a half year, the local governance situation in Magway Region in general and in Pakokku, Gangaw and Mindon townships in particular has been improving. This occurred after the election of the VTA/WAs, the establishment of the TMACs and TDSCs, the split between DRD and DMA and in particular the additional resources that have become available for service delivery at the community level. Both formal changes as well the non-formal ones have had a positive impact on the local level. There is also a change in attitude of government staff and more openness and transparency about the decisions made. Such more subtle attitudinal changes are not so easy to quantify, but do have a positive impact on responsiveness of government. These and other adjustments brought government a bit closer to the people and have enabled its staff at township level and below to achieve more for the people. Several interviewed officials also mentioned that this had made their work more rewarding.

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

In Magway Region, the TDSCs in the three townships are active and take their role seriously, while the TAs have established good working relations with them. In all three townships the mapping noted that the TA is still taking a leading role in development-related decisions, guiding the TDSCs by proposing a short list of potential projects that has been compiled by a planning committee composed of government staff only. This is different from the situation in other States and Regions, in which the TDSCs are taking up a more prominent position in the project identification process. In Magway, the TDSCs are playing a role in the prioritisation process at the township level and in progress monitoring and they meet on a regular basis with the TA to discuss development-related problems and solutions in the township. Several TDSC members therefore asked for an enhanced (legal) framework, similar to the one drafted for the TMACs that would define its role and mandate more precisely and that would make its advice more binding (e.g. requiring the TA to explain a decision in writing if he discards the advice from the TDSC). This would enhance the status of the TDSC, the quality of the deliberations as well as increase the level of transparency in decision-making. In addition a clearer demarcation of the role and functions of the TDSC vis-à-vis those of the TMAC could be included in such framework or guidelines.

The TMACs have only recently been formalized through the Regional Municipal Law that was drafted and adopted by Magway Region in October 2013. As described in this report, the law allocates executive and oversight functions to the TMAC in which citizens' representatives participate as well, and makes the Executive Officer of the DMA at least partially answerable to this new municipal committee. So far, the Executive Officers from the DMA seem to have established good working relations with the various TMACs in the three townships as they see them as an added value to the management of the municipal affairs in the townships. Problems are identified faster, while the committee members act as an intermediary between the municipality and citizens, explaining matters and identifying problems. In Magway in general, or at least in the three townships that were included in the mapping, the TMACs seem to play a more advisory role to the DMA than a real executive role as is the case in a few townships in other Regions. For Magway this might work well for the moment, but a stronger, more active TMAC, can push municipal development to a higher level.

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

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

Given the fact that there are no strong organisations that will push for equal representation of women in the Region and that women themselves are not yet very vocal to claim their rights, it would be worthwhile to consider a (temporarily) quota system for all representative institutions (like the W/VTSC, the TDSC and the TMAC) to ensure that women are getting more involved in consultation and decision-making processes and gain experience and confidence in playing a more active public role in society.

In Magway Region, **service delivery has in general improved** over the last three years and people are aware of these improvements and appreciate them. Especially in the **health and education sector** in which government has invested a lot more during the last few years, most people interviewed confirmed that they have noticed improvements in actual service delivery over the last three years. In the health sector, 63 percent of the respondents noticed that the situation had improved over the last three years and in education 69 percent of the respondents had noticed improvements, which is slightly more than in the other States and Regions included in this mapping.

As was noted, both sectors saw a huge increase in budgets and staffing over the last three years at both regional and township level. Most service managers (like headmasters and nurses managing a RHC e.g.) as well as Head of Departments at the township level mentioned that the planners and decision-makers higher up in the hierarchy have become more responsive

to their ideas and needs for improvement and they therefore feel more respected and appreciated in the work they are doing.

Looking at the **low-cost solutions** that were proposed by service providers to some of the bottlenecks identified, it seems that **further deconcentration** or delegation of responsibilities within sectors to lower levels in the respective departments and even to school or health facility level would help to solve some of the most immediate problems related to staffing, the availability of basic facilities, maintenance of buildings, etc. If at the same time the oversight capacity of local institutions like the Parent Teacher Associations and the Village Health Committee could be enhanced such a delegation of decision-making could make further progress. Such a process can only take place at a very gradual pace as it needs to coincide with an increase in the planning and management capacities and related monitoring and support mechanisms at the lower levels in those ministries.

In access to **safe drinking water**, improvements over the last three years were only noted by 41 percent of the respondents, with large differences between the townships included in the mapping. While the provision of drinking water did not receive much attention from the government in the past, it seems that over the last few years more and more of the resources over which citizens have some kind of say (development funds, municipal revenues and DRD budget) are directed towards improved access to drinking water. This can partly be attributed to the split between DMA and DRD, partly to the extra resources that have been allocated to the DRD and partly to the fact that through the TDSCs and TMACs the needs of the people in this respect are better expressed and responded to. Based on the budget allocations for both the DRD and the DMA for 2014/2015 as well as the number of water improvement projects that will be implemented in the coming year under the PRF and CDF in the three townships, it can be noticed that there is an increase in resource allocation to tackle problems in access to drinking water. Apparently, through the VTA/WAs, TDSCs and TMACs, the needs of the people become known to the Heads of Departments and the TA and they respond by allocating more of the resources that fall to a large extent under their discretion to address these problems.

Even though only six village tracts and wards were included in this mapping, the inventory of most important problems either through the individual responses or through the Community Dialogues showed that the **needs and problems of people differ significantly per township or even per village tract or ward** and that tailor-made solutions and responses are required if government wants to become more responsive to these needs and become more “people-centred”. In general there is no systematic assessment and recording of these different needs on the basis of transparent and equitable criteria and it does not yet have the necessary systems in place that enables it to respond to each of these issues in a fair and systematic way, The quality of planning could be enhanced if consultations at the village tract and ward level could be implemented in a more systematic and comprehensive manner in which all departments would participate and if one collective database could be created and maintained at the township level that is used by all departments concerned.

Transparency and accountability at the township level have seen improvements over the past few years according to the various stakeholders involved in the study. Access to information is critical for improving transparency and accountability. More information is now flowing downward from the township administration to the VTA/WAs and to the committee members. This information is not always reaching citizens at the community

level yet, even though one must say that this is less of a problem in Magway region despite being very rural with large distances. In addition, it is left to the discretion of the Heads of Departments and the TAs to decide what information they share with the public, making the availability of information dependent on the personality of these government staff rather than on clearly defined procedures.

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

As a result of all these efforts, the “**trust**” that people have in their government in the three townships in Magway Region has improved over the last three years. Trust was defined as: the reliability of government in terms of actually doing what it says it will do, its respect for the rights of citizens and rule of law and the confidence people have in government that it acts with the interests of its citizens in mind. **Trust in almost all government institutions has improved**, the most so in the VTA/WA and the least in the judicial institutions like the court and the police, in which the level of trust stayed overall more or less the same according to the participants. Reasons provided for the improvement in trust in the VTA/WA were either related to the fact that they listened to people’s needs, organised meetings, brought their problems to the TA, etc. or to the development activities that have been implemented collectively by various government institutions (like new school buildings or roads), but which people tend to attribute to the VTA/WA.

On **complaint handling and grievance redressal** mechanisms, the mapping noted the important role that the VTA/WAs and TAs play in these processes, either as resource persons who can refer a case to the right institution or to resolve or mediate in an actual case. While no detailed information on individual cases was collected, most TAs mentioned that the number of cases that were brought to them had increased over time and that many of them were related to recent or old cases of land disputes which can be partly explained by the fact that as a result of the new Farmland Law the intrinsic value of land has increased substantially, making it more important for users to establish legal ownership, while absentee landlords see it as an opportunity to increase the rent they are collecting. The fact that the GAD is dealing with these cases and that their number is increasing could mean that there is more confidence of the people that their cases are dealt with by government in a fair way. While the more serious cases are investigated by ad hoc committees (consisting of at least three members), the TA still has much discretionary power in making a ruling. In addition, there is a lack of transparency on how decisions related to disputes or administrative complaints are made, leaving room for arbitrariness. A further specification and clarification of the regulations regarding administrative complaint handling and dispute resolution would help to create more clarity and limit the space for arbitrary rulings and possible maladministration.

Formally, there have been no changes in existing accountability mechanisms as each government official is only accountable to his/her supervisor in the same department and there are no political and social accountability mechanisms in place at the township level. Informally however, the fact that **VTA/WAs are now elected has changed the relationship with their communities** as they feel more than before to be the representative for their

community and have received the mandate to act as the bridge between the township and the village tract or ward (also because they are actively involved in the consultations regarding the use of the development funds) and as a result they do feel more answerable to them.

The number and size of **Civil Society Organisations** in Magway Region is still rather limited and they play so far a marginal role in governance. Most organisations are active in health and education, providing direct support to people in need. Even though their outreach is limited, their work seems to be appreciated by committee members and government staff. From the discussions with the CSOs, it became clear that they are still rather ambivalent with regard to intensifying their relationship with the government at township level. It became also clear that the way in which CSOs position themselves in the governance process can differ a lot per township, depending on personalities on both government and CSO side as well as on their independence from government.

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

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

6. Annexes

Annex 1: Citizen Report Card interviews

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

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

Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents

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

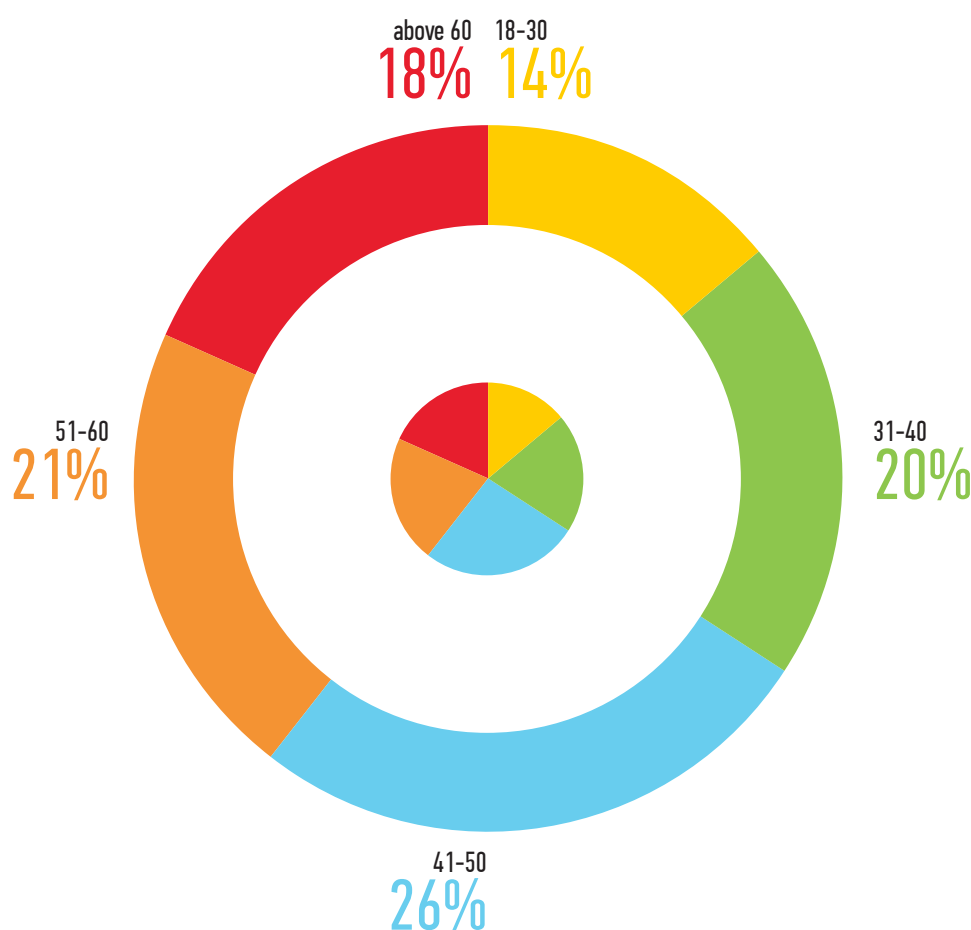


Figure 1.1: Number of respondents per age group

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n= 288.

22 percent of the respondents had no education or did not finish primary education while more than one third (36 percent) completed primary education (see Figure 1.2). About one-fifth of the respondents (18 percent) reported to have finished middle school (grade 9) while only 6 percent of the total respondents said to have completed high school (grade 11).

Figure 1.2: Educational background of respondents

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n= 288.

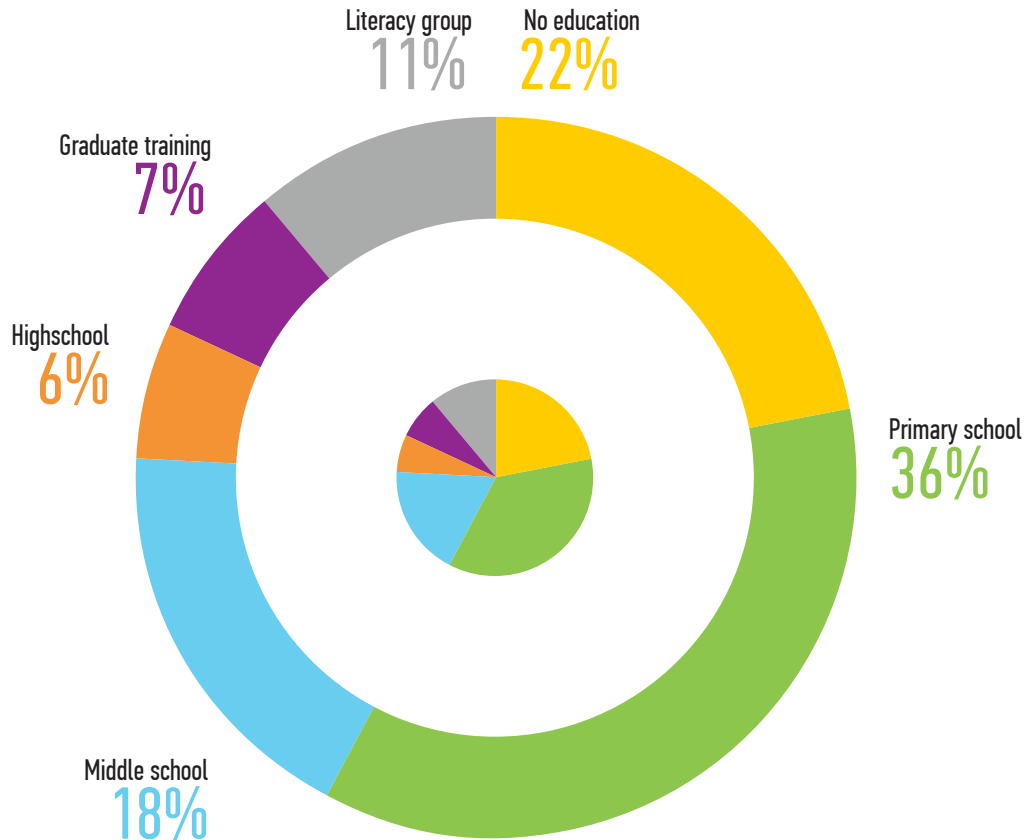
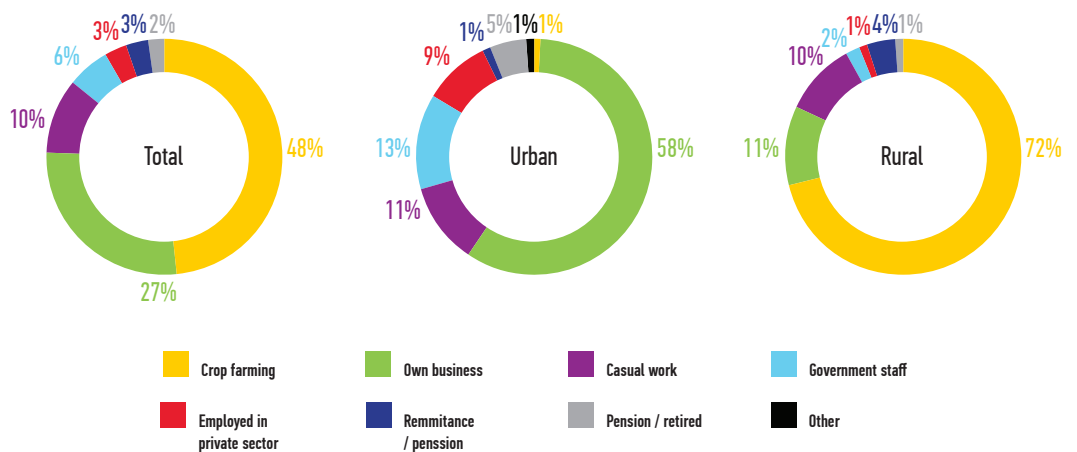


Figure 1.3: Main economic activity of the household of the respondent

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Magway Region, December 2014. n= 288.



Annex 2: Community action plans

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

Village Tract/ Ward/	Education	Health Services	Other
Ward 6 Pakokku	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WA would submit proposals to township management and members of parliament. • The Ward support committee would discuss with people and report to the ward administration. • People would contribute to further improvement of primary education as much as they could. • Offer labour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People would cooperate to clean the hospital campus. • The WA would report to the township management to get enough beds. • People would complain about the needs to township health department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WA would share information if it ought to be known by the public. • People would attend the meetings without fail. • People who attend meetings would share the information to those who fail to attend. • Need to convene more community meetings. • The WA would consider the voice of the people. • Would be more open and invite people to meetings.
Chaik VT Pakokku	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The citizens would provide manpower to build toilets at schools. Then they would coordinate with school committee, the Principal, and the teachers and report to the respective department. • VTA expressed that they would report to the Township Education Office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VTA said that they would have to cooperate to receive better health facilities. • The health staff then expressed they would provide medicines regarding malaria and the TB diagnosis Test. • Then they continued that they would report to build rural health centre to the health department. • The people responded that they would offer their manpower to build rural health centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VTA said that he would coordinate with the community to collect money for a notice board. • The people answered that they would try to contribute money as much as they can and they would offer labour for the building of a notice board.

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

Village Tract/ Ward/	Education	Health Services	Other
Kyawtaik Ward Gangaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WA would cooperate with the school committee, ward supportive committee and respectable members of the ward to raise fund for the school. • To ensure that every primary school age child is at primary school, 10/100 hh heads would encourage parents to enrol their children at school. • To encourage or motivate children to involve in trainings on morality and good manners such as “Yin Kyae Lain Mar” • Teachers will do their best on their own in order to have teaching materials. • Teachers should focus on ensuring that students fully learn what they are taught and that they have proper manners and good attitude. • Parents should give extra care for their children to ensure that their children learn well at school. • Today’s students do not do well in brain storming activities or are not good at making good judgement. Therefore, courses that could help improve knowledge and IQ should be added in the curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both sides suggested that health staff of the hospital should take turns to visit the ward so as to provide better health services • Quality of primary health care could be improved if more staff are employed. • The midwife would report the status of medical supplies for the ward to the district medical officer. 	<p>WA can report to respective authorities to get a clear explanation regarding the procedures for a plot of land or in getting permits.</p>
Min VT Gangaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VTA has already submitted to both township administration and township education departments to build housings for the students. • Teachers should observe disciplines more and should work harder than before. • Parents should pay more attention to make ensure their children don’t play truant. • No fail policy should be terminated. • The VTA and the school principal should discuss insufficient number of teachers and report about that to higher authorities. • Teachers should keep in touch with the parents in a timely manner to report on the situation of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VTA has already submitted about the issue of not having enough beds in station hospital. • As only one health staff is assigned for six villages, it is impossible to travel and provide health services in all the villages in one day. So the government should employ more health staff. • People should take part in upgrading hospital by contributing labour. • People should join health talks and should stay healthy livings. • People should take care of their personal hygiene and keep their surroundings clean. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People should attend community meetings regularly. • Should share the information on pamphlets. • Should use the PA system to announce information although it is not convenient to spread all kinds of information in that way. • 10/100 hh heads should deliver the message to those who cannot attend community meetings. • Information can be shared by word of mouth. • Should convene 10 hh meetings occasionally. • Government should allow village administration to apply local rules to take action on those who failed to attend meetings and to take action to address local issues.

Village Tract/ Ward/	Education	Health Services	Other
Kone Tine Kyin VT Mindon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens would provide manpower to build toilets at the schools. • Teachers would coordinate with the Principal and the teachers and report to the respective department to build the new building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VTA said that they would have to cooperate with Health staff to build RHC. • VTA would report to upgrade inter village roads to Township Administration. • The people responded that they would offer their manpower to build RHC and toilets at Sub RHC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members said that they would coordinate with village administration for the development of mountain community as much as they can.
Pan Tone VT Mindon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government staff can report to government level if the requirements are beyond their limit. • They can do self- help activities in building toilets, and fence, getting clean water, and repairing roads. • Teachers also can report the difficulties to ministry of education. • Community will cooperate with teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health staff will report the difficulties and requirements to the higher authorities and township health centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VTA can buy a PA system to share information in the village. • Community is willing to donate to buy PA system.

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

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

For management there are:

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

For coordination there are:

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

For consultation there are:

- The Township Development Support Committee (TDSC)
- The Village Tract/Ward Development Support Committee (W/VTDSC)

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

3.1 Management Committees

Township Management Committee

In all three selected townships in Magway Region, the Township Management Committees were established in March 2013. The composition is slightly different per township (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Composition of TMCs in the three townships

Role	Position	Pakokku	Gangaw	Mindon
Chair	Township Administrator - GAD	Y	Y	Y
Secretary	Township Planning Officer	Y	Y	Y
Joint Secretary	Deputy Township Administrator - GAD	Y		Y
Member	Chief of Police	Y	Y	Y
Member	Township Immigration Officer			
Member	Township Agricultural Officer	Y	Y	Y
Member	Township Education Officer		Y	Y
Member	Township Executive Officer DMA	Y		Y
Member	Township Cooperative Officer		Y	Y
Member	Engineer, Public Works			

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

Township Farmland Management Committee (TFMC)

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

Township Municipal Affairs Committee

The Township Municipal Affairs Committees (TMACs) were officially established in October 2013 after the adoption of the Magway Region Municipal Organisation Law by the Magway Regional Hluttaw.

One of the citizen representatives is elected by the committee members as chairperson (see Table 3.2). All members are male.

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

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

3.2 Coordination Committees

Township Planning and Implementation Committee

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

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

TA-VTA/WA coordination meetings

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

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

Heads of Department and Heads of Office meetings

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

3.3 Support Committee

Township Development Support Committees

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

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

In Magway Region, the TDSCs were established in March 2013. Except for one member in Pakokku who is a female, all members are male.

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

Role	Position	Meiktila	Thazi	Thabeikkyin
Representative of citizens (elder)	Chair person	Y	Y	Y
Representative of Business Association/business men	Member	Y	Y	Y
Representative of Labour Union/workers	Member	Y	Y	
Representative of Farmers	Member	Y	Y	
Deputy Township Administrator	Member	Y	Y	Y
Executive Officer, Development Affairs Organisation	Member	Y	Y	Y
Person proposed by community elders, civil society and business group representatives	Member	3	3	2

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



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