Perception Survey on Ethics, Equal Opportunities and Meritocracy in the Myanmar Civil Service

June 2016
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Perception Survey Report
Ethics, Equal Opportunities and Meritocracy in the Myanmar Civil Service
2016
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Myanmar is in the midst of a democratic transition in which the civil service plays a profound role. The civil service will be the driving force behind the transformation in public service institutions which will enable the Government of Myanmar to meet the needs of a complex transformation. As the face of government in local communities, with responsibilities for delivering public services effectively and in a non-discriminatory manner, civil service personnel are key to furthering Myanmar’s democratic transition and strengthening the trust in the state.

To ensure that civil service personnel are in a better position to meet these demands, the Union Civil Service Board (UCSB) is exploring how to better promote a meritocratic and inclusive civil service which upholds high ethical standards. To this end, the UCSB commissioned a study to better understand the perceptions and experiences of civil service personnel about professional ethics, equal opportunities and meritocracy.

The study measures perceptions of policies and procedures which are intended to instill meritocratic practices, accountability and motivation among staff. The study followed a mixed methodology that combined a self-administered survey questionnaire and 12 focus group discussions; both were applied at the Central Institutes of Civil Service (CICS) in Lower and Upper Myanmar.

Whilst there are some indications of self-censorship (responses regarding individual well-being and personal experience were more critical than reflections on policies and civil service practices might indicate), most respondents – particularly focus group participants – were confident to share opinions on sensitive issues related to accountability, fairness, and corruption. The key findings include:

**Recruitment:** The majority of respondents are non-gazetted personnel (technical or administrative staff, recruited by line ministries rather than the Union Civil Service Board). They considered the recruitment process to be largely fair but strongly influenced by family and personal ties and lacking transparency, and suggested that better dissemination of information about available positions and a more accountable interviewing process would significantly improve the existing process.

**Promotion/posting:** Respondents are skeptical about how much promotions and postings are decided on the basis of merit, with a significant portion, though generally less than the majority, feeling that promotions, postings and transfers are given based on either friendship, family relationship or bribes. Two thirds of respondents felt that postings are used as a method of reward or punishment.

**Training:** Survey and focus group respondents felt that the curriculum used by the Union Civil Service Board’s Central Institutes of Civil Service helped them understand their rights and duties, but more than three quarters argued for better integration of real life situations
Performance evaluations: Lack of transparency was highlighted as a major limitation to the job performance evaluation system, in which evaluations are made by supervisors often without the knowledge of the person being evaluated. This contributes to the perception that performance evaluations are not accountable, open to bias and used as a tool of control. Performance evaluation is not conceived of a way to identify skills development and to improve job performance.

Remuneration, integrity and ethics: Whilst incidents of corruption and bribery are perceived as widespread across the civil service, many respondents felt that petty corruption is justified, or at least tolerated, due to low salaries. Most of the civil service personnel interviewed said that current institutional anti-corruption safeguards are insufficient because they rely solely on immediate supervisors, who may have their own conflicts of interest or may face reprisals for whistleblowing.

Motivation: Civil service personnel show high levels of motivation and are proud to belong to the civil service. However, there is a sense that personal connections determine many aspects of their professional careers, which can be demotivating. Other demotivating factors include inadequate salary and working conditions, unequal allocation of benefits, and concerns that good performance is not recognized.

Equal Opportunities: There is near unanimous agreement that women receive equal pay to men, and that they receive their due benefits without discrimination, with a similar feeling about non-Bamar civil service personnel. However, civil service personnel raised concerns about equal opportunities—some female civil service personnel felt that they were less likely to be promoted on account of their gender, and some felt that being of a different ethnicity to high level officials in the department hampered promotion prospects.

The survey identifies opportunities to improve the transparency and accountability across the civil service, to better prevent corruption and promote ethical behavior. In particular, more equitable provision of opportunities and greater transparency in decision making would significantly increase morale and institutional credibility. This report presents recommendations to address these challenges, with a summary below.

• Review the mandate and role of the Union Civil Service Board in relation to other Ministries and institutions with regard to all aspects of civil service management.
• Transform the Union Civil Service Board into a quality control and standard setting entity for human resources management, to improve transparency, accountability and effectiveness of human resource management across the civil service.
• Promote leadership of reforms, through the establishment of a competitive leadership scheme to nurture current and future leaders.
• Analyse civil service laws, regulations and procedures to ensure they reflect principles of merit, equal opportunities and ethics; these include the Civil Service Law and bylaws, Code of Conduct.
• Explore policies and systems to promote a more inclusive civil service and the access of women and ethnic minorities to senior level positions.
• Develop standard job descriptions and competency frameworks for civil service positions, and introduce improved human resources management standards and
practices for hiring, postings and transfers, and promotions.
- Review the individual performance evaluation system, give civil service employees more information about performance evaluations, and establish more open appeals and review processes.
- Review the pay and benefits system and elaborate policies to establish a new system in line with the cost of living, while taking into account financial projections of state expenditures.
- Review procedures for reporting and investigating instances of civil servant misconduct, with a view to increasing effectiveness and the protection of whistle blowers; review grievance procedures.
- Enhance Central Institute of Civil Service training curricula and teaching and training techniques to ensure training can enhance skills relevant to everyday work.
- Establish specific guidance and procedures for access to international training opportunities and ensure a competitive selection system.
## Glossary of Key Terms

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>Misuse of entrusted authority for personal or private gain. For example, bribes, fraud, nepotism or embezzlement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>Treating someone unfairly because of a personal characteristic or distinction such as religion, age, sex, disability, ethnic background, place of living, or place of origin.</td>
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<td>Equal opportunities</td>
<td>Policies and practices that give all persons an equal chance in employment, treatment and fairness in the civil service, and to protect their civil rights, regardless of their religion, age, sex, disability, ethnic background, place of living, place of origin or others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Principles that govern behaviour – e.g. the Code of conduct governing the civil service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>Any act, comment or display that demeans, belittles, or causes personal humiliation. It includes sexual harassment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>The quality of a civil servant of being honest and upholding values. It is having strong moral principles that protect public interests over individual ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit</td>
<td>A quality that deserves or justifies a reward or praise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meritocracy</td>
<td>In a meritocratic civil service, officers are recruited based on merit and they are given the opportunity to advance their careers based on their abilities and accomplishments.</td>
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The Republic of the Union of Myanmar is in the midst of a profound democratic transition under the new administration. This spans economic, social and political reforms and a political dialogue to bring an end to decades-long internal conflict. Reforms have the potential to transform Myanmar into a more open society which productively debates key questions about governance, peace and development, and reengages economically and culturally with the region and the world, bringing economic growth and development even to Myanmar’s poorest and most vulnerable people.

The civil service is responsible for preparing and implementing government policies and delivering services, and has the potential to be one of the driving forces of reforms in Myanmar. Civil servants are the face of government in local communities, and as such are also central to the restoration of trust between the government and the people. They are not only representatives of government, and in a position of public trust to use public resources in the most effective and impartial way, they are also a channel for the public’s voices to be heard by policy makers. In these ways and more, the civil service is critical to enabling good governance and ensuring the success and sustainability of Myanmar’s reforms. How the civil service is managed and nurtured, and how civil servants conduct themselves, has been shaped by the legacy of pre-democracy government in Myanmar, and is an important area to strengthen in support of democratisation in Myanmar.

In the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the civil service consists of people working in government ministries, departments and agencies at Union, region and state level. Broadly speaking it is divided into two categories- gazetted officers (professional and management staff), and non-gazetted officers (administrative staff and technicians). All public sector employees, including doctors, nurses and teachers, but excepting armed forces and the police, are administered by the Civil Service Personnel Act (2013). The top ranking gazetted officer is a Director General who heads a Ministry Department (although Permanent Secretaries were reintroduced in 2015, acting as the top civil servant in the Ministry overseeing all departments), followed by Deputy Director General, Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Director, and Staff Officer. Whilst most people apply to the civil service at the entry level only, and are promoted up from there, the government also at its discretion directly appoints people (for example, former military personnel) to the civil service.

There are several government institutions which have responsibilities in managing the civil service of Myanmar. The Union Civil Service Board (UCSB) is constitutionally responsible for selecting and training civil servants, making regulations for governing the civil service, and approving the Civil Service Code of Ethics. The UCSB mainly supports selection at gazetted officer and above, approves promotions,
and currently provides training up to Deputy Director General Level. Line Ministries (such as the Ministry of Health) also recruit their own civil servants at non-gazetted officer level, and promote the civil servants working for them, and many also conduct trainings. The General Administration Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs, whose Union Minister is appointed by the Commander in Chief rather than the President, also occupies a unique place in Myanmar’s civil service: as well as performing key administrative roles in the executive down to the local level, GAD staff also de facto make up the civil service for the Region and State Governments and for Region and State Parliaments. The UCSB, GAD and line Ministries share responsibility in the management of the civil service when determining appointments and transfers, approving leave time and setting promotions.

The Union Civil Service Board has identified that promoting ethics, equal opportunities and meritocracy in the civil service will be important for successful reforms. The ethics and values of the civil service underpin the behaviour of civil servants. Ethical standards and obligations for civil servants are codified in various pieces of legislation, regulations and the Civil Service Code of Conduct (2004), which call on civil servants to uphold values of honesty, ‘avoid abuse of delegated powers’, and protect public funds from wastage or misuse, as well as having respect for the populace. Whilst it is important to set standards for behaviour, it is equally important to understand how those standards are understood and followed, what mechanisms there are for redress if they are violated, and whether those values still stand in the context of Myanmar’s continued democratisation.

Motivated, capable and professional civil servants can perform their duties with pride and efficiency, and can drive positive change. A key factor in motivating people to apply and remain in the civil service, and to effectively fulfil their many responsibilities towards Myanmar’s people, is meritocracy. Strengthening the merit system, by which the best person is appointed to a job (or promoted to a job), has long been associated with better public sector performance. In Myanmar, the Public Service Personnel Act refers to entitlements for meritocracy: promotion based on competency, skills and qualifications (Chapter 7). The Union Civil Service Board has in place detailed procedures for recruitment and promotion which are intended to fulfil these entitlements for the majority of civil servants, and is already

Efficient, effective, transparent, and service oriented. The promotion of equal opportunities refers to the elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimization against people who share a particular characteristic (such as age, birth, disability, religion, ethnicity, sex/gender, and sexual orientation) by people who do not share it; this includes discrimination against individuals by individuals, and also against individuals or groups by institutions. Pro-active approaches to foster equality and diversity can help attract and retain a workforce that reflects a wide range of existing and future talent, is inclusive and representative, and supports more effective policy making and service provision. In Myanmar, both the Personnel Law (2013) and the Constitution (2008) make reference to equal opportunities, in terms of non-discrimination on grounds of ‘race, places they were born in, religion and gender’, and salary and retirement benefits. However it is important to understand how those rights are fulfilled in practice, and whether more pro-active measures are needed to ensure an inclusive civil service that reflects Myanmar’s diversity.
in the process of exploring how effective these measures are in ensuring a meritocratic civil service.

The collection of information is critical to reforms, as it can inform policy makers of strengths and weaknesses of current measures and approaches, and identify opportunities to improve, creating an evidence base for policy responses. In the case of the civil service, civil servants themselves are an important source of data. From June to August 2015, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the UCSB designed a survey to collect the views of civil service personnel regarding ethics, equal opportunities, and meritocracy. The perception survey aimed to investigate the effectiveness of civil service reforms, existing legislation and regulations, and potential improvements to civil service training. The perception survey information provides preliminary data on the opinions of Myanmar civil service personnel.

To accomplish these objectives, the perception survey probed civil service personnel’s experiences with recruitment, professional ethics, performance review, promotion and relocations, morale and equal opportunities. The survey methodology was based on a mix of quantitative (survey) and qualitative (focus group) data. Between 30 June to 3 August 2015, 2,010 civil service personnel were surveyed while undergoing training at the Union Civil Service Board training institutes, the Central Institutes of Civil Service (CICS)- the UCSB and UNDP acknowledge that the sample is not representative of the overall civil service. Twelve focus group discussions gathered in-depth information of civil service personnel’s perceptions, and explore the issues raised in the survey further.

Chapter 2 starts by describing the study’s methodology, highlighting its main limitations. Findings from the survey and focus group discussions are presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 highlights the paper’s conclusions and proposes recommendations.
CHAPTER 2:
METHODS AND STUDY LIMITATIONS

The survey was conducted by UNDP and Myanmar Survey Research at the request of the Union Civil Service Board. The Union Civil Service Board's role in the survey was in survey design, including questionnaire and sampling, and logistical arrangements.

The survey follows a mix of quantitative (survey) and qualitative (focus group) methodology. Fieldwork took place between 30th June and 3rd August 2015 at the two Central Institutes for Civil Service (2 CICS) (See Annex 1), collecting 2,010 self-administered survey questionnaires. Of respondents, 60% were teachers, 12% technicians, and 9% supervisors—all non-gazetted civil servants; 20% were gazetted civil servants (5% pre-service; 8% staff officers; 7% directors). Respondents were almost equally divided among four age groups: (1) 18-24 years old; (2) 25-29 years old; (3) 30-34 years old; and (4) 35+ years old; 75% were women, and 78% self-identified as being of Bamar ethnicity. The definitions of key terms like corruption, discrimination, equal opportunities and meritocracy were explained verbally and provided in writing for reference.

In addition, 12 focus groups were organised to collect qualitative data of civil service personnel’s experiences. Open answers were intended to contextualise or problematize answers given in the questionnaire. Focus groups were divided up by gender in an attempt to be sensitive to gender differences and to encourage full participation in discussions.

The survey has several limitations. First, it was not possible to provide complete anonymity to randomly selected survey participants. The parameters of the survey included minimising disruption to the work of civil service personnel, and as such it was carried out during mandatory service training at the two Central Institutes of Civil Service (CICS). The CICS leadership could therefore know who was taking part in the study. Although the UCSB would not be able to link individuals to survey responses, this situation could have prompted self-censorship from participants.

Second, the survey sample’s demographics are not gender equal and likely not in proportion with the composition of the civil service. The survey results have not been compared against the total population of the civil service as there were no official figures available of the demographic characteristics of the civil service. Efforts to compensate were made by cross-checking data with qualitative data from focus groups.

Third, there was selection bias for questions on recruitment and corruption, since respondents could be engaged in the kinds of corruption about which they were being interviewed.

Lastly, this survey gathers perceptions, and is only one source of data for analysis to understand behaviour, practices or procedures in the civil service. Despite these limitations, at a time when Myanmar’s governance structures are undergoing significant change, the survey results provide the most comprehensive and current information available on civil service perspectives. The survey represents a first step on the part of Myanmar’s leadership to address sensitive issues, using evidence as a basis for improving the civil service. A full description of the methodology and its inherent limitations is available in the Annex.
CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

3.1 Recruitment

The majority of survey respondents said they were recruited through the non-gazetted recruitment process. This type of recruitment is perceived to be strongly influenced by personal networks. Respondents suggested other information channels could be used, such as radio and TV, to advertise non-gazetted civil service openings. They also recommended that civil service exams and interviews processes be made more transparent.

3.1.1 Introduction

Myanmar has recruitment systems for gazetted and non-gazetted positions. The recruitment of gazetted officers is managed by the USCB through an open recruitment process. The time and location for open written examination and interviews are advertised, factoring in time for applicants to prepare. Civil service exams use standardized questionnaires that cover Myanmar and English language, and general knowledge.

The recruitment of non-gazetted personnel is done by line Ministries through a closed recruitment process. Vacancies are advertised through a government newspaper, and potential candidates take a written and oral exam. Methods of candidate selection and examination vary across Ministries. In many instances, the position is advertised in one newspaper for one day only. A result of limited dissemination of job postings is that those who know about vacancy through word of mouth are in a better position to apply.

3.1.2 Type of Recruitment

Only 12% of survey respondents said they were recruited through UCSB’s open recruitment process. The majority (86%) said they were recruited through the non-gazetted recruitment system, by line ministries. Almost a quarter (23%) said they were promoted from support worker to clerk and other rank position as non-gazetted civil service personnel, and 7% said they were promoted from volunteer to non-gazetted support worker.

A small percentage (3%) of director-level respondents said they bypassed the recruitment system by transferring from the military to their current civil service position. Although this percentage is small, it confirms other authors’ findings that in many cases civil service leadership is appointed from military ranks. This trend diminishes the credibility of merit-based recruitment of the Myanmar civil service.

3.1.3 Access to Information on Open Vacancies

The majority of respondents (78%) reported their posts had been openly advertised. The majority of respondents (60%) said their top source of information on vacancies was word of mouth (see Figure 2), and most were positive about having access to information and to the process (see Figure 1). Given that 71% of

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1 Hook, D, Tin Maung Than & Ninh, Kim N. B. (2015), Conceptualising Public Sector Reform in Myanmar, Asia Foundation.
respondents said they have relatives in the civil service (question 9), these findings suggest that access to recruitment information is more dependent on personal networks rather than on official communication channels (41% of respondents answered job advertisements placed in one newspaper for one day).

In contrast to survey respondents, focus group discussion participants said they did not have sufficient information about the recruitment process and said that a one-day advertisement in a government newspaper is insufficient notice for civil service vacancies. Focus group participants suggested using other information channels, such as radio and TV, to advertise civil service openings, with more lead time.

**Figure 1: Access to Information about vacancy prior to recruitment**

I had sufficient information about the recruitment process before I applied for the vacancy

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<th>35+</th>
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<th>Director</th>
<th>Staff Officer</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
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**Figure 2: Respondents' Top Sources for Information on Vacancies**

- Through friends/colleagues: 60%
- Government newspaper: 42%
- Notice board in government administration closer to you: 33%
- Universities and colleges: 10%
3.1.4 Perceptions of Fairness of Recruitment System

In response to direct questions, the majority (82%) agree or strongly agree that the recruitment process used is mostly fair; however, there are indications that personal networks are used to influence hiring to an extent- 65% of survey respondents indicated that between 'some' and 'all' civil servants use personal networks to get positions. Focus group participants felt more strongly that people who knew high-ranking officials had a better chance of getting the job. A male civil service worker said:

"If the children of teachers want to become teachers too, they are considered to be familiar with the teaching profession... In case the answer is positive, he/she will have more chance of getting the job."

A mid-level officer said:

"It has been ten years since there was a job opening for an officer [position]. Recently there was a test for the officer position so there were over 200 candidates who applied for [each] 70 job openings.

Focus group participants emphasized the importance of personal networks in the recruitment process. An executive-level focus group participant explained that using a network-based recruitment process was a deliberate choice within line ministries to select for highly educated personnel. Although it reduced the selection pool, this recruitment process was perceived to have advantages.

Respondents said hiring through networks enabled line ministries to quickly fill vacant positions with educated people, who had relatives who would vouch for them.

A clerk said:

"In some cases, in interviews, there is a question ... 'Do you have any relatives in the Ministry?'... This question is used to test how familiar the person is with the Ministry. For instance, in the Ministry of Education, if the children of teachers want to become teachers too, they are considered to be familiar with the teaching profession... In case the answer is positive, he/she will have more chance of getting the job."

3.1.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

The survey and focus group responses suggest that recruitment processes, especially for non-gazetted officers, are not uniform across Ministries and not sufficiently open; financial and time constraints are among the factors cited contributing to a significant reliance on personal networks in hiring processes.

Clearer procedures for recruitment, ensuring all Ministry staff responsible for hiring have a better understanding of fair recruitment principles, and establishing mandatory minimum periods for open advertisement of non-gazetted vacancies are among measures which could increase access to qualified candidates and ensure that the best candidates can be recruited. Monitoring functions would also be required.

Whilst Ministries should continue managing the recruitment of non-gazetted officers, the Union Civil Service Board could take a stronger quality assurance role to ensure fairness and equality in hiring practices, including sharing
guidance on improving recruitment procedures and encouraging uniform approaches across Ministries according to the law and bylaws.

3.2 Promotion and Posting

Civil service personnel are skeptical about the meritocratic nature of the promotion and posting system in the Myanmar civil service, highlighting lack of transparency and fairness. There is a widespread perception among lower level civil service personnel that allocation of promotions and posts are given based on favouritism, bribes and nepotism.

3.2.1 Introduction

In Myanmar, promotions are used to fill job vacancies above entry level. The civil service is in practice a closed system where internal employees, or those transferring from the military, are the only candidates for senior posts.

The Civil Service Act (2013) establishes that prior to assigning a promotion, each department must conduct an assessment of the employee's qualifications and skills. The employee must provide a written assessment and be interviewed for promotion if required. In addition, a performance evaluation rating is determined to assess the qualifications and merits of service personnel.

Promotion for gazetted and non-gazetted positions follows the same procedure. The only difference is that line ministries process the promotions for non-gazetted officers, and promotions from non-gazetted to a gazetted position are submitted to UCSB for agreement. In the majority of cases, getting a promotion is a lengthy process. After the promotion takes place, civil service personnel are often transferred to a new posting.

Vacant positions are limited. It is normal for civil service personnel to wait for several years for a promotion. Opportunities for promotions are also limited for qualified professional cadres, such as doctors or engineers, who thus move into management roles.

This system creates structural problems as qualified professional cadres, such as doctors, engineers, etc., are expected to apply for managerial positions for which they may be unqualified or under-qualified. This also leads to difficulties in filling more technical vacancies. In Myanmar, existing research indicates that military and authoritarian affiliations trump merit in assignment of senior promotions and postings.²

3.2.2 Effectiveness of Promotion System

Half of survey respondents said superiors follow rules and regulations and assign promotions based on performance and on merit (58%, 48% and 58%, respectively). Around a quarter of respondents thought that promotions are given based on friendships and bribes (21% and 25%, respectively).

Similar to survey responses, focus group participants were divided over the fairness of the promotion system. In some cases,

perceptions of bias emerge from feelings that years in service are not sufficiently considered in promotions, and in others because personal connections play too large a part. An officer said:

"In our department, there are people from outside. For instance, from the military, [who get promoted]. While there are people in the department with many years of service who don't get promoted... They are professional in carrying out their responsibilities and very useful at work. They are expert [in their fields] and can really work. But they don't get promotions and don't have the right to say anything."

Focus group participants generally accepted that years in service and quality of work are among the important factors considered during the promotion process, and most described a process being followed. However a uniform picture of criteria and practices used, especially amongst different Ministries, did not emerge; this suggests a lack of clarity or awareness.

3.2.3 Perceptions on Posting

Less than half of respondents (41%) said they had limited information regarding posting rules and regulations, although 54% were confident that superiors follow rules and regulations on posting. Less than half (46%) felt they were based on merit, and 59% still felt that postings are used as a means or reward or punishments; Most (70%) stated they are generally satisfied with their posting, noting that among the top factors making it difficult to work effectively in their posting would be insecurity (51%); lack of health care (46%); and poor transport and communications (46%).
At least two thirds (67%) of respondents agreed that civil servants are largely unable to choose where they are posted, although a similar proportion (65%) felt that their needs are taken into account in decisions about postings. Finally, the majority of respondents (71%) agreed that once posts are assigned, they are hard to change, and that people are not posted to their location of origin.

If we are posted in our native place, we have our families and places to live. In other places, there will be insufficiency as we have to cook and rent a home. Since the salary is not enough, there will be more possibility of corruption. Only those who want to transfer on their own will should be transferred. (Female Junior officer)

**Figure 4** Responses to Statements on Posting System

![Figure 4](image)

### 3.2.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

Whilst civil servants have differing perceptions of the fairness and efficacy of the promotion and posting system, there is a prevailing lack of clarity about the procedures and limited consensus on the factors influencing decision making. Whilst the nature of the work and the conditions at the posting can have a profound impact on the lives of civil servants, they have limited formal avenues for voicing their preferences for posting location.

A review of promotion and posting procedures, with a view to enhancing meritocratic practices, making them more transparent, enhancing awareness and access to the rules and procedures could help improve the efficacy of these systems in the immediate term and increase trust. In the longer term, systems which allow civil servants greater choice in postings, with additional incentives in place for unpopular postings, and competitive internal application processes can be phased in.

### 3.3 Training and Capacity Development

Surveyed civil service personnel believe that training provided by the Central Institutes of the Civil Service (CICS) gives them basic administrative skills and knowledge on rules and regulations. But survey respondents also said that the CICS curriculum is too general. A very small proportion of surveyed civil service personnel (3%) have applied for international learning opportunities, and feel that they are awarded based on biased criteria.
3.3.1 Introduction

The UCSB is responsible for civil service development. The UCSB achieves this by providing training at the CICS and by facilitating international learning opportunities. This section discusses the perceptions of civil servants regarding CICS training and training opportunities outside of Myanmar.

From recruitment to the end of their careers, all Myanmar civil service personnel attend CICS courses. CICS offers ‘resident training’: civil service personnel are hosted for the entire course in Lower Myanmar (Phaungyi) or in Upper Myanmar (Pyin Oo Lwin). In most cases, participants are given uniforms to wear, and courses include both physical components (including marching drills and classroom time, and trainees sometimes have additional responsibilities (such as writing daily reports to their Ministries). Classroom time is generally lecture focused.

Trainees are divided into four categories: (1) Administrative Management level; (2) Professional level; (3) Technical; and (4) Clerical staff. The following are the different CICS courses:

- Induction courses: This 14-week training is given to all newly recruited (in-service) civil service personnel. First, there is a physical training section for in-service personnel on basic military skills in case they need to defend their country. Then, there is a theoretical training which teaches basic managerial skills and civil service rules and regulations.

- Special refresher courses: These two to six week trainings are for teachers from Basic Education and Higher Education who directly engage with public. The course focuses on managerial techniques and the civil service Code of Conduct.

- Mid-level management courses: These four week trainings are for middle level management officials and focus on managerial skills.

- Senior and executive level management courses: These 8 week seminars and management workshops are for senior and executive level officials from central and local levels. Trainings are provided with support from international partners to improve management and administrative skills by focusing on governance, climate change, early recovery, decentralization, and peacebuilding.3

3.3.2 Perception on Relevance of CICS Training

The majority of survey respondents stated that CICS courses are relevant for the work they do (72%) (see Figure 5). In addition, civil service personnel said that CICS training provides them with adequate management skills (70%), helps them to understand the rights and duties of the civil service (83%), and gives them information on other ministries (83%).

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Almost half (45%) of survey respondents mentioned that CICS courses are too general. The majority of respondents (86%) agreed that CICS courses need to be expanded to address real-life situations on corruption, conflicts of interest, and reporting misconduct and mismanagement. Also, respondents stated that more information has to be given on rules on asset/financial management and on mechanisms for reporting ethical misconduct (31% and 46% respectively).

A total of 1,735 survey respondents (or 86%) provided suggestions to improve CICS training. These comments included suggested improvements to the quality of the physical environment and the content and delivery of lessons (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Suggested improvements for CICS training courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Category: Improve CICS Training Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Let trainees wear their own clothes, not military style uniforms and boots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove the practice of having the trainees perform guard duty at the accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove the practice of having trainees do menial jobs, like cutting the grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide medical care at the training facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let trainees have some free time in the day or evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have fewer trainees in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the facilities, particularly toilets, and provide learning equipment, like computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the food budget</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second Category: Improve CICS Lessons</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide greater emphasis on classroom/theoretical lessons and thinking time, than physical activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the method of instruction - make it more participatory, use modern teaching techniques, with more time for group discussion and group activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest in making instructors more qualified and efficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetables should be more carefully planned, and allocate more time for some topics - some lectures move too fast to follow easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide additional materials, such as handouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give fewer assignments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Third Category: Improve CICS Training Content

Include more practical instruction, and provide training on practical topics.
Stronger emphasis on computer skills and English.

More topics related to administration/management, law, regulations related to office work. Teach more social and management subjects. Include courses on dialogue and cultural sensitivity.

Perceptions on Pre-service Training

All focus group participants said that they appreciated pre-service training. However, several focus group participants said CICS pre-service training over-emphasized militarily training. An officer said:

"Some people would say that this [pre-service] training is nothing. It is just making the trainee to suffer... These things should be trained properly. One should be able to protect the country in practical [terms]... And for theory... the teaching should be taught effectively."

Focus group participants mentioned that technical courses needed to be better prepared and the curriculum combining physical and class-bound courses are taxing for trainees. Their personal concerns include dress, food and adequate housing. Focus group participants argued that CICS courses should emphasize ethical principles and the importance of accountability within the civil service.

3.3.3 International Learning Opportunities

International training opportunities are important to civil servants, allowing them to improve skills, learn about other countries and introduce new methods on return to Myanmar. Because UCSB is in charge of allocating international training opportunities to civil service personnel, the survey captured respondents' perceptions about the access they have to them.

The majority of respondents (73%) said they received additional in-country training in addition to CICS. Only 22% of respondents said they received training given by outside experts. When discussing desired training subjects, most survey respondents mentioned technical skills. Study participants said Japan and Thailand are favored destinations for international training, followed by Malaysia and Singapore.

A small proportion (3%) of civil service personnel attending the CICS have applied to international training because there is limited access to information regarding international scholarships. Survey respondents only knew of three ways of accessing international learning opportunities: requesting the President's office, requesting one's line ministry and international scholarships offered by the other governments such as Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and New Zealand.

Only half of survey respondents (51%) described the application process for international learning opportunities as fair and transparent (see Figure 6). Also, 18% of survey respondents disagreed that women and men have equal opportunities for accessing international training.
Civil servants that attend international training institutes are selected because of merit

Minority ethnic groups/races have access to equal training and learning opportunities

Female and male civil servants have access to equal international training and learning opportunities

The application process to international education institutions fair and transparent

Proportionally, more males (5%) than females (2%) have applied for international training. Also, directors and staff officers seem to have more opportunities to apply for international training than other civil service personnel. These answers reveal a selection bias in favor of male senior civil servants that should be addressed in order to improve equal opportunities for female civil servants.

3.3.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

Whilst civil service personnel are largely positive about the training they receive and its relevance for their work, several improvements in the CICS training environment, quality of instruction and training content were suggested.

Resident training has consistently been part of the Myanmar civil service learning and professional development system, and measures to improve it could include improving capacity of trainers, revising curricula based on an assessment of needs and an understanding of the competencies/skills required for the job, and more targeted training approaches. These could greatly help the CICS to meet expectations of trainees. The UCSB may also consider introducing other methods of training, similar to the on-the-job training and coaching to complement the resident training approach currently in place.

Moreover, enhancing transparency of systems for studying abroad, including ensuring the adoption of fair and inclusive selection criteria, could address the finding that information on international learning opportunities is not widely available to civil service personnel.

3.4 Performance Review

Although civil service personnel surveyed stated that their supervisors could assess their work, a majority also felt it was unfair that performance reviews were conducted in secret and with no opportunity to review or challenge supervisors’ assessments. Respondents perceived performance reviews to be open to bias, unaccountable, and in need of reform.

3.4.1 Introduction

In Myanmar, performance reviews are used to decide on promotions, relocations, and eligibility for workshops and trainings. The
Performance reviews are mainly conducted by the civil service personnel's direct supervisor. Direct supervisors prepare annual performance evaluations for all civil service personnel by providing ratings on supervisees' performance reports.

To complete a performance review, direct supervisors have to rate supervisee work following ten criteria. Each criteria has to be assessed using a 10-point scale (see Table 2). Each aspect of the performance review is then giving a qualitative value: a below average score (1-3 points), an average score (4-6 points), above average score (7-8 points), and outstanding score (9-10 points) (Civil Service Personnel Rules (12/2014)). In addition, the direct supervisors has to provide special comments if the supervisee exceeds or fail to meet his/her performance goals. This evaluation review report is signed by the immediate supervisor. This report is then sent for authorization to the next supervisor at the Managing/General Director level. The report is finalized after approval from the Head of the Ministry.4

Three elements will need to improve in the Civil Service Personnel Rules (12/2014). First, the rules do not mention that the supervisee has to be consulted or notified when the performance review is taking place. Second, the rules do not mention whether the results of the performance review are shared with the supervisee. Third, the rules do not explain how a poor performance appraisal can be challenged.

Table 2: Performance Review Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Appraisal Area</th>
<th>Rating (Maximum Value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fulfillment of duties assigned</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Professional competency</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Eagerness to learn</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Innovativeness</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Compliance with office and workplace disciplines</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Volunteering</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Good relationship with others</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4 According to Civil Service Rules and Regulations article 3(b). “Head of the Ministry and the Organization” is the head of the ministry and organizations appointed by the President according to the Section (2), Sub-section (f).
Poor performance evaluations can result in loss of salary increment, delay a promotion or provide grounds for a demotion (Civil Service Personnel Rules (12/2014:18), and performance evaluations are therefore a central instrument for maintaining meritocracy. Civil servants are not required to be involved in their own performance evaluations, suggesting that the evaluations are not seen primarily as a tool for individual improvement and organizational progress.

The study indicates that the performance review rules are not followed systematically and that more needs to be done in order to have an ethical and transparent process.

### 3.4.2 Performance Review System

Most civil servants (63%) did not know that the performance appraisal took place annually, and only half of survey respondents (49%) had knowledge that they had been subject to an official evaluation. Directors (68%) and gazetted officers (74%) were the civil service personnel most aware of having been subjected to performance reviews. Comparatively, more male (59%) than female (46%) civil service personnel were aware of having undergone a performance review.

Survey respondents' and focus group participants' main complaint about the evaluation process was that insufficient information is shared with performance review subjects, and felt that this lack of transparency opened the way for bias. Only 26% of survey respondents said that they were adequately informed about the performance review system. Focus group participants affirmed that performance appraisals are often done without the knowledge of civil service personnel (although there were different practices in different departments) and highlighted the lack of a complaint or appeal process.

The performance management system should be used and the review should be done monthly and announced. Moreover, staff should have the right to complain about unsatisfactory results. (Male Clerk)

Also, most survey respondents (68%) thought they could not challenge a bad performance appraisal. Two male officers who participated in focus group discussions said:

If one civil service personnel does not get along with one of them (superiors) then no matter how talented that person may be, his or her superior officer would not (validate) his or her performance and would be passed over (for promotions).

And we can ask them to have a look and can complain about the result, but the superior usually will not change his/her judgement.

Around half of survey respondents perceive their direct supervisors as capable of understanding their work and performance (59%), but focus group participants argued for a more balanced set of criteria to be used for promotion.

(A) 360 appraisal should be done... Everyone might do well on the exam, however, promotion should be done based on their quality, skill and usefulness. (Male Clerk)

### 3.4.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

The performance evaluation system is widely...
recognized as important to the promotion system; however, not all civil servants understood how the system works and how or whether they could participate in evaluations or dispute outcomes. It is perceived that supervisors have significant control and influence over the process with limited oversight.

In the short term, the Union Civil Service Board may consider disseminating guidance on performance appraisal criteria and encouraging line Ministries to make an individual’s performance evaluation available to him/her (whilst maintaining their privacy); instituting mechanisms to hear and mediate disputes, and to exercise oversight over how the system is implemented could increase trust in the system. Regular conversations between supervisors and supervisees should be encouraged in preparation of formal evaluations but also as a tool to provide feedback to supervisees to improve their performance.

There are few indications that civil servants view the system as a means to enhance their individual performance and improve the effectiveness of the organization as a whole. The Myanmar civil service may consider a review of the individual performance management system to ensure it more adequately promotes improved individual performance at all levels of the civil service.

### 3.5 Remuneration, Integrity and Ethics

Corruption and bribery are perceived to be widespread across the civil service, and civil servants often link this to low salaries received by civil service personnel. Most respondents said civil service remuneration fails to cover basic family expenses and needs.

Institutional mechanisms to stop corruption are not felt to be effective, potentially because monitoring and enforcement mechanisms are in the hands of immediate supervisors, who might not have the adequate incentives or means to address unethical behavior.

#### 3.5.1 Institutional Mechanisms for Anti-Corruption

Civil servants must abide by the Public Service Personnel Act (2013) which prohibits corruption, misuse of authority and bribery. The Civil Service Personnel Code of Conduct also highlights the importance of ethical behaviour from civil servants. The Code of Conduct prescribes measures against civil service staff found guilty of corruption: to be given a warning, asked to retire, or dismissed. These actions will be determined by the offender’s home department based on the extent of the offences and the discretion of supervisors.

This arrangement allows for a large amount of subjectivity when addressing unethical behavior. The Civil Service Personnel Act (2013) establishes that demotion, withholding increments and reducing salary are used as punishment for immorality, acts of corruption, and poor performance.

#### 3.5.2 Pay, Benefits and Allowances

In Myanmar, pay is allocated according to rank (Civil Service Personnel Rules 2014). For example, gazetted officers earn almost double what non-gazetted (or support) officers receive. Also, lower ranks earn significantly less than higher ranks. In addition to their salary, civil service personnel can receive allowances and benefits. In terms of allowances, civil service personnel...
personnel can receive a pension for injuries, disabilities and death while serving their duty. Female personnel have maternity leave as an additional allowance.

For example, gazetted officers can also obtain free medical care, housing and rental subsidies (residential quarters provided by government in the main towns), land allocation and no-interest loans, and discounted rates on food and clothes. However, allocation of these benefits is not standardised and these benefits are not explicitly mentioned in the Public Service Act (2013). Furthermore, the Act stipulates that benefits are not defined by the government nor approved by the Union Council of Ministers but allocated at the line ministry level. Thus, allocation of benefits is a contentious issue as they are given mainly to senior gazetted officers and total remuneration for the majority of Myanmar civil service personnel remains low.

3.5.3 Perceptions of Individual Corruption versus Institutional Integrity

More than half of survey respondents stated that civil service personnel ask for additional payments, such as bribes, to do their work (40% stated ‘some’ and 16% stated ‘most’). A total of 42% said ‘most’ and ‘some’ accept expensive gifts from interested parties. More than half of survey respondents (56%) think that ‘some’ civil service personnel ask for bribes and other forms of compensation. This view is consistent across all subgroups, including gender, location, type of civil service personnel, level of education and ethnicity.

Despite perceptions of civil servants that bribery is widespread at an individual level, respondents said that there are high levels of integrity at their place of work. The majority of surveyed civil service personnel (81%) agree that their supervisors set a standard for integrity. Half of survey respondents (49%) think existing complaint mechanisms are effective tools to reduce corruption (see Figure 7). However, only 1% of survey respondents believe bribery is always reported to higher authorities (7% of respondents think it is done most of the time). More than half of respondents (56%) said mechanisms to lodge complaints about corruption are used to ‘some’ extent.

The anti-corruption mechanisms commonly used are reporting corrupt behavior verbally to supervisor (33%), writing letters to superiors describing unethical events (31%), and writing to higher authorities (20%). When prompted further, respondents said that reporting to supervisors is safe as it is somehow ‘informal; without negative consequences for whistleblowers. It was also found that a formalized reporting of corruption requires whistleblowers to present evidence against their colleagues. This means that the most common mechanism of reporting corruption is informal and requires the involvement of the immediate supervisor who may be involved in the infraction.

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A total of 44% of respondents believe unethical behavior is only punished 'some times'. The most common form of punishment for corrupt behavior include verbal warning (87%) or through formal written notification or warning letter (73%). Focus group participants said:

The abuse of authority may depend on the environment. This may be due to the fact that corruption is not taken as a serious violations of the law and viewed as a normal phenomenon.

(Male Pre-Service Trainee)

The main thing would be that the law is weak at taking actions. So there are corruptions.

(Male Officer)

In my township, a school principal was punished for corruption, she was transferred to a remote township. But she kept doing this because the supervision team visited the school, checked superficially, accepted the bribe offered by the principal and then went back.

(Male Teacher)

When asked whether punishment is commensurate to corruption, the majority of respondents answered: 'some of the time' (44%) and 'rarely' (18%). When asked why civil service personnel are not punished, respondents said that colleagues support unethical behavior (32%), superiors don't take action (30%), and unethical behavior is widespread (24%).

Surveyed civil service personnel believe there are significant levels of bribery at their place of work, that this is a way for civil servants to supplement their salary, and that small scale bribery is 'tolerated' or 'justified' among survey respondents.
3.5.4 Link between Low Pay and Corruption

More than half of survey respondents said that salary (58%) and pension (59%) are insufficient to cover family expenses. This view was supported by all focus group participants.

The inadequacy of salaries and pensions to cover basic family expenses was seen by some focus group participants and survey respondents as a cause of corruption within the civil service. Figure 8 shows that the majority of survey respondents (81%) agree with the statement that a higher salary would reduce corruption. Focus group participants said that inadequate salary levels force civil service personnel to engage with unethical behavior.

If a staff finds his salary insufficient and there are unethical and illegal behaviors such as smuggling goods, he would find extra income through any means.

(Male Executive Officer)

When families of civil servants cannot live on their salaries, there is a possibility of unethical behavior.

(Female Officer)

Salary has an impact on our integrity because I think it is less likely to be corrupted for a staff if he gets paid sufficiently.

(Male Teacher)

Figure 8: Having a higher salary would reduce corruption in the civil service

However, whilst many felt that better salaries and pensions would reduce the existing levels of corruption, others felt that salary increase alone (especially in cases where salaries are sufficient for the family’s living expenses) would not be sufficient and should be part of a balanced set of measures providing positive and negative incentives to upholding ethical behaviour.
The mentality/attitude/character is the main thing. However much the salary might increase, greed will still lead him to continue his/her corruption practices.

(Female teacher)

The morals and characters depend on the individuals. There needs to be (good) models to follow.

(Male Pre-service)

3.5.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

There are a number of administrative and regulatory arrangements which are necessary to promote ethical values and accountability. For example, Codes of Ethics and Conduct which are supported by a range of other mechanisms, such as training; effective and confidential investigation procedures; and protection for whistleblowers have been shown in other countries to effectively reduce instances of bribery. Instances of corruption and bribery are partly perceived to be motivated by low salaries received by civil service personnel, and a review of the pay and benefits system may also have a positive impact on instances of corruption.

Civil servants acknowledge that leaders have an important role to play in setting a positive example, acting as role models, and in driving change within their organisations. Mind-set change will be a central element in ensuring fairer and more meritocratic practices, without undue reliance on nepotism or favouritism, and lower tolerance towards bribery. It is recommended to introduce leadership training and a longer term leadership scheme which reinforce high ethical standards and provides leaders with the skills and tools to uphold them.

3.6 Motivation and Equal Opportunities

Civil service personnel have associated low motivation with three key factors: inadequate salary, poor working conditions and lack of recognition of all staff performance. With regards to equal opportunities, it is a commonly recognized that women and non-Bamar civil service personnel find it more difficult to be promoted, although neither ethnicity nor gender affect salary levels. The prevailing view is that in the Myanmar Civil Service, personal connections affect many aspects of human resource management. The lack of transparency and meritocracy in the service disadvantages all civil servants.

3.6.1 Introduction

The Myanmar 2008 Constitution and the Civil Service Act (2013) provide guidelines for upholding equal opportunities within the civil service. Article 352 of the Constitution decrees that civil service personnel will not be discriminated for or against based on race, birth, religion, and sex. However, it specifies that there are certain civil service positions that are suitable for men only (2008 Myanmar Constitution).

Chapter 4 of the Civil Service Act stipulates that civil service personnel have rights and benefits including security of tenure, appropriate salary, benefits and other allowances (including

transfer allowances), performance bonuses, opportunities for training, retirement and maternity leave (2014). The Civil Service Act includes the principle of equal pay for equal work and different types of leave to which public servants are entitled. Chapter 4 (Obligations and Facilities) of the Civil Service Act (2013) and the Personnel Code of Conduct (2004) stipulates that civil service personnel can appeal if they feel they are not receiving equal treatment.

3.6.2 Equal Opportunities in Civil Service

The majority of survey respondents (77%) agree the recruitment process provides equal opportunities for women and men, and almost all (86%) agreed that there is an egalitarian recruitment process that does not discriminate based on ethnicity. Investigating instances of bias, 17% survey respondents indicated they were based on gender, and only 7% identified potential bias against different ethnic groups. A total of 81% of survey respondents reported that the equal opportunities principle was applied to them (and to other candidates) when they competed for their current position (see Figure 9). The majority of survey respondents (86%) feel their place of work provides equal opportunities in terms of benefits, entitlements and leave allocation for all civil service personnel, independent of their sex or ethnic background.

A total of 78% of survey respondents identified themselves as belonging to the Bamar ethnic group. This was followed by Rakhine (6%), Kayin (4%), Mon (2%), Shan (2%), Chin (1%) and Kachin (1%). A total of 2% of respondents identified themselves only as ethnic minorities, and 3% as having mixed ethnicity. A greater proportion of Bamar than non-Bamar agreed with the statement, “Civil service personnel from minority ethnic groups/races receive their benefits and entitlements without
any discrimination.” However, focus group participants challenged this view on equal opportunities. Some officers said:

High-level officials tend to favor those in the same ethnic group as them. When assigning public housing for civil servants, those in the same ethnic group as high-level officials are granted a preferential treatment.

(Clerk)

For the ethnics (sic), they will not achieve higher level positions... Mostly they would just be up to director levels. This is my frank opinion... This should be treated fairly. For the people who are really talented should also be given higher level positions.

(Officer)

The majority of survey respondents (70%) say ethnic discrimination is not a factor in the civil service. They said the most common form of discrimination was based on place of residence (33%). This answer has an ethnic dimension as ethnic groups often live within specific neighborhoods and townships. Discrimination based on gender, 10%, and ethnicity, 15%, were the second and third most common types cited. There is a difference between answers given by Bamar and non-Bamar respondents, with 9% and 32% respectively, having witnessed discrimination based on ethnicity. A slightly higher number of men, 19% against 17%, witnessed discrimination based on gender. More men witnessed discrimination regardless of its nature.

The majority of surveyed civil service personnel (70%) did not think benefits were allocated on an equal basis. Respondents (across all groups) said that benefit allocation was based on who you know. Survey respondents (83% male and 88% female respondents) agreed with the statement “Civil service personnel are given maternity benefits and other entitlements without any discrimination.” Men and women unanimously agreed (both in the survey and focus group discussions) that there are no differences in terms of salary between men and women. Emphasising the equality in payment in the civil service, a female clerk said:

Women earn as much the same as men, and sometimes, women in our factory earn more than men.

Whilst recognizing equal pay, female participants of focus groups mentioned that it was more difficult for women and ethnic minorities to be promoted. As one female officer noted: “All are paid equally, but men have, I think, greater opportunities for promotion.” Although some focus group participants cited examples of women that have reached Director General and ministerial positions, we observe comparatively few women in senior positions. Other comments include:

Gender may influence promotion in Myanmar—it’s harder for a woman to get a promotion than a man. A friend of mine told me that her promotions were usually postponed many times.

Salary is paid evenly whether for women or men, however men would have exclusive jurisdiction over women, by which I mean, is that men are in senior or manager positions in Myanmar.

(Female Officer)
Delayed promotions and limited posting opportunities disadvantage female civil servants.

Focus group participants generally accepted that women could perform leadership positions and the majority were in favour of women having an equal opportunity to men to compete for leadership roles. However, some felt that women are not always able to perform certain roles (including roles requiring them to be away from their families) and that they are underrepresented in traditionally 'male' sectors such as the military, police and construction (at all levels, but especially senior management) due to 'the nature of the work'. There is a provision in Article 352 of the 2008 Constitution which indicates that not all civil service positions are available to women, giving these attitudes legal foundation.

A woman or man, if one is qualified, he or she could be in higher position. (Male Executive)

In the military, mining, forestry, the number of men dominates that of women. But it is the current situation, there is a potential for women in the future. (Male Executive)

3.6.3 Motivation of Civil Service Personnel

Motivation is consistently acknowledged as a critical factor in determining performance in the public sector. This section shares preliminary data on how civil servants feel about their work, but is not an exhaustive analysis on motivating factors.

The top three reasons stated for joining the civil service were the opportunity to make a difference to society (77%), job security (74%), and good social status (50%). Access to pensions (35%) was another motivating factor. Civil servants are in general highly motivated. The majority of survey respondents said they enjoyed their work (91%) and were proud to belong to civil service (91%). The majority of respondents would recommend joining the civil service to their children (72%) and many (71%) already have family members in the civil service.

In line with their stated motivations for joining, seeing people benefit from public programs is a source of job satisfaction for 97% of survey respondents (41% strongly) - a picture consistent across age, gender, ethnicity and type of job.

The value of putting civic duty above personal benefit resonated with nearly all respondents (92%), and few cited salary as a feature attracting them to becoming civil servants (6%). Whilst focus group participants connected salary with motivation, this was most often in cases where people were already hard working or committed, or when it provided better financial security for civil servants' families.

If the salaries are high then the sincere and hard-working are willing to put more efforts in their work. The opportunists will still do the same even if the salaries are paid highly. (Male officer)

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11 Civil servants could choose three reasons.
It would be better if the mentality of the civil servants can be framed in such a way that they will be proud of, crave for and improve the work they do. If the condition of the subsistence of the family is fine, a civil servant will be able to do his work with joy.

(Male Executive)

Sometimes, we are afraid to be promoted, because officers are not provided enough resources, number of staff and finance and we could get a blame or punishment if we failed to carry out our tasks despite those limitation of resources.

(Male Clerk)

In most cases, civil servants are the breadwinners of the family. This means that they have to take care of all of the family expenses. If their salary cannot satisfy the basic necessities of the family, they are in trouble and have to find ways to get money.

(Female Clerk)

There is a high level of interest in making a personal contribution to improving the public service (97%). An improvement that civil servants felt would increase their motivation include a meritocratic promotion system and greater confidence that merit and good performance are factors in promotion.

Promotion based on merit is the most appropriate one. If this is abided by, civil servants will be motivated to work harder...I think this will have a ripple effect on one's colleagues and all will work hard together.

(Male Pre-Service)

The conditions for promotion should also be clearly described. A person will be more motivated and exerts more efforts at work.

(Male Executive)

Although social support the family provides is important, with one male clerk pointing out “If we were separated with our family members, we might lose our attention on work,” living with immediate family was viewed as incompatible with career advancement through the posting system, prompting some to avoid promotions in order to remain with family. Other demotivating factors include insufficient support in a move to gazetted roles, linked to a fear that underperformance will lead to punishment.

For example, one of my friends in Yangon do not want to go promotion to Nay Pyi Taw as he wants to live in Yangon with his family and he can do his business in Yangon.

(Male Executive)
Other motivating factors include equal and transparent access to training and learning opportunities and improving facilities in the workplace (43% felt they did not have adequate means to complete daily tasks). While improving the performance evaluation system was felt to be motivating, it was linked to merit based promotion, rather than improving job satisfaction or performance.

Motivation itself emerged as an important value to civil servants, with many focus group participants feeling that motivation, commitment, and enthusiasm should be a consideration in promotion decisions.

People who have good moral conducts, considerate and enthusiasm should be promoted. Some people are civil servants but they don’t really want to be civil servants. (Pre-service male)

Interest or motivation, and sincere and selfless contribution towards the organization are necessary in a good performance appraisal. (Female Clerk)

Expertise, team spirit, decorum, faithfulness to work, responsibility, good disciplines...should be included in the performance appraisal for promotion. (Male junior officer)

3.6.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

Civil servants have positive perceptions of how equal opportunities principles are put into practice in the Myanmar civil service, and both male and female civil servants show an openness to women playing leadership roles. However, there are still opportunities to promote an atmosphere of inclusion in the civil service and take action against discrimination against ethnic minorities and women.

In the short term, the civil service could develop and integrate an interactive training module on gender equality, women’s empowerment and equal opportunities into standard training curricula to increase awareness amongst civil servants. In the longer term, the Union Civil Service Board could consider taking on a role promoting equality and diversity in the civil service, and identifying policy goals and targets.

Civil servants’ motivations are complex and highly individual. Myanmar’s civil servants are highly motivated and have a strong desire to see people benefit from their work, but they also show a strong desire for stability and the ability to provide for their families, and are eager to learn more and progress in their own careers. Many of the recommendations mentioned in this and other sections in this report, including amendments to the performance evaluation, promotion, and pay and benefits, may have a positive impact on motivation.
CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the perspectives of Myanmar civil service personnel regarding their professional lives. The study found a systematic lack of transparency in civil service management functions and an inequitable provision of benefits and career opportunities. Whilst the results show important gaps in terms of meritocracy, ethics and equal opportunities, they also highlight that civil servants are highly motivated and are eager to be part of making change in the civil service. The findings suggest the following recommendations:

Leadership of Reforms

1. Review the mandate and role of the Union Civil Service Board in relation to other Ministries and institutions with regard to all aspects of civil service management. Transforming the Union Civil Service Board into a quality control and standard setting entity for human resources management, and granting Ministries greater responsibility over human resources management processes, could allow Ministries greater flexibility and strategic leadership, whilst positioning the UCSB to provide the support needed to address inconsistencies in practice. This would promote fairness and equality in hiring, postings and transfers, performance evaluations and promotions, and benefits allocation.

A revised mandate could also allow the Union Civil Service Board to take a stronger role in establishing and managing systems for upholding ethical conduct and addressing civil servant grievances. Standardized, civil service data-rich human resources management systems can help make decision makers more accountable and fight discriminatory practices. They would also ensure that criteria used to make various personnel decisions are recorded, accessible, and subject to administrative review.

2. Establish roles and responsibilities in identifying, taking forward and monitoring reforms to enhance meritocracy, equal opportunities and ethics. This would translate into determining responsibilities for taking forward the development of prioritized action plans to promote and monitor integrity, meritocracy and equality across the civil service, and to communicate ongoing reforms throughout the civil service. Monitoring measures could include undertaking employee surveys on a periodic basis and establishing a centralized personnel information management system, analysis of which would help the UCSB to assess whether adjustments to civil service policies and systems are yielding the expected results.

3. Promote leadership of reforms through leadership training and a leadership scheme. Leaders require training and institutional support to uphold practices and embody the principles of the civil service and to ensure their application and respect. The Government could provide...
dedicated training on the practice and theory of leadership, towards improving leadership competencies.

The Government of Myanmar could also establish a competitive leadership scheme which nurtures current and future leaders over a longer period of time, and establish clear and regulated succession plans for leadership positions. This scheme may also include a ‘fast track’ mechanism for future leaders, who would receive dedicated support to assume higher responsibilities in a shorter period of time. This scheme would contribute to creating a feeling of pride and mutual loyalty among the higher level gazetted officers, and would instate more transparency and meritocracy in promotions.

Policy and Regulatory Changes

4. Analyse the Civil Service law, by laws and related rules and procedures to establish the extent to which they reflect the principles of merit, equal opportunities and ethics. This action, if taken as part of broader civil service reform measures, can help identify areas of improvement in the law and procedures.

5. Review the Civil Service Code of Conduct in a consultative manner. Civil servants are called upon to take on numerous challenges and the values and conduct they are required to uphold should as far as possible enable them to actively take forward the changes happening in the country. Consultative review of the code of conduct, and wide dissemination with additional explanatory and promotional materials within the civil service and more broadly to the general public, will help promote mindset change essential to the effective functioning of the civil service. Revisiting the Code of Conduct will promote the values of the civil service inducing more accountability and reducing incidences of misconduct.

Revise procedures and disseminate revised procedures widely. In particular, the Union Civil Service Board could consider reviewing selection procedures for gazetted and non-gazetted officers, and establishing and disseminating clear guidelines on selection procedures and principles of recruitment to Ministries. The Union Civil Service Board could also include a mandatory minimum period for public advertisement of vacancies, to avoid over-reliance on personal connections in hiring.

6. Explore policies to promote a more inclusive civil service, and to ensure that more women and ethnic minorities are considered for promotions to senior civil service positions. A task force or similar body on equal opportunities and inclusion could identify policy objectives and drive policy and system change towards these objectives.

Civil Service Systems

7. Establish Competency frameworks for the civil service. These support the achievement of reform objectives through direct contribution to improving the selection and individual performance management processes. Competency frameworks help establish civil service values and the skills, knowledge and behaviours that will enable individual civil servants, and the civil service as a whole to succeed.
8. Encourage establishment of job descriptions for new posts, which outline role objectives, key functions, and the competencies and qualifications. Making job descriptions, backed by competency frameworks, the basis of recruitment and selection processes would improve meritocratic practices and ensure fairness in promotions and postings, and better enable new civil servants to understand the expectations of their performance.

9. Review the individual performance evaluation system, with a view to transforming it into a tool to drive improved job performance, satisfaction and career development, and establish a plan for phased revisions to the system. Give civil service employees more information about performance evaluations; establish a more open appeals and review process; establish efficient oversight; and make the process more participatory and based on mutually agreed objectives. Competency frameworks would be reinforced in the individual performance management system at a later stage.

10. Review the pay and benefits system, with a view to ensuring fairness and predictability. This would enable the government to identify measures to ensure benefits are allocated consistently, that pay can be adjusted to meet living conditions in different parts of the country, and that any improvements to the pensions system can be identified. Given the fiscal challenges of pay and benefit reform, it is recommended to carry out financial analysis and projections before establishing plans for rationalising pay and benefits.

11. Review systems for upholding ethical conduct, such as procedures for reporting and investigating instances of civil servant misconduct, with a view to increasing its effectiveness and the protection of whistle blowers. Among the improvements suggested by this survey include systems for anonymous reporting of instances of bribery and subsequent effective, objective and confidential investigation. A referral entity could be established to discuss ethical dilemmas/conflict of interests faced by employees and find solutions to manage them.

Training and Capacity Development

12. Enhance Central Institutes for Civil Service (CICS) training curricula, to improve relevance of training to job requirements and career progression, including skills and competency development. Competency frameworks could form the basis of a training needs assessment and the subsequent redevelopment of existing curricula and training of trainers. Updated curricula could also include more participatory learning methodologies.

13. Introduce targeted modules on ethics and equal opportunities. The Union Civil Service Board can develop and integrate an interactive training module on gender equality, women’s empowerment and equal opportunities into training curricula, and develop awareness materials targeting leaders and those responsible for human resources management. Similarly, the Union Civil Service Board could establish a compulsory training module on ethics and integrity in accordance with the new Code of Conduct and, if applicable, revised systems for upholding ethical conduct.

14. Provide clear guidance on international training opportunities and ensure a
A competitive selection system is balanced by considerations of equal opportunities and the future needs of the civil service.

In the longer term, the Government can review how international learning opportunities are budgeted and the role of individual Ministries in directing the improvement of individual staff capacity. The UCSB or any other entity within the service could be mandated to review and validate selection criteria and subsequently the selection of candidates for international training / learning opportunities.

Among the above recommendations are short term measures that can have an immediate impact to improve meritocracy, ethics or motivation in the civil service; others are longer term endeavours which would require significant investment and effort on the part of the Union Civil Service Board. It is recommended that the Union Civil Service Board and other government institutions review the above to establish what is politically and logistically feasible and in line with national priorities.
Sources Consulted


Hook, D, Tin Maung Than & Ninh, Kim N. B. (2015), Conceptualising Public Sector Reform in Myanmar, Asia Foundation.


A1.1 Mixed Methods

The premise of this study's methodology is that using a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches strengthens analyses overall. Quantitative research begins with predetermined, instrument-based questions designed to test a priori hypotheses. In contrast, qualitative methods involve naturalistic data collection through unstructured conversations with participants in which trends emerge from the subjects themselves. The study includes a frequency count of survey data, which was cross-tabulated against civil service personnel's demographic information. The second type of analysis was qualitative and investigated the content of the information provided during the focus group discussions. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted separately. Findings were integrated afterwards in a comprehensive analysis set. The objective is to use quantitative and qualitative methodologies to check one another to reveal strengths and inconsistencies in the study.

Following the mixed methodology, the survey team chose a convergent analytical design to compare findings from the qualitative and quantitative data sources (see Figure A1.1).

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12 See Annex 2 for a summary of the results of the frequency analysis.
**Implement Perception Survey**
- With UCSB, identify participants of interviews and secondary literature
- Finalise survey questionnaire
- Identify sample and collect all survey questionnaires

**Implement Focus Group discussions**
- Finalise focus group guide
- Identify sample
- Conduct all focus group discussions

**Step 2**

**Analyze Perception Survey Data**
- Use descriptive statistics
- Use inferential statistics

**Analyze Focus Group Discussions**
- Develop common themes
- Code FGDs

**Step 3**

**Strategies to Merge Two Sets of Results**
- Identify content area represented in both data sets and compare, contrast and/or synthesise the results in a discussion or table.
- Identify differences within one set of results based on dimensions within the other set and examine the differences within a display organised in the dimensions.
- Develop procedures to transform one type of results into another type of data (i.e., turn codes into counts).
- Conduct further analysis to transform data to the other data (i.e., conduct statistical analysis that include thematic counts).

**Step 4**

**Interpretation of Merged Results**
- Summarise and interpret separate results.
- Discuss to what extent and in what ways results from two type of data converge, diverge, relate to each other and/or produce a more complete understanding.

A1.2 Sampling, Piloting and Survey Implementation

Sample quotas for each survey instrument were set in proportion to the number of trainees attending the UCSB Training Institutes at the time that the survey was to take place (See table 2.1 with CICS total trainee population). This sample could not be compared against the total population of the civil service as there were no official figures provided during the study of the demographic characteristics of the civil service. Therefore, survey results cannot be extrapolated to the total civil service population and selection bias for questions on recruitment and corruption is possible since it is impossible to know how many respondents were engaged in corruption or received preferential treatment during their recruitment process, two subjects of this study.

It is also possible that some respondent demographics are over-represented. For example, civil service respondents worked for the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, but other ministries were not available to participate in this study. Also, the CICS trainee population during this study skewed predominately female.

Table A1.1 Total CICS Trainee Population (June-August 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Civil Service Personnel</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper Myanmar CICS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre Service</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Officer</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Level</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>1279</td>
<td>1498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lower Myanmar CICS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Service</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Officer</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level Officer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1275</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,171</td>
<td>3,792</td>
<td>5,039</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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13 The survey tried to interview proportionally to the type of trainee that was attending the CICS. There were two lists given to MSR, one with female trainees and one with male trainees. The company hired to conduct the survey, the Myanmar Survey Research, proportionally selected from each list (every n=3 respondent was selected from the list). However, by the end of the data collection 25% of respondents were male and 75% were female. This gender proportion mirrored the existing CICS trainees' representation.
The survey sampled 40% of the total population of CICS trainees for the June-Aug 2015 term. In Lower Myanmar CICS, the main fieldwork commenced on the 20 July and was completed by 3 August 2015. In Upper Myanmar CICS, the fieldwork started on the 20 July and finished by the 30 July 2015.

The perception survey conducted two pilot exercises in an attempt to validate survey instruments. The first pilot took place in the Upper Myanmar CICS on 1 June 2015. A total of 31 survey questions were discussed. The purpose of the pilot was test the effectiveness of selected questions and their wording and to evaluate participants’ opinions of the questionnaire.

The second pilot took place on 22 July 2015 in the Lower Myanmar CICS and tested the data collection process. The requirement to get trainees to take the survey on location made it difficult to provide complete anonymity to participants.

A1.3 Data Collection

After four months of consultation, piloting and fine-tuning, involving both international and national stakeholders, the survey questionnaire and focus group discussion guides were completed at the end of June 2015. UCSB arranged the data collection process to take place in both the upper and lower CICS between 20 July 2 and 3 August, 2015. Data collection occurred during its training schedule. The survey questionnaire was given to the civil service personnel for self-answering in classroom settings and took approximately 45 minutes. Questionnaires were completed in the presence of a facilitator, who read each question aloud, and research assistants, who answered survey respondents’ questions to clarify misunderstandings. Questionnaires were checked for answers that were left in blank. Each survey session took place in classrooms with an average of 50 respondents.

A1.4 Data Analysis

The survey team compared survey responses with civil service personnel’s demographic information and applied three analytical lenses: Ethics, equal opportunities and meritocracy.

Focus group responses were analysed for new insights and to provide context for survey data. Focus group discussions were transcribed and translated from Burmese into English, introducing possible uncertainties around original meanings of respondents’ statements. Word frequency queries were conducted with Nvivo software. Focus group data were coded and analysed according to the three lenses guiding the study.

A1.5 Survey Limitations and Quality Assurance

Selection Bias

There is a selection bias for specific questions as respondents are questioned about behaviours and systems in which they have a stake, including bribery and nepotism. For example, respondents who have benefited from corrupt hiring practices may have favourable opinions regarding the efficacy of questionable CICS recruitment practices.

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14 The responses were not weighted against the whole civil service as there was incomplete information on the total civil service population. For example, it was not known the proportion of women versus male civil service personnel. Also, it was unknown the proportion of teachers with regards to the rest of the civil service. Annex 2 presents the information given by UCSB on the total civil service population.

15 Focus group answers added a qualitative dimension further to the answers given in the survey questionnaire.
Target Population Biases

UCSB fixed a specific period when the survey was to be conducted, so the sample is mainly comprised of teachers (60%) and health workers (14%).\textsuperscript{17} Furthermore, it was not possible to gather information on the proportion of teachers within the general civil service. Therefore, teachers and health workers’ answers are not weighted against the total civil service.

Also, following requirements by the CICS leadership, the survey sample mirrored the CICS trainee population, which has more women trainees than men trainees. The study was unable to obtain gender disaggregated data of the total Myanmar civil service personnel population. Because of this, results are not weighted and inferences can only be applied to the total CICS trainee population.

Biases due to Lack of Anonymity

It was not possible to provide anonymity of the respondents because the survey took place within the CICS during training and CICS leadership knew in advance who was participating. This might have skewed data toward positive responses.

Addressing Survey Limitations

To counterbalance these limitations, quality assurance was introduced throughout the survey from the design, data collection and data analysis.\textsuperscript{18} Government officials, international experts, local researchers and UNDP staff revised various drafts of the survey to improve its coherence. The survey instrument was piloted twice to ensure that the equivalent versions of questions in English was easy to understand in colloquial Myanmar.

During the data collection phase, the survey followed clearly delineated protocols to minimise errors. Data collection teams underwent training to ensure uniform application of the survey materials and clear explanation of the study’s rationale and protocol.

Data-entry was conducted under close supervision by a UNDP statistician, who randomly tested data analysis for inconsistencies and missing values.

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\textsuperscript{17} Nvivo is a qualitative software designed for textual analysis.

\textsuperscript{18} Quality assurance is defined here as the methods used for collecting, processing or analysing survey data aimed at maintaining the survey’s validity and reliability.