

LOCAL GOVERNANCE MAPPING

MAPPING HIGHLIGHTS IN YANGON REGION



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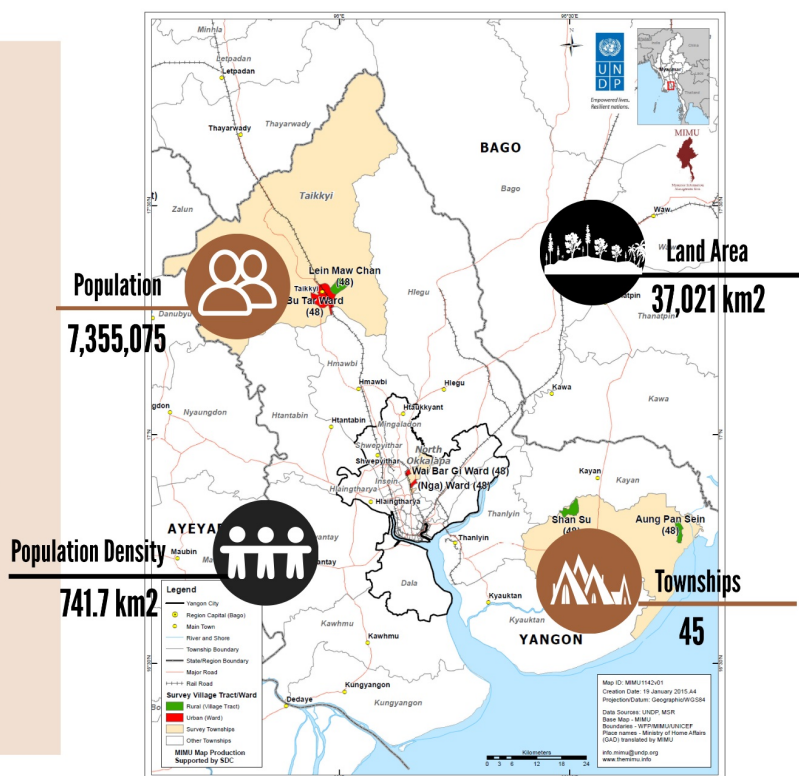
BACKGROUND

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

In Yangon, the mapping covered North Okkalapa, Thongwa and Taikkyi townships, whereby citizens, committee members, civil society representatives, service providers and local administrators were interviewed about local governance and service delivery.

Around 300 citizens and 100 service providers and local administrators shared their experiences and impressions of **development planning and participation**, **access to basic services** (specifically primary education, primary health care and drinking water), and **information, transparency and accountability**.

This highlight shares some of the key findings in Yangon.



SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Yangon Region is the smallest of all 14 Regions and States in the country, yet home to almost 15% of the population. It is the commercial, industrial and trading hub of Myanmar and contributes about 20% to the country's total GDP. The Region, with its largely urban, and on average better educated and more vocal population, can be expected to have a significant influence on the course of the whole country's reforms itself.

The Region is dominated by Yangon city, the country's former capital. 33 townships, representing less than 10% of the land area and over 70% of the population, form Yangon city area. The rural areas of Yangon Region are far less developed and maintain a predominantly agricultural character.



Special institutional arrangements for service delivery in Yangon

The situation in Yangon for service delivery is rather complicated, with 3 types of actors involved. The Union government agencies, the Region government ministries and the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) all operate next to each other, trying to find their new bearings following the reforms that started in 2008. 26 township are covered completely by the YCDC and 7 townships partly by the YCDC and partly by the DRD (under Union budget). For the 12 townships outside the city area, service delivery in the 112 wards fall under the DMA (under Region budget), while the DRD takes care of 582 village tracts. The current setup is rather complicated and inefficient requiring coordination structures for all three providers.

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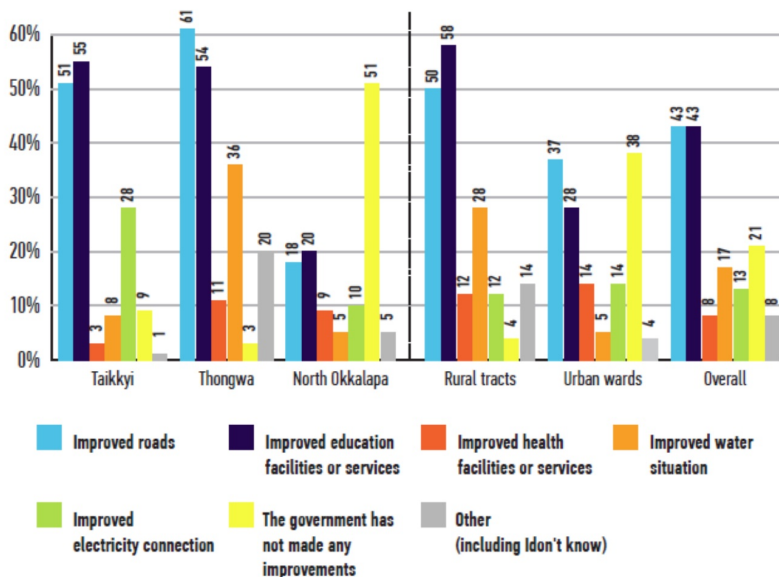


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IMPROVEMENTS SEEN AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

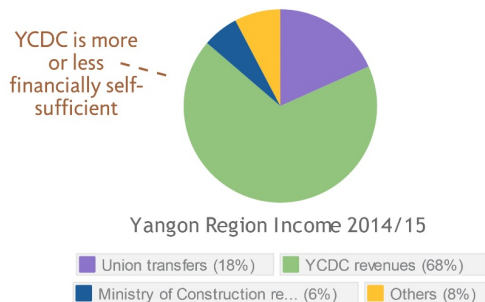


Perceived improvements in Yangon

Education facilities and services- 43%
 Roads - 43%
 No improvements – 21%
 Access to water - 17%

Notwithstanding the improvements, 23% mention poor roads and 20% the lack of jobs as problems, with urban respondents more concerned about the economic situation (jobs) and rural respondents more about service delivery issues.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND PARTICIPATION



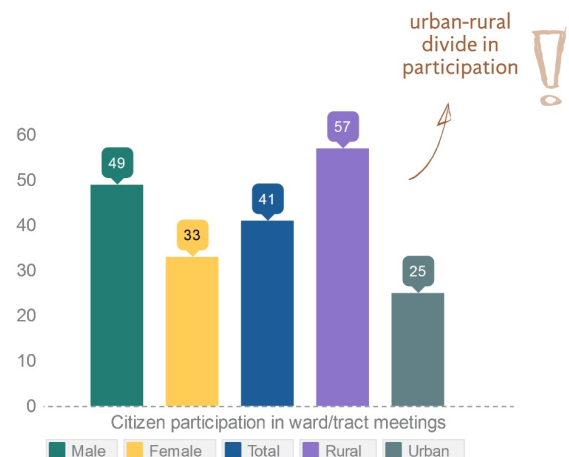
The Yangon Region budget for 2014/15

The total budget for Yangon Region is around 344 billion Kyat (344 million USD), almost 68% of which is generated by YCDC, including the 10% of its collected revenue it has to hand over to the Region government as tax, which is around 4.2% of the Region's total revenue. 18.3% of the Region's income originates from Union level transfers, including 100 million Kyat (100,000 USD) per township through the Constituency Development Fund and 1 billion Kyat (1 million USD) for the Region through the Poverty Reduction Fund. The income collected by other departments is comparatively small, except for the amounts collected by the Ministry of Construction, which constitutes around 6% of total income.

The Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC)

The Yangon City Municipal Law (2013) led to municipal elections in the region on 27 December 2014 (first such elections in over 6 decades). The Minister of Development Affairs heads the YCDC, as the 'Mayor of Yangon' – and at the same time oversees the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA) and the Region Ministry of Development Affairs.

The YCDC, using 90% of its generated income, is self-sufficient. Its expenditure accounts for about 69% of the Region's total expenditure. At the township level the YCDC has one office – the Municipal (or Development) Affairs office – mainly dealing with activities around water supply, waste management and tax collection. Other functions like urban planning, engineering and public health, are dealt with by the YCDC's headquarter in downtown Yangon which employs over 10,000 people.

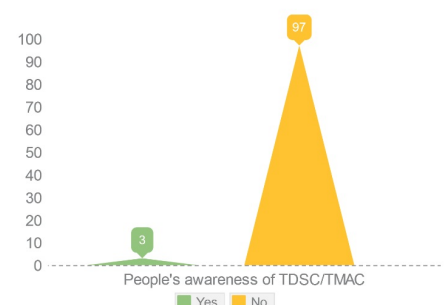


TMAC

Partly due to the YCDC's dominant role in Yangon, the Township Municipal Affairs Committees (TMAC) have yet to become fully functional. TMACs in all 3 townships noted insufficient formal guidance from the Union and/or Region level and felt a lack of understanding of their role. While TMACs in fact have decision making powers as per the Municipal Law they tend to see their role as advising the (DMA) regarding development priorities for municipal services.

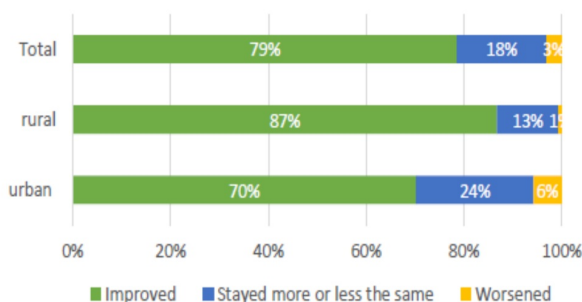
TDSC

In contrast to TMACs, Township Development Support Committees (TDSC) see themselves in a decision-making role regarding a wide range of township development priorities while they are supposed to advise the decision-makers and represent the voice of different interest groups. This misconception of their role has caused some frustration as TDSC members often felt that their project proposals were not approved and that their advice ignored. It has also created confusion between TDSCs and TMACs regarding who has the ultimate suggestion or decision-making power, in addition to an overlap of functions.



BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY

Has primary education in your village tract/ward improved over the last three years?



PRIMARY EDUCATION



The majority of people (79%) perceived improvements in education, which were primarily attributed to improved infrastructure (85%) and quality of the teaching (35%).



86% of respondents say that education is free of charge. However, in urban schools 75% of teachers (9% in rural schools) provide after school tuition in exchange for money or gifts.



The potential role of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) as a platform for citizen participation in education has not been fully utilised.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE



57% of people perceived improvements in health, mainly because of improved infrastructure, better equipment and availability of medical supplies.

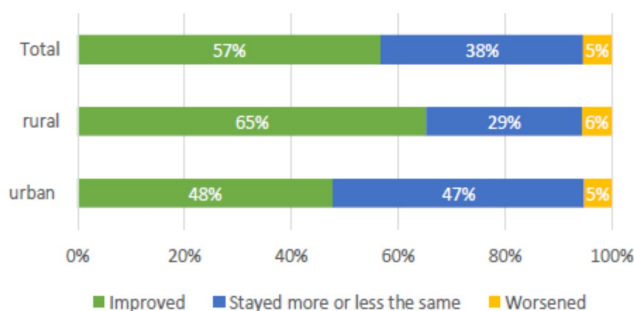


The potential role of the health committees at ward and tract level that are linked to the health centres as a means to involve citizens for improving community health has not been utilised.

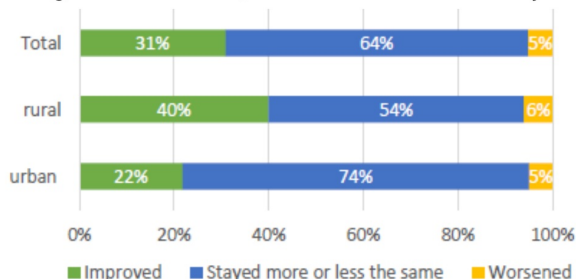


59% of rural respondents that use public health facilities indicated they always pay for medicines, and 42% indicated that they sometimes do so.

Has primary health care in your village tract/ward improved over the last three years?



Has the provision of clean drinking water in your village tract/ward improved over the last three years?



WATER PROVISION



While one third saw improvements, for two thirds of respondents nothing had changed in terms of water supply. 62% consider the quality good, while 32% think it's acceptable.

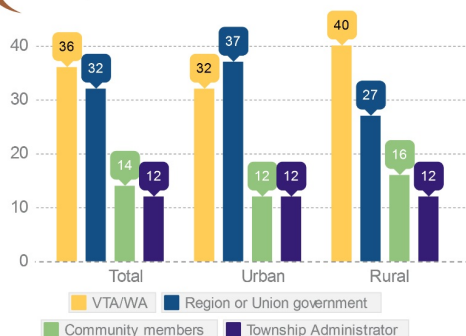


In rural areas 66% of respondents use open water sources, while 26% use a private source. Only 8% of rural and 1% of urban respondents use public water points. Around half or more of Yangon's population organises its own water supply.

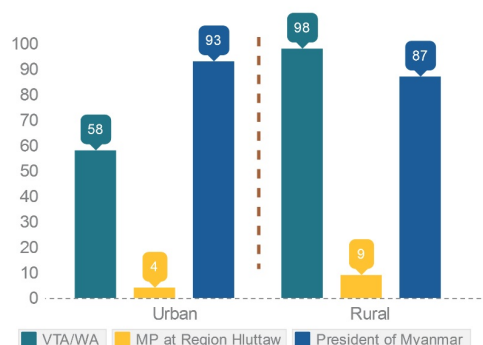
INFORMATION, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Who is responsible for addressing development problems?

Most respondents hold the Village Tract/Ward Administrator and the Region/Union government responsible for addressing the problem they identified as the most pressing, whereby urban respondents look slightly more to the Region/Union level. Only 12 percent of the respondents consider the Township Administration accountable for solving their problem.



The VTAs and WAs are potentially highly instrumental to support the GAD/TA offices in their coordination role, as they directly interact with citizens, and are able to bring people's development needs to the 'township table' for all departments collectively.



Awareness of representatives

The VT/WA is a central player in local governance. 99% of rural residents could name their VTA as could 58% of urban respondents name their Ward Administrator (WA). Representatives on the regional level are less known.

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE



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

For example, citizens in several wards and village tracts raised that their health centre is insufficiently staffed and/or equipped and requested health staff and VTAs to bring the needs of their health centres to the attention of the higher levels of government. One community that is lacking a midwife offered to provide accommodation for any midwife assigned to their village.

The issues regarding information flow from officials to citizens was brought up in a number of communities. VTAs/WAs and 10/100 household heads promised to provide more and timely information, and through more efficient channels. Communities on the other hand agreed to pay more attention to the information given and make more effort to participate in village meetings and activities if organised.

CONCLUSIONS

The current organisational structure of the YCDC is not organised around functional areas but divided in a way that shares the 'weight' of responsibilities, thus dividing up also functional areas. Reviewing the YCDC's organogram to reflect the core functions of YCDC may help in establishing clearer accountability relations and make it more effective and efficient.

For people to be engaged with the YCDC it is important to keep them well-informed about the roles and responsibilities of the YCDC.

Support training programmes for VTA/WAs to enhance their capacity as people's voice and representatives particularly at township level and as facilitators for participatory planning. The VTA/WAs are the key link between citizens and government and their role seems currently underutilised.

A programme for civic education may be useful to empower citizens to be more directly involved in local decision making.



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

UNDP Myanmar
No. 6, Natmauk Road,
Tamwe Township
Yangon 11211,
Myanmar
E-mail:
communications.mm@undp.org
February 2015

