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Local
Governance
Mapping

THE STATE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE: TRENDS IN BAGO



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UNDP MYANMAR

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Acronyms

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



Executive Summary

This report outlines the results of the Local Governance Mapping conducted by UNDP in Bago Region. Based on the perceptions of the people and local governance actors, the mapping has tried to capture some key aspects of the current dynamics of governance at the frontline of state-citizen interaction and focuses in its analysis on participation in public sector planning, access to basic services and accountability in local governance.

In consultation with the Bago Region government, it was agreed that the Local Governance Mapping would be conducted in three townships, namely, Taungoo, Padaung and Zigon between February and June 2014.

Bago Region

Bago Region is one of the core regions of central Myanmar, home to almost 10 percent of its population and it is the second largest producer of rice among all States and Regions contributing substantially to Myanmar's GDP and economic growth. While the eastern part of Bago region has faced instability due to armed conflict between ethnic armed groups and the army, the remaining part has been more stable and has not experienced any major conflict or instability after the turbulent decades of the 1950s and 1960s.

On most of the social indicators Bago Region fares similar to the national average of Myanmar. On access to safe drinking water Bago is doing slightly better, on several primary education and health indicators Bago Region remains slightly below the national average while on the overall poverty incidence it is doing better than the national average (18 percent versus 26 percent). However, this may not be the case in the eastern part of the Region.

According to the 288 people that were interviewed as part of this survey, not much has changed over the last three years in the food and income situation of their households. However, safety and security was not a concern for most people as 95 percent of the respondents felt safe in their village tract or ward covered under this mapping and mentioned that this has either remained the same over the last three years or even improved. At the village tract and ward level, more than half of the respondents had noticed an improvement in basic services like basic health care and primary education. In general, more health and school facilities are available or have been upgraded and more qualified staff is available to attend to the needs of the citizens.

Overall, the lack of access to clean water came out as the most important problem, mentioned by 27 percent of the respondents, followed by lack of jobs or economic activities by (24 percent), and lack of access to electricity (13 percent). However, there were significant differences between the three townships. The figures presented in the report show that **the needs and problems of people can differ significantly per township or even per village tract/ward and that tailor made solutions and responses are required if government wants to become more responsive to these needs and become more "people centred"**. If so, it is critical for government to be able to assess and record these different needs on the basis of transparent and equitable criteria and have the necessary systems in place that

enables it to respond to each of these issues fairly, systematically and adequately. It will require more autonomy of township administration staff to enable them to respond to these needs as they are in the best position to evaluate and weigh the different demands from the various communities and prioritise and implement the most effective and efficient response.

Development planning and participation

The availability and use of the various development funds at the township level and the mechanisms that have been put in place to involve people in the identification of projects act as important catalysts for reform at the township level. Even though the combined volume of these funds is still rather limited per township, they trigger a new way of interaction between government and citizens, while they act at the same time as a positive incentive to become more responsive to the needs of the people.

In the three townships studied in Bago Region, the Township Development Support Committees (TDSC), which were established in 2013, play already an active role in the identification of projects for the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) and the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). Members of the committee go out to the village tracts and discuss and assess project proposals with the Village Tract Administrators/Ward Administrators and formal (Village Tract/Ward Development Support Committees) or informal (like the Elderly and Respected People) groups at village tract/ward level. No direct consultation of community members is taking place in a systematic way however, which is partly the reason why not many citizens are aware of this new consultative body. At the township level, the TDSCs are actively involved in the decision-making process regarding the selection of projects for these development funds which usually are prioritised collectively involving the Township Administrator (TA), the various Heads of Departments (HoD), the Village Tract Administrators and the TDSC during their joint meetings and later on endorsed by the General Administration Department (GAD) at Township and Region level.

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

While the TDSCs are active and play an important role that is respected by the TA, there is however the questions of representation and legitimacy. The TDSCs in Bago Region are mainly composed of representatives of the business sector who are essentially from the wards and not from the village tracts, thus excluding the majority of the population in the townships in the deliberations of the use of the development funds. While this was done to make it easier for the TDSCs to meet on a regular basis, it excludes a large part of the more rural population in the consultation process regarding the selection of development projects. In addition, there are no female TDSC members in the three townships in Bago Region, which is most likely to result in their needs and priorities being not taken up. This can be explained by the fact that members of these committees in Bago Region were selected/nominated from the various groups in each of the wards that have an almost exclusive male membership. As a result however, the TDSCs do not reflect the diversity that exists in society and the different interests that different groups do have within society.

This is likely to impact negatively on their legitimacy as was mentioned several times especially by people not feeling represented or involved.

Delivery of basic services

Discussions with Heads of Departments revealed that not much has changed in the planning processes of sector departments at the township level over the last few years. The actual planning in most departments still takes place at the Union level, making it almost impossible for Heads of Departments at the township level to adjust their plans to any agreed upon township priorities or to the plans of other departments.

Both citizens and front line service providers acknowledge that improvements in service delivery have been made over the last three years however. Fifty-five percent of the respondents mentioned that health services in general (both public and private combined) had improved over the last three years, mainly due to improved health facilities, and the improved availability of health staff and medicines. Fifty-one percent of the respondents mentioned that primary education had improved due to improvements in the school facilities and the availability of teachers. Regarding the availability of safe drinking water only 29 percent of the respondents mentioned that they experienced any improvements in their situation over the last three years. These findings are encouraging in the sense that people do acknowledge the result of the additional investments by government that have taken place since 2011, but they should be used with caution as well since the starting point against which people compare the present situation in service delivery in health and primary education is very low and small improvements might be seen as big steps forward.

When discussing these changes and needs with the government staff directly involved in service provision, it became clear that these improvements are mainly due to extra resources that are made available by government for basic service delivery and are not so much a result of changes in the planning and delivery mechanisms of these services. Citizen participation in service delivery, either through consultation or through active involvement via a Village Health Committee or Parent-Teacher Association remains very limited. “Bottom up planning” is up to now not much more than “bottom up information provision” to Union-level decision makers by the lower administration. Since the actual planning in most departments is still taking place at the Union level it is almost impossible for Heads of Departments at the township level to adjust their plans to any agreed upon township priorities or to the plans of other departments. Their ability to become more responsive to the needs of the township citizens and to coordinate their plans and activities is as a consequence very limited. In that sense, Bago Region is not much different from the other States and Regions in Myanmar.

Basic healthcare: Most health providers interviewed acknowledged that the provision of health services in the three townships has improved over the last three years. More facilities have been built (more (Sub)-Rural Health Centres and hospitals are upgraded) and more health staff is available. In addition, most of them mentioned improvements in the supply of medicines (essential drugs) and medical equipment and an improved knowledge of healthcare by the staff.

While the overall health provision situation has improved, there are according to the service providers several specific bottlenecks for improving public health services in these three

townships. More Sub Rural Health Centres (SRHC) are still needed since the number of centres remains far below the target. At the facility level, the basic infrastructure of the facility is often not optimal as there is often lack of water, electricity, and housing for medical staff. In addition, even though improvements have been made, the regular supply of medicines and medical equipment and the number of healthcare staff at the health facility was cited as the most important challenges for further improvement in the quality of health services.

There were big differences between urban and rural respondents regarding the use of public or private health facilities. Fifty five percent of the respondents mentioned that the health services in their village-tract or ward have indeed improved, while 38 percent mentioned that these services had stayed more or less the same. Regarding equity in treatment, almost all respondents (95 percent) and both male and female respondents who made use of public health facilities felt that they received the same treatment as any other person in their village tract or ward, i.e. there was no discrimination against particular groups within the community. Direct participation of people in the planning of health care improvements is still very limited.

The survey noticed a big difference in statements of service providers and service users regarding the payment for essential drugs. While the health mentioned that these are always for free (if available), 76 percent of the respondents who use a public health facility mentioned that they always or most of the time have to pay for medicines.

Primary education: According to the Township Education Officers (TEOs), teachers and principals interviewed there have been substantial improvements in the provision of primary education. Most interlocutors identified the improved quality of teaching (better trained teaching staff) and improved infrastructure (buildings and classrooms) as the main factors. Teachers believed that improvements to school accessories and teaching support materials would be the most cost-effective way to further improve the quality of teaching. In addition, more structural basic infrastructural improvements were also seen as required, although overcrowding of classrooms has reduced significantly.

Only a small majority (51 percent) of the respondents were of the opinion that primary education in their village-tract or ward had improved over the last three years. Most of the respondents mentioned the improvements in infrastructure as the main reason for the improvement in education followed by an increase in the number of teaching staff and an improved attitude of the teachers. As a result of these improvements 69 percent of the respondents with children attending primary school were satisfied with the quality of education.

Drinking water: Access to safe drinking water stood at 81 percent for Bago Region as a whole in 2010, which is slightly above the national average of 69 percent and has improved substantially from 66 percent in 2005. In most cases, however, households and communities are self-reliant, especially in rural and remote areas, and do not get any assistance for meeting their basic water needs. The responsibility for drinking water provision is shared by the Department of Rural Development (DRD) under the Union Ministry of Livestock,

Fisheries and Rural Development and the Development Affairs Organisation (DAO), which is part of the Region Ministry of Development Affairs.

However, mapping showed that only 29 percent of the respondents mentioned that the provision of safe drinking water has improved over the last few years. The provision of safe drinking water is high on the list of needs in most village tracts and wards. However, government authorities in Bago Region have only recently begun to invest more resources in this sector, and have yet to develop a more systematic, transparent, target-oriented and participatory approach to drinking water provision. Partly as a result of the citizen consultation process through the Village Tract Administrators (VTAs), the TDSC and the Township Development Affairs Committee (TDAC) an increasingly larger part of the development funds and the revenue of the DAOs in the three townships is going to be allocated to address bottlenecks in drinking water provision in 2014/2015.

Information, transparency and accountability

Regarding transparency and accountability of government at the township level, the corner stones of a sustainable democracy, only small improvements have been made in Bago Region over the past few years according to the various stakeholders involved in the study. Formally, there have only been minor changes in the accountability structures at the township and village tract/ward level over the last few years. Although the Ward or Village Tract Administration Law of 2012 describes that the Village Tract Administrator/ Ward Administrator (VTA/WA) is elected from and by the group of 10 household heads¹, the elected VTA/WA is not accountable to this constituency and reports in practice to the TA, who can assign tasks to the VTA/WA and can fire the VTA/WA in case of serious misconduct. Nevertheless, partly because the developmental role of the VTA/WA has increased over the years and the VTA/WA has become the link person between the village tract/ward and the township, most of the VTAs/WAs interviewed do feel accountable to their communities.

Early 2014 the Township Development Affairs Committees (TDAC) was established after the Bago Region Government had adopted its Municipal Law. Four out of its seven members are representatives of groups of citizens in the township. According to this law, the TDAC oversees and assists the Executive Officer of the Development Affairs Organisation (DAO)² with the management of the municipality and the provision of municipal services like garbage collection, drinking water provision, the issuing of licences, etc. Contrary to other departments, the revenues of the DAO stay within the municipality and constitute both the recurrent and capital budget of the DAO. The TDAC has to be consulted about the utilisation of these funds and can propose public works to be implemented in the municipality as well as approve local rates and taxes among others. As a result, the Executive officer of the DAO will become to a certain extent accountable to the TDAC. At the time of collecting the field data, this law had not been fully implemented and the TDAC was in practice still more advisory to the DAO. Whether and how this relationship will change in practice based on the new municipal law remains to be seen.

Access to information is critical for improving transparency and accountability. More information is flowing downward from the township administration and departments to the VTAs and to the committee members but this information is not reaching citizens at the community level yet. In addition, it is left to the discretion of the Heads of Departments and

¹ While the Ward or Village Tract Administration law of 2012 does not explicitly refer to 100 household head leaders and only to 10 household leaders, they continue to function in practice.

² It is important to clarify that Development Affairs Organization (DAO) is meant to only denote the Office (Municipal) here although some sources have indicated that it should be used to include both the Office and the TDAC.

the TAs to decide what information they share with the public, making the availability of information dependent on the personality of these government staff rather than on clearly defined procedures.

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

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

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

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



1. Introduction

Bago Region is one of the core regions of central Myanmar, home to almost 10% of its population and it is the second largest producer of rice among all States and Regions contributing substantially to Myanmar's GDP and economic growth. While the eastern part of Bago region has faced instability due to armed conflict between ethnic armed groups and the army, the remaining part has been more stable and has not experienced any major conflict or instability after the turbulent decades of the 1950s and 1960s, when its central hill tracts were affected by a major armed insurgency and the state's efforts to quash it. It is subject to occasional flooding damaging farmlands and destroying property. Its largely rural population is dominantly Bamar Buddhist with a large presence of Kayin in the eastern parts of the Bago region. Together, these features qualify Bago Region as one of the regions where government could relax its traditionally tight social control and implement its political and administrative reforms relatively fast and easily.

This report intends to present a snapshot of the present situation of local governance in Bago Region. It does not pretend to present a systematic assessment of the quality of governance in the Region, as most of the minimum required data for such an assessment are not yet available or reliable. Moreover, performance standards related to either the minimum quality of service delivery or the adherence to basic governance principles (like transparency and accountability) against which the present state of affairs could be measured has not yet been developed in Myanmar. Using the lens of "democratic governance", the report will therefore focus on a selected number of trends that have been chosen by the government of Myanmar as critical areas of change. They relate to the quality of interactions between state and citizens, effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery, and to 'clean government' and 'people-centred development'.

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

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

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

First, it addresses the **participation** in the planning and utilisation of the **development funds** available at the township level to tackle bottlenecks in service delivery and stimulate

local development. These funds represent the only budgets available at the township level over which the township has, to a certain extent, discretionary power. They are at the same time the only budgets in which people have some say about their allocation as to how they are utilised. How are these consultations taking place and do they help in changing the way in which government operates?

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

Lastly, the report addresses some aspects of improved **access to information, transparency and accountability** at the township level. In the relative absence of formal political and social accountability mechanisms towards the people, the report looks at some important processes that are critical for any possible accountability mechanisms that might be introduced in the near future. These include emerging formal and informal accountability mechanisms at the township and village tract/ward level, information flow from township-level governance institutions to citizens, the functioning of existing grievance redressal mechanisms and the potential role of civil society in governance processes at the township level.



2. Methodology

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

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

In order to obtain a holistic perspective of governance at local level, the Local Governance Mapping (LGM) used a combination of relevant instruments to map the quality of local governance from a ward/village-tract, township and Region or State level perspective.³

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

In Bago Region, a representative sample of 288 citizens equally divided over 6 village tracts/wards in 3 townships (Taungoo, Padaung and Zigon) were interviewed using the **Citizen Report Card (CRC)** methodology. The questionnaire focused on collecting opinions and experiences of people using basic services provided by government (such as primary healthcare and primary education) and on the way they interact with government (see Table 1 for an overall view of all instruments used).

In addition, 41 **Frontline Service Providers (FSP)**, including school principals, teachers, healthcare facility managers, healthcare staff and Village Tract/Ward Administrators (VT/WA) were interviewed in the same locations, focusing on the service delivery process and on their interaction with citizens who make use of these services. The objective was not to conduct an in-depth technical assessment of the education, health or water sectors as this was beyond the scope of this mapping.⁴ Instead, these interviews were intended to gain insights in the actual process of service delivery by describing and analysing the way in which service providers and service users interact in order to realise the actual delivery of basic services.

Similar issues were also discussed during the **Community Dialogues (CD)**, which were held in the same village tracts/wards, in which 211 people from different groups present in the community (including women, youth and elders) participated alongside 116 frontline service providers active in the health and education sector and the VT/WAs. The objective of this exercise was to collectively identify issues of governance emerging in relation to service delivery and local administration, and to agree on solutions that could be implemented at the community level.

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

⁴ A number of these studies are currently taking place to inform capacity building initiatives and programme design in Myanmar. In the education sector, the Ministry of Education and UNICEF have piloted a Township Education Improvement Plan (TEIP) in Mon State from 2013, and will be rolling the programme out to all 14 states/ regions in the country. A preliminary social assessment has been conducted by MSR for the Ministry of Education to inform the Myanmar Decentralizing Funding to Schools Programme, supported by the World Bank. In addition, a Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) initiated by the Ministry of Education (MoE) is underway with the support of development partners.

Township-level Mapping: Background Study on Township Governance

In order to gain insights in the functioning of township-level government (comprising the GAD, represented through the Township Administrator (TA), as well as representatives of the various sector departments) and of important governance processes within Bago Region, a background study was conducted in the same three townships.

In addition, Focus Group Discussions were held with both government and non-government members of the newly established Support Committees as well as with a selection of civil society organisations (CSOs) present in the township. These discussions focused, first of all, on the role of these actor groups in the governance process at township level and the relationship between these groups and the various government departments at the township level. Following this general discussion, a scoring was used to stimulate a discussion about important elements of governance in the respective townships.

Region-level Mapping: Interviews, focus group discussions and validation of interim findings

To complete the 360-degree mapping of governance at township level, discussions were held with relevant actors at the Region level using open interviews and focus group discussions. Finally, during a one-day workshop held at the Region level in which representatives of the various townships (both government and non-government) and Region-level officials participated, the initial findings were discussed and validated. Table 1 below provides an overview of the various tools used at each level of data collection and the number of participants in Bago Region.

Table 1:
Local Government
Mapping participants,
coverage and outputs for
Bago Region.

Mapping level	Activity	Participants	Geographical scope	Outputs
Community	Citizen Report Card (CRC)	288 citizen respondents	6 VTs/ wards in 3 townships	Dataset and report on key findings
	Frontline Service Provider interviews	6 Village Tract Administrators 6 primary school principals 14 primary school teachers 6 heads of healthcare facilities 9 health care staff	6 VTs/ wards in 3 townships	
	Community Dialogues (CD)	211 service users 116 service providers	6 VTs/ wards in 3 townships	Reports for each village tract/ward
Township	Interviews and secondary data analysis	Government staff from relevant departments.	Three townships	Background report on key findings
	Focus group discussions	Government staff, committee members and civil society representatives	Three townships	Data from scoring exercise and summary report for each township
Region	Focus-group discussions and interviews	Government staff from relevant departments.	Bago	Qualitative data to inform integrated analysis
	Workshop to share interim findings	Government staff and committee members from township level, Region level government and civil society representatives	Three townships and Bago	Validation of interim findings

In consultation with the Bago Region government **Taungoo, Padaung and Zigon** townships were selected to participate in this local governance mapping.⁵ Taungoo is the second largest township in the Region, easily accessible and more urban in character, while Padaung is a more rural but easily accessible township of medium size. Zigon is more rural and the smallest township in the Region. Together these three townships represent almost 10 percent of the population in Bago Region.

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

Taungoo	Ward No. 11
	Kyauk Taing Village Tract,
Padaung	Ta Loke Pin Village Tract
	Sin Te Village Tract,
Zigon	Ward No. 3
	Sa Bai Hmyaung Village Tract

Table 2: Selected townships and village tracts and wards

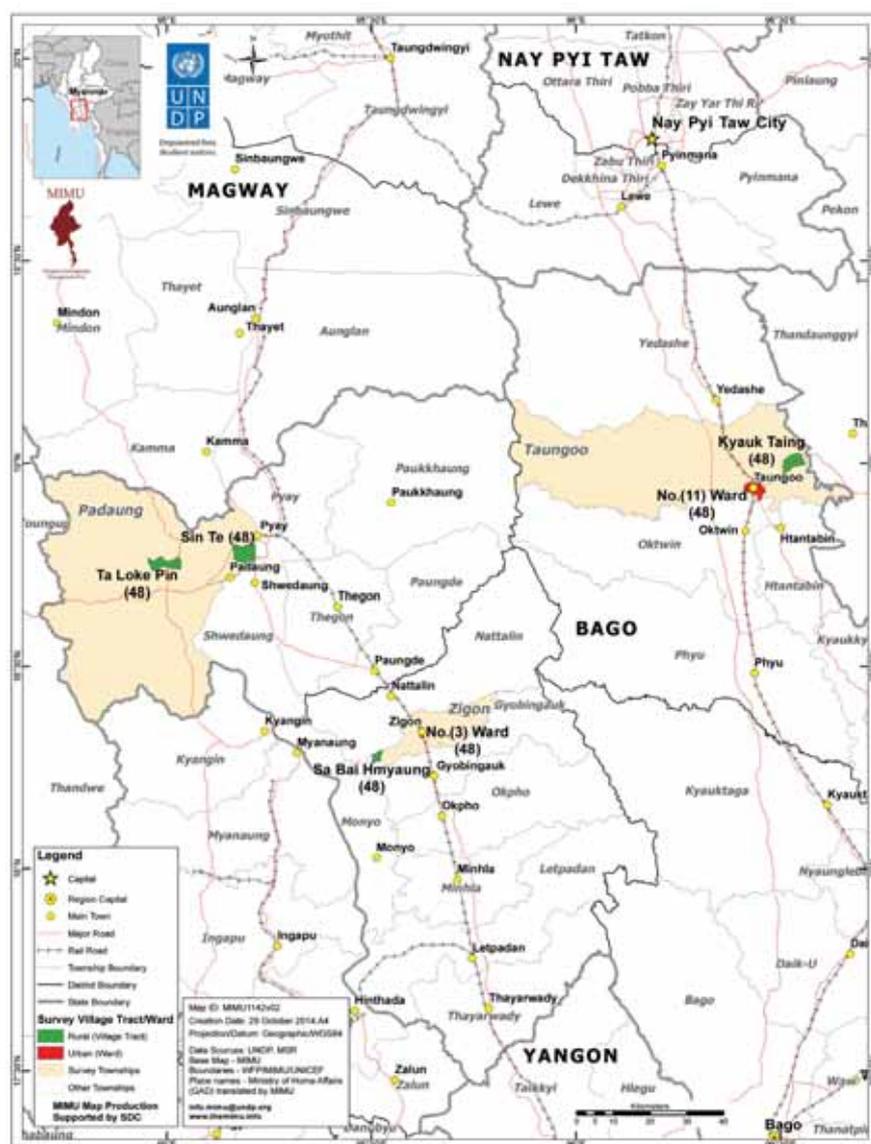


Figure 1: Bago Region and location of sample townships and village tracts/wards.

5 For selection criteria used see Local Governance Mapping in Myanmar: Background and Methodology’.



3. Introduction to Bago Region and the participating townships

Table 3: Bago at a glance

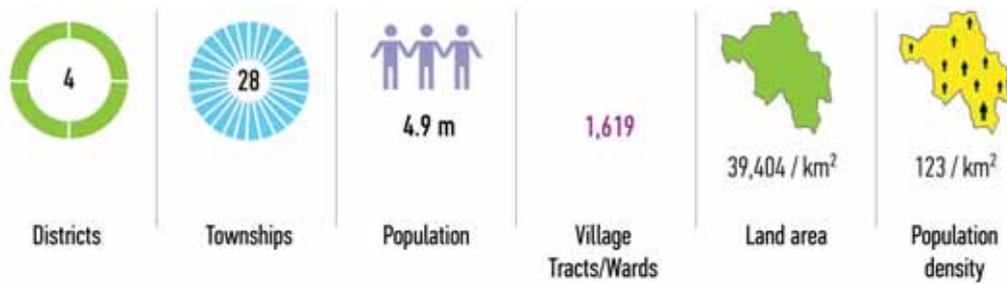


Figure 2: Map of Bago Region and its townships, including the ones participating in this study



Bago Region lies in the southern-central part of Myanmar, bordering 7 different States and Regions and the Gulf of Martaban in the south (see Figure 2). It occupies an area of 39,400 km² (which makes it slightly bigger than Bhutan and slightly smaller than Switzerland) (see Table 3). It is geographically divided by the sparsely inhabited Pegu

mountain range (Pegu Yoma) that runs from north to south through the middle of the Region. Bago Region therefore has a clearly identifiable western part sloping towards the Ayeyarwady River and an eastern part that consists mainly of the floodplains of the Sittaung River. This natural division has also been reflected in the sub-division of Bago East and Bago West for some administrative and statistical purposes. Bago Region benefits from the south west monsoon, but is protected against the violent storms that sometimes hit the western parts of Myanmar along the Bay of Bengal. Combined with its fertile soils Bago Region has therefore very conducive conditions for the production of rice and other crops.

3.1 Socio-economic context

On most of the social indicators Bago Region fares similar to the national average of Myanmar, while on the overall poverty incidence it is doing better than the national average. However, in the east, pockets of communities and IDPs would not be doing so well.

Since Bago Region features both mountains and floodplains, the Region has both forest cover for teak production, while the floodplains are important for rice production (covering two-thirds of the area used for crop farming) and other agricultural products like betel nut, sugarcane, maize, groundnut, sunflower, beans and pulses, rubber, etc. Mining and industries are limited to petroleum production and some processing of agriculture and forest products including salt, ceramics, sugar, paper, plywood, distilleries, and monosodium glutamate (MSG, a food additive).

On most of the social indicators Bago Region fares similar to the national average of Myanmar (see Figure 3). On access to safe drinking water Bago is doing slightly better, on several primary education and health indicators Bago remains slightly below the national average while on the overall poverty incidence it is doing better than the national average. However, this may not be the case in the eastern part of the Region.

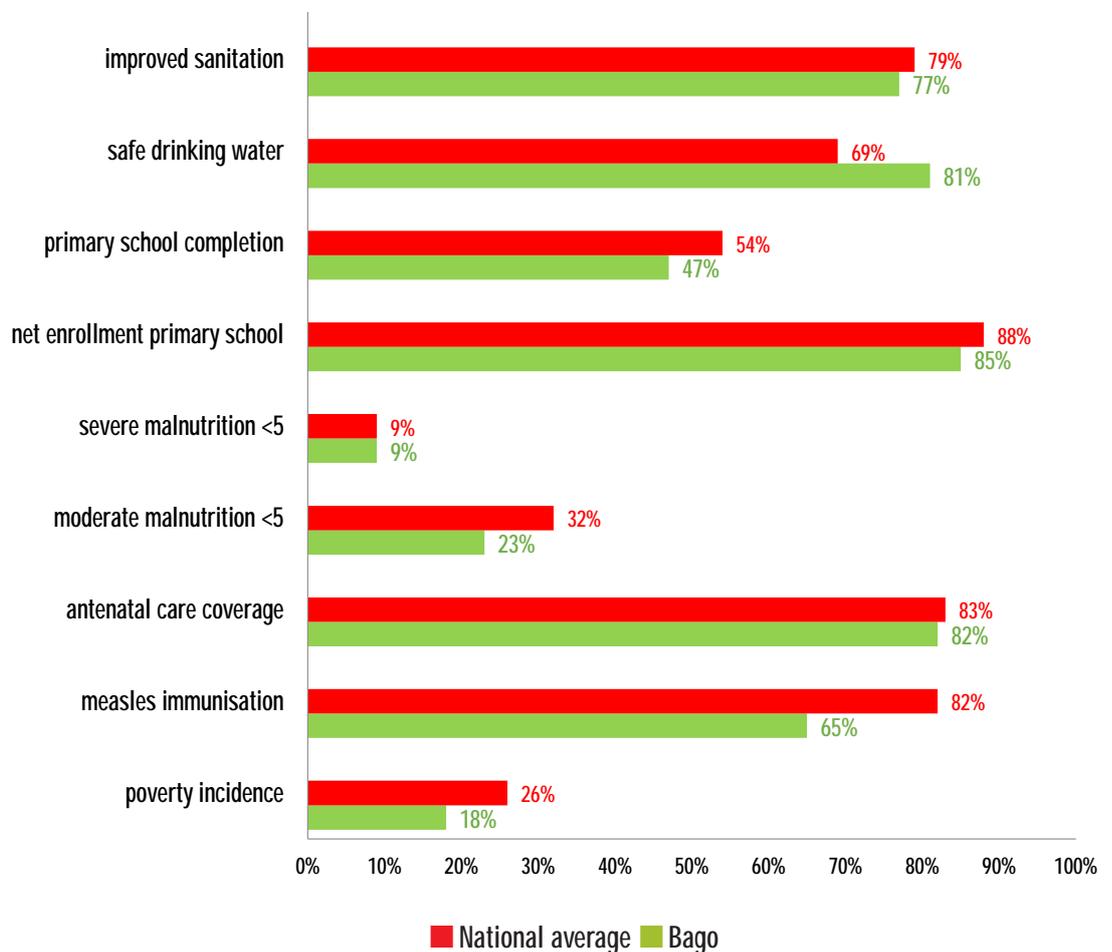


Figure 3: Selection of social development indicators for Bago Region compared to the Myanmar national average.

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

Bago, Pyay and Taungoo are university towns. Road and transport infrastructure is comparatively well-developed compared with other States and Regions. In Western Bago, the Ayeyarwady forms the main transport artery, and the country’s main railway lines pass through the Region. The long-standing plans to construct a large new airport outside Bago town (the “Hanthawady International Airport”) received a boost recently by the Myanmar government’s agreement with Incheon Airport to build and develop its facilities, which over time are expected to serve as the country’s main international airport.

3.2 Demographics

The recently held census⁶ revealed that Bago has a total population of 4.9 million people, which is 9.5 percent of the total population of Myanmar (its population being slightly bigger than that of Ireland). Overall, 22 percent of the population lives in urban areas, which is slightly below the national average of almost 30 percent. Compared to other States and Regions it has a medium population density of 123 inhabitants per square kilometres. Bago Region’s sex ratio is 92, meaning that there are 92 males on every 100 females, which is very close to the national sex ratio of 93 (see Table 3).

Bago’s population is dominantly Bamar Buddhist, although there are also Kayins, Shans, Pa-Os and Mons, as well as people of South Asian and Chinese origin.

Figure 4 presents an overview of the population distribution over the various townships in the Region.

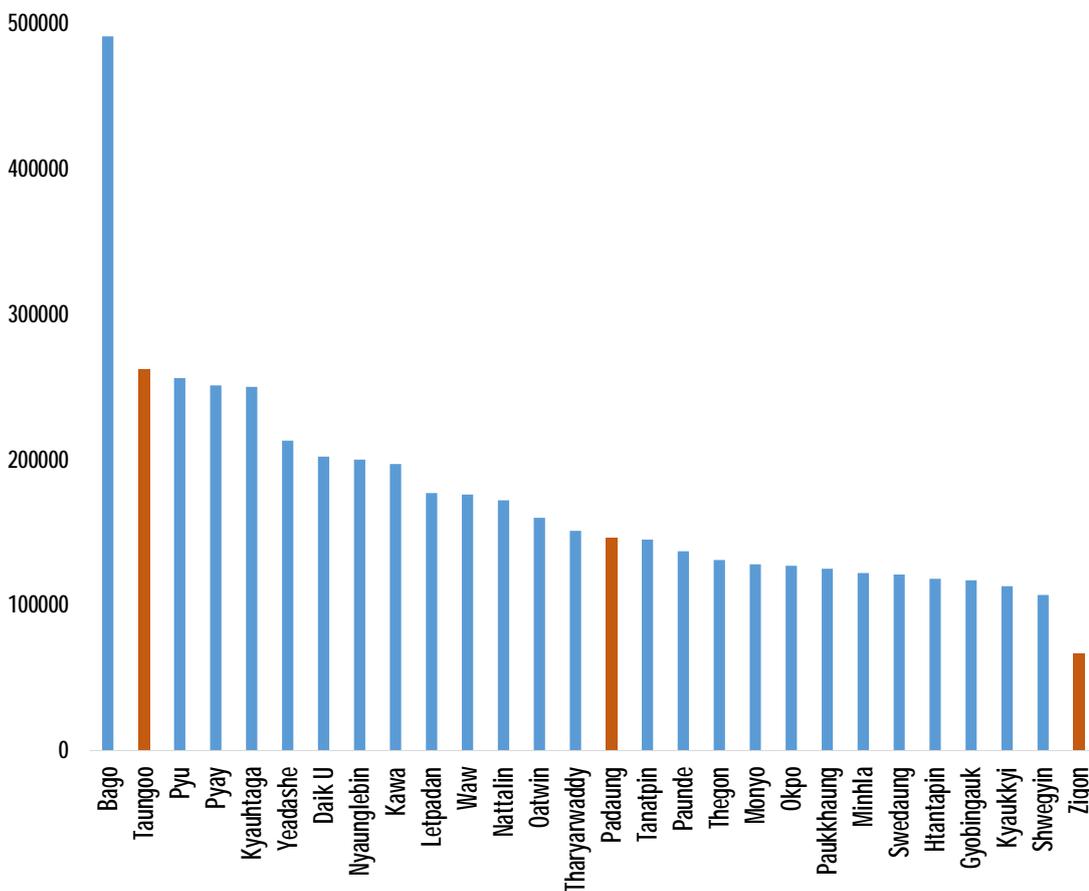


Figure 4: Overview of population Bago Region per township.

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

⁶ Department of Population, Ministry of Immigration and Population 2014; Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014; provisional results

3.3 Historical context and governance institutions in Bago Region

Bago Region had already, as Bago Division, been a functioning administrative entity since the British colonial era. In order to get a better understanding of the existing governance structure in Bago at the Region and local level, and to put the state-citizen relationship into the appropriate context, it is necessary to consider a number of historical legacies which continue to shape roles, attitudes and expectations across the Region.

Historically, Bago belongs to the heartland of the realms that have formed Myanmar in the course of centuries. According to legend, the city of Bago was already founded in 576 AD by Mon princes. The towns of Bago and Taungoo both served as capitals for medieval kingdoms. The Taungoo Empire once comprised most of what is now Myanmar, Thailand and Laos. The control of the area around Bago shifted several times between the Bamar and Mon kingdoms. For centuries, the region was a historical stronghold of the Mon people and Bago (then a major seaport and known as Pegu to European seafarers) was the traditional centre of Mon kingdoms, known as Hanthawaddy. Until the early 1800s, the areas of what is now Bago Region were predominantly populated by Mon and Karen tribes. Following the eventual defeat of the Mon dynasties in the 18th century, Burmese kings briefly established their capital in Bago and launched their campaigns against Siam's Ayutthaya from there. However, Bago lost its significance after the waterway connecting it to the open sea became unnavigable due to silt and the move of Burma's capital first to Ava (near Mandalay) and later to Rangoon (now Yangon) under the British rule.

In 1862, following the Second Anglo-Burmese War, Bago was incorporated as Pegu Division into British India, and thus became part of Lower Burma which comprised of Burma's coastal areas and had its administrative centre in Rangoon. After an 1885 reorganisation of the British-Indian Province of Burma, the areas of Ministerial Burma (Burma proper) included Pegu as one of its four Divisions with the subdivisions in the Districts of Rangoon City, Hanthawaddy (which is now Yangon Region), Pegu (now Bago District), Tharrawaddy and Prome (now Pyay). Taungoo was part of Tenasserim Division. As such, Bago was put under direct colonial administration. The British colonial period left a number of important legacies in Bago Region, some major infrastructure (such as the Rangoon-Mandalay Road), the basic economic structures, as well as the local administrative structure, which in its essentials continues to be in place today.

Following Burma's independence in 1947, Bago Division was placed under central government administration, in contrast to the Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin States which were provided, at least constitutionally, a significant degree of autonomy in a quasi-federal system. The 1947 Constitution treated States and Divisions differently, and did not provide for any elected representation of the latter. In fact, it neither mentioned divisions generally or Bago in particular. The devolved legislative powers included in the Constitution only applied to the States of Shan, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and, to some extent, the Special Division of the Chins. As a Division, Bago thus remained under the direct control of the central government in Yangon, with a Commissioner in charge of the Division, and Deputy Commissioners and Township Officers at the districts and townships respectively.

The territorial subdivisions in village tracts/wards, townships, and districts were retained from the pre-independence period. At the division level, attempts to institute local self-

government following the Democratization of Local Administration Act of 1953 never reached a stage of full implementation and did not alter the fundamental set-up of local government during the 1950s.⁷ In Bago, as in many parts of the country, these efforts were additionally hampered by the local instability and armed resistance against the state in many remote rural areas. During the 1950s and 1960s the fight against the Communist insurgency, which tried to overthrow the state formed under the 1947 Constitution, in the central Bago highlands was a priority for the increasingly militarized state administration. The Pegu Yoma, the highlands in the centre of Bago Division, served as hide-outs for Communist guerrillas. The Burmese military, using tactics that led to both the deforestation and the depopulation of much of these areas, ultimately prevailed, with the skirmishes taking place in the 1970s. The Karen National Union and its armed branch Karen National Liberation Army control certain areas of the eastern Bago. Since 2012, when the ceasefire was signed between the Government and the Karen National Union, several liaison offices were established in order to facilitate the implementation of the agreements. However in September 2014, several skirmishes between the Army and Karen National Union has raised concerns about the future of peace negotiations.

Following the 1962 military coup, all incipient forms of democratic participation were abolished, and Bago was, like all other States and Divisions, placed under direct military rule. Following the coup, Security and Administration Committees (SACs) were set up across the country, which were chaired by the regional military commander, and by the (military) Minister of Home Affairs at the centre.

It was only after the 1974 Constitution, shaped by the ideology of Burmese Socialism, that the 7 States and the 7 Divisions still largely in place today were provided the same outer attributes of sub-national state-hood, however with little actual space for autonomy. The 1974 Constitution introduced the concept that States and Divisions had the same status. Bago thus became one of 14 'constituent units' of the 'Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma', made up by the States and Divisions of People's Councils were introduced at all levels of government administration. The basic units of villages/village tracts and wards, towns and townships were essentially retained as they were set up in the 1920s, only leaving aside districts which had earlier played a more central role but were abolished as a level of administration in 1972. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) was built up as a mass organisation following the same territorial structure as the state itself, while all other parties were banned. From 1974 onwards, the BSPP's role in state administration was firmly entrenched in the Constitution itself. In the mid-1980s, the party claimed that over 2.3 million people were involved in fortnightly party cell meetings and other Party activities.⁸ In Bago, this new structure was established throughout the entirety of its territory.

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

⁷ For more detail on these attempts, see Furnivall, *Governance of Modern Burma*.

⁸ Taylor, *The State in Myanmar*.

The participatory elements of the structure were essentially abolished with the suspension of the 1974 Constitution in 1988, when Bago, as all other parts of the country, were again placed under direct military control and administration. While the territorial organisation remained the same, the dominant role played earlier by the BSPP was essentially substituted by the military in the form of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). The 27 May 1990 elections for a new national parliament resulted in the National League for Democracy (NLD) winning 47 seats in Bago Division (including one woman⁹), the National Unity Party (NUP) one seat and the Party for National Democracy, a regional party, 3 seats.¹⁰ However, the 1990 elections were not implemented and did not lead to the formation of a national legislature, nor did they have any effect on governance arrangements in Bago Region. Many of the NLD candidates who had won seats in Bago division were either arrested or left the country.

In 1993, the military regime began to rebuild direct links with the population and established the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA). It gradually became the largest state sponsored mass organisation (claiming in 2005 that it had grown to 23 million members). USDA branches were set up in every township across Bago, as in nearly every village tract and ward. Membership was “essentially compulsory for civil servants and those who sought to do business with or receive services from the state.”¹¹ Division officers of the USDA were often prominent regional businessmen as well as military personnel and civil servants. In 1997, the SLORC was reorganized into the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), which set up a pyramidal structure of similar committees down to the village tract/ward level.

In May 2008, the national referendum on the new Constitution was held. The new Constitution transformed Bago Division into Bago Region and made it a constituent unit of the new Union of the Republic of Myanmar. Accordingly, its institutions were set up following the 2010 elections.

The 2010 elections simultaneously elected representatives to the two House of the Union legislature and to the Region legislature (Hluttaw). They resulted in a victory of the USDP, which had emerged from the USDA a few months before the elections and had inherited its assets, leadership and networks, and gained a majority of the seats in all elected bodies in Bago Region.¹² The composition of the Region Hluttaw was slightly changed following the 2012 by-elections. In the by-elections of 1 April 2012, elections were held to fill four seats in the Pyithu Hluttaw, one seat in the Amyotha Hluttaw and one seat in Bago Region’s Hluttaw, all of which were won by the NLD.¹³

The Region Hluttaw is formed by (1) two representatives elected from each township in the Region; (2) representatives elected from each national race determined by the authorities concerned as having a population which constitutes 0.1 percent and above of the population

9 Daw Hla Hla Moe from Minhla (2) constituency.

10 A report about the 1990 elections contains biographical information of all those who won in the respective constituencies: http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs4/1990_multi-party_elections.pdf.

11 Taylor, *The State in Myanmar*.

12 On 4 March 2011, two USDP MPs from Bago Region, Ant Gyi, a Pyithu Hluttaw MP representing Thanatpin Township, and Cho Nwe Oo, representing Constituency 7 (Oktwin and Htantabin Townships) were disqualified by the Union Electoral Commission for failing to meet the constitutional requirements for citizenship (as both had a parent who are not Burmese citizens). There were also reports of irregularities in conduct of elections in Bago.

13 Pyithu Hluttaw: Htantabin - Sein Htun, Letpadan - Kyaw Min, Taungoo - Aung Soe Myint and Thanatpin - Myint Oo; Amyotha Hluttaw: Oktwin and Htantabin Townships (Constituency 7) - Min Oo and Bago Region Hluttaw: Kawa Township (2) - Myo Khaing.

of the Union; and (3) representatives who are the Defence Services personnel nominated by the Commander-in-Chief for an equal number of one-third of the total number of Hluttaw representatives elected under (1) and (2), i.e. one quarter of the total number of members. In the Region Hluttaw, the USDP holds 51 seats, the NUP 4, the Kayin People’s Party and the NLD one each, and the military occupies 19 seats (see Figure 5). The term of the Region or State Hluttaw is the same as the term of the Union Hluttaw, i.e. five years. Only three of the 76 Region Hluttaw members are women.

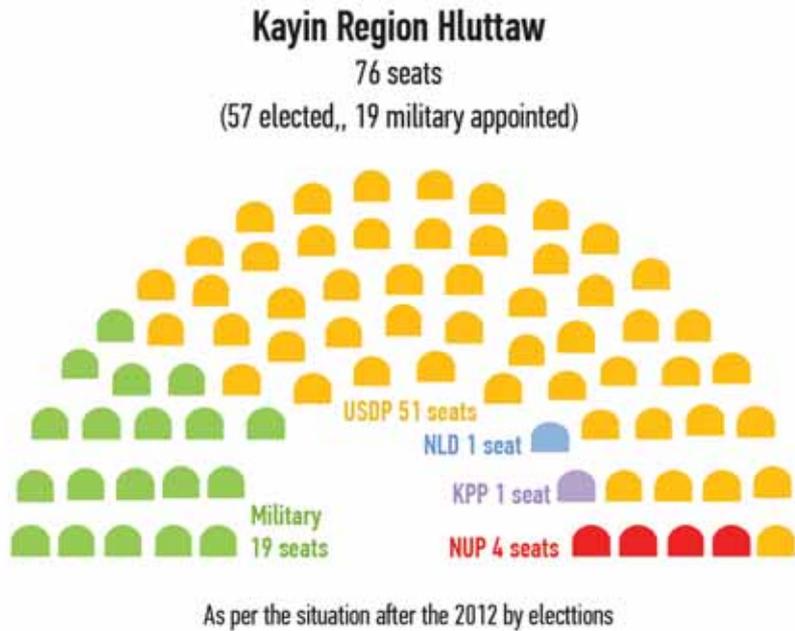


Figure 5: Composition of the Bago region Hluttaw

The elections for the members of the Bago Region Hluttaw were contested on the basis of townships, which were divided in two separate constituencies. As the Region has 28 townships, 56 territorial constituencies were formed. In addition, one constituency was set up for the ethnic Karen community of the Region. Altogether, therefore, 57 members were elected for the Region Hluttaw. In the townships selected for the survey, the USDP has won all the seats (see Table 4) , including Nyan Win, who went on to become Chief Minister of the Region. He ran as an unopposed candidate in Zigon 1 constituency.¹⁴

¹⁴ A retired Major General in the Myanmar Army, he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar from 2004 until his appointment as Chief Minister of Bago.

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

Constituency	Party	Candidate	Votes
Zigon 1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Nyan Win (elected)	unopposed
Zigon 2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Htoo Khaing (elected)	10,357
	Democratic Party (Myanmar)	Cho	4,990
	National Unity Party	Tun Chit	3,640
Padaung 1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Kyaw Myint (elected)	28,785
	National Unity Party	Htut Lin	10,441
Padaung 2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Than Zaw (elected)	25,837
	National Unity Party	Saw Hlaing	10,903
Taungoo 1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Tin Soe (elected)	56,744
	National Unity Party	Win Myint	16,301
	Kayin People's Party	Maung Mya	3,159
Taungoo 2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Kyaw Oo (elected)	45,783
	National Unity Party	Khin Maung Win	16,394
	Kayin People's Party	David Aye Ko	7,258

The head of executive branch of the Region is the Chief Minister of the Region. Members of the Region Government are Ministers of the Region. In addition, the Region Government also includes the Advocate General of the Region. The institutional framework for Bago Region follows that of another States and Regions and is prescribed in detail in the 2008 Constitution. The Region Government was established on 31 January 2011. Nyan Win, USDP, was appointed as Chief Minister, Win Tin, USDP as Speaker and Win Myint Soe, USDP, as Deputy Speaker of the Region Hluttaw.

In addition to the Chief Minister, the Region Government also comprises of 10 Ministers and the Advocate General of Bago Region.¹⁵ In addition to representatives of the USDP, the NUP was also given a ministerial portfolio. The Minister of Security and Border Affairs and the Minister of National Races are by constitution held by a representative of the military and a person elected for the ethnic minority constituency in the Region, i.e. the Karen community. All members of the Bago Region Government are men (see Table 5).

¹⁵ August 2014.

Name	Function	Party
Nyan Win	Chief Minister	USDP
Col Thet Tun	Ministry of Security and Border Affairs	Military-appointed
Myint Lwin Oo	Ministry of Finance	USDP
Tin Soe	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Breeding	USDP
Kyaw Htay	Ministry of Forestry and Mines	USDP
Kyaw Myint	Ministry of Planning and Economics	USDP
Tun Wai	Ministry of Transport	USDP
Baby Ohn	Ministry of Electric Power and Industry	NUP
Ye Myint Tun	Ministry of Development Affairs	USDP
Kyaw Oo	Ministry of Social Affairs	USDP
Jublee San Hla	Ministry of National Races Affairs (Karen)	KPP

Table 5:
Overview of Bago
Region Ministries and
Ministers

For the seats in the *Pyithu Hluttaw*, each township in Bago Region served as a constituency. Hence, altogether 28 members were elected from Bago Region to the larger one of the two Houses of the Union legislature. Of these, 26 seats went to the USDP, and 2 to the NUP (see Table 6).

Party	Constituencies contested	Votes	Percent	Seats
Union Solidarity and Development Party	28	1,185,431	58 percent	26
National Unity Party	26	551,881	27 percent	2
National Democratic Force	12	146,232	7 percent	-
Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics	7	101,593	5 percent	-
Independents	3	33,020	2 percent	-
Democratic Party (Myanmar)	2	22,590	1 percent	-
Democracy and Peace Party	2	9,861	∅1 percent	-
88 Generation Student Youths (Union of Myanmar)	1	8,148	∅1 percent	-
Kayin People's Party	1	6342	∅1 percent	-

Table 6 : 2010 Pyithu
Hluttaw election results for
Bago Region

For the *Amyotha Hluttaw*, each Region and State is assigned 12 seats. These are elected on the basis of groups of townships. The USDP won all of the 12 available seats in Bago Region (see Table 7).

Party	Constituencies contested	Votes	Percent	Seats
Union Solidarity and Development Party	12	1,234,580	57 percent	12
National Unity Party	12	672,986	27 percent	-
Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics	2	97,864	7 percent	-
National Democratic Force	2	53,587	5 percent	-
Democratic Party (Myanmar)	1	40,574	2 percent	-
Union Democracy Party	1	26,492	1 percent	-
Kayin People's Party	1	8,349	1 percent	-

Table 7:
2010 Amyotha Hluttaw
election results

What the brief summary of the political and administrative institutions of Bago Region shows, is that the Region has closely followed the pattern of developments in other parts of central Myanmar. The military, which fought active campaigns in the Region against a

Communist insurgency during the 1950s and 1960s, has had a tight control over the area for the past decades but less so in the east where KNU presence exists. The social-political infrastructures of the BSPP and the USDA have been well-established in the Region for the past 40 years. The election results of the 1990 elections and the 2012 by-elections indicate that the NLD also potentially enjoys a strong appeal among the population. Gaining about a third of the popular vote in 2010, the NUP can apparently also count on a sizable backing in the Region.

The Region institutions formed after the 2010 elections, however, do not reflect the political diversity and still essentially constitute a continuation of the influence of groups previously connected with and supportive of the military regime. This is important because it informs and shapes the efforts, undertaken since 2012, of reintroducing some forms of popular participation at the local level, in particular the townships and the village tracts and wards. Understandably, voices critical of the prevailing power structures have not yet fully come to the fore in the Region in the past three years. The 2012/2013 elections to the Village Tract and Ward Administrators as well as the formation of the various township committees in 2013 took place outside the scope of the wider political party spectrum, and returned many individuals who had already served in or had been connected to the system earlier.

Questions such as accountability and public participation in local decision-making processes cannot be considered entirely disconnected from the political dynamics in any given locality. While neither this summary nor the research undertaken by UNDP as a whole focuses on the historical legacies or the political dimension of transition in Myanmar, or in any given State or Region, not taking into account the overall context of political reform would not do justice to a comprehensive mapping of the local governance situation on the ground. Increasingly, questions such as the spending of public funds for development projects, and the accountability of office holders for their administrative actions will gain a political dimension, as Myanmar gradually moves closer to a genuine multi-party environment. A clear delimitation of roles and a definition of responsibilities between local administrators and civil servants on one side, and political or interest groups representatives on the other side, will be required. In particular, services should be provided on the basis of equal rights and equity, rather than on the basis of political favours and personal loyalties.



3.4 Introduction to the three townships participating in the study

The three townships participating in this mapping can be considered to be largely representative for Bago Region, with one township being more urban and the others more rural in character (see Table 8).

Township	Location	District	Population size	Urban	Rural	Wards	Village tracts	Villages
Taungoo	North-East Bago, along the Yangon Naypyitaw highway	Taungoo	262,000	107,000	154,000	27	37	251
Padaung	North-West Bago 20 km from Pyay	Pyay	146,000	18,000	128,000	8	40	208
Zigon	Central-West Bago along Yangon-Pyay tar road	Thayarwady	67,000	15,000	52,000	5	29	132

Table 8: Characteristics of Taungoo, Padaung and Zigon Townships

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

Taungoo

The town of Taungoo (see Figure 6) was established in the 16th century. Under the name Kaytumadi it was the capital of the Taungoo dynasty for nearly two hundred years. Until independence, Taungoo was part of Tenasserim Division, but was later joined with Bago. Because of its strategic location and history it has become the second largest township in Bago Region with 262,000 inhabitants and is the capital of the north-eastern district in Bago. It is well connected to Bago and Yangon in the south and Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay in the North by highway and railway. It is also the starting point of a road to Northern Kayin State and Kayah State, thus serving as a hub in central Myanmar for these more remote areas. The internal road infrastructure in the township is less well developed. Due to its proximity to northern Kayin, Taungoo has received a large influx of IDPs as a result of the ethnic conflicts in Kayin and Kayah during the last few decades of the 20th century and has sporadically been affected by the conflict itself.

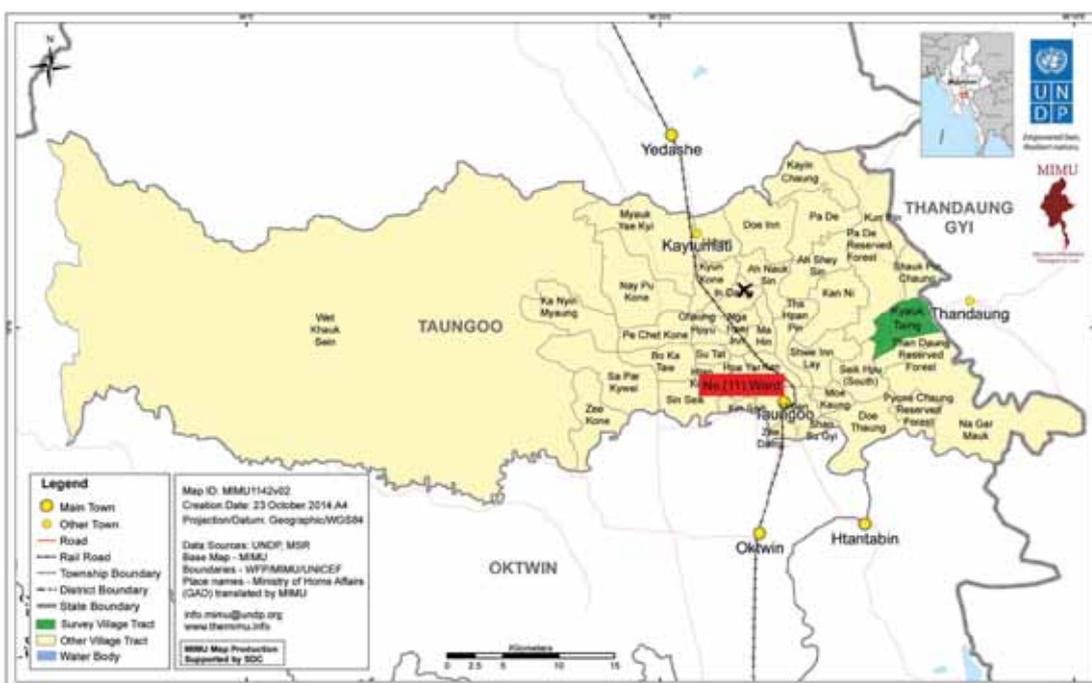


Figure 6: Taungoo Township

Source: MIMU

on small-hold farms in the floodplains. Major crops are monsoon paddy rice. Timber production is taking place in the more mountainous areas in the more remote western part of the township. In addition, there is a significant food processing industry in Taungoo town and due to its location on the old Yangon-Mandalay road the service and trade sectors are well represented as well. It is also a university town.

Padaung

With its population of 146,000 people Padaung is one of the medium size townships in Bago Region. It is part of Pyay District in the North West of Bago Region (see Figure 7) . Padaung was established as a township in 1973. Padaung is well connected to Pyay by road. The internal

Figure 7: Padaung Township

Source: MIMU



road network is however poorly developed and many villages across the township are not reachable by car during the rainy season. The township consists of lowlands on the western side of the Ayeyarwady River, while a large part bordering the Rakhine mountain range in the west is more mountainous, has a low population density and is difficult to access.

The main economic activity in the township is agriculture, most of which is taking place on small-hold farms. Major crops are monsoon paddy rice, groundnut, sesame, sunflower, black gram, green bean, and pigeon pea. Only 5,330 acres are under irrigation.

Zigon

Zigon (meaning ‘plum hill’) is the smallest of the three townships included in this study with only 67,000 inhabitants. It lies in the central part of Bago East along the North-South tar road from Yangon to Pyay (see Figure 8) . The Township Administration Office was established in 1973. The internal road network (linking all villages) is relatively well

developed. Almost all villages in the entire township are reachable by motorbike the whole year round.

The township consists mostly of lowlands, while the eastern part bordering Phyu Township is hilly. The main economic activity is agriculture, most of which is taking place on small-hold farms. Major crops are monsoon paddy rice, black gram, green gram, groundnut, sesame, and a little bit of sugar cane. Only 2,479 acres, out of a total crop land of 42,531 acres, are under irrigation.

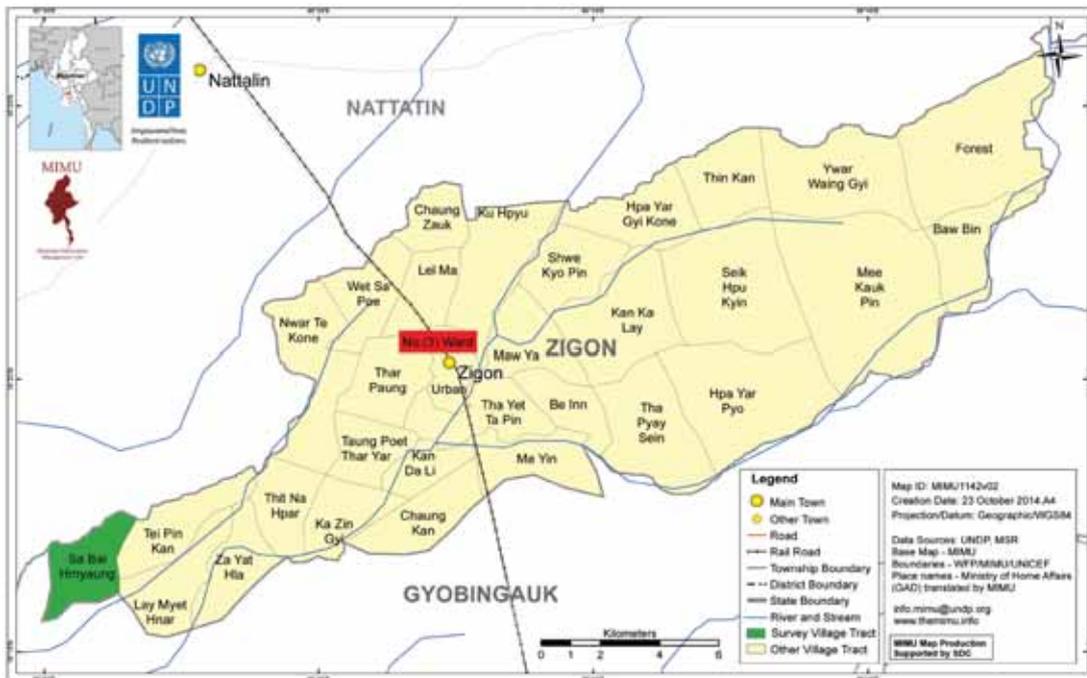


Figure 8: Zigon Township

Source: MIMU



4. Governance at the frontline – participation, accountability and responsiveness for service provision

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

In order to provide a context to the governance issues related to service delivery in Bago Region, it is important to understand the problems and challenges facing people in the three townships as well as perceptions of the major changes that have taken place over the last few years.

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

Respondents were asked to mention the most important problems at the moment in their village tract or ward (see Figures 9 and 10a/10b).

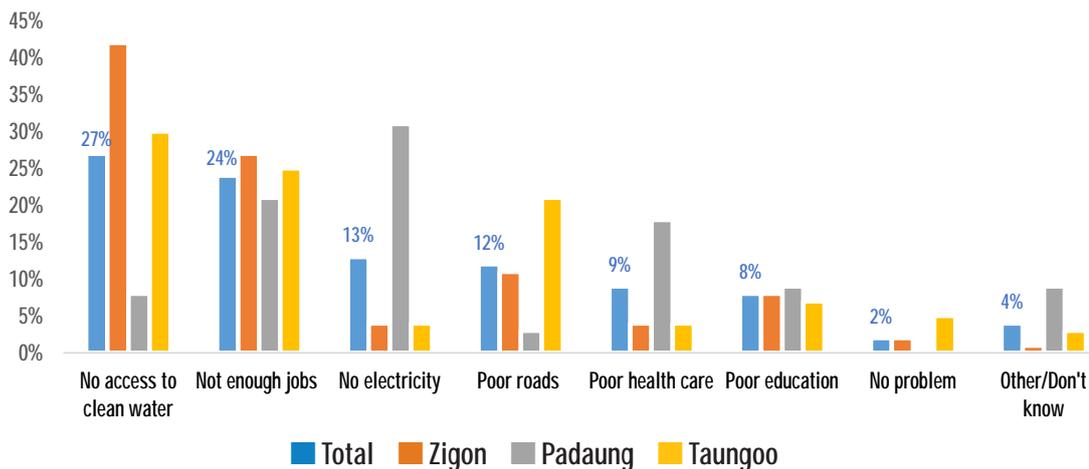
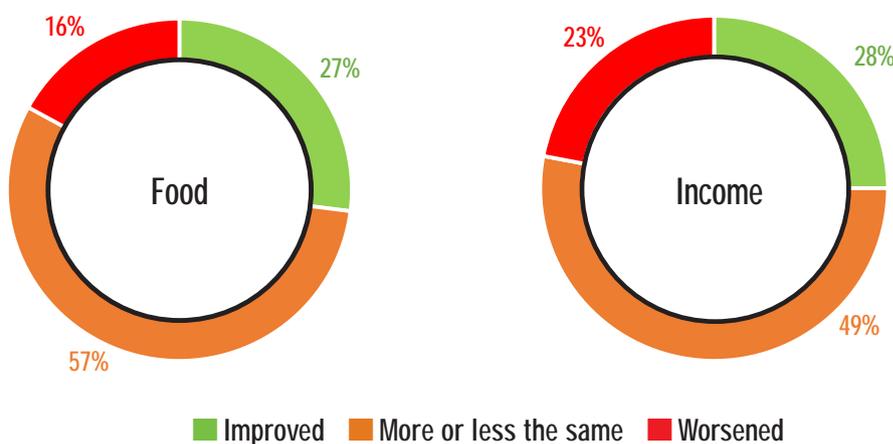


Figure 9: Main problem in village-tract or ward according to CRC respondents.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014. n=288

Overall, the lack of access to clean water emerged as the most important problem, mentioned by 27 percent of the respondents, followed lack of jobs or economic activities by (24 percent), and lack of access to electricity (13 percent). Two percent of the respondents mentioned that there was no problem at all in their village tract or ward. The food and income situation has also not changed much for most households over the last three years. For 16 percent of the respondents the food situation has worsened and for 27 percent it has improved, while for the majority (57 percent) it stayed more or less the same (see Figure 10a). It is also important to note that the food insecurity was found higher in Taungoo where most of the Kayin and Shan respondents lived and people of Bamar ethnic origin recorded a higher food security than them. Sixty-three percent of the Bamar respondents always had enough food compared to only 37 percent of the Kayin and Shan respondents combined. A similar pattern emerged with regard to changes in household income (see Figure 10b).



Figures 10a/ 10b: Changes in household food and income situation over the last three years in the three townships in Bago Region

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014 n=288

Overall, the lack of access to clean water emerged as the most important problem, followed lack of jobs or economic activities and lack of access to electricity. But there were significant differences between the three townships.

However, the data also show that the responses need to be disaggregated to obtain a clearer understanding of local concerns. Very high figures for highlighting a problem in one locality can skew the overall result for the total in the three townships, even though it constitutes a serious problem only in one or two of them. There were significant differences between the three townships. In Zigon, the lack of clean drinking water was mentioned as the biggest problem by 42 percent of the respondents (especially the ones in the urban areas), but only by 8 percent in Padaung. In Padaung however, the lack of electricity was mentioned by 31 percent of the respondents but only by 4 percent in Taungoo and Zigon, while in Taungoo the lack of roads was mentioned more often (21 percent) than in the other two townships. A further disaggregation of the data within the township showed that the lack of drinking water stood out even more starkly in ward no. 3 in Zigon Township, whereas it was a much lesser concern in Sa Bai Hmyaung village tract.

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

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

Source: Local Governance Mapping, CD meetings Bago Region, May 2014

Township	Village Tract/ Ward	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Taungoo	Ward No. 11	No health centre	Drain blockages	Inadequate school supplies of books, furniture, etc.
	Kyauk Taing VT	Insufficient drinking water	Insufficient electricity for the whole ward	Inter-village roads are bad
Padaung	Ta Loke Pin VT	Lack of electricity	Broken bridge that crosses the stream	In need of a new school building and more teachers
	Sin Te VT	No sub health centre	Poor condition of school buildings	Poor condition of streets
Zigon	Ward No. 3	No employment opportunities	Insufficient drinking water	Insufficient electricity for the whole ward
	Sa Bai Hmyaung VT	The drain is narrow and needs to be repaired	Better road infrastructure	Upgraded school level from primary school.

While certain trends emerge across these communities, there are significant differences between village tracts and wards within one township as well. Since only one village tract and one ward were included in this study in each township, it is not possible to say whether other village tracts and wards have similar priorities or add to the diversity of felt needs. What these figures do show however is that the needs and problems of people can differ significantly per township or even per village tract/ward and that tailor-made solutions and responses are required if government wants to become more responsive to these needs and become more “people-centred”. If so, it is critical for government to be able to assess and record these different needs on the basis of transparent and equitable criteria and have the necessary systems in place that enables it to respond to each of these issues fairly, systematically and adequately. Further below this report will assess whether the township administration and the various departments at township level have the necessary instruments, whether they have sufficient capacity and at least a minimum level of autonomy to become more responsive.

At the township level, the various groups of citizen representatives (support committees and CSOs) were able to link the more physical needs to a further continuation of improvements in the governance sphere as important preconditions for enhanced development. They mentioned more efficient service delivery, a decrease in corruption and improved cooperation between government and civil society. They also saw additional investments in the improvement of the basic infrastructure like roads, water and electricity as being particularly important for economic growth and an increase in employment.

4.1.2 Citizens views on improvements in their village tract or ward

Regarding the situation in their village tract or ward, the respondents were asked “what has been the most important improvement made by the government in their village tract or ward over the last three years”. 44 percent of the respondents mentioned that government has not made any improvements over the last three years. Almost half (or 47 percent) of the female respondents mentioned that government has not made any significant improvements against 41 percent of the male respondents. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents mentioned improvements in roads, which was higher than the average of the other six States and Regions, only 8 percent mentioned improvements in education, which is below the average of the other States and Regions (25 percent), while 10 percent mentioned improvements in drinking water and 2 percent in health care as the most important improvement (see Figure 11).¹⁶

Almost half (or 47 percent) of the female respondents mentioned that government has not made any significant improvements against 41 percent of the male respondents.

More remarkable is the difference in response between respondents from the three townships. The road improvement made by the government in Zigon was noted by 77 percent of the respondents, while in Taungoo the improved situation in education and electricity was mentioned more often (see Figure 11).

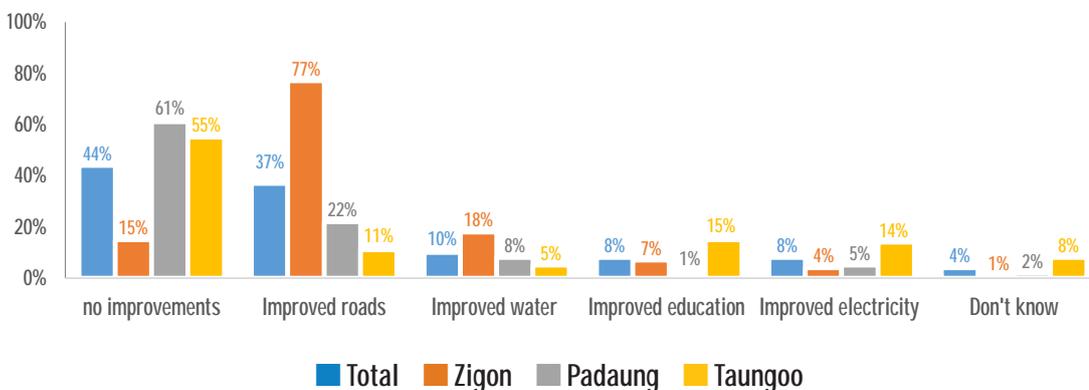


Figure 11: Improvements made by the government over the last three years, by township

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014 n=288

When asked to mention the major improvements that have taken place in Bago Region, all members from the TDSC and Township Development Affairs Committees (TDAC)¹⁷ and civil society organisation (CSO) representatives who were interviewed in the three townships mentioned similar improvements. They acknowledged the improvements that have been made with regard to basic service delivery, in particular related to primary education and health care (see paragraph 4.3). There are now relatively more schools and clinics in the three townships and the quality of both education and health care has improved as well.

¹⁶ Note that in relation to this question the researchers asked the respondents to name any major improvement themselves without probing. Later on (see section 4.3) when the respondents were asked about improvements in each of the sectors, most respondents were able to identify some type of improvement.

¹⁷ See for a detailed description of their role and function notification 27/2013 from the President's Office and Local Governance Mapping in Myanmar: Background and Methodology'. For their establishment and composition in the three townships in Bago Region see Annex 3.

In addition both the committee members and CSO representatives mentioned improvements in governance, which included the government’s relaxation of control over CSOs, more openness from government, freedom of expression and media freedom.

4.1.3 Perceptions on safety and security in Bago Region

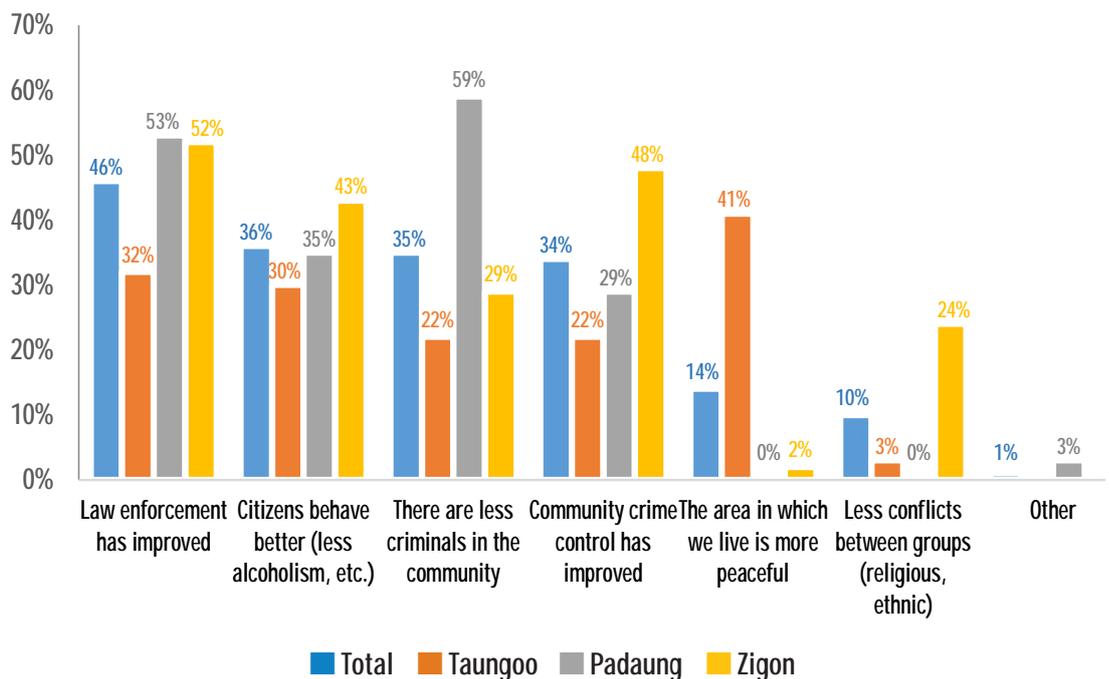
95 percent of respondents mentioned that they felt safe in their village tract/ward at the moment.

Concerns about safety and security have been less of a concern in Bago Region in recent years, as compared to Shan, Kayin and Kayah, the three States to the east of the Region. Ninety-five percent of respondents mentioned that they felt safe in their village tract/ward at the moment which is slightly higher than in most of the other six States and Regions that have been covered by the study so far.

Around half of the citizens interviewed (60 percent) reported that the safety situation in their immediate area of residence had stayed more or less the same over the last five years, 39 percent noticed an improvement in the safety situation, while only one percent mentioned that the situation had worsened. According to the 113 respondents who stated that the safety situation has improved, the most common reasons given were: “law enforcement has improved” (46 percent), “citizens behave better (less alcoholism, etc.)” (36 percent) and “less criminality in the village tract/ward” (35 percent) (see Figure 12). Note that “a reduction in criminality” was relatively more often mentioned in Padaung, while “improved peace in the area” was more often mentioned in Taungoo, which lies closer to Kayin and is still hosting IDPs from the northern Kayin State. In Zigon, “less conflict between groups in the village tract/ward” was mentioned more often than in the other two townships.

Figure 12: Reasons for improved peace and security in village tract/ward

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014 n=288.
Note: more than one answer possible



To map how the above issues are being addressed through various governance mechanisms, an effort was made to look at issues of participation, equity, effectiveness, efficiency and transparency and accountability in planning, service delivery and information and grievance redressal.

4.2 Development planning and citizen participation

One of the objectives of the administrative reform programme of the Government of Myanmar is to transform the development process in Myanmar and make it more “people-centred”. What this means in the Myanmar context is in general described in the Framework for Economic and Social Reforms of January 2013¹⁸, which mentions: “The Government of

Box 1: Planning and budgeting processes

From a township level perspective there are four distinctive planning and budgeting processes that affect service delivery to the township population and in which people could possibly be involved.

The first type of planning processes that takes place at the township level is the development fund planning process related to the various development funds that are made available either by the State or Union level Government to the township and that are managed by the GAD. The details of this planning process and the implementation in the three townships will be described in this section.

The second and (in terms of volume of public resources utilised) most important planning process, is the sector planning process. Each of the departments at the township level, whether falling under the State Government (schedule two responsibilities) or under the Union level Government (schedule one responsibilities), adheres to its own annual and sometimes multi-annual planning process. The details of this planning process will be briefly summarized in section 4.3 when reflecting on the planning processes in the health and education departments.

Thirdly there is the municipal planning and budgeting process, which is still fairly new. It is similar to the sector planning process and is implemented by the Development Affairs Organisation (DAO), a newly created organisation that exists in each State and Region, but has no equivalent at the Union level. Since the revenues for the DAO are generated at the local level, the planning process is slightly different from the sector departments however. The details of this planning process will be described in section 4.3 under the drinking water section.

Finally there is the township level planning process which takes (or should take) a more comprehensive analysis of the whole township including its challenges and opportunities as a starting point for analysis and drafting a more strategic mid or long term development plan for the whole township and ideally should inform each of the departments of their role in this process, their contribution to the development objectives and their sector priorities. It could foresee the drafting of a more strategic mid- or long-term development plan for the whole township and could inform each of the departments of their role in this process and their sector priorities. The township plans that are currently compiled by the Township Planning Officer have a 5-year perspective and include some township planning priorities but they are nothing else than a compilation of the sector plans for as far as they have a mid- to long-term perspective. No budget is available at the township level for their implementation and they are not used to inform the actual planning process of the sector ministries yet.

¹⁸ See Government of Myanmar 2013, Framework for Economic and Social Reforms, final draft January 2013.

Myanmar attaches high priority to developing a participatory process of local budgeting, which should reflect local priorities and needs while corresponding with national policy directions” (FESR, page 34) and “...new forms of public participation are emerging as citizens seek opportunities to actively participate in shaping the policies that affect their lives.” (FESR, page 37). To facilitate this process, new consultative structures at the township and village tract/ward level have been established following notification 27/2013 of the President in February 2013.¹⁹ Moreover, each State and Region has adopted a Municipal Law as per Schedule Two of the Constitution. As a result, the TDSC and the **Village Tract/Ward Development Support Committees (VT/WDSC)** were established in Bago Region in March 2013.²⁰ The **Township Development Affairs Committees (TDAC)** were established at the township level early 2014 after the adoption of the Municipal Law by the Bago Region *Hluttaw*

4.2.1 Planning, implementation and monitoring of development fund projects

In Bago Region there two development funds are available at the moment at the township level:

1. The Poverty Reduction Fund (sometimes called the “Regional Fund”)
2. The Constituency Development Fund

The Poverty Reduction Fund

The Poverty Reduction Fund²¹ was a presidential initiative to address rural development and poverty, and began in financial year 2012-13 with one billion Kyats (1 million USD) allocated to each State and Region with Chin as an exemption receiving 3 billions (3 million USD). The funds were both budgeted and executed under the GAD, because State and Region government institutions were newly formed and considered unable to manage these funds. The second round of poverty reduction funds for the financial year 2013/14 – also one billion Kyats (1 million USD) per State and Region – were budgeted and transferred directly to the State/Region “administrative organization” budget category. However, execution of the State/Region administrative organization’s budget is still the GAD Executive Secretary’s responsibility, and therefore under the GAD’s control.²² Projects under this fund can be submitted by wards/village tracts for school and health facility renovation, road improvement or bridges, water facilities and electricity connection. The projects are small (between 2-3 million Kyat each; 2,000-3,000 USD) and should be implemented by the village tract/ward itself under supervision of the VTA/WA. While the fund has been in operation since the financial year 2012/2013, the recent introduction of support committees led to a new process of deliberation and decision-making on the awards from this fund .

Approved projects are announced during the combined monthly TDSC/TDAC/VTAs meetings and the GAD finance officer informs each village tract/ward as well on the

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

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

21 Note that in Bago Region the GAD Development fund, which is a very small fund managed by the GAD has been integrated into the PRF fund at Regional level and is therefore not seen as a separate fund at the Township level. Some TA therefore mentioned the “Poverty Reduction Fund” the “Poverty Reduction and Rural Development Fund”.

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

financial details. The TA is the drawing officer, while the Deputy TA is controlling officer.²³ The money is released in two instalments to the township GAD office which distributes the money in two instalments to the VTA/WAs. The VTA/WAs submit progress reports during each VTA meeting. In 2013/2014, most projects were completed within three months, as most of them were maintenance projects. The auditor checked a sample of projects after completion.

In 2013/2014, Taungoo (as District capital) received 40 million Kyat (40,000 USD), and Padaung and Zigon 32.5 million Kyat each (32,500 USD). In 2013/2014 Taungoo used all the money to complete only one bridge (with extra donations from companies and citizens) but this was exceptional. During the 2014/2015 fiscal year, 13 small projects will be implemented. Padaung finished 12 projects focussing on water supply and bridge repairs.

Constituency Development Fund

The Constituency Development Fund was established by the Union legislature in 2013. Initially the President refused to sign the law and sent it back to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw with comments that the law was unconstitutional due to its granting the hluttaw executive power to implement development activities. However, the hluttaw proceeded to promulgate it with minor amendments.²⁴ Townships form single-member constituencies for the election of members of the Pyithu Hluttaw, the lower chamber of the Union legislature, and are divided in two constituencies for the election of members to the Region hluttaws.²⁵ Several townships form Amyotha Hluttaw constituencies are in Bago Region. Representatives from the two houses of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Region *hluttaw* are allowed to select township development activities in their constituencies to a **maximum of five million Kyats per project (5,000 USD)**.

The CDF is now budgeted as current expenditure and revenue under the State/Region hluttaw budget. Priorities for these projects are to be water supply, renovations of rural roads and bridges, renovation of school buildings, renovation of buildings related to health and other township needs. The implementation of CDF projects is to be done by Township Development Implementation Bodies consisting of the four hluttaw representatives for a township.²⁶

In 2013/2014, each township received 100 million Kyats (100,000 USD) from the Constituency Development Fund irrespective of the population or size of the township for the implementation of small projects. For this fund both village-tracts and wards can submit proposals. Since the fund was announced only at the end of 2013, there was only one round of submitting project proposals and implementation. The project criteria were the same as for the Poverty Reduction Fund. The four Hluttaw Members were involved in the discussions about the selection and prioritisation of projects (and one was controlling officer together with the Rural Development Officer). The selection procedure was similar to that of the Poverty Reduction Fund only in this case the budget ceiling of 100 million

Through a process of consultation with the Township Committees and VTA/WAs, the Poverty Reduction Fund is meeting small needs of the community as evidenced by the utilisation of funds in Taungoo which used all the money to complete one bridge (with extra donations from companies and citizens) with plans to implement 13 more small projects during the 2014/2015 fiscal year. Padaung finished 12 projects focussing on water supply and bridge repairs.

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

24 See also Order No. 83/2013 and No. 86/2013.

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

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

Kyat per township (100,000 USD) was known beforehand. The final approval for the selected projects came from the Region Government.

Box 2: Decision making process for CDF

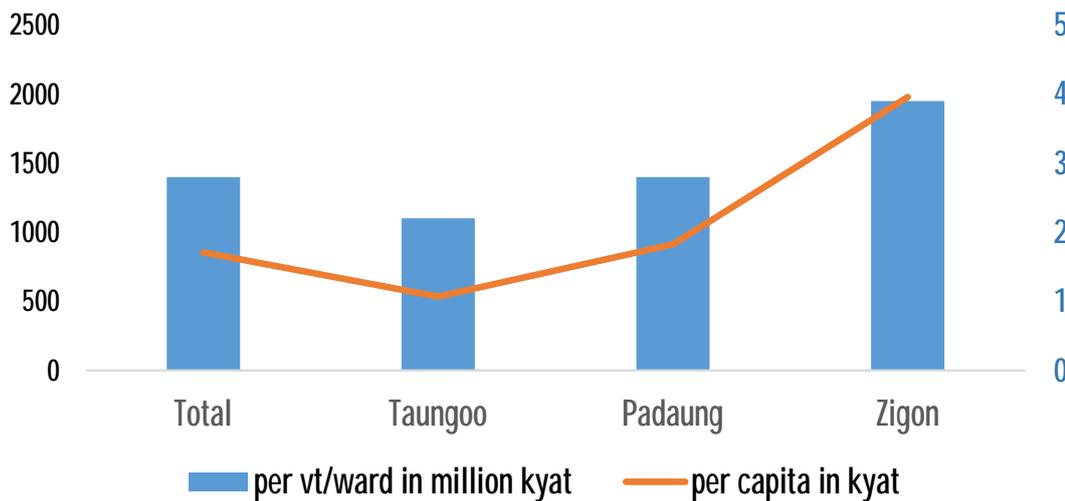
In Padaung and Taungoo, towards the end of 2013/2014, a ‘Regional Development Fund Supervisory Board (RDFSB)’ was formed with the exclusive mandate over the Constituency Development Fund. It consists of one elected Hluttaw member as chairperson and the other 3 Hluttaw members, the executive officers of the DAO, the Departments of Construction and of Rural Development, the TA, the TDSC and TDAC chairpersons as members. The selection and monitoring of Constituency Development Fund projects is done in the same way as for the PRF fund. The purpose of the RDFSB is to ensure that villages which have never benefited from other sources of development funds are given priority and to avoid repetition of development projects in the same village using other sources of funding. E.g., in Padaung in 2013/2014, 43 projects were thus implemented (7 projects by wards and 36 by village tracts). Of these 43 projects, 18 were for water supply, 12 for roads, 6 for bridges, 4 for electricity, 2 for education and one for solar power.

If one looks at the amounts available for each of the three townships under the various development funds within Bago Region (see Table 10 and Figure 13), one can notice that **the average amount available per village tract or ward in 2013/2014 was 2.8 million Kyats (2,800 USD) and per capita it was 853 kyat (0.853 USD)**. As a result of the differences in population, the per capita amount available in Zigon was 3.7 times the amount available in Taungoo. The allocation of 40 million Kyats (40,000 USD) under the PRF fund to the district capitals as compared to 32.5 million Kyats (32,500 USD) for other township is done to compensate for their larger population, but as can be seen from Table 10 and Figure 13 below this doesn’t compensate by far for the large differences in population size.

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

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

	PRF in million Kyat	CDF in million Kyat	Total in million Kyat	Number of VTs/ Wards	per VT/Ward in million kyat	citizens	per capita in kyat
Taungoo	40	100	140	64	2.2	262,000	536
Padaung	32.5	100	132.5	48	2.8	146,000	913
Zigon	32.5	100	132.5	34	3.9	67,000	1978
Total	105	300	405	146	2.8	475,000	853



5 Figure 13: Overview of Development Funds for the three townships per village tract/ward and per capita for the year 2013/14.

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

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

In theory, citizens can be involved at two levels in the planning process of development fund projects. First, they can be consulted either directly or indirectly at the village tract/ward level during the identification of potential projects, with the Village Tract/Ward Development Support Committees (VT/WDSC) potentially playing a role, and secondly they can participate indirectly through the participation of their VT/WA and the TDSC in the selection process at the township level.

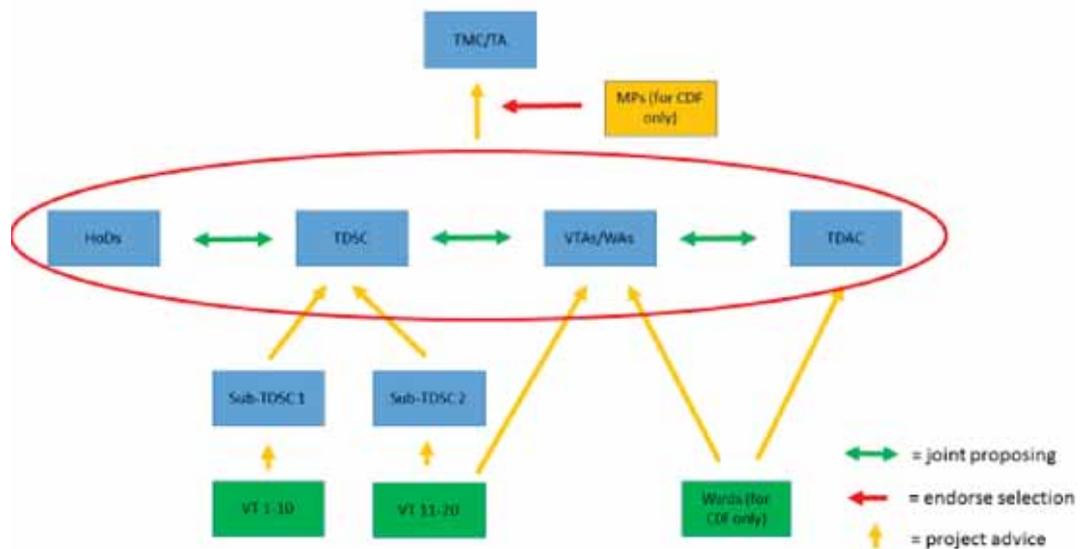
It is however necessary to ask whether this actually takes place in practice. At the village tract/ward level, both the VT/WAs and the TDSCs play an active role in the identification of projects in Bago Region. Most VT/WAs generally consult their VT/WDSCs and/or the group of elders and respected people (i.e. generally men) and/or the 10/100 household heads²⁷ in the village tract only.

For the identification and later on monitoring of projects for the various development funds the TDSCs in Bago Region split themselves up in sub-committees of two members each (see Figure 14). Each of the sub-committees will visit a selection of village tracts/wards to meet with the VT/WDSC, the VT/WA to discuss and identify potential projects and visit the actual project sites, take pictures and reach consensus on the proposed project for each village tract/ward. The sub-committee takes this proposal to the township level. The VT/WAs and TDSC members interviewed mentioned that they are aware of the GAD's eligibility criteria and that it gives preference to smaller projects in order to be able to reach more village tracts/wards .

²⁷ The 10/100 household heads or village heads or village administrators, have been incorporated in the administrative system during the British colonial rule and still play an important role in assisting the VTA who usually oversees 4-6 villages. They are not part of the formal government structure, and are either elected by the community or self-appointed. The Village Elderly and Respected People (VERP) is a kind of advisory committee to the VTA. There is no division of responsibilities between members but one will often assume the role of chairman. They meet in an informal manner and on an occasional basis. The selection process for VERPs is not clear. Typically, they are chosen by the Village Tract Administrator with advice from other elders in the village or are self-appointed. Most of them are former VTAs/10/100 household heads who automatically assume a VERP position upon leaving their post. In some villages the VERPs occupy a more permanent position than the VTA and so outlast several VTAs. Members are generally older men of a medium to higher socio-economic background. With the establishment of the VT/WDSC they are sometimes incorporated in these new committees and sometimes continue to exist next to the VT/WDSC. See for more detail: Kempel, Susan 2012; Village Institutions and Leadership in Myanmar: A View from Below, UNDP 2012.

Figure 14: Schematic presentation of consultation process for the PRF and CDF projects in Bago Region.

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



Depending on the VT/WA, they sometimes organise a meeting for all community members to discuss their priorities, but for the time being, direct consultation of community members in the village tract or ward about their preferences is not taking place systematically in Bago Region. At the community level, opinions were mixed on the extent to which citizens were actively involved in project selection. See Box 3 with some positive and negative examples of community members’ involvement in project identification.



Box 3: Responses from community members regarding their involvement in project selection for the development funds.

- “Local citizens did not receive complete information/all details - for example, they were not informed about the budget for road construction or when it was to begin.”
- “The 10/100 HH representatives cannot disseminate detailed information. The WA said that he also did not have any information related to construction in the ward. After the road had been built he was informed and asked to sign.”
- “The government looks more after local citizens, but they still carry out projects that citizens don’t need and few that local citizens actually require.”

Ward no. 3, Zigon Township

- “The VTA did not inform the local people in detail about construction on the Sin Te Road. People had no information about the poverty reduction fund.”
- “Some household heads do not disseminate information to the people.”

Sin Te VT, Padaung Township

- “People’s voices are not heard by the administration. When building a bridge, plans were made without the participation or opinions of the people.”

Ta Loke Pin VT, Padaung Township

- “Local people explained that they were invited to meetings by written invitation which was hand-delivered to households in the community. In the past they did not know anything about government projects and plans. Now, however, they know a little and have limited information about projects.”

Ward no. 3, Zigon Township

- “When the road and drain were built, a meeting was held and the VTA took suggestions from the citizens and village elders.”

Sa Bai Hmyaung VT, Zigon Township

- “Whenever projects are planned, meetings are held to discuss with community members. Their decisions are taken into account and people are encouraged to get involved. For instance, some projects are led by community members such as building roads and installing electric power poles.”

- “Some community activities did not happen when people disapproved.”

Ward 11, Taungoo township

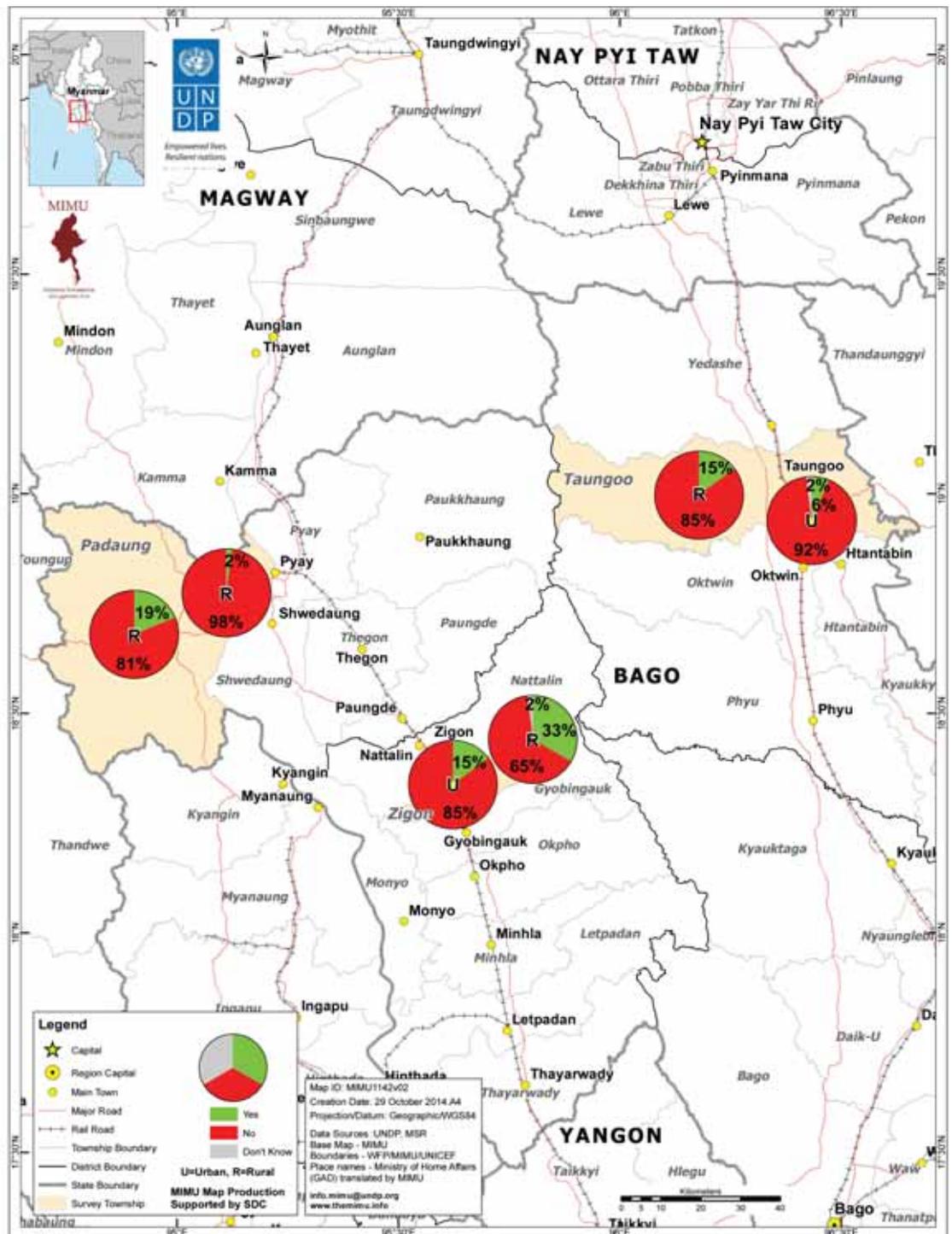
Participation of respondents in village tract or ward meetings is rather low. Sixty-two percent of the respondents do not participate on a regular basis in village tract or ward meetings. Female respondent participate even less than male respondents (71 percent of the female respondents do not participate regularly vis-à-vis 53 percent of the male respondents).

Eighty-four percent of the respondents (78 percent of the male and 91 percent of the female respondents) stated that they have never been invited to a meeting in which the government

wanted to discuss new development projects for their village tract or ward. Figure 15 shows that being invited to such meetings is slightly more common in the rural areas as compared to the urban areas (especially in Zigon).

Figure 15:
Citizens being invited to meetings organized by government

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014



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

It is equally significant that during the survey, the newly established Village Tract/Ward Development Support Committees (VT/WDSC) which were set up at the same time as the TDSCs at the township level, and are supposedly more broadly representative and inclusive, were not mentioned by either the local people or the VT/WAs as a significant platform for consultation or information flow. This is despite the provisions in the 2013 Presidential Notification that TDSCs and the TDACs shall give advice to the Township Management Committees (TMC) “on the plans of township development projects, investment projects, and infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water supply and electricity which are going to be carried out through the government’s budget or by private investment” after inviting Ward or Village Tract Development Support Committees and giving them explanations on such projects in view of informing the general public.

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

The TDSCs in the three townships in Bago Region take their tasks seriously and inform themselves directly, while the GAD respects the decisions taken collectively during these meetings. All proposals coming from the TDSC sub-committees were discussed in the combined VTA/WA/TDSC meeting together with the TA and a joint decision was made about the prioritization of projects. In all Townships the TA respected this prioritisation and endorse the selected projects. This list was submitted to the GAD at the Region level for approval. According to the TAs, the **GAD at Region level divided the total PRF and RDF budget available equally over the 28 townships, but usually adheres to the priority list as prepared at township level.**

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

The TDSCs in the three township are active and their proposals of projects are collectively prioritised in the combined VTA/WA/TDSC meeting together with the TA and a joint decision was made. Besides playing an active role in project selection, the TDSCs are also actively involved in progress monitoring.

However, there are **no female TDSC or TDAC members** in the various committees in the three townships in Bago Region, meaning that half of the population is not represented in these committees. This can partly be explained by the fact that members of these committees in Bago Region were selected or nominated from the various groups of Elderly and Respected People in each of the wards that have an almost exclusive male membership. As a result, the township committees do not reflect the diversity that exists in society and the different interests that different groups do have within society. This is likely to impact negatively on their legitimacy as was mentioned several times especially by people not feeling represented or involved in these committees.

The TDSC however has issues of no female representation, not being known to 99 percent of people interviewed and with limited feedback to the stakeholder groups.

It may therefore not be surprising to find that 99 percent of the people interviewed as part of the CRC in the three townships had never heard of either the TDSC or TDAC. A serious question therefore arises as to how these committees can represent the interests of citizens if citizens in most cases don't even know of their existence, don't know who its members are and are not aware of whether or how these committees represent their interests.

The issue of limited representativeness of the TDSCs was discussed during the Region-level feedback meeting in which representatives from village tract/ward, township and Region level participated to discuss the interim findings and suggest possible remedies. Participants suggested that in future TDSC member should be elected from among all citizens in the township instead of from limited interest groups. To improve on their performance, they should better understand the way in which government operates on the one hand and the problems and needs of citizens on the other hand. In addition they should have clearer guidelines, while their mandate should be extended (no specification was provided as what this would entail though).

Not only are the TDSC and TDAC not known outside a small group of people close to government, the risk of elite capture of the limited funds available to serve the interests of only a few people is definitely present, especially in the present setting where there is limited or no feedback from these members to their stakeholder groups (as they acknowledged themselves during the Focus Group Discussions) and to the population at large. No concrete evidence for any wrong-doing was reported at the moment, but as the mandates and amount of funds that these committees deal with expands (like with the TDACs that have been bestowed more executive functions following the adoption of the new Bago Region Municipal Law), the risk that this will happen will increase. More and better representativeness and accountability mechanisms will be required to prevent a negative trend in this regard in the future.

According to one Deputy TA: "there are both weaknesses and strengths of the new committee by involving public representatives. The weakness is that more time is required to reach a consensus as many people with different views are now in the committee. In the past Heads of Department did their jobs simply by following the instructions from their boss without having to consult outsiders. However, the strength is that more views of outsiders (interest groups) are heard for consideration to be reflected in the development activities. Departmental staff may come and go at any time but local people are bound to stay there with full knowledge of the locality. This is a plus point for involving public representatives in the committees".

CSOs in the three townships were more sceptical about the involvement of citizens in the decision-making process regarding the use of the development funds.²⁸ CSOs in Taungoo mentioned that “the TDSC is formed by the TA and not with persons elected by citizens”. They asked “how can we be involved in the decision-making process if we even lack essential information about these funds and the way in which they should be used?”

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

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



28 Besides a few larger Non-Governmental Organisations in Taungoo, the civil society organisations in the three townships consist mainly of community based organisations that have a loose structure, work mainly with volunteers and focus on relieving the immediate needs of their members or target groups. They are active in the fields of education, health care, funerals and support to elderly people.

4.3 Access to Services

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

Most service delivery in Myanmar is provided by sector Ministries at the township level. It is therefore important to describe and analyse the planning and organisation of service delivery at that level. This section will look at **three basic service sectors (primary health care, primary education and household water provision)** and describe how they are organised and how state service providers interact with citizens/service users in the three selected townships in Bago Region both in planning as well as actual service delivery. The mapping looked at these sectors from a governance perspective and not at the quality of these services from a technical medical, educational or water and sanitation perspective. The picture described below presents therefore only a partial overview and should be seen as complementary to the more in-depth and internally focused sector analyses that are taking place at the moment in each of these sectors.²⁹

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

While there are some minor variations in the planning and budgeting process between the various sector ministries, the **actual planning and budgeting is taking place at either the Region or Union level**. Heads of Departments collect the required baseline data on staff and facilities and provide an estimate of the recurrent budget required for the next year to their supervisors, but they are normally not involved in defining priorities or in the actual planning of investments. While most Heads of Departments are involved in implementing the operational activities and the recurrent budget expenditures throughout the year, they are only marginally involved in the implementation of the more substantial capital investments that are either implemented by the Region or Union level sector departments.

The approval for the allocated recurrent budget for each sector department usually comes at the start of the financial year (which runs from April to March) while the actual transfers follow in four tranches. Interlocutors have stated that these are usually late. The capital

²⁹ See for a general overview of government spending on the social sectors: UNICEF, 2013; Snapshot of Social Sector Public Budget Allocations and Spending in Myanmar.
See for the health sector among others: SDC, 2013; Health Assessment in Southeast Region of Myanmar, August 2013.
See for the education sector among others: MDRI, 2013; A Preliminary Assessment of Decentralization in Education: Experiences in Mon State and Yangon Region, December 2013 and JICA, 2013; Data Collection Survey on Education Sector in Myanmar, Final Report, February 2013.

budget approval usually comes only in June/July, 3-4 months into the financial year. Both the recurrent and the capital budgets come without any explanation or justification, which makes it very difficult for township level officers to explain their budgets to the various committees and to the public in general.

With the gradual expansion and improvement of service delivery and of development support activities by key departments at the township level, the need for horizontal (between departments) **and vertical co-ordination** (between the township administration and the VT/WA and other government representatives at the village tract and ward level on the one hand and government at the District and Region level on the other hand) has increased substantially over the last few years. Better horizontal and vertical coordination could improve both the effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery, especially in the Myanmar setting in which the various resources available at the township level (qualified staff, budget and assets, like offices, vehicles and computers) are far from sufficient to tackle all the needs of its population at the same time. This makes it even more important to ensure that the limited resources are used the most optimal way. The Government has realised this need and intends to improve coordination between the departments through the establishment of the Township Management Committee.

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

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

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

Despite the awareness that a “coordinating” role must be played by the TA and is inherent to the formation of various coordinating committees (see Annex 3), **horizontal co-ordination between departments remains a challenge in Bago Region according to most Heads of Departments interviewed.** Township departments continue to plan and deliver services in a “vertical” fashion, following the instructions from higher levels within their own ministries. They therefore also continue to collect their own baseline data according to their own definitions and requirements, resulting in differences in very important and basic statistics (including even the total population in the township), which makes integrated planning and coordination almost difficult.

Within these **structural limitations** the various departments at the township level in Bago Region have been making efforts to coordinate their planning by discussing their plans in

Horizontal co-ordination between departments remains a challenge in Bago Region according to most Heads of Departments interviewed. Township departments following the instructions

from higher levels within their ministries continue to collect their baseline data according to their own definitions and requirements, resulting in differences in basic statistics which makes planning and coordination difficult.

the TMC and Heads of Department meetings³⁰ and by sharing and discussing them with the TDSCs and TDACs.

Box 4: Region-level interim-finding workshop: Participant suggestions on improving information sharing

The above challenges were confirmed and discussed during the Region-level feedback workshop when the initial findings of the survey were discussed. In order to improve integrated data collection the following proposals were presented:

- Improve collaboration between townships, districts and relevant government departments
- Financial assistance to bridge the gap between departments
- Reduce centralization of planning from Union level to Region level
- Design a departmental framework for data collection
- Workshops on the implementation of information sharing

In order to improve on the limited communication between Region and township level departments regarding allocation of budgets and planning and the need for better justifications of decisions made at Region/Union level the following suggestions were made:

- When the upper level of government makes changes to projects submitted by the township, it should negotiate these changes with the township level bodies.
- If information is requested from the departments, they should not reject the request by saying that “it is not possible to provide the information because of instructions from the higher levels of government”.

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

4.3.1 Basic health care services

After decades of stagnation in the budget for public health, the national health budget has increased over the last three years from 92 billion Kyats (92 million USD) in 2010-2011 to 652 billion Kyats (652 million USD) as budgeted for 2014-2015.³¹ While this is a substantial increase, government expenditures on health as part of total government spending at present still only amount to only 3.38 percent of the total, or as percentage of GDP only 0.76 percent, which is approximately half of the average amount spent by similar countries in the region on health care. This section aims to shed some light on how the recent 600 percent increase in the health budget has reached the lowest level of health care provision at the village tract/ward level and how people are experiencing changes in the health care services. However, it

³⁰ See Annex 3 for more details on these committees

³¹ Myanmar Times 5 May 2014

goes beyond the scope of the mapping to assess the reasons for these historically low figures. But, as a consequence of this legacy, the provision of health care by the private sector is more substantial and as a result, the private expenditures by the people in Myanmar for health care rank much higher than elsewhere in the region. Accordingly, 60-70 percent of the health spending in Myanmar is paid for directly by the people according to the Ministry of Health.³²

Besides increasing the public health budget, the Government of Myanmar realises that more structural measures are required to improve the quality of public health care. In its Framework for Economic and Social Reforms (FESR), which is the Government of Myanmar’s major policy document for the 2012-2015 period, it mentions that “the government also recognizes the importance of quickly updating its overall health strategy, reviewing current health policies and strengthening the National Health Law”.³³ Recently, the Ministry published its National Health Plan 2011–2016. According to the WHO, the plan takes account of the prevailing health problems in the country, the need to realize the health-related goals of the MDGs, the significance of strengthening the health system and the growing importance of social, economic and environmental determinants of health.³⁴ The National Health Plan has 11 priority programme areas, but does not mention or propose changes in the way health services are provided in Myanmar, in particular at the local level.

”National health” remains a competency included in Schedule 1 of the Constitution, which fall under the **Union Legislative List**.³⁵ In practice, this has been interpreted as meaning that the provision of public health care services is the exclusive responsibility of the Ministry of Health at Union level, without any involvement of the State or Region Hluttaws or the State or Region Governments (either legislative or executive/administrative). However, the 2013 Presidential Notification has included health-related matters also among the issues township, ward and village tract support committees are mandated to discuss and assist in.

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

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

Township	UN organisations and (I)NGOs active in health services
Taungoo	Danish Church Aid, Leprosy Mission Myanmar, Medical Action Myanmar, Myanmar Positive Group, Population Services International (PSI), Save the Children, Thai Border Consortium, UNICEF, UNFPA , WHO
Padaung	Population Services International (PSI), UNICEF, WHO
Zigon	Population Services International (PSI), UNICEF, WHO

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

Source: MIMU: Overview of the May 2014 Who, What, Where and VT MAP Bago Region

32 Based on 2010 health figures see: Myanmar Times 5 May 2014.

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

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

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

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

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

Source: Township Healthcare Profiles, Bago Region. 2014

	Taungoo	Padaung	Zigon
Population	262,000	146,000	67,000
Division hospitals	1		
Station hospitals	1	1x25 beds, 3x16 beds	1x25-beds
Maternal Child Health Centres	1	1	1
Urban/Rural Health Centres (RHC)	8	5	3
Sub-rural health centres	28	24	14
Private clinics	Not recorded	5	Not recorded
Number of healthcare staff approved	113	100	20
Number of healthcare staff appointed	91	69	20
Number of vacancies	22	31	0

Table 13: Basic healthcare indicators, Bago Region townships

Source: Township Healthcare Profiles, 2014.

	Taungoo			Padaung			Zigon		
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
Home deliveries by health staff (percent)	12	35	34	52	47	73	74	50	77
Antenatal care coverage (percent)	96	84	91	72	61	88	48	49	91
Infant mortality rate/ 1000 live births	6	6	11	10	15	12	4.3	2.5	9.9
Under 5 years mortality rate/ 1000 live births	8	7	13	11	18	14	5.4	4.9	12.2
Maternal mortality rate/ 1000 live births	2	0.5	0.7	1	0.5	3	2.2	--	2.2
Children under 5 moderately underweight (percent)						1			1.8
Children under 5 severely underweight (percent)						0.1			
Number of outpatients	16100	15800	47300	10938	6990	8556	1059	1490	4068
Number of inpatients	9400	12300	17000	3264	3392	3470	1165	1473	1499
Deliveries	600	1100	1500	217	414	413	197	243	332

It is difficult to draw any conclusions from the above figures as numbers are small and the timeframe is very short. If the figures are correct however one can notice significant differences between townships, which are reasons for concerns about both capacity and equity in providing health services.

Most health service providers interviewed (3 Township Medical Officers, 6 health facility managers and 9 health staff) acknowledged however that the **provision of health services in the three townships has improved over the last 3 years**. More facilities have been built (there are more (Sub-) RHCs and hospitals have been upgraded) and more health staff is available. In addition, most of them mentioned improvements in the supply of medicines (essential drugs) and medical equipment and an improved knowledge of healthcare by the

staff. Finally most of the health staff (77 percent) mentioned that they now receive a fair salary for the work they are doing.

Three out of six health facility managers mentioned they had structural vacancies (more than 3 months) in their facility over the last year, while four out of six health staff mentioned there was at the moment a shortage of medical staff at their facility.

Generally speaking, there is sufficient supply of medicines and medical supplies in the health facilities covered in the study. When shortages in medicines were reported they were successfully resolved. Shortage of desks, chairs and beds in the health facility were common as well and these shortages were regularly brought up during inspection visits but hardly ever resolved. Lack of accommodation for health staff was mentioned by most health staff as a bottleneck as well.

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

Basic output indicators for the monitoring of healthcare facilities are also in place. All healthcare facility managers interviewed mentioned that they had received at least one inspection visit last year either from the Health Assistant or from the TMO who conducted routine inspections, stock checks and audits. Four of the six health facility managers qualified the support they received from their supervisors at the township level as good.

Regarding payment for essential drugs, all six managers and nine health staff answered that patients never have to pay for those drugs.

While the overall health provision situation has improved, according to the service providers there are several specific bottlenecks for further improving public health services in these three townships.

Box 5: Bottlenecks in providing health services

- The number of RHCs is insufficient (now there is one per 30,000 inhabitants in the three townships while the target is 1 per 2,000).
- The various health facilities still need more and better skilled manpower; there are too many structural vacancies.
- There is no travel allowance for the TMO and the township level staff to visit all health facilities to carry out their regular monitoring functions.
- The basic infrastructure of the facility is often not optimal as there is often lack of water, electricity, and housing for medical staff.

These changes recorded in Bago Region are in line with the Ministry of Health's priorities over the last few years as mentioned by a director in the Ministry's Health Planning Department, who said that the budget increases since 2011 had initially been used to provide

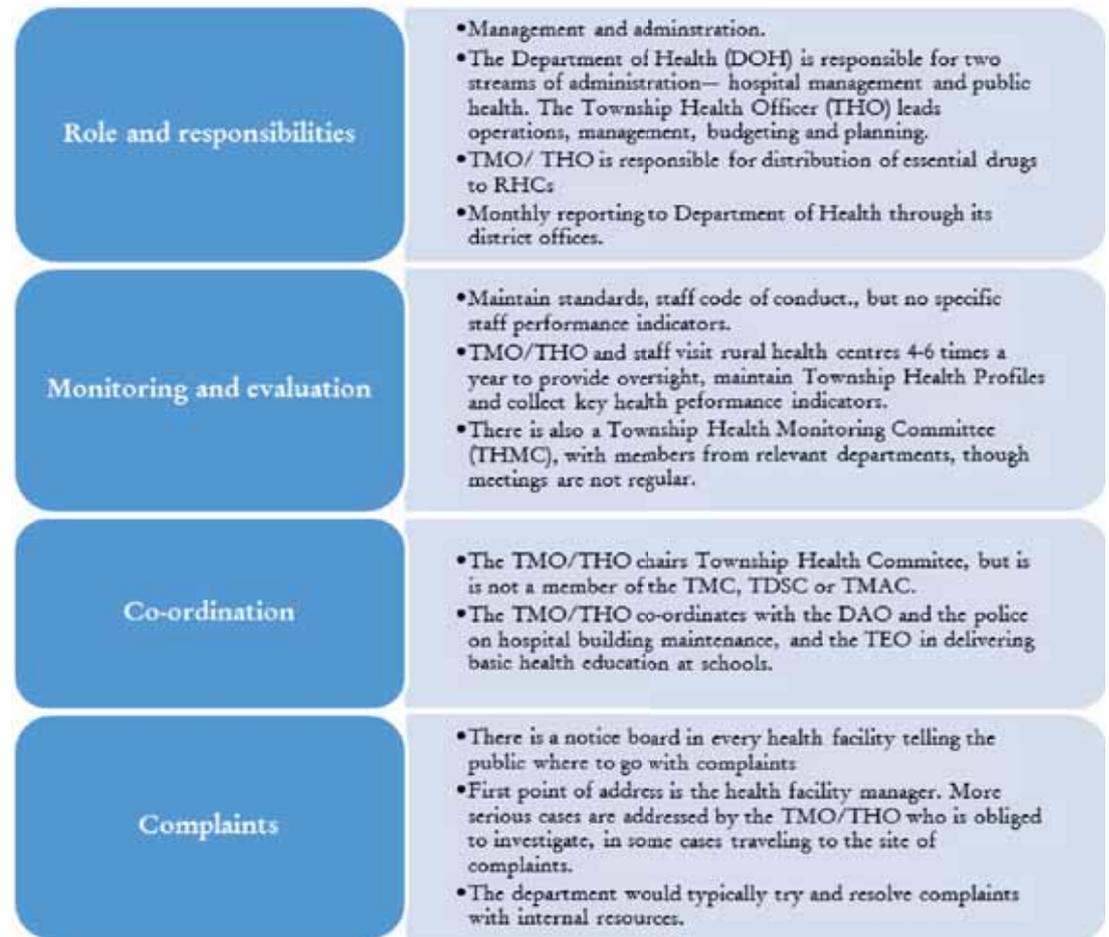
medicines free of charge and to replace outdated medical equipment and will now shift to further improve the infrastructure of the health facilities.³⁶

Organisation and administration of public basic health care services

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

An overview of the more specific tasks of the TMOs/THOs is provided in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Key characteristics of township health administration in Bago Region



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

36 Myanmar Times 5 May 2014.

forcing the staff to pay for these travel costs from their own pockets. This lack of operational budget combined with a highly centralised decision-making structure in most departments has a serious negative impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and on the optimal use of the limited manpower available.

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

Planning and budgeting

As a result of “national health” being a Union-level power included in Schedule One of the Constitution and as hardly any decision-making power has been delegated to lower levels in the Ministry of Health, the planning and budgeting in the health sector remains also very centralized and is mainly taking place at the Union level. The THO/TMO and lower level health facility managers merely provide basic data as an input into the planning process. The TMO is requested to submit a proposal for the annual recurrent budget for township healthcare to the District Health Officer, who collates the various township requests and submits them to the Region level. As there are no township strategic (health) plans, most TMOs calculate their recurrent budget needs based on the previous year’s actual expenditure and add to that any additional requirements based on e.g. an increase in number of medical staff in their township.

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

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

As a result of the centralised planning system in the Ministry of Health the ability of the THO/TMO to coordinate planning with other sector departments and with other health service providers in the township is very limited. In addition, the TMO does not have

The Village Health Committee are functional in five of the six sample village tracts/wards with a support role and not as an intermediary between people and service providers to take up health issues affecting their village.

As there are no township strategic (health) plans, most TMOs calculate their recurrent budget needs based on the previous year’s actual expenditure and add to that any additional requirements based on e.g. an increase in number of medical staff in their township.

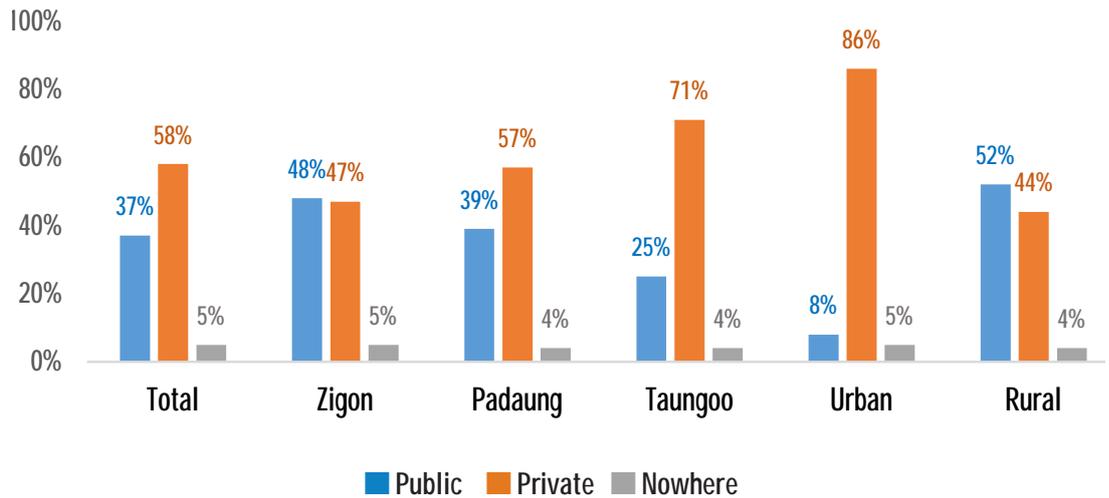
the means nor the mandate to respond to locally-specific needs or bottlenecks in service delivery, while they are in the best position to identify such bottlenecks. As a result it takes for instance a very long time to recruit or replace medical staff once there are vacancies available.

People's views on health services

Regarding the use of public or private health facilities, 107 respondents (or 37 percent) stated that they usually make use of public health facilities ((Sub) Rural Health Clinics, station and township hospitals), while 168 respondents (or 58 percent) said that most of the time they make use of a private health facility (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: Use of public vs. private health facilities in the three townships.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014 n=288.



There were big differences between urban and rural respondents regarding the use of public or private health facilities. Of the urban respondents, only 8 percent of the respondents said they made use of public facilities, while 52 percent of the rural respondents said they made use of the public facilities. As a result, respondents in Taungoo, which is more urbanised, tend to make more use of private health facilities than respondents in the other two townships.

Reasons for using a public facility were: the proximity of the public health facility (64 percent), the quality of health staff (35 percent) or the fact that the respondents were just used to going to this facility (46 percent). Reasons for using a private facility were similar: the proximity of the private health facility (44 percent), the quality of health staff (35 percent) or the fact that the respondents were just used going to this facility (49 percent).³⁷ It is remarkable that cost considerations were hardly mentioned at all (only by 18 percent of the respondent using a public health facility) as a reason for choosing a public health facility.

In order to get an impression of the awareness of citizens of the improvements made by government in the health care sector, respondents were asked whether health services in general (public and private combined) have improved in their village-tract or ward over the last three years (see Figure 18).

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37 Note that more than one answer was possible.

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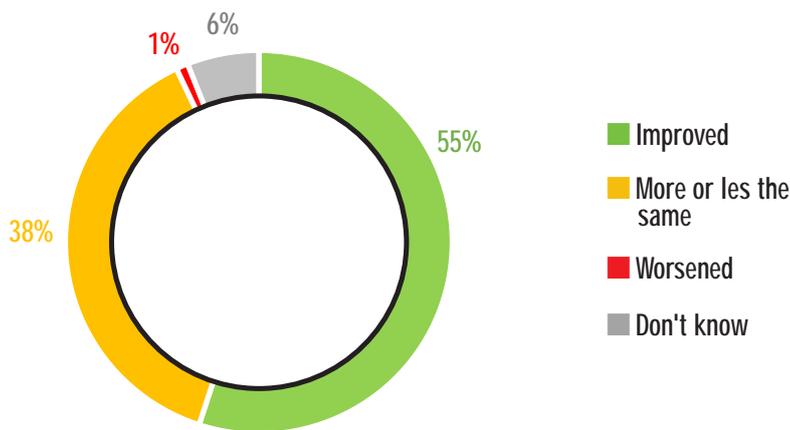


Figure 18: Perceived changes in primary healthcare services over the last three years at the village tract or ward level.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014 n= 288.

Fifty-five percent of the respondents mentioned that the health services in their village-tract or ward have indeed improved, while 38 percent mentioned that these services had stayed more or less the same. Only one percent mentioned that the quality of health services had deteriorated over the last three years. These are similar figures compared to the other States and Regions included in the research. There was no significant difference between urban and rural respondents, nor between male and female respondents. Of those respondents who mentioned that the situation had improved, the main reasons mentioned are presented in Figure 19:

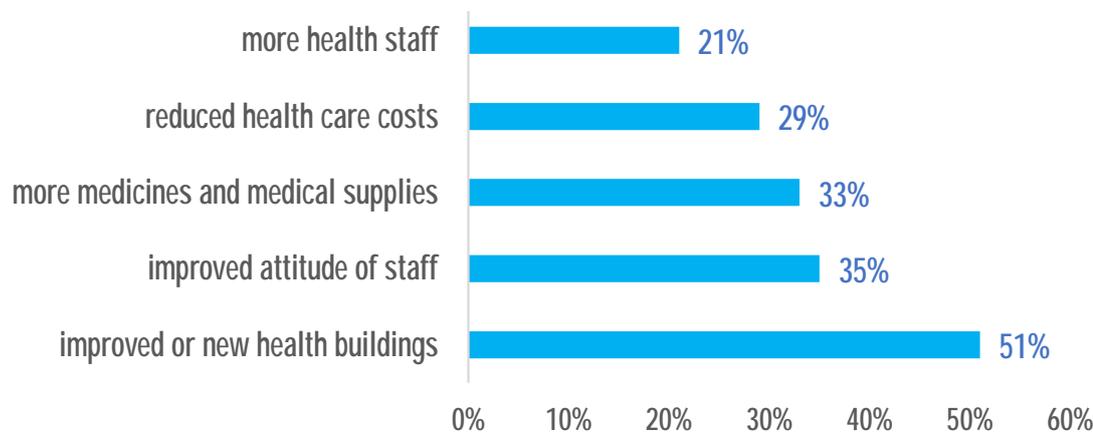


Figure 19: Reasons for improved health care as mentioned by respondents who were of the opinion that health care had improve in their village tract/ward.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014 n= 158. More than one answer possible.

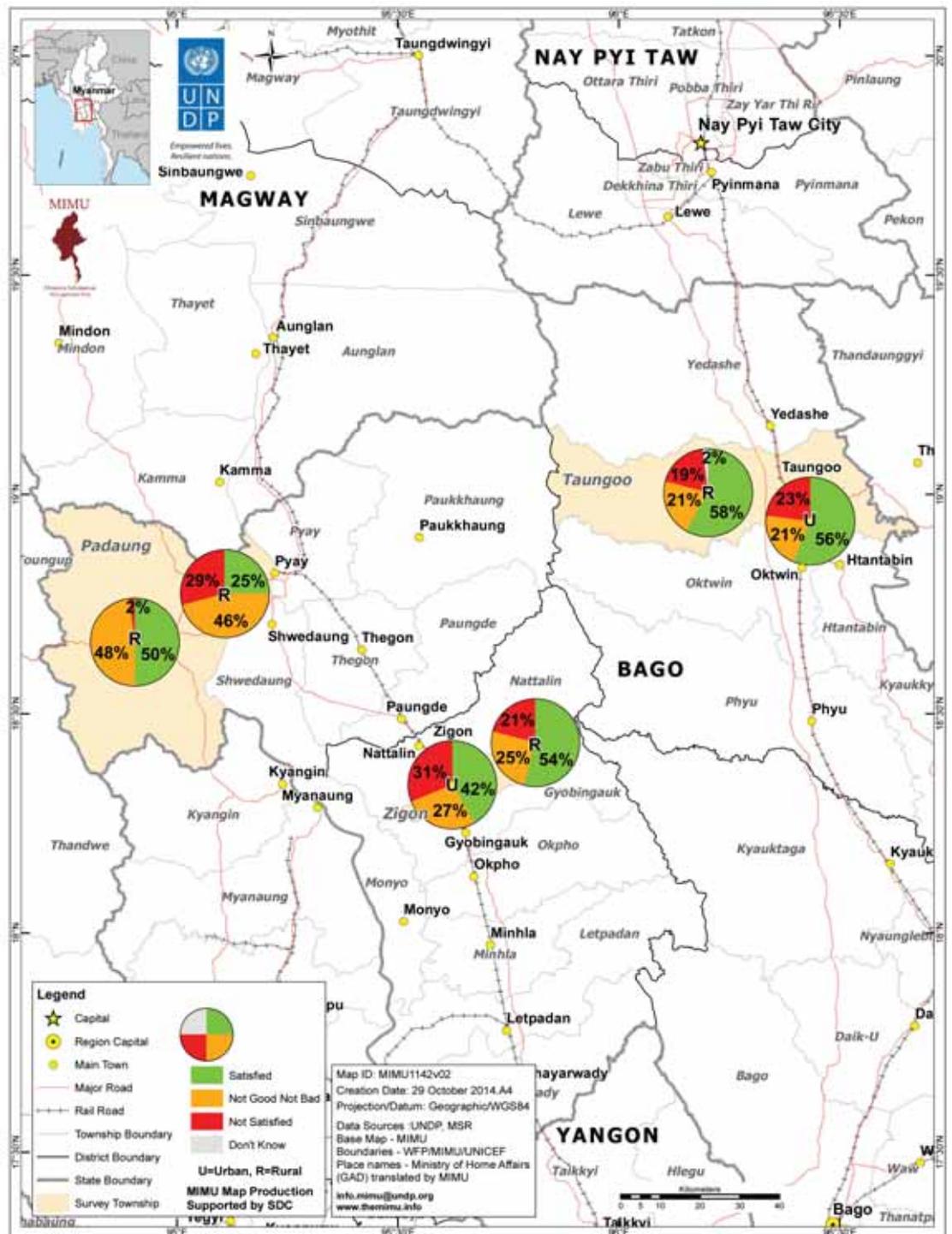
Taking the changes in health care into consideration, the respondents were asked whether they were satisfied with the quality of health care services in their village tract or ward. Forty-eight percent of the respondents (44 percent of the male and 51 percent of the female

38 Note that more than one answer was possible.

respondents) said that they were satisfied, 31 percent qualified the services to be “not good, not bad” while 21 percent were not satisfied with the quality of the health care services. Taungoo had the highest level of satisfaction, with 57 percent of the respondents qualifying the services as “good”, while Padaung had the lowest number of satisfied respondents (38 percent)(see figure 20). Padaung also had the lowest score on the basic health care indicators and the highest number of vacancies. To find out whether there is a relationship between these figures would require more detailed research.

Figure 20: Level of satisfaction with health care services in their village tract or ward.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014.



In Boxes 6 and 7 some of the responses made by the communities during the Community Dialogue session are presented to illustrate some of the progress made and the challenges that are still present at the village tract/ward level.

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

- “The quality of primary health care has improved in the last 3 years.”
- “There is more support towards poor patients while there was no free treatment/consultation in the past.”
- “Improved customer-service in the health centre.”
- “Vaccinations are provided free of charge.”

Ward 11, Taungoo Township

- “Regular health services are provided every Monday, Wednesday and Friday (for prenatal care and family planning, general consultation, child care etc.)”
- “Sufficient drugs/medicines.”
- “Vaccination is provided regularly.”
- “No discrimination of poor people.”

Ta Loke Pin VT, Padaung Township

Box 7: Examples of challenges in health care services as mentioned by the communities during the Community Dialogues

- “The quality of healthcare is really bad. There is no electricity in the RHC, while there are insufficient community health staffs.”
- “The local healthcare centre can’t accept emergencies as they are unable to give treatment.”
- “There is no improvement in Zigon Township hospital or in the local neighbourhood healthcare staff.”

Ward No. 3, Zigon Township

- “As the health staff is a lady, there might be a few cases that she refused to visit to patient at night because of security.”
- “One staff cannot provide healthcare service to the whole community. She could not visit every patient thus some people misunderstood this as unequal treatment.”

Sa Bai Hmyaung VT, Zigon Township

- “Not every ward/village has a health centre. Since there are only assigned health staffs who visit villages/wards, their availability varies and it is hard to get regular treatment.”

Ward 11, Taungoo township

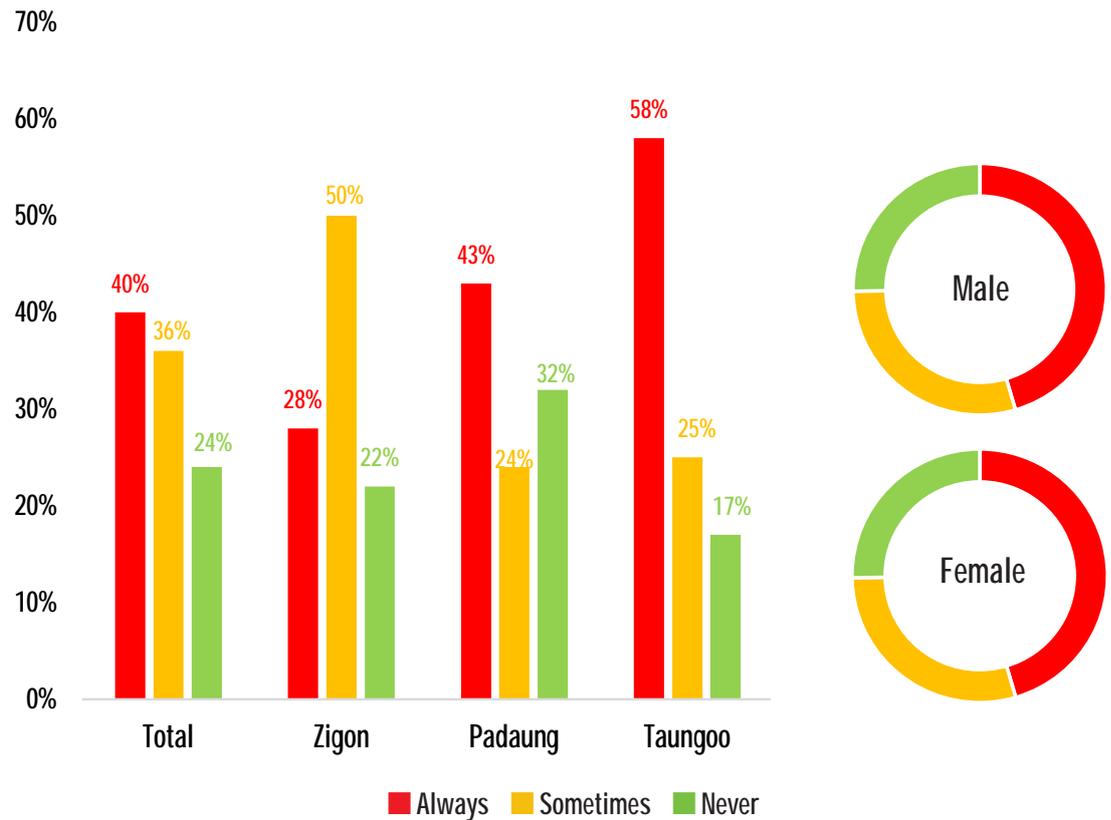
- “There is only one health facility in this village tract which is comprised of nine villages and the building at the health facility is not good.”
- “More government funds are needed to repair buildings at the health facility and to build new health centre in the community.”

Kyauk Taing VT, Taungoo Township

Subsequently, the 107 respondents who usually make use of a public health facility were asked whether or not they had to pay for the medicines they received from the health staff. Their responses are presented in Figure 21.

Figure 21: The number of times respondents who are using a public health facility had to pay for medicines.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 20 n=107



While health facility staff maintained that the generic drugs were free, 76 percent of citizen respondents acknowledged that they had to either sometimes or always pay for medicines.

Forty percent of the respondents said that they always had to pay for medicines in a public health facility and 36 percent sometimes, while most medicines (i.e. essential drugs, if in stock) should be provided for free. Respondents using a public health facility in Taungoo said more often than in the other townships that they had to pay. Female respondents said more often than male respondents that they had to pay. Of the respondents who mentioned that they always had to pay for medicines 69 percent stated that they did not get an explanation from the medical staff on why they had to pay for these medicines. These statements seemed to contradict with what the health facility managers and the TMOs had reported.

In 2013, the MoH made generic (non-specialist) drugs available to patients at public-health facilities free of charge. The eight public healthcare facility managers interviewed all confirmed that patients were not required to pay for treatment, essential drugs and medical supplies. Further, all of them stipulated that health staff at their facility refrained from selling drugs that should be for free. In addition, 11 out of 13 health staff interviewed mentioned that essential drugs are almost always available. Yet, 40 percent of the respondents who use a public health facility mentioned that they always had to pay for medicines and 36 percent mentioned that they sometimes had to pay for medicines.

These discrepancies, while possibly raising some concerns, cannot be used as direct proof of mismanagement of healthcare resources, as the rules related to the distribution of drugs and medical supplies are not always clearly formulated and communicated, and there are some specialist medicines in circulation that are not subsidised by the MoH. In addition, health

staff often assist patients with non-government supplied medicines once their regular stock is depleted, and charge people for the actual costs.

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

The problem of payment for essential drugs was discussed during the regional feedback workshop as well. The following suggestions were made as to how these issues could be tackled:

Box 8: Suggestions for improving transparency in health-related information

- Wall posters or directives should be attached at hospitals and health centres
- Health staff should explain the regulations to those who are illiterate
- Health talks could be held in the community to educate people about health awareness and rules and regulations of the health services
- More social security and health insurance should become available
- Have complaint mechanisms in place
- Lay down staff policy rules and regulations/improve the level of human resource

On a more positive note, regarding equity in treatment, almost all respondents (95 percent), both male and female, who made use of public health facilities felt that they received the same treatment as any other person in their village tract or ward, i.e. there was no discrimination against particular groups within the community.

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

While the ability of the TMO to resolve issues raised by the communities is rather limited, the examples of elementary action plans made during the Community Dialogue sessions regarding the improvement of basic health care services show that there are also improvements that can be made that fall within the mandate of the health staff or that can be resolved through cooperation with the communities.

Although direct participation of people in planning of health care improvements is extremely limited, TDSC and TDAC in the three townships had regular meetings with TMO to discuss health related issues. But without resources and real influence on planning, TMO and health facility managers cannot respond much.

Box 9: Examples of community ideas to resolve bottlenecks in health care services as mentioned by the communities during the Community Dialogues

Government staff explained that there will be more health staff as some are getting trained in town. Health staff encouraged people to attend meetings and discussions to gain knowledge about health. Community members agreed to attend health educational seminars.

Ta Loke Pin VT, Padaung Township

The mid-wife explained that the Health Assistant had submitted a request to the TA to build a sub RHC. The VTA would integrate with the public, form committees and join with work forces in improving the health sectors of the village. The public agreed to attend health talks. Poor pregnant mothers should receive prenatal care instead of arriving to the mid-wife just before giving birth.

The people agreed with the mid-wife and they said they would follow her suggestions.

Sin Te VT, Padaung Township

The Midwife said that the proposal about insufficient staff and RHC building had already been submitted. The citizens would provide voluntary labour for RHC building. The community would take care of the security of health staff if MW is going to the patient house at night.

Sa Bai Hmyaung VT, Zigon Township

4.3.2. Primary education

Similar to public health care, the quality of primary education has been very poor in Myanmar for decades if compared to internal standards and performance improvements in other countries.³⁹ The Government of Myanmar has recognized this deficit and has started to address this backlog first of all by gradually increasing the education budget from 310 billion Kyats (310 million USD) in 2010-2011 to 1,142 billion Kyats (1.142 billion USD) for the current year 2014-2015, which constitutes an increase of 368 percent within five years.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, despite this increase, the Government's planned expenditures on education are still only 5.92 percent of the total government's budget for the year 2014-2015, which remains very low if compared to other countries in the region. As a result, in the current fiscal year Myanmar spends a mere 1.33 percent of its GDP on education while other countries in the region spend on average approximately 3 percent of their GDP on education, with Thailand leading the group with more than 5 percent.⁴¹

Not only has the education sector been subject to severe underfunding for decades, in addition, "the education system is characterized by poor quality, outdated pedagogy and

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

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

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

insufficient geographic coverage, with rural and border areas being poorly served”.⁴² As a result of both factors, roughly half of Myanmar’s children (2011 figures) do not complete primary school.

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

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

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

In addition, a recent report concluded that “the existing education administration structure does not allow each locality to respond to their local needs.”⁴⁶ This last conclusion is confirmed by another study called “Preliminary Assessment of Decentralization in Education”.⁴⁷ Although the scope of that study was limited its main conclusion was very clear: “This study indicates that there has been little decentralization within the Ministry of Education. There has been limited, unclear “deconcentration,” resulting in a certain amount of responsibility shifting to lower levels of administration (like minor school repairs, small scholarships, etc.), but people at these lower levels do not have decision-making authority commensurate with, or related to, their responsibilities. Government policies concerning education and decentralization have not been clearly defined. Instead, the institutional and organizational culture in the Ministry of Education continues to be top-down.”⁴⁸ As a result, “the provision of these services represent a form of deconcentration, meaning that people at the lower levels have more work and responsibilities, but which give them no greater authority—only more work”⁴⁹.

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

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

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

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

46 JICA 2013; Data Collection Survey on Education Sector in Myanmar Final Report. February 2013, page 11.

47 Zobrist, Brooke and McCormick, Patrick. A Preliminary Assessment of Decentralisation in Education.

48 Ibid, page 4.

49 Ibid, page 19.

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

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

Looking at the figures provided by the TEOs for primary education in the three selected townships (see table 14), the teacher-student ratio differs a lot between the three townships but is well below the national guidelines of one teacher per 40 students.

Table 14 Key education data for government operated facilities, Bago Region townships.

Source: GAD township profiles and data as provided by the TEOs

	Taungoo	Padaung	Zigon
Population	262,000	146,000	67,000
Primary schools	160	135	84
Primary school students	26,653	9,226	5,338
Primary school teacher: student ratio	1:30	1:16	1:14
Primary school teachers appointed	885	556	391

Compared to the other Regions and States included in this survey there are fewer (I)NGOs active in the education sector in the three townships included in the survey (see table 15).

Table 15: (International) Non-Governmental Organisations active in the education sector in the three townships.

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

Township	UN organisations, (I)NGOs and CBOs active in education
Taungoo	Karen Baptist Convention, Phaung Dawoo Monastic school
Padaung	UNICEF
Zigon	UNICEF

Box 10: Bago showing improvements in education

According to the three TEOs, the six headmasters and 14 teachers interviewed, the quality of service delivery in the education sector has improved over the last three years in the three townships in Bago Region. Most interlocutors identified the improved quality of teaching (better trained teaching staff) and improved infrastructure (buildings and classrooms) as the main factors. Teachers believed that improvements to school accessories and teaching support materials were the most cost-effective way to further improve the quality of teaching. In addition, more structural basic infrastructural improvements by the Ministry of Education were also seen as required, although overcrowding of classrooms has reduced significantly (most classes have 30 or fewer than 30 students while only a few have between 30 and 40 students). This makes Bago Region one of the most advanced Regions in this regard.

Most teachers found their salary to be reasonable for the work they are doing. Teachers believed that they adhere to the code of conduct from the Ministry of Education, that they are punctual, report honestly on their performance to the education office at the township level, listen to the parents about their children's education and take any complaints from parents seriously. The teachers were divided about the quality of education they are able to

provide. Half of them mentioned that they think their school is doing not as good as other similar schools in the area in providing good quality education, while the other 50 percent mentioned that they were doing as good or even better than other schools. More than half of the teachers recorded a lack of interest and involvement of the parents in the education of their children.

It is interesting that teachers mentioned the lack of cooperation between parents and teaching staff as the second most important bottleneck to improve the quality of education after lack of school furniture and facilities and found that to be more important than the insufficient number of teachers at their school.

The concept of performance management was understood by education staff as the timely reporting on basic indicators. Standards and practices for monitoring are fairly well-established for primary schools, for which there are regular inspection visits conducted typically by the Assistant and Deputy TEOs. These are done with the objective to conduct routine inspections, evaluate personnel and audit stock, and collect data for 12 basic output indicators for primary schools (seven relate to quality, five for physical infrastructure). Though inspectors are supposed to inspect personnel, no data is collected with respect to staff performance (i.e. teacher absenteeism, or quality of teaching).

All schools had a **Parent Teacher Association (PTA)**. These PTAs are mainly involved in implementing small maintenance works and in collecting donations from the parents. In two schools the PTA was also involved in checking finances and stock.

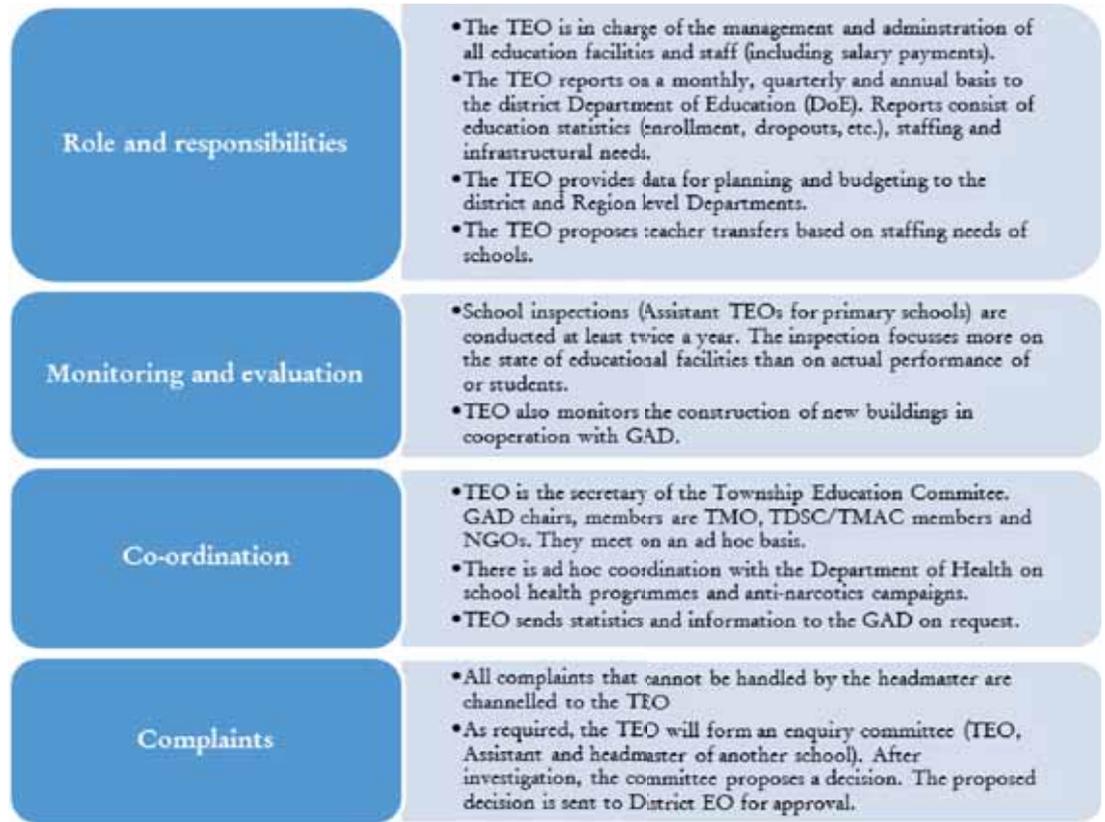
The organisation and administration of primary education

The job of the TEO is one of the most demanding jobs in the township. Together with a few assistants, the TEO manages roughly 60-70 percent of all civil servants in the township including their salary administration; monitors the quality of all levels of education; collects relevant educational baseline data and, resolves a multitude of practical issues especially with regard to the structural shortage of teachers in the more remote areas. This is despite the fact that the TEO's autonomy and ability to respond to these problems is very limited, due to the centralised way in which the Ministry of Education is organised.

The administration of primary education at township level in Bago Region is in line with standard procedures within the Ministry of Education (see Figure 22).

Figure 22: Key characteristics of township primary education administration in Bago Region.

Source: Interviews with Township Education Officers



For monthly salary payments, the TEO issues cheques to each high school and middle school headmaster who pays the teachers. They return the signed salary sheets the following month.

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

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

Planning and budgeting of primary education in the three townships

Using the inputs provided by every school, the TEO drafts a recurrent budget proposal based on the previous year's figures, including the newly arrived teachers, and submits this via the **District Education Officer (DEO)** to the Department. A copy of the recurrent budget request is sent to the TA. In addition, the TEO provides the DEO with the basic data for the Department of Basic Education at the Ministry of Education to conduct its planning. Based on the actual needs, the TEO can submit requests for capital investments but is not involved in the actual planning of new education facilities. The TEO only knows

were a new school is going to be built when the actual construction starts. Not knowing the capital investment plans of the Ministry beforehand, and not having a copy of the contract or specifications, makes it very difficult for the TEO to monitor construction progress or consult with the community in this regard.

School construction projects are supervised by a **school construction committee** which is formed at both township and village level when required. The committee is chaired by one of the parents and has the headmaster, a VT/WDSC and a Parent-Teacher Association representative as members. To pass the instalment payments, the headmaster signs the completion certificate on behalf of the school construction supervision committee.

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

People’s views on primary education

Just like in health care, a small majority (51 percent) of the respondents in Bago townships were of the opinion that primary education in their village-tract or ward had improved over the last three years, while 36 percent mentioned that the quality had stayed more or less the same. Only 9 percent mentioned that the quality had deteriorated (see Figure 23).

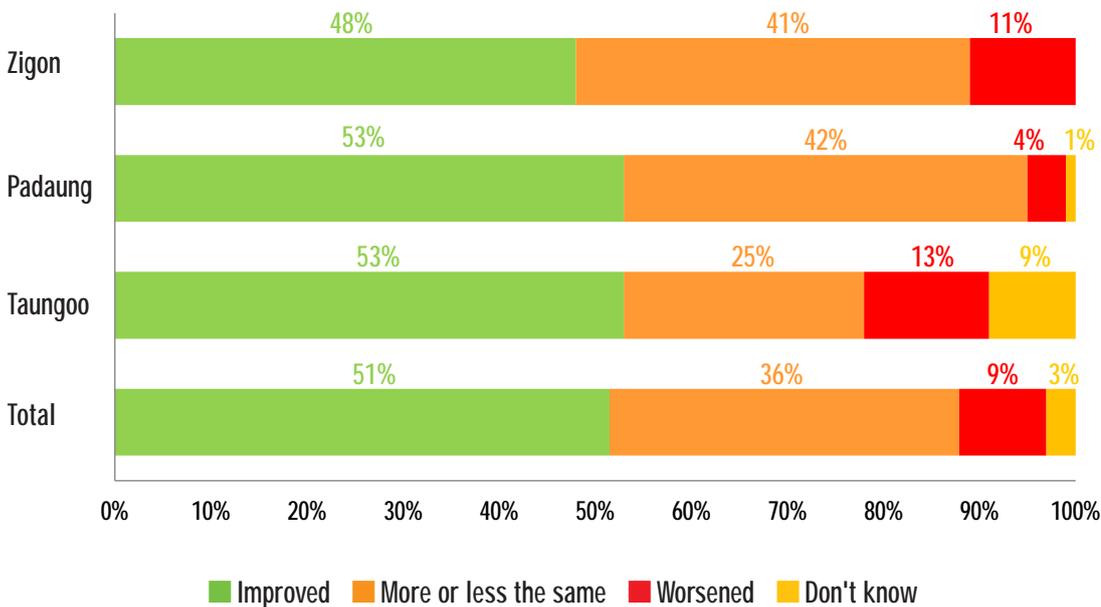


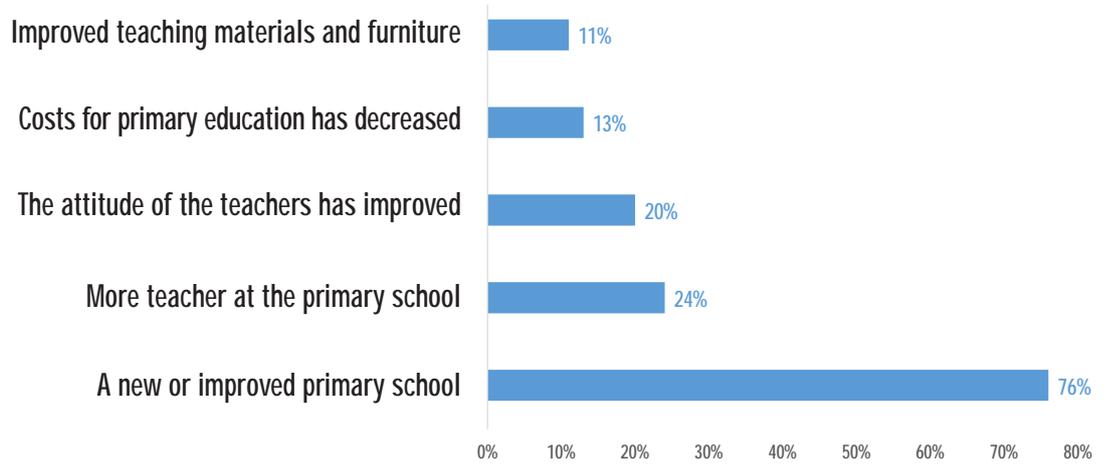
Figure 23: Perceived changes in the quality of primary education at village tract or ward level, over the last three years.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014 n=288.

The main reasons for improvements mentioned by the respondents who stated that education had improved (148) are presented in Figure 24.

Figure 24: Reasons why according to the respondents primary education has improved.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014 n = 148. Note that more than one answer was possible.

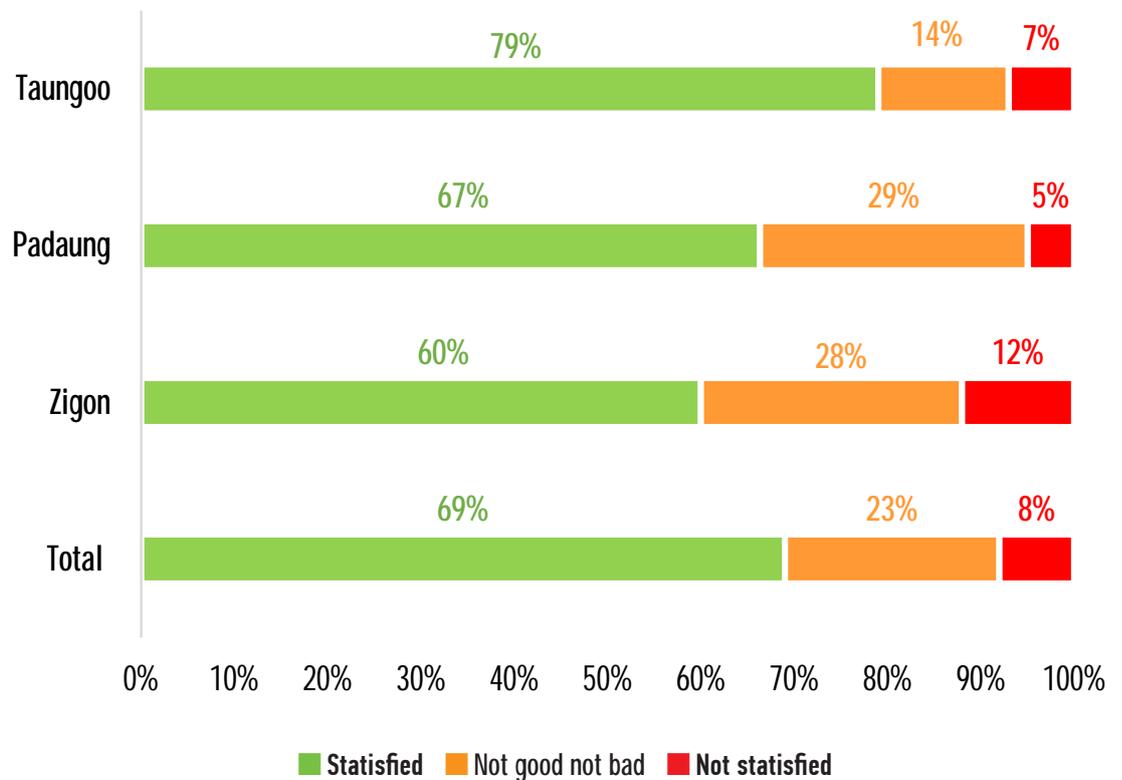


Most of the respondents mentioned the improvements in infrastructure as the main reason for the improvement in education. Of the few respondents (27) who mentioned that primary education had worsened over the last three years, 81 percent attributed this to a lack of maintenance or deterioration of the school infrastructure.

Respondents with children attending primary school (74) were asked about their satisfaction with the quality of education. **Sixty-nine percent of the respondents with children attending primary school were satisfied**, 23 percent qualified it as “not good/not bad”, and 8 percent were not satisfied (see Figures 25 and 26). Taungoo had the highest level of satisfaction (79 percent), while Zigon had a relatively high percentage of dissatisfied respondents (12 percent).

Figure 25: Overall satisfaction with the quality of primary education for respondents with primary school-going children.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014 n = 74



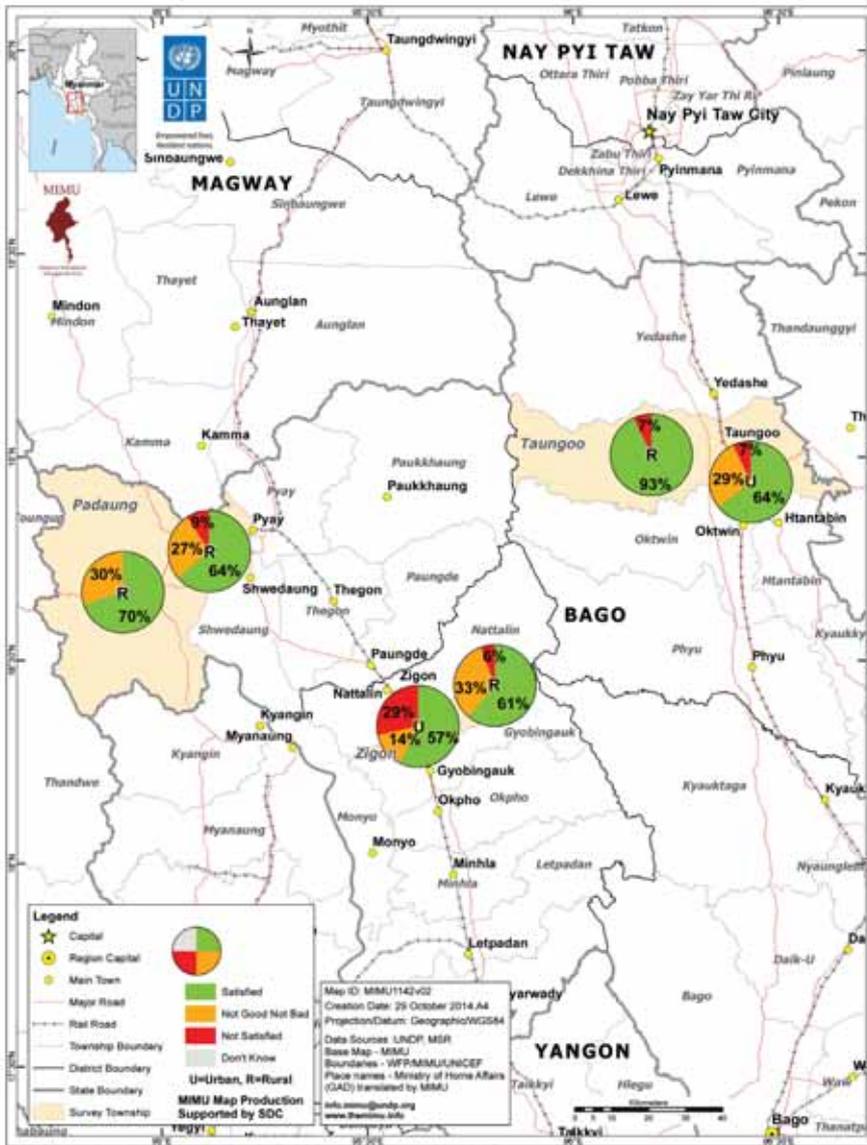


Figure 26: Overall satisfaction with the quality of primary education for respondents with primary school-going children

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014. n = 74

Source: UNDP, Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014

Box 11: Examples of improvements made in primary education as mentioned by the communities during the Community Dialogues

- “The school principal bought pencils and books for the poor students with her own money.”
- “Teachers are very kind to their poor students by providing clothes and they visited sick children at home.”

Sa Bai Hmyaung VT, Zigon

- “Improved condition of toilets.”
- “Due to government-funded support, clean drinking water is now available.”

Ward 11, Taungoo

- “Desks were provided by the education department.”
- “A new school building has been built.”
- “More teachers have been employed or transferred to our community.”
- “The no-fee education system has come into effect.”

Kyauk Taing, VT Taungoo

Box 12: Examples of challenges in primary education as mentioned by the communities during the Community Dialogues

- “Teachers favour students whose parents are high ranking officers.”
- “Teachers do not pay attention to unintelligent students.”
- “Teachers discriminate students who do not attend their tutoring classes.”
Sin Te VT, Padaung
- “Weakness in cooperation between teachers and parents.”
- “Not enough books/textbooks and school furniture.”
Ward 11 , Taungoo
- “Insufficient class rooms.”
- “Class rooms are very small or narrow.”
- “Most of the school buildings are ruined and they also do not have fence.”
- “The space of the school is insufficient.”
Sa Bai Hmyaung VT, Zigon
- “Bad condition of the school building. The school roofs leak water.”
- “Not enough desks.”
- “Difficulty accessing the school.”
- “Insufficient numbers of teachers (middle school teachers have to supplement a lack of primary teachers).”
Ta Loke Pin village tract

The distances for most children to get to school are relatively short. Of all children of respondents attending primary school, 65 percent had to walk between 0-15 minutes to school, 30 percent between 15 and 30 minutes and the remaining 5 percent more than 30 minutes. Ninety percent of these respondents mentioned that in general the teachers at the primary school were observing regular working hours (i.e. they are present when the school is open), and 88 percent said that the teachers are polite and friendly to the parents and their children.

85 percent of respondents never ‘gave any gifts’ to school authorities and 92 percent felt equal treatment meted to their children.

On the question of gift-giving, i.e., whether respondents had to pay or provide a gift to the teachers, school principal or the school, for the education of their child/children, 85 percent of the respondents with children at school said that they ‘never’, 11 percent that they ‘sometimes’ and 4 percent that they ‘always’ gave a gift. Of those who said that they always or sometimes paid or provided a gift half felt they were obliged to do so while the other half felt they did this on a voluntary basis.

Ninety-two percent of the respondents with children at primary school felt that their child was treated in the same way as all the other children. Only a small group of parents felt that children from poor households were treated differently. According to 84 percent of the respondents, different needs of boys and girls (like separate toilets) were always taken care of by the schools.

Government is not yet actively discussing education-related matters with the parents of children attending school. Eighty-one percent of all the respondents with children had never been involved in such a meeting.

Source: UNDP, Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014

Box 13: Examples of action plans for the improvement of primary education as mentioned by the communities during the Community Dialogues

- Regarding the weakness in cooperation between teachers and parents, we can organize teachers-parents conferences and meetings.”
- “In regards to the bad condition of roads to the school, the ward administration can improve the dirt road to a gravel road.”
- “The ward administration can cooperate with the village elders group to make some improvements.”

Ward 11, Taungoo

- “The teachers said they would be at school during school time.”
- “The VTA said he would submit the deteriorated state of the school building and insufficient school materials in the school to the TA and the TEO.”
- “The community members said they can provide voluntary labour for the school building and a school fence. They would encourage the children to go to school.”

Sa Bai Hmyaung VT Zigon

4.3.3. Drinking water

Drinking water provision

In a development context, ‘access to safe drinking water’ can be defined as having access to a private or public tap, a deep well or a protected hand-dug well or a protected open water source all within 30 minutes walking distance. As per this definition, **access to safe drinking water stood at 81.3 percent** for Bago Region as a whole in 2010, which is slightly above the national average of 69.4 percent and has improved substantially from 66 percent in 2005.⁵⁰

This aggregate figure however does not allow any conclusions for the availability and accessibility of drinking water at the local level in different parts of the Region. Providing safe and equitable access to drinking water is a core responsibility of government at the local level. However, government authorities in Bago Region have only recently begun to invest more resources in this sector, and have yet to develop a more systematic, transparent, target-oriented and participatory approach to drinking water provision. At the same time, residents of Bago Region’s urban and rural communities are only beginning to make higher demands on the state for responding to their needs in this sector.

The responsibility for drinking water provision is shared by the Department of Rural Development (DRD) and the Development Affairs Organisation (DAO) (see Figure 27). The DRD falls under the Union Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development,

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

while the DAO is part of the Region Ministry of Development Affairs. The DRD is among others responsible for drink water provision in the rural areas (village tracts), while the DAO is responsible for drinking water provision in the municipalities (wards), i.e. the urban areas. The departments were only established late 2013 and are still in the process of being established in most townships. Especially the DRD is still seriously understaffed. In Taungoo, only 10 out of 40 allocated staff are actually employed by the department at the moment, in Zigon 4 out of 23 and in Padaung 8 out of 27. In Bago Region, the DRD aims to play an intermediary role between citizens and other line ministries. It collects baseline data on water supply, roads and bridges, the number of livestock etc., and carries out needs assessments, which are passed on to the relevant line ministries. Besides rural water supply, it also provides rural energy (mainly solar power) and micro-finance assistance. It has its own budget for implementing development activities. All major works are carried out by contractors who are engaged by the DRD at Region level.

Figure 27: Administrative set up of water provision.

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

<p>Role and responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split between the DAO (urban areas) and the DRD (responsibility for supporting rural water supply), both newly-formed (since September/October 2013). • Management and administration • Monthly reporting to district DRD and DAO.
<p>Monitoring and evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DMA along with the TMAC monitors municipal water supply in the wards. • The DRD monitors the situation in each village through established volunteer groups, comprising of five local people selected to assist the department on the ground.
<p>Co-ordination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DAO receives requests to work with other departments on joint initiatives. • TMAC serves a key coordination mechanism for water supply. • The DRD provides various line ministries with relevant baseline data on rural development.
<p>Complaints</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TMAC is a key mechanism for fielding municipal water-related grievances (though this is not a core role as originally conceived). • In rural areas, the DRD's volunteer groups will support investigation of complaints.

In Padaung, suboptimal water supply is a main constraint for both rural and urban development and has been prioritized as one of the main development activities. Under both Departments various water projects planned for the current financial year. To oversee these projects, a water supply sub-committee has been established.

Like other States and Regions, as instructed by Presidential Notification 27/2013, and as provided for in Schedule Two of the Constitution, in 2013 Bago Region adopted, a Municipal Law to establish and lay down the mandate of the relevant municipal institutions, including the TDAC. It provides a legal basis for the formation and composition of the TDAC in each of Bago's townships and allocates tasks and responsibilities to it which range from urban planning and water supply projects, to sanitation tasks, urban power supply, markets, slaughtering, slow-moving vehicles, construction and maintenance of roads and bridges, traffic rules, road names and building numbers, eviction of squatter buildings, construction of parks, sport grounds, swimming pools, and recreation centres, cemeteries, public health and socio-economic support works, and festivals as well as other typical municipal functions and duties. At the time of collecting the field data, this new law had not been fully implemented and the TDAC was in practice still more in an advisory role to the DAO.

Whether and how this relationship will change in practice based on the new Municipal Law remains to be seen.

For municipal water provision the organisation is therefore slightly different. The Executive Officer (or Director) of the township DAO is answerable to the Ministry of Development Affairs at the Region level. At the same time, the Executive Officer of the DAO is to a certain extent accountable to the TDAC (see section 4.4). The financial management set up of the Ministry of Development Affairs differs from all other departments, partly because it doesn't have a parent Ministry at the Union level. Most of the DAO's revenues are generated locally through the provision of licences (restaurants, abattoir, and market fees) through local taxes (like building and land tax, water supply tax, street light tax, waste and sanitation tax, public sanitation tax, tax on vehicles, etc.) or as payment for services provision, like garbage collection and maintenance work. Contrary to other departments, these revenues stay within the municipality and constitute both the recurrent and capital budget of the DAO. The DAO can either execute works itself or use local contractors for the implementation of contracts below 5 million Kyats (5,000 USD). Above 5 million Kyats (5,000 USD) the Minister at Region level will conduct the tender. In addition, either the Region Ministry of Development Affairs or the Union Government can provide grants to the DAO to implement certain infrastructure works that are beyond the financial capacity of the DAO or for emergency relief activities within the municipality.

Looking at the completed activities over the 2013-14 fiscal year (see Table 16) and the plans for the following year, the improvement of water provision is becoming more and more important in the three selected townships of Bago Region. Initially, the DAO was only involved in checking the quality of water from private shallow wells, but for the coming year, partly in response to the needs of the people, more money, both from its own revenues as well as from the CDF will be allocated to address drinking water needs.

	Taungoo	Padaung	Zigon
Municipalities	No activities in providing water supply; only checking the quality of private wells.	No activities in providing water supply.	32 percent of DAO budget is dedicated to improved water supply.
Rural areas (VTs)	DRD focused on completing outstanding infrastructure projects.	12 water provision project funded by the PRF and 43 by the CDF.	Identifying needs.

Table 16: Information on municipal and rural water supply, Bago Region townships

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

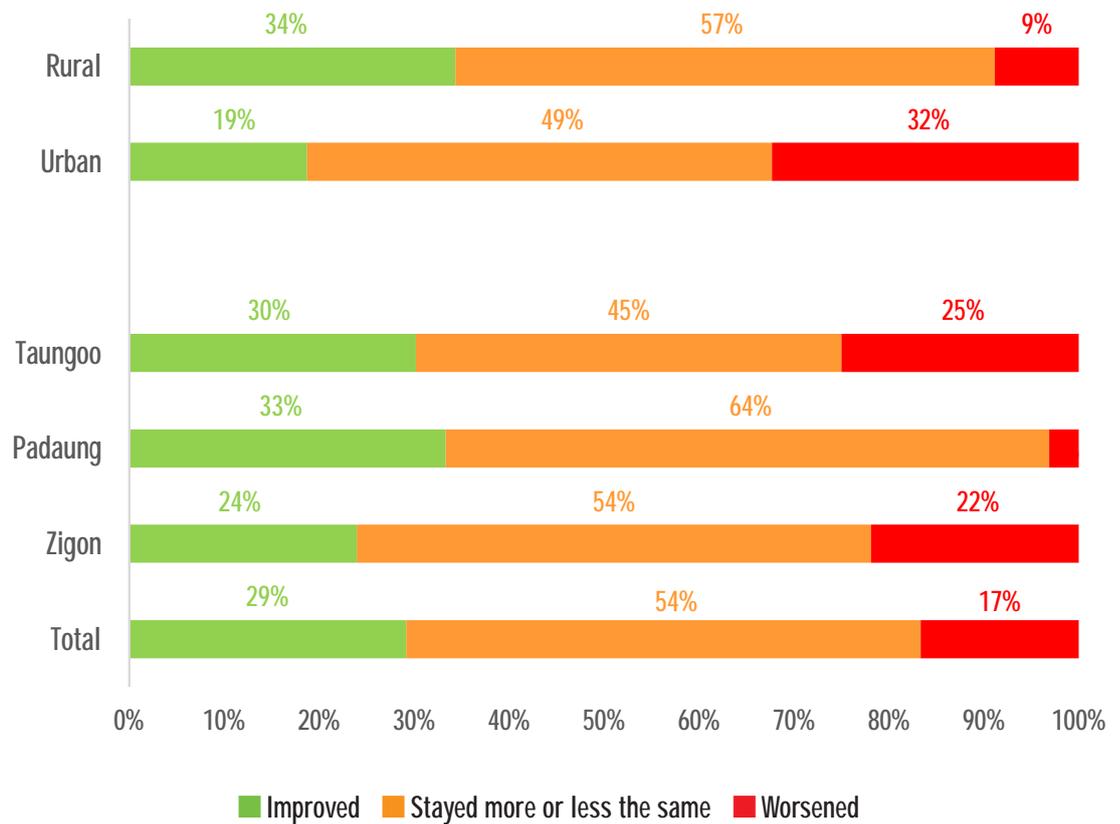
Besides the DRD and DAO there are only two INGOs active in providing safe drinking water in the three townships, namely Save the Children in Taungoo and the Myanmar Red Cross in Padaung.

Peoples perspectives on safe drinking water provision

Forty-one percent of the respondents interviewed said that they got their water from a deep tube well, 25 percent from a shallow tube well and 25 percent from an open water source (river or pond). Regarding access to safe drinking water, the respondents were asked whether the drinking water situation has improved in their village tract or ward over the last three years (see Figure 28).

Figure 28: Perceived changes in the provision of clean drinking water in the village tract or ward over the last three years.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014.



Less than one-third indicated that the provision of safe-drinking water has improved and mainly in rural areas and barely any citizens had been involved in discussions with government on water provision.

Only 29 percent of the respondents mentioned that the provision of safe drinking water has improved over the last few years, which is much lower than the figures for health care and primary education. Also, 17 percent mentioned that the situation has worsened. In section 4.2 it was already stated that the provision of safe drinking water was high on the list of needs in some village tracts and wards.

As shown in Figure 28, more urban respondents claimed that the situation had worsened rather than stayed the same (32 percent for urban as compared to 9 percent for rural). The differences between the three townships are significant. Padaung has a lower percentage of respondents mentioning that the water situation has deteriorated (3 percent), compared to the other two townships (22 percent Zigon and 25 percent Taungoo)

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

- New taps or pumps have been installed (57 percent).
- The water source is protected/cleaner (51 percent).
- The water source is nearer (13 percent).

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

- An increase in distance to their water source (79 percent),
- The water source got polluted (44 percent),
- More people using the same water source (21 percent)⁵¹.

For most of the respondents the quality of the drinking water was good or acceptable (54 percent and 36 percent).

⁵¹ More than one answer was possible.

Hardly any of the respondents (only 2 percent) had ever been involved in a meeting with government staff about the improvement of water provision in their respective village tract or ward.

With regard to the provision of drinking water in the three townships, it seems that government is becoming more responsive. **Access to drinking water came up as a serious problem both during the individual interviews and during the Community Dialogues.** Not having access to safe drinking water came out as the second most important issue raised by 22 percent of the respondents as the most important problem in their village tract or ward.

It seems that the administrations at the township level is beginning to pick up this message and that more and more resources over which the local committees have some say (i.e. the PDF, the CDF and the revenues from DAO) will at least for the coming year be allocated to improve access to drinking water.

Concluding remarks on service delivery

The figures from Bago Region on both health and primary education are encouraging, as they show that frontline service providers and people see that improvements are made at the community level. However, one has to be cautious using these figures as an indication for the actual quality of primary education or primary health care in Bago Region or in Myanmar at large. Myanmar continues to perform poorly on a number of international rankings both for primary education and health care, particularly when viewed against global standards set through initiatives such as Education for All.⁵²

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

⁵² In education, enrolment rates are still low, and completion rates from primary school remain poor. In health, Myanmar has improved on most MDG indicators but still lags behind as compared to other countries in the region (e.g. the 'under-5 child-mortality' rate is 52.3 compared to 28 as average for the region, maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live birth) is 200 compared to 150 as average for the South-East Asia Region). Most recent figures (2012) are from the MDG global data base (www.mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx) for Myanmar on progress regarding the achievement of the MDGs.

4.4 Information, Transparency and Accountability

Transparency of government and accountability of office bearers are critical elements for a well-functioning and sustainable democratic society. In Myanmar, given its long history of a completely closed government that was not accountable to its population at all, that did not share information or justify decisions made, progress towards more transparency and accountability is very slow since it is difficult to change attitudes of both government staff and citizens that have almost become part of culture. As described in the sections above, planning and service delivery is still done in an hierarchical manner within the “silo” of each sector, and the top-down decision-making structure that persists is not designed and suited for the integration of “the needs of the people” and neither for any form of downward or horizontal accountability.

While administrative accountability, the answerability to higher levels within the administration, and the related reporting and accounting mechanisms as well as the minimal internal checks and balances are fairly well developed and implemented in Myanmar, they cannot prevent mismanagement or corruption if they are not complemented by effective political and social accountability mechanisms. Despite the adoption of the Anti-Corruption Law in August 2013, both the Support Committee members and CSO representatives mentioned that they had not experienced any changes in practice. According to them “departments that deal with people directly often ask for money and the police is still accepting bribes”.

Nevertheless, some changes in the interaction between government and citizens are taking place at the township level and below that contribute to a restoration of basic mutual trust between the citizens and the state. Some of these processes as they present themselves in Bago Region are described in the section below.

4.4.1 *Aspects of Institutional and Social Accountability*

Changes in accountability at the township level

The government institutions at township level (both administration and departments) do not form a separate tier of government that is primarily accountable to its own citizens, either directly (which can be called social accountability) or indirectly via elected representatives (which can be called political accountability). Being merely an extended arm of the Union-level government and its tiers of administration (with the exception of the DAO which falls under the State/Region government’s authority) prevents the TAs and Heads of Departments from playing a more independent role in improving governance at the local level in Myanmar.

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

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

The **Region and Union-level *Hluttaw* members** often participate in meetings at the township level (when the Hluttaws are not in session), usually in the combined VTA/WA-TA and advisory committee meetings. However, they have no formal oversight function over the township administration except in the implementation of the recently introduced Constituency Development Fund in which they play an executive and oversight function at the same time.

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

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

Box 14: Bago Municipal law and its reach

The new Bago Region Municipal Law might, if implemented accordingly, create a precedent in establishing new relationships between citizens and local administrations. The Municipal Law establishes the TDAC, whose members include two government staff and local citizens representing various interests groups in the municipal area of the township. The Law gives the TDAC executive responsibilities and a statutory foundation in Region law, rather than Union law, which is rather innovative in the Myanmar setting. The TDAC can, on advice from the Executive Officer of the DAO, determine local taxes and levies. It can also instruct the Executive Officer to carry out certain works, and analyse draft regulations and notifications of the DAO. The Executive Officer remains directly accountable to the Minister of Development Affairs at the Region level and the Minister can overrule any decision of the TDAC. The Minister of Development Affairs decisions can only be appealed to the Chief Minister of the Region, but not the Union government. As a consequence of this new law, the Executive Officer of the DAO becomes to a certain extent also accountable to the TDAC. Since this law is still fairly new, it will be interesting to see how all parties deal with these rather complicated and multiple accountability lines in practice in future.

Changes in accountability at the village tract/ward level

The *Ward or Village Tract Administration Law of 2012* is not very clear about the formal accountability of the **Ward or Village Tract Administrators**. To become a VTA/WA one has to meet certain basic criteria. The VTA/WA is elected from and by the group of 10 household heads (in practice many different election procedures were applied). The TA appoints the VTA/WA, and provides him/her with a monthly subsidy and can assign functions to the VTA/WA. The VTA/WA reports to the TA and in case of misconduct, the TA can dismiss a VTA/WA. While the VTA/WA is not a civil servant following the usual rotation scheme, he/she is formally engaged by the government, and the main accountability line is upwards. In practice however, the interviews with the VT/WAs showed that since they are now elected (either through secret ballot by all male and female community members (3 out of 6) or by the 10 household heads (3 out of 6), most of them do feel accountable to their community members.

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

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

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

In Bago Region, this formal mandate of the VTA/WA, which originally dates back several centuries in the form of the village head, may be significantly different from the role the VTAs and WAs play in practice and how members of the community perceive this function. Historically, the village head has been the key person of authority at the village level, which has been incorporated into the bureaucracy of the State/Region from the time of the Myanmar Kings and further institutionalised during the colonial period⁵³. Partly due to the emergence of the various development funds that require the involvement of communities, in Bago Region the VTA/WA has in practice become more of an “**elected representative**” of the village tract or ward, acting as the intermediary between the village tract/ward and the township (informing community members on the one hand and bringing relevant village tract/ward problems or needs to the attention of the TA) next to his/her formal role as mentioned in the 2012 Law being in charge of maintaining law and order, while

Partly due to the emergence of the various development funds that require the involvement of communities as well as in reporting local problems to the TA, in Bago Region the VTA/WA has in practice become more of an “elected representative” of the village tract or ward, acting as the intermediary between the village tract/ward and the township and informally accountable to the people

53 Susanne Kempel, ‘Local governance during transition’, report for Action Aid, forthcoming.

also playing an important role in mediation and settling disputes which could be seen as an extension of the maintaining law and order functions (see Figure 29).

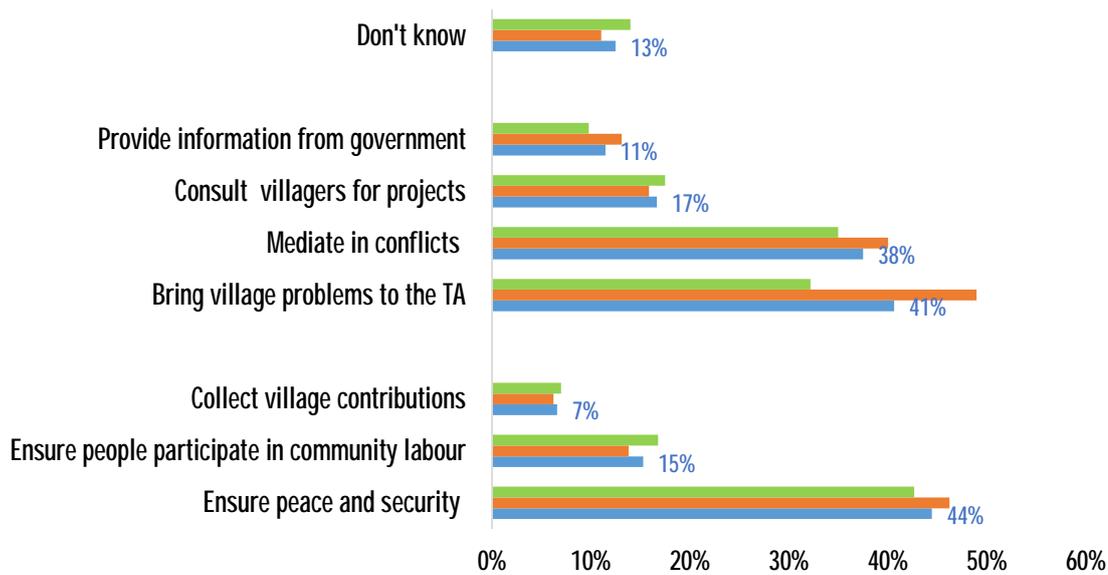


Figure 29: Functions of the VT/WA according to the respondents.

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

The bottom three functions are the formal functions of the VT/WA, while to top four functions are the informal functions.

■ Female ■ Male ■ Total

Only 13 percent of the respondents could not mention any function at all, while other respondents could mention one or more functions. “Ensuring peace and security” (one of the legal functions) and “bringing village problems to the attention of the township administrator”(one of the functions not mentioned in the law) were mentioned as the most important functions by 44 percent and 41 percent of the respondents, followed by “mediating in conflict situations” (also not mentioned in the law) with 38 percent. Female and male respondents provided similar answers except for “bringing village problems to the TA”, which was mentioned by 49 percent of the male respondents but only by 32 percent of the female respondents. This may indicate a difference in the manner in which women identify the village’s problems as well as the extent they feel represented by the VTA/WA.

The VTA/WAs of the six village tracts and wards interviewed also emphasized their bridging role. Next to “maintaining peace and security” which was seen by all as the most important task most of them mentioned: “bringing the needs of the people in the village tract/ward to the attention of the government at township level” and “mediation in conflicts or problems”. Also during the Community Dialogue sessions in which the VTA/WAs participated they showed that they felt to be the link between their village tracts or wards and the township and that they are at least informally accountable to the people in their community (see also annex 2 with examples of village tract ward action plans, which often include as an important component the VTA/WA reporting the problem to the TA). On the one hand, VTA/WAs are integrated into the government machinery (since they report to the TA, receive instructions from the TA, and are remunerated by the GAD) while on the other hand they are elected by, feel part of and responsible for the wellbeing of the community. The VTA/WAs are therefore often caught between the genuine demands and needs of their communities that they bring to the attention of the government at township level and the limited ability of the township administration to address all issues at the same time.

Grievance redressal

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

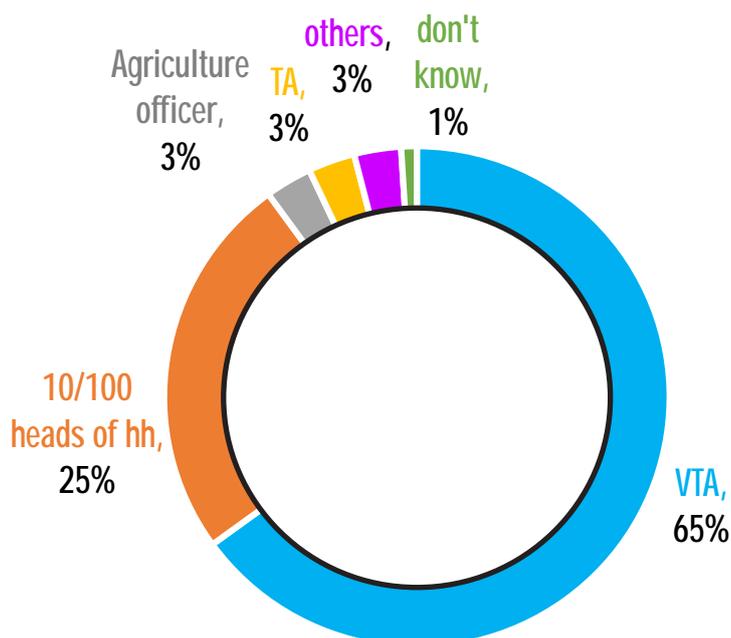
Box 15: Complaints in primary education

As part of the CRC survey, respondents with children at a primary school were asked whether complaints by parents are taken seriously by the school management and are properly dealt with. While still a large percentage of 31 percent mentioned that they don't know how complaints are dealt with, most likely because they have never made a complaint, 66 percent of the respondents mentioned that complaints would always or usually be treated seriously, while only 3 percent mentioned that complaints are not taken seriously. The school principals and the TEOs confirmed that they do take complaints seriously and that mechanisms are in place to deal with them. Depending on the gravity of the complaint, either the principal resolves the case or reports it to the TEO who will appoint an ad hoc team of three 'independent persons' to investigate the matter. If the matter cannot be resolved at the school or township level it will be forwarded to higher level authorities. Appeal procedures were said to be in place as well. None of the respondents with children at the primary school had ever submitted a complaint, so it is difficult to say how they will be dealt with.

For most citizens, the VT/WA is the first person to approach to resolve civil cases like domestic issues or land disputes (see Figure 30). It was noted that the Township Farmland Management Committee (TFMC), that deals with land disputes was not mentioned by anyone. According to the land registrar, land issues and conflicts related to heritage and renting land are dealt with by the court. The TFMC only deals with disputes about the rightful ownership of land.

Figure 30: First person to approach to resolve a possible land dispute

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014.



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

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

4.4.2 *Transparency and Access to information*

Easy access to information by citizens is a prerequisite for a government to become more transparent and accountable to its citizens. In Bago Region, the traditional hierarchical channels of official information provision (the 10/100 household heads, the Village Elders and Respected People and the VT/WA)⁵⁴ play an important role in the information flow from government to citizens as is shown below.

Seventy-four percent of the respondents mentioned that they received information on new laws and directives from government or about community meetings through their 10/100 household heads, 44 percent through the VT/WA, 44 percent through television, 41 percent via friends/family, 37 percent via radio and 35 percent via the village elders or respected persons⁵⁵ (see Figure 31).

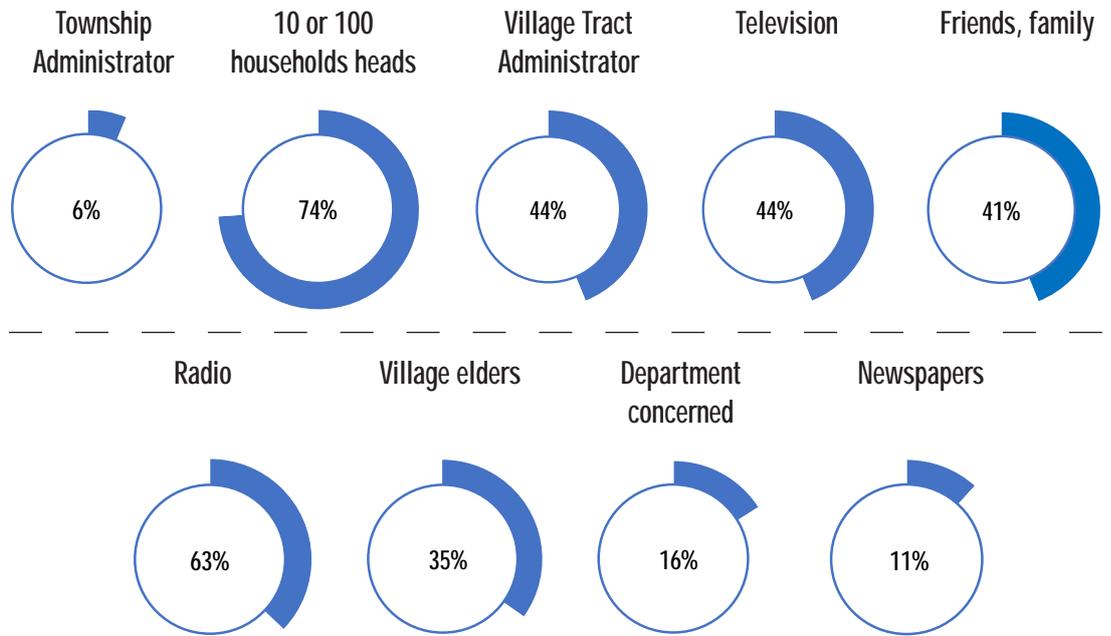
In Bago Region, the traditional hierarchical channels of official information provision (the 10/100 household heads, the Village Elders and Respected People and the VT/WA) play an important role in the information flow from government to citizens as is shown below.

⁵⁴ The 10/100 household heads or village heads or village administrators, have been incorporated in the administrative system during the British colonial rule and still play an important role in assisting the VTA who usually oversees 4-6 villages. They are not part of the formal government structure, and are either elected by the community or self-appointed. The Village Elderly and Respected People (VERP) is a kind of advisory committee to the VTA. There is no division of responsibilities between members but one will often assume the role of chairman. They meet in an informal manner and on an occasional basis. The selection process for VERPs is not clear. Typically, they are chosen by the Village Tract Administrator with advice from other elders in the village or are self-appointed. Most of them are former VTAs/10/100 household heads who automatically assume a VERP position upon leaving their post. In some villages the VERPs occupy a more permanent position than the VTA and so outlast several VTAs. Members are generally older men of a medium to higher socio-economic background. With the establishment of the VT/WDSC they are sometimes incorporated in these new committees and sometimes continue to exist next to the VT/WDSC. See for more detail: Kempel, Susan 2012; Village Institutions and Leadership in Myanmar: A View from Below, UNDP 2012.

⁵⁵ More than one answer was possible.

Figure 31: Ways in which respondents are informed about new laws or directives from government.

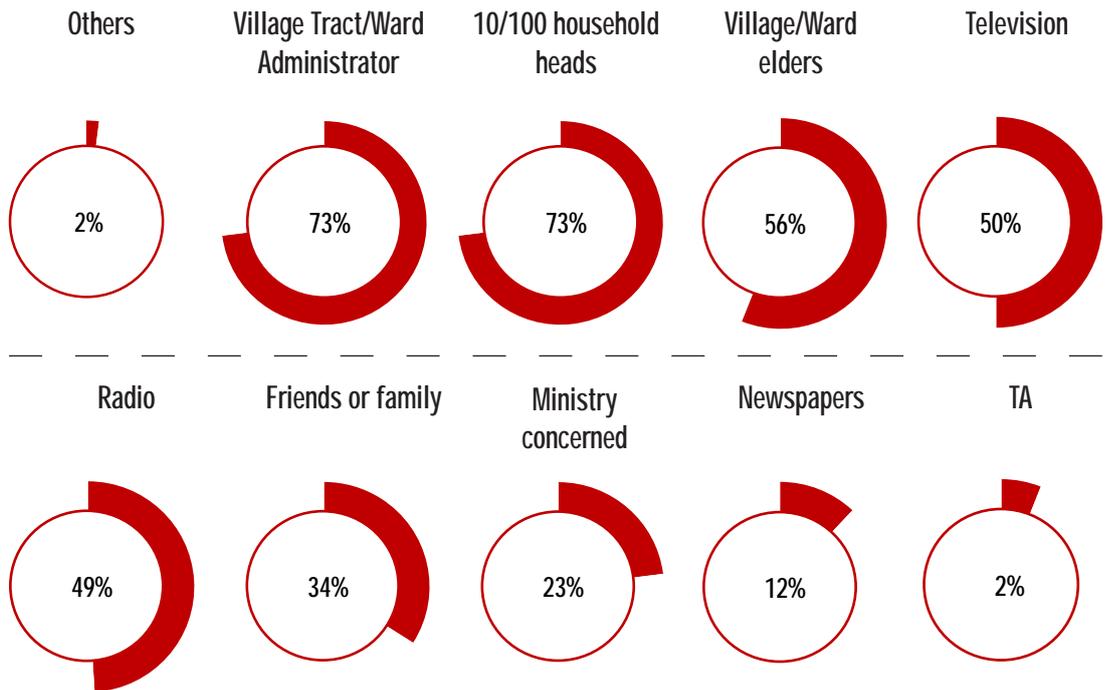
Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014 n = 288. Note that more than one answer was possible.



The same pattern emerged regarding the way in which respondents were informed about the national elections in 2010 (see Figure 32). Seventy-three percent received information via the 10/100 household heads, 73 percent via the VTA/WA, and approximately 50 percent via the media through TV, radio or newspapers.⁵⁶

Figure 32: Ways in which respondents are informed about new laws or directives from government.

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



Interestingly, female respondents rely slightly more on the “traditional” sources of information (VT/WA, 10/100 household heads, etc.), while male respondents in comparison tend to rely more on modern means of information provision (radio, TV, newspapers, etc.).

In order to get an idea about the familiarity respondents have with government, they were also asked to mention the name their VT/WA, the name of the President of Myanmar, and the name of their elected representative in the Region Hluttaw (see Figure 33).

⁵⁶ More than one answer was possible.

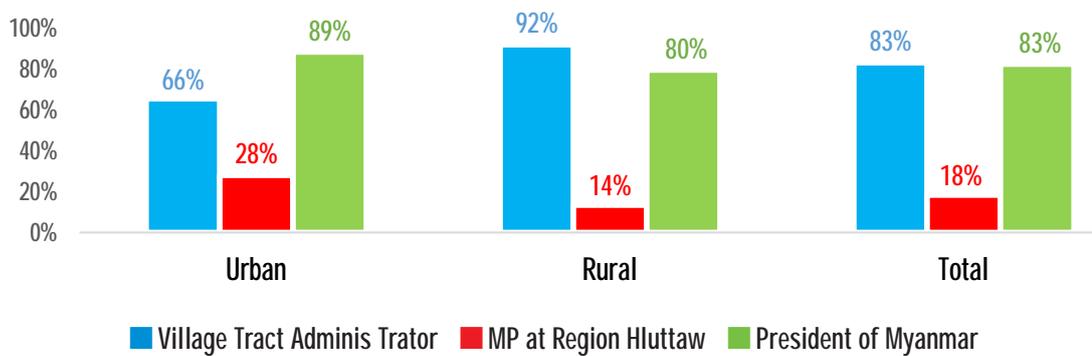


Figure 33: Knowledge of names of government representatives.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014.

Eighty- three percent of all respondents knew the name of the VT/WA and of the President of Myanmar, while only 18 percent knew the name of the elected member representing them in the Region Hluttaw. Urban respondents were less often than rural respondents able to mention the name of the VT/WA, while they were more often than rural ones able to mention the name of the Region Hluttaw member. Male respondents had a slightly better knowledge of the names of these government representatives than female respondents.

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

In order to gain insights into the knowledge people have about services provided by government, the survey asked those respondents who mentioned crop farming as their main economic activity and had user rights to the land on which they grew their crops (n=98) whether they had registered their farmland. This has been possible since 2012 on the basis of new legislation which provides farmers with documentation for user right over their land and that can be used as collateral to obtain a loan. In Bago Region, 78 percent of those respondents who mentioned farming as their main activity had already registered their land, while 9 percent were in the process of doing so. This percentage is higher than in most other States and Regions (except for Ayeyarwady) and shows the awareness and appreciation of the people of the possibility to register their farmland. Most of the farmers had received the information on this possibility to register their plot and the modalities of doing so either from the VTA/WA or from the agricultural extension worker. This indicates that information flow for the benefit of ordinary citizens worked reasonably well in Bago in this case.

The six VTA/WAs interviewed all mentioned that the township administration and other government departments inform them sufficiently about the plans they have for new projects in their community regarding construction and renovation of schools, roads and health facilities etc. (four qualified the information provision as “good”, two as ”not good, not bad”). The most important means of receiving information from the township level are either direct information from the TA or through a sharing of information during the TA-VTA/WA meetings.

There is clearly a need to raise more awareness about the existence of TDSC and TDAC, and their role and functions, as well as their actual discussions and deliberations.

Most of the farmers had received the information on this possibility to register their plot and the modalities of doing so either from the VTA/WA or from the agricultural extension worker. This indicates that information flow for the benefit of ordinary citizens worked reasonably well in Bago in this case.

Box 16: Efforts at information flow

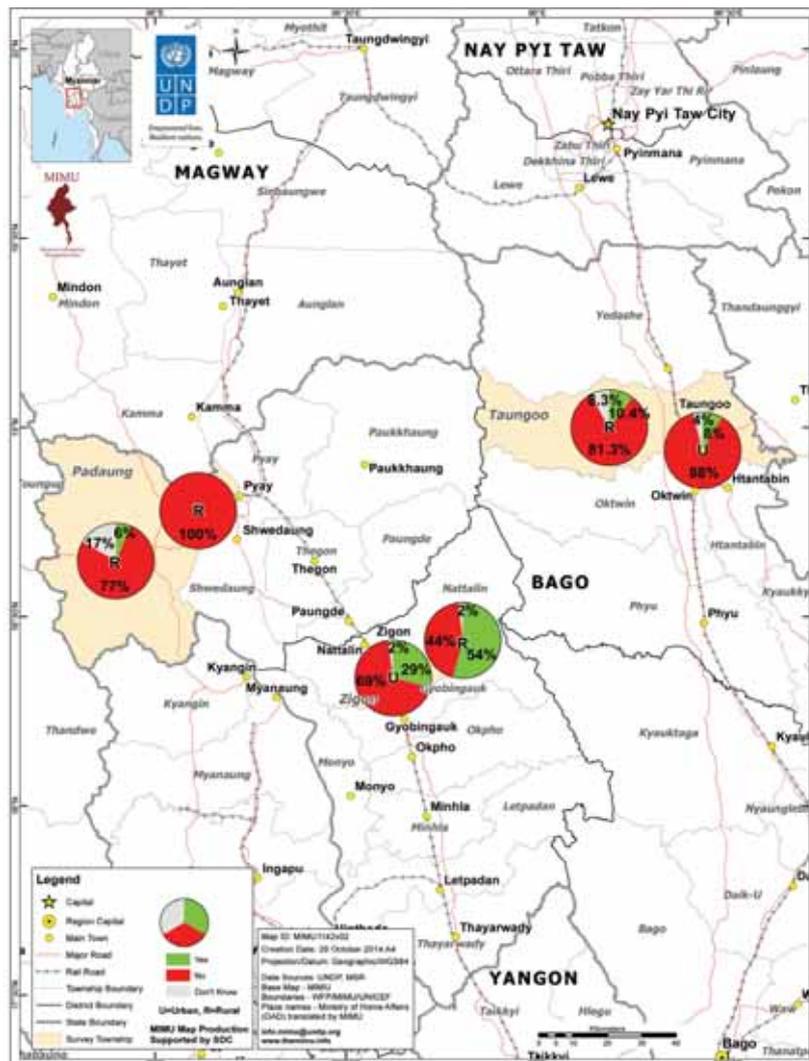
The TAs in the three selected townships in Bago Region said they were well aware of the importance of good information provision to their citizens and that they actively involved the VT/WAs and the TDSC members in information sharing. The TA in Taungoo mentioned that whenever there are new laws or important directives that are relevant to the population, the senior staff at the various departments, including the TA himself, form teams and go out to visit all village tracts/wards to inform citizens directly and to deal with questions from the citizens.

76 percent of the respondents felt that the township administration was not informing them enough about government information and new projects.

Government staff at the township level as well as the VTA/WAs were therefore of the opinion that they are informing citizens well enough about important government directives or news and about planned projects in their villages, either through notice boards and or via the VTA/WA or support committee members. This however stands in stark contrast with the views of citizens. Seventy-six percent of the citizens interviewed mentioned that the information provision by the township administration about important government information and new projects was not enough (see Figure 34). These perceptions of individual respondents were confirmed during the CD meetings by both citizens as well as by frontline service providers in these areas .

Figure 34: Level of satisfaction with information provision by township administration.

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014. n = 288



TDSC and TDAC committee members who participated in the Focus Group Discussions acknowledged that although more and more government information is available nowadays and is actively shared by the township administration, it is not reaching the citizens in the communities yet. According to them, the main bottleneck in information flow is at the village tract/ward level. Information from the Community Dialogue sessions suggests that a lot depends on the willingness and active attitude of the VT/WA to share information either directly with citizens and/or via the 10/100 Household Heads. Government staff in one of the village tracts suggested: “The administrator and the clerk are weak in information sharing; even members of the administration and support committee did not receive full information about the project. The heads of the education and health sector departments did not disseminate information about the construction project and the budget”.

There were also examples of improved information flow. People in Ward 3 in Zigon mentioned that: “they were invited to meetings with a written invitation, which was hand-delivered to households in the community.” In the past, community members said, they “did not know anything about government projects and plans.” Now, however, they said they knew a little or have at least limited information about the projects. In Ta Loke Pin Village Tract in Padaung people were well aware that getting access to information is a responsibility for both sides as they said: “unlike in the past, people are more informed about things such as electing the village tract administrator; as people try to get information themselves”.

CSOs and NGOs qualified the information sharing by the township administration as “bad” but acknowledged that there were improvements. CSOs in Taungoo said: “There was no information provided from the government in the past and now at least some information comes through via the committee. Information sharing through the committee is however not efficient and needs to improve. The committee still relies on the administrative channels which do not reach everyone”.

In order to understand and if possible overcome these bottlenecks, these findings need to be placed in the historical context of Myanmar. Government and administrative information has not been shared freely with the public in the recent past, and focused more on informing people about their duties than on their rights. Only very recently has there been a certain break with the past as evidenced by high-profile examples such as the unprecedented publication of the national 2012-13 budget.⁵⁷

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

“The VTA and the clerk are weak in information sharing; even members of the administration and support committee did not receive full information about the project. The heads of the education and health sector departments did not disseminate information about the construction project and the budget”.

CSOs and NGOs qualified the sharing by the township administration as “bad” but acknowledged that there were improvements. CSOs in Taungoo said: “There was no information provided from the government in the past and now at least some information comes through via the committee.”

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

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

These problems in information flow were discussed during the feedback workshop at the Regional level, especially from the perspective as to what the township level committees (TDSC and TDAC) could play a more active role in information provision to citizens. Several suggestions were made:

- The Support Committees should have an office and other support such as stationary and financial support;
- The Committees should visit the communities and find out what people need;
- Township support committees should interact with village tract and village committees and other representatives of the community such as village elders;
- Township support committees should be cooperative with people in submitting, planning and implementing projects

4.4.3 Civil society's role in enhancing transparency and accountability

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

The number and size of CSOs in Bago Region is still limited. Most organisations are active in health and education, providing direct support to people in need. In character they are better described as community-based organisations (CBOs) than non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Most are volunteer organisations receiving donations from the public while only a few receive funds and support from (I)NGOs. Even though their outreach is limited, it became clear from the interviews that their work is appreciated both by committee members and government staff. So far they have not been mapped systematically, partly because most of them would be rather hesitant to provide such information at this stage. As a result, there is not much available information on their membership, their outreach, their organisation, funding etc.

CSOs claimed that the TDSCs do not reflect the diversity in the township population

As part of the research short workshops were held with a group of CSOs in each of the three townships in which in total 41 CSOs participated. Most CSOs acknowledged that improvements have been made in the three townships, especially in infrastructure and education. Several of them added that the mutual trust between government and CSOs is improving as well, even though there are many areas where the government performance has not much improved, like in fighting corruption and being more transparent about its planned activities and budgets. In addition, CSOs claimed that the TDSCs do not reflect the diversity in the township population as they are selected by government from the group of persons who are already close to government. According to the CSOs it still depends a lot

on who you know in the system whether you can get access to information and therefore people close to government can benefit from this knowledge.

as they are selected by government from the group of persons who are already close to government.

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

Box 17: Plans to improve CSO-GO coordination

All meetings concluded that the establishment of a platform or network of CSOs that are active within each of the townships would be desirable. Under its umbrella they could meet on a regular basis without the fear of being seen as too critical or counterproductive and it would be an important starting point for them to grow and become more vocal. Once such a network is well-established the CSOs would like to engage with the township government on a regular basis to discuss and resolve issues of mutual interest and see how they can complement the efforts from the government to speed up development in the townships.

During the feedback meeting at the Region level in Bago, township-level stakeholders confirmed the importance of improving communication between the government at the township level and civil society organisations active in the township and they therefore suggested to create opportunities and channels to communicate with CSOs on a regular basis.





5. Conclusions

Based on the information collected in the three townships and comparing that information with similar findings in other States and Regions, it may be concluded that Bago Region in general and Taungoo, Padaung and Zigon townships in particular are trying to implement the reforms at township level over the last few years. The findings also show however that in order to reach the objectives of these reforms, improved service delivery, clean government and people-centred planning, these institutional arrangements are only the first important steps in a reform process that need to be complemented with changes in structures, attitudes and relationships that will require a more concerted and systematic approach to local governance reform.

In Bago Region, the TDSCs and TDACs seem to work as they were intended by the Presidential Notification and the Municipal Law. The TDSCs in the three townships are active and take their role seriously, while the TAs have established good working relations with them. The TDSCs are actively involved in project identification, in the decision-making process and in progress monitoring and they meet on a regular basis with the TA and the TMC to discuss development-related problems and solutions in the township.

The TDACs have only recently been formalized through the Municipal Law that was drafted and adopted by Bago Region in early 2014. As described in this report, the law allocates executive and oversight functions to the TDAC in which citizens' representatives participate as well, and makes the Executive Officer of the DAO at least partially answerable to this new municipal committee. It will be interesting to see how this revised relationship will work out in practice and whether this additional line of accountability could be applied to other departments as well in future. So far, the Executive Officers from the DAO seem to have established good working relations with the various TDACs in the three townships as they see them as an added value to the management of the municipal affairs in the townships. According to one of them it makes his work much easier, problems are identified faster, while the committee members act as an intermediary between the municipality and citizens, explaining matters and identifying problems.

Despite the fact that the township committees are functioning relatively well, there remain several areas of concern that require the attention of the Regional and Union level government as they are beyond the authority of the township administration to resolve. The first one is the question of selection and representation. The non-government members of both township committees were selected from various groups in society in accordance with the Notification and the Municipal Law. In practice, these members mostly represent the business sector in the townships, a small group of people with specific interests that have access to information and are in general close to government. None of the members is female and only a limited number come from the rural village tracts. As a result, the support committees do not reflect the diversity that exists in society and the different interests that exist among the community. This is likely to impact negatively on their legitimacy as was mentioned several times especially by people not feeling represented or involved. In addition, there is the risk of "elite capture" if only a small group in society is represented and has access to the information. No hard proof was found of any abuse of these privileged positions at the moment, but as the mandates and amount of funds that these committees deal with expands (like with the TDACs that get more executive functions following the adoption of the new Bago Region Municipal Law), the risk of such trends materializing happen will increase, based on comparative experiences.

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

In Bago Region, **service delivery** has generally improved. Especially in the health and education sector in which government has invested a lot more during the last few years, most people interviewed confirmed that they have noticed improvements in actual service delivery over the last three years. In the **health sector**, 55 percent of the respondents noticed that the situation had improved over the last three years and in education 51 percent of the respondents noticed improvements. Whether with the same amount of extra resources available much more could have been achieved is difficult to say as both sectors do not at present monitor performance or effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery systematically and there are no long term strategic plans at the township level (neither sectoral nor integrated) against which progress can be measured. In addition, the **practice of planning and delivering services has not changed much** according to the key service providers at the township level. While more information is collected at the grass-roots level to feed into the planning system, the actual planning is still done in **top-down** manner. “Bottom-up planning” up to now appears to be not much more than “bottom-up information provision” to District, Region and Union-level decision makers. Since the actual planning in most departments is still taking place at the Region or Union level it is almost impossible for Heads of Departments at the township level to adjust their plans to any agreed upon township priorities or to the plans of other departments. Their ability to become more responsive to the needs of the township citizens and to coordinate their plans and activities is as a consequence very limited. In that sense, Bago Region is not much different from the other States and Regions in Myanmar.

Looking at the low-cost solutions that were proposed by frontline service providers to some of the bottlenecks identified, it seems however that a **further deconcentration of responsibilities** within these sectors to lower levels in the respective departments and even to school or health facility level would help to solve some of the most burning and immediate problems related to staffing, the availability of basic facilities, etc.

In the **drinking water sector**, improvements over the last three years were only noted by 29 percent of the respondents, while at the same time improving access to safe drinking water was mentioned most frequently by the respondents both in the individual interviews as well as during the Community Dialogues as the most important problem at the village tract/ward level. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents in the three townships mentioned it is as the most important problem in their village tract/ward, while in Zigon even 42 percent of the respondents mentioned it as the most important problem.

Based on the budget allocations for both the DRD and the DAO for 2014/2015 as well as the number of water improvement projects that will be implemented in the coming year under the PRF and CDF funds in the three townships, it can be noticed that there is an **increase in resource allocation** to tackle problems in access to drinking water. Apparently, through the VTA/WAs, TDSCs and TDACs, the needs of the people become known to the Heads of

Departments and the TA and they respond by allocating more of the resources that fall to a large extent under their discretion to address these problems.

Even though only six village tracts and wards were included in this survey, the inventory of most important problems either through the individual responses or through the Community Dialogues showed that the **needs and problems of people can differ significantly per township or even per village tract/ward** and that **tailor-made solutions and responses are required** if government wants to become more responsive to these needs and become more “people-centred”. Even though the DRD in some townships is starting to make a more systematic inventory of facilities at the village and ward level, government is not yet able to systematically assess and record these different needs on the basis of **transparent and equitable criteria** and have the necessary systems in place that enables it to respond to each of these issues fairly, systematically and adequately. It is hampered to respond adequately, partly because government at the township level lacks sufficient resources (like development funds or income from taxes/levies and services) which it could allocate at its discretion to address all needs and partly because sector departments are limited in their ability to respond to local needs as described above.

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

In the context of efforts to further transparency and accountability, the problem of **poor information flow** between township committees (or the township administration) and citizens was identified as a critical bottleneck. While the TDSC committee members do go out and talk to the VTA/WAs and VT/WDCs, hardly anyone in the townships is aware of the existence of these committees and the important role they play at the township level. They do not seem to consult the interest group in society they represent on a regular basis.

With regard to complaint handling and grievance redressal, the mapping noted the important role that the **VTA/WAs and TAs play** in these processes, either as resource persons who can refer a case to the right institution or to resolve or mediate in an actual case. While no detailed information on individual cases was collected, most TAs mentioned that the number of cases that were brought to them had increased over time and that many of them were related to recent or old cases of land grabbing. The fact that the GAD is dealing with these cases and that their number is increasing could mean that there is more confidence of the people that their cases are dealt with by government in a fair way. While the more serious cases are investigated by ad hoc committees consisting of at least three members, the TA still has much discretionary power to rule. There is a lack of transparency on how decisions are made, leaving too much room for arbitrariness. A further specification and clarification of the regulations regarding complaint handling and dispute resolution would help to create more clarity and limit the space for arbitrary rulings and possible mismanagement.

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

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

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

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

6. Annexes

Annex 1: Citizen Report Card interviews

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

In Taungoo and Zigon townships, one ward and one village tract and in Padaung two village tracts were randomly selected, and in each of these 48 adults were interviewed using a random selection process.

Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents

By alternating between male and female respondents it was ensured that 50 percent of the respondents were male and 50 percent were female. All age groups were represented in the survey as is shown in Figure 1.1. Not knowing the actual age distribution of the total population in these ward and village tracts makes it difficult to say whether the age distribution of the respondents was representative. From the figure below it seems however that the age groups above 40 years of age were slightly overrepresented in the sample.

Figure 1.1: Number of respondents per age group

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014. n= 288

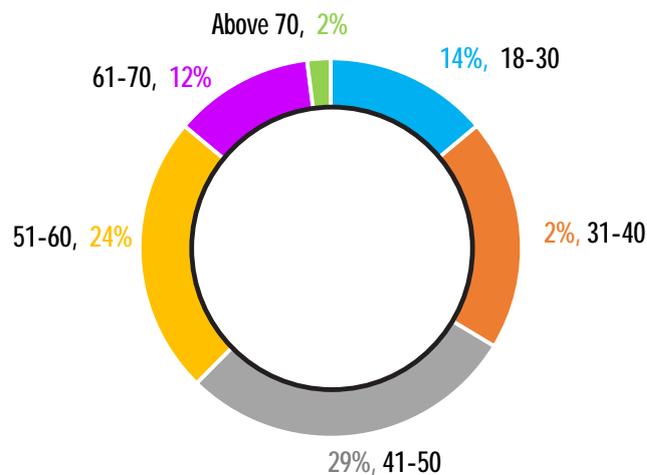
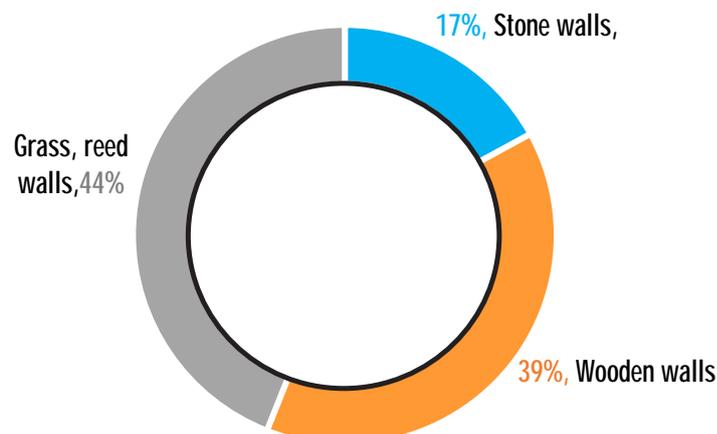


Figure 1.2: Type of housing of respondents

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014. n= 288



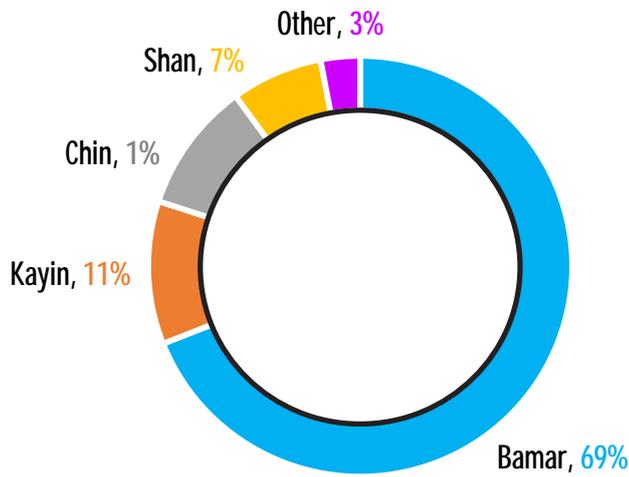


Figure 1.3: Ethnicity of respondents

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014. n= 288

27 percent of the respondents had no education or did not finish primary education while more than one third (38 percent) completed primary education (see figure 1.4). In total, almost two-third (65 percent) of the respondents had received education at most up to primary school level. About one-fifth of the respondents (19 percent) reported to have finished middle school (grade 9) while only 8 percent of the total respondents said to have completed high school (grade 11). Despite fairly equal gender distribution among those who completed primary and middle schools, there is a wider gender gap among those with no completed formal education – 23 percent males vs. 31 percent females.

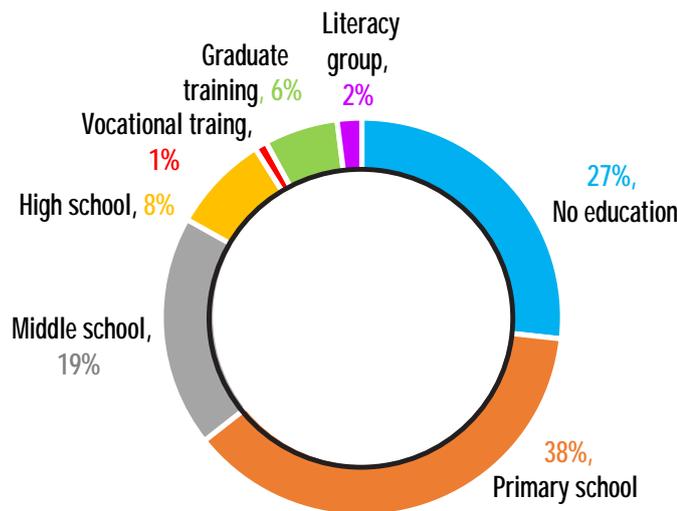


Figure 1.4: Education background of respondents:

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014. n= 288

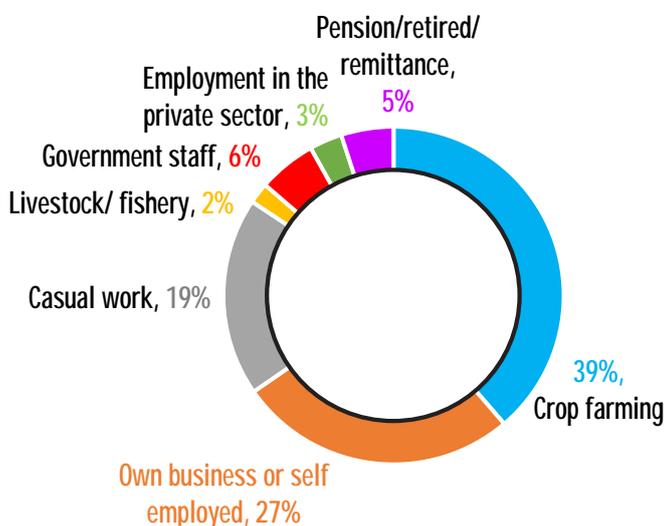


Figure 1.5: Main livelihood of the household of the respondent

Source: UNDP Local Governance Mapping, Bago Region, May 2014. n= 288

Annex 2: Community action plans

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

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

VT/ Ward	Issue 1 (Education)	Issue 2(Health)	Issue 3 (information flow)	Issue 4 (other issues)
Ward No. 3, Zigon Township	<p>Regarding the status of deteriorated school building and the requirements of teaching staffs, the WA and the school principal would report to TA and TEO. They are asking budget for new building.</p> <p>Regarding the unequal treatment relating to tuition, education staff recommended parent should not pay tuition; if there is no demand for it. .</p>	<p>To combat problems with mosquitoes, local citizens promised to clear local drains to prevent stagnant water and clear bushes and shrubs.</p>	<p>The WA can only promulgate accurate information if he receives accurate information from TA.</p> <p>Service users required that the support committee members should be elected by the people so as to improve transparency.</p>	<p>A proposal for electrification must be submitted to the TA by the WA.</p> <p>Local citizens can help with general labour and putting in the lamp posts.</p>
Sa Bai Hmyaung VT, Zigon Township	<p>The VTA will submit deteriorated state of the school building and insufficient school materials in the school to the TA and Township Education Department.</p> <p>Teachers will report the issue of insufficient staffs in the school to the Township Education Department</p> <p>Citizens can provide voluntary labour for school building and school fence. They would encourage the children to go to school.</p>	<p>The VTA would submit proposal about insufficient staffs to the Township Management.</p> <p>The VA group said that they would guarantee the security of health staff if she is going to the patient house at night.</p> <p>The citizens would provide voluntary labour for RHC building</p>	<p>The VTA promised that he would deliver all the messages that he received from the Township Management to the village support committee, 10 and 100 household heads, and village elders.</p>	<p>The VTA would submit the proposal to Township Management to get water tank cars and fire station.</p> <p>The citizens would volunteer in the fire station.</p>

<p>Sin Te VT, Padaung Township</p>	<p>Teachers, together with the VTA can look for funds for poor students.</p> <p>The Village Administration will report the needs of schools to the Township and State Administration.</p> <p>Teachers recommended that Parents should join meetings when the teachers want to tell them about their children's education.</p>	<p>Poor pregnant mothers should receive prenatal care instead of arriving at the MW just before giving birth.</p> <p>The VTA would integrate with the public, form committees and join with work forces to improve the health sectors of the village.</p> <p>The public agreed to attend health talks.</p>	<p>The VTA would buy an amplifier for announcing information.</p> <p>The public insisted to have notice boards in every corner of the village.</p>	<p>The VTA will explain to the people how to form a committee and encourage them to be more involved in the committees.</p> <p>People said that they would be more involved in the process of forming committees.</p> <p>The VTA will encourage people to attend educational meetings about human trafficking.</p>
<p>Ta Loke Pin VT, Padaung Township</p>	<p>School principal made requests to the Ministry of Education for filling staffs, more support with repairing computers and getting solar panels.</p> <p>The VTA can report to the Township administration about necessary projects. It will also organize meetings and raise funds.</p> <p>People can offer help to carry out development projects.</p>	<p>Service providers explained that there would be more health staff as some are getting trained in town.</p> <p>Health staffs encouraged people to attend meetings and discussions to gain knowledge about health</p> <p>The public agreed to attend health educational seminars</p>	<p>The VTA agreed to announce information via the public address system and notice board.</p> <p>The VTA also confirmed that other representatives can attend meetings if 10 HH heads can't attend.</p> <p>The people suggested that 10 HH heads should attend meetings so as to inform their households.</p>	<p>The village administration will address and resolve problems whenever they are reported.</p> <p>The VTA promised that if the fire alarm breaks down or malfunction, it'll be repaired.</p>
<p>Ward 11, Taungoo Township</p>	<p>WA have requested funds from the Ministry of Education</p> <p>Regarding the weakness in cooperation between teachers and parents, the administration group can organize teachers-parents conferences and meetings.</p> <p>In regards to the bad condition of roads to the school, the ward administration can improve the dirt road to a gravel road</p>	<p>Ward administration will find the place to build a health centre., but they need final decision and approval from Ministry of Health.</p>	<p>The citizens would like to be informed by using the public addressing system whenever they need to know something. However, the WA could not afford this system and they also mentioned that some information would not be received through the PA system if people are working in the field. Therefore, the WA prefers using the information notice board.</p>	

Kyauk Taing VT, Taungoo Township			The village administration could make more of an effort to get people more involved.	The village administration and people can cooperate to solve the problem with having no village fence.
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Annex 3: Composition of management, support and coordinating and committees in the three townships in Bago Region.

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

For management there are:

- The Township Management Committee (TMC)
- The Township Farmland Management Committee (TFMC)

For coordination there are:

- The TA-VT/WA coordination meetings
- And the more informal weekly Heads of Department meetings
- The Township Planning and Implementation Committee (TPIC)

For consultation there are:

- The Township Development Support Committee (TDSC)
- The Township Development Affairs Committee (TDAC)

Besides these committees there can be additional sector or coordinating committees in each of the townships, like the education and health committees

3.1 Management Committees

Township Management Committee

In all three selected townships in Bago Region, the Township Management Committees are well established. The composition in Padaung and Taungoo is more comprehensive than in Zigon (see table 16).

Role	Position	Taungoo	Padaung	Zigon
Chair	Township Administrator – GAD	Y	Y	Y
Secretary	Township Planning Officer	Y	Y	Y
Joint Secretary	Deputy Township Administrator – GAD	Y	Y	Y
Member	Chief of Police	Y	Y	Y
Member	Township Immigration Officer	Y	Y	
Member	Township Agricultural Officer	Y	Y	
Member	Township Education Officer	Y	Y	
Member	Township Executive Officer DAO	Y	Y	

Table 3.1: Composition of TMCs in the three townships

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

Township Farmland Management Committee (TFMC)

Since the adoption of the Farmland law in 2012, farmers can own agricultural land. They can obtain a land registration certificate for the land they formerly leased from government. The District Officer for Land Registration (Land Registrar) deals with these registration

requests. According to the Land Registrar, farmers have been keen to make use of this new possibility because they can use their land as collateral for loans. It also gives them legal certainty and better protection against land grabbing.

Land disputes are dealt with by the TLMC which is chaired by TA and head of land records is designated as secretary.

3.2 Coordination Committees

Township Planning and Implementation Committee

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

TA-VTA coordination meetings

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

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

Heads of Department and Heads of Office meetings

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

3.3 Support Committees

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

farmers and workers), thus ensuring the participation of “local organisations and private individuals” in township development.

Township Development Support Committees

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

In Bago Region, the TDSCs were established in Taungoo and Padaung in May 2013 and in Zigon in October 2013. They consist of 9 members each. In Taungoo and Padaung, 7 representatives come from different interest groups and there are two ex-officio members from government (Deputy Township Administrator (TA) and the Executive Officer of the Development Affairs Organisation (DAO)) (see table 3.2). In Zigon, all civil society members are representatives from the business sector (traders, transport owners, shop owners, rice millers). All members of the three TDSCs are male and most (if not all) come from the wards, leaving the village tracts (where 70 percent of the population lives) un- or at least underrepresented. One of the citizen representatives is elected by the committee members as chairperson and one as secretary.

	Position	Taungoo	Padaung	Zigon
Representative of CSO	Member	Y	Y	
Representative of Business Association/business men	Member	Y	Y	6
Representative of Labour Union/workers	Member	Y	Y	
Representative of Farmers	Member	Y	Y	Y
Deputy Township Administrator	Member	Y	Y	Y
Executive Officer, Department of Municipal Affairs	Member	Y	Y	Y
Person proposed by community elders, civil society and business group representatives	Member	3	3	

Table 3.2:
Composition of TDSCs in
the three townships Bago
Region

The TDSCs meet on a regular basis, usually twice a month (or once a month in Zigon) and often together with the TA-VTA meeting, which takes place once a month. According to the members, no minutes of meetings are kept. During these meetings they are informed by the Deputy TA about issues relevant to their township, directives, development projects, etc. The Chairman and secretary set the agenda in consultation with the TA. Members of all three elected legislatures are invited and attend almost always (as observers). During their discussion they focus on all 10 areas mentioned in the instructions: but mainly on health, education, roads, telecommunications and project selection.

TDSC members stated that they were aware of the guidelines/notification but had not received any training. For them the instructions are clear enough. Minutes of meetings are taken and sent to the members, to the TA and to other relevant Heads of Departments.

Township Development Affairs Committee

The Township Development Affairs Committees (TDACs) were officially established in Taungoo and Padaung in May 2014, while in Zigon, at the date of interview (June 2014) the township authorities were still in the process of establishing a TDAC.

All members of all three township TDACs are male. One of the citizen representatives is elected by the committee members as chairperson (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3:
Composition of TDCs in
the three townships Bago
Region

Role	Position	Taungoo	Padaung	Zigon
Chair	Citizen	Y	Y	Y
Secretary	Executive Officer DAO	Y	Y	Y
Member	Deputy TA/GAD	Y	Y	Y
Member	Elder	Y	Y	Y
Member	CSO/Business Representative	Y	Y	Y
Member	Professional Representative	Y	Y	Y
Member	Rural Development Officer	y	y	y

Annex 4: Proposed action plans from village tract/ward, township and Region level stakeholders to address some of the identified governance issues in Bago Region.

As they were formulated during the Region level feedback workshop.

Key issue	Action (short term)	Action (mid-term)	Actors	Capacity-building support required
Poor information flow from township management to citizens and other stakeholders main bottleneck at village tract/ ward level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Township committees (T/C) should have an office building and other supports such as stationary and financial support. T/C would visit the community and find out what people need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T/C would integrate with village committees and other representatives of the community such as village elders. T/C would cooperate with people in submitting, planning and implementing projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Township committees Village committees Village elders 10/100 HHs Local citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide trainings to the T/C on IT, Law, rule and regulations of government departments To provide general knowledge to T/C about the essential needs of people (health, education, etc.)
Lack of clarity in procedures for payment for essential drugs at public health facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wall posters or directives would be attached at hospitals and health centres. Health staff should explain to those who are illiterate. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare staff Ministry of Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health talks held in the community to educate people about health awareness and rules and regulations of the health services
Support committees (TDSC and TDAC) are not representative for the whole population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the whole population of the community to be included in the election of community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T/C members to have more authority and clearer objectives, rules and regulations T/C members will only support the township management and other departments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Township committee members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T/C would learn about IT, law, rules and regulations of the government's departments T/Cs also need to know general knowledge about the essential need of the people such as public health, education, etc.

Table 4.1: Group 1: Village-tract/ Ward stakeholders

Table 4.2: Group 2: Township level stakeholders

Key issue	Action	Actors	Capacity-building support required
'Issues of equity reflected in urban-rural disparities'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government administration, committees, Municipal Department, DRD should all work together in choosing the projects to implement • Should discover the needs of the villages; prioritize the projects by forming committees and should oversee the budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government administration • Committees • Municipal Department • DRD 	A budget for the formation of committees
Limited communication between Region and Township level departments regarding budgets allocation and planning and the need for better justifications of decisions made at Region/Union level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the upper level government makes changes to the projects submitted by the township, it should negotiate the changes with the township level government. • If information is gathered from the departments, they shouldn't reject the request by saying "it is not possible to give the information because of instruction from the upper level government." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper level government • Township level government 	n/a
Existing CSOs operate in isolation (they don't network among themselves and there is little or no co-ordination with Township Administration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government gives opportunities and channels to communicate with the CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSOs • Government administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactions and meetings between the CSOs and government administration

Table 4.3: Group 3: Region level stakeholders

Key issue	Action (short term)	Action (mid-term)	Actors	Capacity-building support required
More integrated and efficient data collection at the Township level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More collaboration between township, district and relevant government departments • Financial assistance to bridge the gap between departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce centralization of planning from Union level to Region level • A departmental framework • Workshops on the implementation of information sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant government departments • District/ township level government administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical support (fax, email) • Capacity training for staff • English language training
Lack of clarity in procedures for payment for essential drugs at public health facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More social security and health insurance • Have complaint mechanisms in place • Standardize lay off staff policy rules and regulations/ improve the level of HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve ethical practices of medical staff • Carry out activities to increase the capacity of public knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare staff • Ministry of Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building of a storage facility to house medicine for future use • Trainings to sharpen the skills of women in society/ workplace • Information centres/ counseling centres/enquiry centres
Women's engagement and participation in decision-making is limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold discussions on gender equity • For CSO MAAF to submit proposal to the parliament related to the rights of women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide vocational and management trainings to women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women • Region level government • CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region administrative units to carry out directives to improve self-esteem and self-confidence levels among a diverse range of women. • Introduce simulating programs to change the traditional perceptions of women towards men and social services. • A program that will find leadership roles for women in Region administrative field units



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