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Local  
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Mapping

# THE STATE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE: TRENDS IN YANGON



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Local Governance Mapping

# THE STATE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE: TRENDS IN YANGON

UNDP MYANMAR



# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	II
Acronyms	III
Executive Summary	1 - 4
<b>1. Introduction to the Local Governance Mapping</b>	<b>5 - 8</b>
1.1 Yangon Region - most striking features	7
1.2 Yangon City Development Committee and the Region government	8
1.3 Objectives of the report and its structure	8
<b>2. Descriptive overview of governance structures in Yangon Region</b>	<b>9 - 38</b>
2.1 Yangon Region - administrative division	11
2.2 Yangon Region - Socio-economic and historical context	13
2.3 Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC)	18
2.4 Yangon Region Government	24
2.5 Representation of Yangon Region in the Union Hluttaws	33
2.6 Some of the governance issues that Yangon Region and YCDC are facing	37
<b>3. Organisation of service delivery at the township level</b>	<b>39 - 62</b>
3.1 Governance structures at the township level	43
3.2 Planning and Budgeting	46
3.3 Role of GAD and the VTAs/WAs	48
3.4 The TDSC and the TMAC	51
3.5 Election and selection processes for peoples' representatives	53
3.6 Three concrete services - people's participation and providers views	54
3.7 Major development issues from a service provider perspective	60
<b>4. Quality of service delivery - a citizens' perspective</b>	<b>63 - 84</b>
4.1 Introduction	64
4.2 Views on responsibility of the township and sub-township administration	67
4.3 Citizen participation and representation	67
4.4 Views on the quality of service delivery	69
4.5 Transparency, Accountability and Responsivness	79
4.6 Equity, transparency and 'corruption'	80
4.7 Information sharing	80
4.8 Major development issues emenating from the Citizen Report Cards	83
<b>5. Conclusions on participation and accountability in Yangon Region</b>	<b>85 - 94</b>
5.1 Mechanisms for popular participation	87
5.2 Mechanisms for accountability	89
5.3 Pre-requisites for effective participation and accountability	90
5.4 Suggestions for further discussion	93
<b>6. Annexes</b>	<b>95 - 101</b>
Annex 1: Governance Mapping - Objectives and Methodology	96
Annex 2: Community Dialogues Action Plans	100



\* Imaginative drawing of the Strand Road riverfront, in the Yangon Business District. The Myanmar text reads: “How would you like Yangon to be build”, or “How would you like Yangon to look like?” which are core questions for any participatory approach to development of both the city and the region. See [www.yangonheritagetrust.org](http://www.yangonheritagetrust.org) for more information.

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# Acronyms

CD	Community Dialogue
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DHW	Department of Health and Welfare
DMA	Department of Municipal Affairs
DoE	Department of Education
DoH	Department of Health
DoP	Department of Planning
DRD	Department of Rural Development
DTA	Deputy Township Administrator
ED	Education and Cultural Department
EO	Executive Officer (Municipal Affairs Department)
GAD	General Administration Department
GoM	Government of Myanmar
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
MSR	Myanmar Survey Research
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
MoAI	Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
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)
TMAC	Township Municipal Affairs Committee
TMC	Township Management Committee
TMO	Township Medical Officer
TPIC	Township Planning and Implementation Committee
TPO	Township Planning Officer
TRDO	Township Rural Development Officer
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VC	Village Clerk
VT	Village tract
VTA	Village Tract Administrator
WA	Ward Administrator
W/VTDSC	Ward/Village Tract Development Support Committee





# Executive Summary

The Myanmar government is currently implementing three parallel and interlinked reforms: a change-over from a military rule to a system of democratic governance; a transition from a centrally planned to a market-based economy, and the move from a state of conflict to a unified country with peace in all its border areas. The combination of these transitions has the potential to bring peace and prosperity to the people of Myanmar and for the country to resume its place as one of the most vibrant economies in Asia. The status of a democratically governed middle-income country, as is the government's ambition, will then be within reach.

Yangon Region is the smallest of all 14 Regions and States in the country, yet home to almost 15 percent of the population and leading contributor to the country's GDP. Although relatively less affected by the peace processes in the border-states, the political and economic reforms are expected to have a huge impact on the Region and its people. At the same time, the Region, with its largely urban, and on average better educated and more vocal population, can be expected to have a significant influence on the course of the whole country's reforms itself.

## Nature and objectives of the report

This report sets out to map the state of affairs and the evolution over the past years with regards to governance reform in Yangon Region. It endeavours to provide background information on the various recent elections in the Region and its results; it adds to the transparency of the Region government budget, but it especially pays attention to the perceptions of citizens regarding the changes they have experienced. They have also been asked about their impressions on the changes in the quality of basic public services, with a focus on the sectors of basic education, primary health care and drinking water supply. On the basis of that information, the report seeks to implicitly highlight some selected issues that merit further analysis and attention under the premise that, ultimately, improved governance in terms of participation and accountability, is to lead to improved quality and more equitable access to those public services, as an important contribution to a better quality of life.

## Yangon Region is different from all other States and Regions

Not only in terms of population, density and economic activities, Yangon Region stands apart from the other Regions and States; but also in terms of its institutional organisation. The Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), which as a municipal committee has been in existence since colonial times and which had - and still has - some characteristics of an urban local government, has recently been reinforced with the election of peoples' representatives into this committee. The city (or YCDC) area covers 33 out of the 45 townships of Yangon Region. Its budget, at Kyats 238 billion (equivalent to 238 million USD) for FY 2014/15 is almost 70 percent of the total expenditure budgeted for the Region. It is integrated into the Yangon Region budget, and is administered under the Region Minister for Development Affairs (dealing with municipal services), and who is at the same time chair of the YCDC and as such 'mayor' of the city. In terms of income, YCDC is more or less self-sufficient: For FY 2014/15, the budgeted income would cover over 90 percent of the expected expenditure,

while it passes 10 percent of its income on to the Region government to be allocated to other sectors. As much as the mandates and budgets of other Region ministers are expected to have grown over time as the reform progresses - for the moment, YCDC constitutes the core of the activities of the Region government.

### **Box 1: 'Development Affairs' or 'Municipal Affairs'?**

In this report, the term 'municipal services' is used for those public goods that are normally provided in urban areas with a higher population density, such as garbage collection and solid waste management, water and sanitation, drainage and sewerage, management of public spaces, cleanliness of the streets, street lighting etc. The government departments that provide these services are nowadays sometimes called the Department of Development Affairs, sometimes Department of Municipal Affairs. The portfolio of the Region Minister who is also the Mayor for Yangon and the head of these departments is called 'Ministry of Development Affairs', yet the functions pertain to municipal services (and not development overall - as other crucial services are not covered). In this report, and apart from the formal name of the Ministry of Development Affairs-, the term 'Department of Municipal Affairs' and 'Township Municipal Affairs Committee' or TMAC instead of 'township development affairs committee') are used as it is considered a better indication for the services these departments and committees are actually to deliver. For the TMAC it also avoids confusion with the Township Development Support Committee, whose mandate, in terms of the service range, is broader.

## **Perceptions on the quality of services**

Overwhelmingly, respondents in the mapping indicated that the quality of services has improved over the past 2-3 years, especially for primary education and improvements in school infrastructure; to a lesser extent for health, where especially in an urban setting relatively few people use public health services as they have gotten used to rely on private providers. However, perceptions for (positive) changes for water supply were lowest among the three sectors, a sector largely falling under the YCDC. Obviously, in these perceptions, also the base-line positions play a role (and water supply may already have been reasonably good), but it also means that YCDC has to find other ways to live up to the people's expectations and meet their needs. Overall, the rural respondents were much more positive about the changes than their urban counterparts, which is most likely explained by a combination of the starting position (that may have been better in urban areas) and the actual changes that took place (which may have indeed been biased to the rural areas).

## **Participation**

For the appreciation of citizen participation, two different types of participation are distinguished in this report, being, firstly, active participation in decision-making (which is most often done by citizens' representatives) and participation in the appointment (election) of those representatives. Data show that most people in Yangon Region, especially in rural areas, know their Ward/Village Tract Administrator (who is even better known by name than the president), the Chief Minister and the Union Hluttaw members, but that for the majority of people the intermediate township level - which is the newly selected focal level

for service delivery - is still a 'grey un-known box'. Relatively few people are aware of the new committees at township level that also provide opportunity for peoples' participation. The link with these peoples' representatives and the population they represent needs to be strengthened.

Although good progress is being made, there is also further scope to improve the relationship between the elected representatives (in the *Hluttaws* as well as in the various committees) and the electorate. Certainly, judging by the exceptionally low turn-out for the recent YCDC elections, there is huge scope for civic education, making clear that voting is not only a right but also a civic duty. It should also be recognised that government has a task to make clear to the voters the issues at stake and offer genuine space for participation to have an impact on policy. As much as voters have the obligation to vote, government has a task to make clearer 'who is responsible for what' - so people know whom they can hold accountable for what. Both elements should be part of both the on-going reform as well as an information and communication strategy for civic participation.

## Accountability

Related to participation, accountability has two dimensions: accountability of government officials to the peoples' representatives (or the public directly) and from those elected to the electorate. A clear form of accountability presently operational is through the Region *Hluttaw*, which approves and monitors the execution of the Region Budget. At township and sub-township level downward accountability relationships are still evolving, as they need to follow a clear assignment of tasks, which is still 'work-in-progress'. The tendency of setting up 'committees' responsible for public sector decision-making, with a mixed composition of both appointed government staff and elected peoples' representatives, risks to compromise the clarity of accountability relations between providers of public sector services and the population.

Another institutional governance issue, mainly related to efficiency but also blurring accountability relations, concerns the status of 54 village tracts within the 33 YCDC townships. They are for some basic services (officially) dependent on departments under the Union budget (such as the Department of Rural Development for water supply), while all wards are served for the same services by YCDC, who in the margin also serves these tracts.

It is evident from the mapping that for accountability mechanisms to kick in, some sort of institutional reform of the government and committee structure, which is now burdened with ineffectiveness and duplication, may be required. It appears important to undertake such an exercise in the light of clarifying 'who is responsible for what' and thereby also strengthen the accountability lines.

A specific institutional issue clearly illustrated by the Yangon mapping is that because of the wide variation in the size of the administrative units in terms of population, a one-size-fits-all allocation formula, be it for electoral seats, for funds or a standard office outfit, is either unfair or inefficient. This is well illustrated by comparing the case of Seikkan and Hlaingtharya townships respectively. Seikkan has around 2,800 inhabitants and Hlaingtharya has around 686,000 inhabitants; yet they have both one representative in the *Pyithu Hluttaw*, two representatives in the Region *Hluttaw*; the same amount for the Constituency Development

Fund and the same standard-size General Administration Department (GAD) office with 31 budgeted positions. It means that an inhabitant of Seikkan is disproportionately better represented and much better resourced, to the extent that this becomes inefficient and difficult to justify.

## Conclusions

The one single issue that stand out clearly from the mapping in Yangon Region, in addition to the increased trust in government and the perception that services have improved, is that citizens are asking for more information from government on what it plans to do in their neighbourhood and their township.

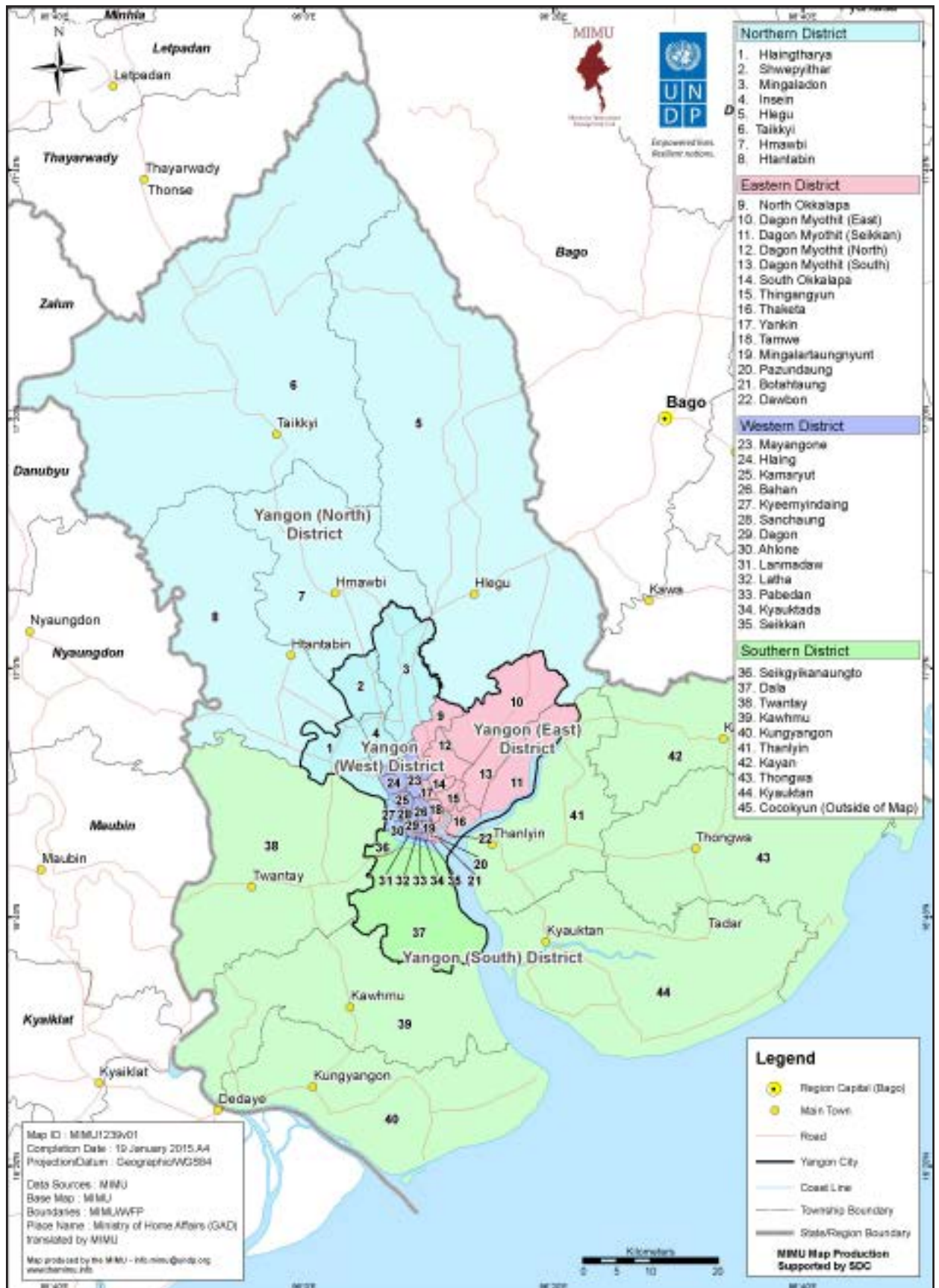
At the same time, and whilst half of the population reports that they feel free to express themselves, the other half is still careful in what to say and what not - which may have positively biased the perceptions. But the respondents are very clear that they consider their elected Ward/Village Tract Administrator as their entry point for their contact with government. For enhanced dialogue and information sharing it is the link between all these Ward/Village Tract administrators with the - hitherto distant and little-known - township administration that is a promising avenue for enhanced participation and accountability, in particular in the rural areas. In the urban areas, the municipal committees can serve that role.

As compared to several other States and Regions, Yangon Region seems to have been a little behind with the establishment of the various committees, such as the Township Development Support Committees (TDSC) and the Township Municipal Affairs Committee (TMAC) and in making their roles clear. Given the recent YCDC elections, the Region government now has a special chance to lead the way in establishing structures of democratic, participatory and transparent municipal governance - while at the same time redefining its position vis-à-vis the rural areas in the Region.



# 1. Introduction to the Local Governance Mapping

Figure 1:  
Townships in  
Yangon Region  
and Yangon city  
(district map  
MIMU)



## 1.1 Yangon Region - most striking features

Yangon Region, located in the middle of lower Myanmar, is the smallest of all 14 Regions and States in terms of territory - yet with almost 7.4 million people (roughly equivalent to the population of Hong Kong) the Region has more inhabitants than any other State or Region. The resulting average population density is 742 persons/km<sup>2</sup>, almost four times as high as Mandalay, Ayeyarwady Region and Mon State, the runners-up for population density (see Table 1).<sup>1</sup>

Regions / States <sup>2</sup>	Census 1983		Census 2014		Average Annual Growth	Land area		Population density pers/km <sup>2</sup>
	#	%	#	%		Km <sup>2</sup>	%	
1. Kachin	904,000	2.6%	1,689,654	3.3%	3.05%	88,980	13.3%	19.0
2. Kayah	168,000	0.5%	286,738	0.6%	2.60%	11,760	1.8%	24.4
3. Kayin	1,058,000	3.0%	1,572,657	3.1%	1.90%	30,327	4.5%	51.9
4. Chin	369,000	1.0%	478,690	0.9%	1.25%	36,277	5.4%	13.2
5. Sagaing	3,856,000	10.9%	5,320,299	10.3%	1.55%	93,873	14.0%	56.7
6. Tanintharyi	918,000	2.6%	1,406,434	2.7%	2.05%	41,061	6.1%	34.3
7. Bago	3,800,000	10.8%	4,863,455	9.5%	1.20%	38,867	5.8%	125.1
8. Magway	3,241,000	9.2%	3,912,711	7.6%	0.90%	45,025	6.7%	86.9
9. Mandalay	4,581,000	13.0%	6,145,588	12.0%	1.40%	30,999	4.6%	198.3
10. Mon	1,682,000	4.8%	2,050,282	4.0%	0.95%	11,242	1.7%	182.4
11. Rakhine	2,046,000	5.8%	3,188,963	6.2%	2.15%	35,020	5.2%	91.1
12. Yangon	3,974,000	11.3%	7,355,075	14.3%	3.00%	9,917	1.5%	741.7
13. Shan	3,719,000	10.5%	5,815,384	11.3%	2.15%	155,672	23.2%	37.4
14. Ayeyarwady	4,991,000	14.1%	6,175,123	12.0%	1.00%	33,705	5.0%	183.2
15. Nay Pyi Taw	0	0.0%	1,158,367	2.3%		7,069	1.1%	163.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35,307,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>51,419,420</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.80%</b>	<b>669,794</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>76.8</b>

Table 1: Population (1983 and 2014), area and density 2014, for all 14 Regions and States

Source: MIMU, 2014 / Census 2014 are official provisional data; Area data GIS measurement done on request.

The Region is dominated by Yangon city, the country's former capital, couched at the confluence of Yangon and Bago rivers - as if the rivers were carrying the city on its hands (see Figure 1). The point where the two rivers meet is close to the central business district and all the main ports, approximately 34km away from the mouth of the Yangon river dispersing into the Gulf of Mottama, the northern part of the Andaman Sea.

The two characteristics that bestow specific identity to Yangon city, and by affiliation to Yangon Region, are the Yangon River and Shwedagon Pagoda. Whereas the latter provides a religious identity, the river has granted Yangon its position of economic capital, a position the Region is likely to retain also after the administrative capital was shifted to Nay Pyi Taw in 2005.<sup>3</sup> Given its position and natural port, Yangon is the commercial trading hub for an immediate hinterland of millions of consumers. At present, an estimated over 20 percent of the total GDP for Myanmar is generated in Yangon Region (verbal communication; Region Planning department).<sup>4</sup>

1. As comparison, for Hong Kong the population density is over 17,000per/km<sup>2</sup>.

2. Regions and States presented in the order of the Myanmar alphabet, with exception of Naypyitaw.

3. Mandalay is the economic hub for Upper Myanmar and is considered the country's cultural centre. Despite Naypyitaw 's recent rise, Mandalay remains Upper Myanmar's main commercial, educational and health centre and serves a position as Yangon in lower Myanmar. Although, Yangon has the advantage of a natural international harbour, Mandalay is strategically located in between of China and the seaports in Rakhine and may, over time, become a rival for the leading economic position of Yangon.

4. At least the major part of 33 townships as officially only the (urban) wards, and not the village tracts, in these townships are part of YCDC; As such, twenty six of the 33 townships are in their totality part of YCDC (as they are exclusively composed of urban wards), but 7 townships also include a total of 54 village tracts that are officially outside of YCDC and - as one official in YCDC would say 'managed by the GAD' (instead of YCDC). In practical terms these village tracts are often considered as part of the city, and, for example, in the municipal elections held on 27<sup>th</sup> of December 2014, the population of the village tracts were part of the electorate. Yet, on the other hand, Mingaladon Township, with 27 wards and a handful of village tracts has a Department of Rural Development that only provides services in these village tracts, in the assumption that the urban wards are covered by the municipal department. Yet the latter claims to serve - and collects taxes - in the entire township. This issue will be further discussed later in in this report.

## 1.2 Yangon City Development Committee and the Region government

Another aspect that sets Yangon Region apart from the other 13 States and Regions is the fact that 33 of its 45 townships together form Yangon City, where part of the public services, notably the municipal services, are provided under the responsibility of the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC). YCDC was created in 1990, but after the Constitution (2008) and the creation of Region governments, it operates almost, as will be illustrated in this report, as a dominant '13th ministry' under the Region government. Mandalay and Naypyitaw have similar city development committees. However, Naypyitaw has a special constitutional status as a Union Territory, which covers all the 8 townships and is under the direct administration of the President, while in Mandalay it only covers a few townships (6 out of 28 or 21.5 percent, whilst in Yangon this percentage stands at 75). Hence, in Yangon, the situation is rather complicated with regards to the management of service delivery at the regional level as three competing types of actors - the Union government agencies, the Region government ministries and the YCDC - operate next to each other, trying to find their new bearings following the reforms that started with the adoption of the Constitution in 2008.

## 1.3 Objectives of the report and its structure

The objective of this report, which is one of the series of *state of local governance* reports for all 14 Regions and States, is to first of all describe the present governance structures in place for public service delivery, funded by public funds and meant to optimally serve and support the citizens to realise their aspirations and pursue their livelihoods.

After this introduction, Chapter 2 will describe the governance structures and institutional arrangements for the Region government and the YCDC. It also describes how these work alongside with the de-concentrated staff of the Union ministries and departments, and pictures, with a big brush, the changes that have taken place over the past three years. The same is described more in detail in Chapter 3 for the township level with a focus on three selected services and basic needs in peoples' lives, as provided by the government; basic education, primary health care and water supply, whereby the latter serves as an example of a municipal service. Given that Yangon Region, at least in terms of population, is largely urban, due attention is given (and more than in the other reports in this series) to municipal services such as waste management, management of public spaces, street lightning etc.

In Chapter 4 the perspective is changed to a citizens' view of the same services and describes the perception of people - through citizen report cards and semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions - about the quality of public service delivery and the trends over the past years.

In Chapter 5, the lines as pictured in the foregoing chapters are brought together in an analysis of how people can participate and contribute to a better spending of public funds for services delivery that responds to the needs and wishes of the people. The chapter concludes with the notion that shared information and enhanced understanding of how government institutions operates and what budgets they have is a prerequisite for effective participation.

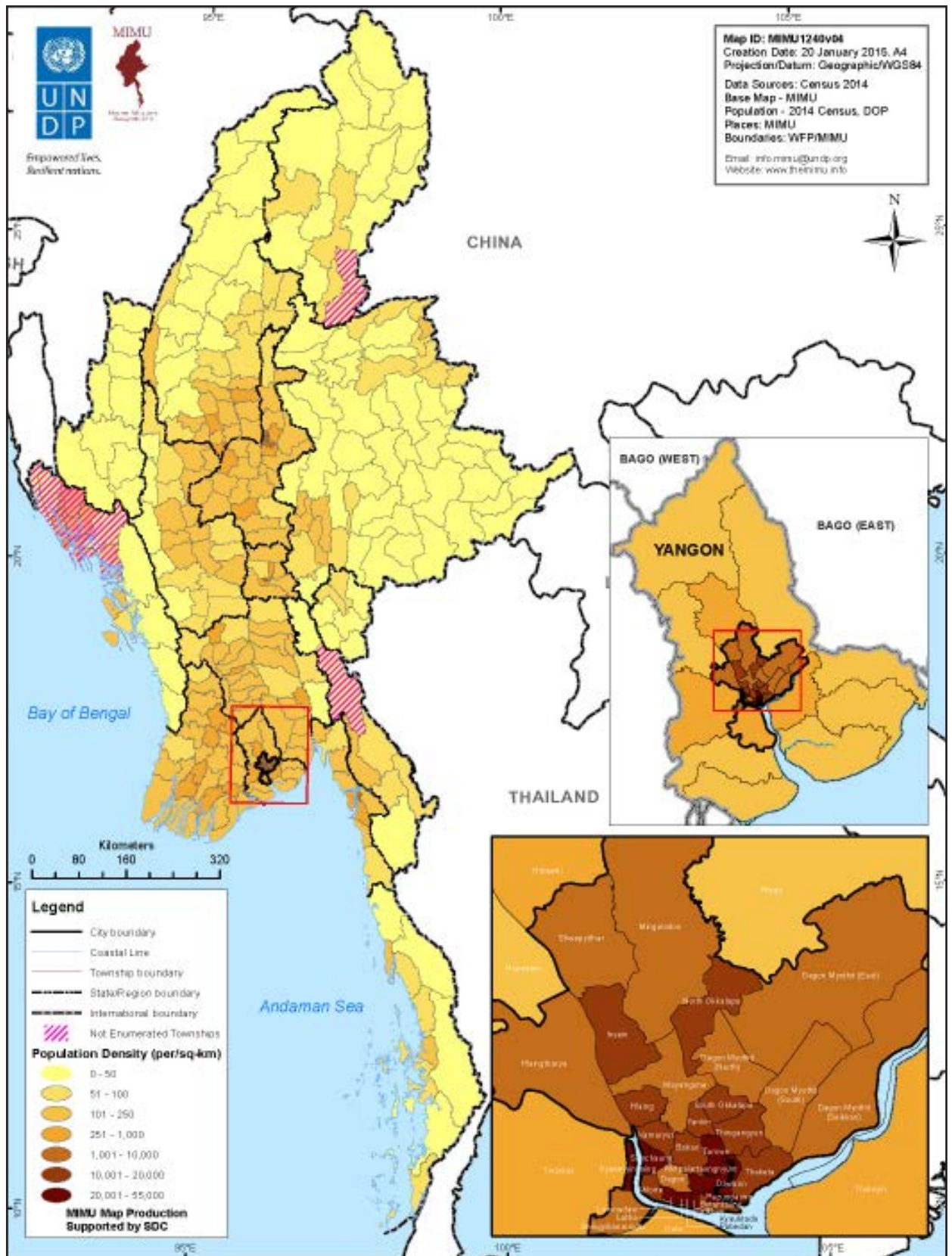
Readers interested in more details on the objectives of the local governance mapping in general and the data collection process for this report are referred to Annex 1.





## **2. Descriptive overview of governance structures in Yangon Region**

Figure 2:  
Myanmar  
population  
density map



## 2.1 Yangon Region - administrative division

Administratively, Yangon Region is divided in 45 townships and one sub-township. It includes the Coco islands, a group of small islands in the Indian Ocean, west of the Andaman Sea, 300km southwest of the Myanmar mainland - and physically closer to Ayeyarwady Region. In the past, the islands were used as prisoner camps. They are now entirely used by the military - for which reason the actual number of townships as administrative units can be evaluated as 44, unless the sub-township of Tadar, part of Kyauktan township is counted as a separate township.

Thirty-three townships<sup>5</sup>, representing less than 10 percent of the land area and over 70 percent of the population in the Region, together form Yangon city area. The twelve townships that are not part of the city are located in the northern and southern districts. Even though all townships in the eastern district are either totally or in part under YCDC, only the western district (basically 'downtown Yangon') is exclusively composed of wards (without any village tracts) and is in full part of the city area (see Figure 2 and Table 2).

Even for the 33 townships that cover the 630 (urban) wards that form the city, there is a remarkable diversity between these townships in terms of area and population. Some townships (like Kyauktada, Pabedan and Latha) are smaller than one square kilometre. Leaving Coco islands and the odd exception of Seikkan township downtown at the river front with a population of 2,800 people aside, population numbers typically vary between 25,000 to 350,000, with Hlaingtharya Township in the north west, located as a relatively new suburb in between of the Hlaing and the Pun Hlaing Rivers with a population of almost 700,000 (on an area of 67.5 km<sup>2</sup>), as the exception at the upper end of the scale.

With such a wide variety in the characteristics of townships (even for only two variables, area and population), one could expect that different types of townships would have different organisational arrangements as well as different provisions for citizen participation. In practice, however, this does not appear to be the case as will be discussed below.



5. Or rather the 630 urban wards in the 33 townships, as officially the 54 village tracts, located in 7 of the 33 townships, notably in the Northern and Southern districts (see Table 2.1) are not part of the city. The majority or far majority of the administrative units in the 33 townships however, falls under YCDC. As population and area data are not (yet) available for ward and village tract level, the data provided here are for the entirety of the 33 so-called 'YCDC townships', as if the total township area falls under YCDC (See also footnote 4).

**Table 2: List of all Townships in Yangon Region, with population and area**

District		Township	Falling under YCDC	# urban wards	# village tracts	Census 2014		Total Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Density In pers/km <sup>2</sup>
						Total	% female		
YANGON (WEST)	1	Kyauktada	Yes	9	0	29,796	53.6%	0.70	42,565.7
	2	Pabedan	Yes	11	0	33,264	54.4%	0.62	53,651.6
	3	Lanmadaw	Yes	12	0	47,123	57.2%	1.31	35,971.8
	4	Latha	Yes	10	0	24,926	57.0%	0.60	41,543.3
	5	Ahlone	Yes	11	0	55,412	53.9%	3.38	16,394.1
	6	Kyeemyindaing	Yes	22	0	111,566	52.7%	4.46	25,014.8
	7	Sanchaung	Yes	18	0	99,772	55.6%	2.40	41,571.7
	8	Hlaing	Yes	16	0	160,018	53.2%	10.17	15,734.3
	9	Kamaryut	Yes	10	0	84,368	56.4%	6.47	13,039.9
	10	Mayangone	Yes	10	0	198,038	52.8%	27.02	7,329.3
	11	Dagon	Yes	5	0	25,563	52.1%	4.90	5,216.9
	12	Bahan	Yes	22	0	96,703	53.0%	8.48	11,403.7
	13	Seikkan	Yes	3	0	2,815	39.9%	1.17	2,406.0
YANGON (NORTH)	14	Insein	Yes	21	0	305,670	52.0%	29.88	10,229.9
	15	Mingaladon	Yes	27	6	332,520	52.2%	128.63	2,585.1
	16	Shwepyithar	Yes	23	5	343,270	52.2%	55.94	6,136.4
	17	Hlaingtharya	Yes	20	10	686,827	53.0%	83.46	8,229.4
	18	Hmawbi		4	40	244,279	50.5%	471.14	518.5
	19	Hlegu		5	53	269,522	50.4%	1,510.50	178.4
	20	Taikkyi		20	75	277,165	51.3%	1,764.07	157.1
YANGON (EAST)	21	Htantabin		5	55	145,768	50.7%	600.29	242.8
	22	Thingangyun	Yes	39	0	209,301	52.9%	13.12	15,952.8
	23	Yankin	Yes	15	0	70,992	53.9%	4.79	14,820.9
	24	South Okkalapa	Yes	13	0	160,956	53.1%	8.22	19,581.0
	25	North Okkalapa	Yes	19	0	332,869	53.1%	27.76	11,991.0
	26	Thaketa	Yes	19	0	220,447	51.3%	13.45	16,390.1
	27	Dawbon	Yes	14	0	74,994	51.3%	3.11	24,113.8
	28	Tamwe	Yes	20	0	165,348	54.7%	4.99	33,135.9
	29	Pazundaung	Yes	10	0	48,245	54.4%	1.07	45,088.8
	30	Botahtaung	Yes	10	0	40,849	52.8%	2.60	15,711.2
	31	Dagon Myothit (South)	Yes	44	1	371,579	51.2%	37.51	9,906.1
	32	Dagon Myothit (North)	Yes	27	0	203,883	52.7%	24.18	8,431.9
	33	Dagon Myothit (East)	Yes	63	4	165,518	51.1%	137.16	1,206.8
	34	Dagon Myothit (Seikkan)	Yes	35	5	167,346	50.6%	77.12	2,169.9
	35	Mingalartaungnyunt	Yes	20	0	132,209	52.8%	4.94	26,763.0
YANGON (SOUTH)	36	Dala	Yes	23	23	173,376	50.9%	229.57	755.2
	37	Seikgyikanaungto	Yes	9	0	33,978	49.7%	12.10	2,808.1
	38	Thanlyin		17	29	267,946	51.3%	359.58	745.2
	39	Kyauktan		13	45	167,023	51.2%	802.14	208.2
	40	Thongwa		12	65	157,774	52.1%	721.60	218.6
	41	Kayan		12	54	157,564	52.1%	636.43	247.6
	42	Twantay		8	66	226,803	50.9%	722.01	314.1
	43	Kawhmu		7	56	118,775	51.1%	615.02	193.1
	44	Kungyangon		7	44	111,485	51.4%	595.93	187.1
	45	Cocokyun (Coco islands)		2	0	1,430	45.0%	34.10	41.9
District sub totals		<b>Total Western District</b>	<b>13/13</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>969,364</b>	<b>53.9%</b>	<b>71.68</b>	<b>13,523.5</b>
		<b>Total Northern District</b>	<b>4/8</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>2,605,021</b>	<b>51.9%</b>	<b>4,643.91</b>	<b>561.0</b>
		<b>Total Eastern District</b>	<b>14/14</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2,364,536</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>360.02</b>	<b>6,567.8</b>
		<b>Total Southern District</b>	<b>2/10</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>1,416,154</b>	<b>51.3%</b>	<b>4,728.48</b>	<b>299.5</b>
<b>Grand Total Yangon Region</b>			<b>45</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>7,355,075</b>	<b>52.2%</b>	<b>9,804.09</b>	<b>750.2</b>

Summary TSs in/ outside YCDC	# of wards	# of tracts	Total Population TSs		Total Area TSs		Population density TSs
			Total	# Female	Area	% of Yangon Region	
33 Townships part of YCDC	630	54	5,209,541	70.8%	971.28	9.9%	5,363.6
12 Townships outside of YCDC	112	582	2,145,534	29.2%	8,832.81	90.1%	242.9
<b>Total for 45 Townships</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>7,355,075</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>9,804.09</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>750.2</b>
Averages, population and area, by district		# Town- ships	Population		Area		Population density
<b>Total Western (central business) district</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>74,566</b>		<b>5.51</b>		<b>13,523.5</b>
- Northern District - TSs (partly) under YCDC		4	417,072		74.48		5,600.0
- Northern District - outside YCDC		4	234,184		1,086.50		215.5
<b>Total Northern district</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>325,628</b>		<b>580.49</b>		<b>561.0</b>
<b>Total Eastern District</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>168,895</b>		<b>25.72</b>		<b>6,567.8</b>
- Southern District - TSs (partly) under YCDC		2	103,677		120.84		858.0
- Southern District - outside YCDC		8	151,100		560.85		269.4
<b>Total Southern district</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>141,615</b>		<b>472.85</b>		<b>299.5</b>
<b>Overall average all townships</b>		<b>45</b>	<b>163,446</b>		<b>217.87</b>		<b>750.2</b>

## 2.2 Yangon Region - Socio-economic and historical context

### 2.2.1 Socio-economic background

Yangon Region, or rather the Greater Yangon city area, is the commercial, industrial and trading hub of Myanmar. It is the most developed and advanced part of Myanmar, estimated to account for one quarter to one third of the country's economy. More than a dozen industrial zones -many with garment factories for the Korean market- are located at the outskirts of Yangon city, and are among the country's main employers of industrial labour. The rural areas of Yangon Region are far less developed and maintain a predominantly agricultural character. Rice, beans and pulses are the main crops, but jute, rubber, groundnut and sugarcane are also being produced. Livestock and fisheries also play an important role in the rural economy of Yangon Region.

The Region has the country's most advanced transport infrastructure. Yangon is the terminus of five railway lines, has a seaport, including the Thilawa deep-water port, which handles most of Myanmar's imports and exports, the country's main airport (in Mingaladon township, just north of Okkalapa township), and is connected with Ayeyarwady Region by the Twantay Canal, which connects the Yangon River with the Irrawaddy (or Thande) River. It has the country's best health and education facilities, as well as numerous religious and cultural institutions and sites. A newly built highway connects Yangon to Naypyitaw and Mandalay in the north. Yangon is also the country's first tourist destination (as point of entry). Tourism has seen an explosive development in recent years, with Yangon being one of the main beneficiaries of this upswing in that tourism sector.

Yangon has also seen a construction boom in recent years. This has included road projects, bridges and flyovers, power stations, telecommunications infrastructure, as well as private residences and office buildings. A number of large projects are underway, including a public

transport system for Yangon and a Special Economic Zone in Thilawa<sup>6</sup>, which broke ground in November 2013; and even though the new Hanthawaddy international airport is presently being built in the neighbouring Bago Region, even in future arriving passengers will still be heading for Yangon. The first electronics and automobile factories are scheduled to open in 2015.

On most social development indicators, Yangon Region scores much higher than the national average. It has one of the lowest poverty rates among all States and Regions (16 percent) and the highest proportion of births in a health facility as well as births registered. The water and sanitation situation is, on average also more favourable than most other parts of the country.<sup>7</sup>

### *2.2.2 Demographics*

**Yangon Region is the most densely populated and most urbanized region of Myanmar, with around 70 percent of its population living in the Yangon city area.**

Yangon Region is the most densely populated and most urbanized region of Myanmar, with around 70 percent of its population living in the Yangon city area. About 14 percent of Myanmar's population live in the Region. The population is mainly Bamar Buddhist, but is also characterized by immense diversity. Buddhist and Hindu temples, Christian churches<sup>8</sup>, mosques and even a synagogue all form part of the city's heritage and serve the different faiths represented among its population. People belonging to all of Myanmar's numerous ethnic groups, including Indians and Chinese, many of whom have Myanmar citizenship, can be found in the Region, i.e. mainly in the city area. The Karen (Kayin) and Rakhine are the most populous of the recognized ethnic minorities (sometimes referred to as 'national races' by the Myanmar Government) in the Region. Before the British incorporated what is now Yangon Region into its colonial empire, the area was thinly populated and had been inhabited by mainly Karens and Mons in the distant past.

With the British decision to locate its administrative and political centre in what they called Rangoon, a large-scale migration began from all other parts of the then Burma, as well as South Asia. Burmans from 'Upper Burma' moved in large numbers to work in the rice fields, but also in the emerging workshops, industries and offices of Rangoon. Thousands also came from India in particular to work as civil servants in the public administration. At the end of the 1930s, almost half of Yangon's population was Indian. English was widely spoken. Although a series of historic changes have led many people, in particular Europeans and later Indians, to leave Yangon during the last century, the city has largely maintained its status as the most cosmopolitan and dynamic of all Myanmar cities.

### *2.2.3 Yangon Region historical context*

The history of Yangon Region largely coincides with that of Yangon city, which has served as the capital of Burma/Myanmar for more than 150 years. In ancient times, Mon people inhabited the areas now included in Yangon Region. In the first millennium, the Region was part of various Mon kingdoms, which established the origins of Shwedagon Pagoda, Yangon's most famous landmark, and laid the foundation for the city of Dagon, that later became Yangon. After 1057, the area came under the control of Burman kingdoms, which

6. One of the three special economic zones (SEZ) in the country, next to Dawei SEZ in Tanintharyi region and Kyaukpyu SEZ in Rakhine State. Whilst the latter are based on economic cooperation with Thailand and China respectively, the Thilawa SEZ, an area of 400 hectares in Thanlyin and Kyauktan Townships, is managed by a consortium of Myanmar and Japanese companies.

7. For a detailed overview of socio-economic indicators, in particular with regard to the welfare situation of children, see "Yangon Region: A Snapshot of Child Wellbeing" UNICEF, 2014. [http://www.unicef.org/myanmar/Yangon\\_Region\\_Profile\\_Final.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/myanmar/Yangon_Region_Profile_Final.pdf)

8. The Armenian Church in downtown Yangon is probably the oldest Christian church in South-East Asia.

had begun to expand from the north from its capital in Bagan on the upper Ayeyarwady River. From the 13th to the 16th centuries and briefly in the 18th century, the region reverted to Mon influence and was part of the Taungoo- and Bago-based Mon kingdoms. In the early 17th century, the Portuguese briefly established a base in Thanlyin (Syriam), which later emerged as Burma's main seaport.

In 1753, during the reign of King Alaungpaya who had reunited the area with the Burmese Kingdom, the decision was made to expand Dagon into a city to be called "Yangon" and develop its seaport. In the early 19th century, the British and other powers had set up trading posts and representations in Yangon, and its importance rose further after the annexation of Arakan and Tenasserim by the British after the first Anglo-Burmese War in 1826. During that war, Yangon was captured by the British but was later returned to the Burmese kings.

In 1852, following the second Anglo-Burmese War, the entire 'Lower Burma' coastal areas, equivalent to what are now Ayeyarwady, Yangon and Bago Regions, also came under British colonial rule. Yangon Region was incorporated into British India as Hanthawaddy district and part of Pegu (i.e. Bago) Division, which had its administrative centre in Yangon, which the new British rulers called "Rangoon". After the 1885 reorganisation of the British-Indian Province of Burma, the areas of Ministerial Burma (Burma proper) included Pegu Division as one of its Divisions with the subdivisions in the Districts of Rangoon City, Hanthawaddy (which is now the rural areas of Yangon Region), Pegu (now Bago District), Tharrawaddy and Prome (now Pyay). Pegu Division was put under direct colonial administration in contrast with the Frontier Areas, which retained a large degree of self-governance.

The general administrative machinery that evolved gradually under British rule was a pyramidal territorial organization comprising Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, Sub-divisional Officers, and Township Officers in charge respectively of divisions, districts, subdivisions, and townships.<sup>9</sup> Already during the colonial period there was a divergence of local governance arrangements between urban and rural areas. Efforts to reform the colonial system of local governance in urban areas across British India already started in the late 19th century, inspired by and modelled after similar reforms in England at the time. In Yangon, then still known as Rangoon, representative Municipal Committees were first constituted by law in 1874, and became partly elective in 1884. They were reorganized under the Municipal Act of 1898.<sup>10</sup> Town committees with less extensive powers were constituted for the smaller towns.

With the Municipal Act of 1922, the Municipal Committee of Rangoon was endowed with a higher status as the Rangoon Corporation.<sup>11</sup> As per the 1922 Rangoon Municipal Corporation Act three fourths of the (up to) 40 councillors had to be elected from the general body of electors and the remainder nominated by the executive or elected by local authorities in a special procedure.<sup>12</sup> Every year, the Corporation elected one of its members to be Mayor. In 1921, first efforts were made to extend representative forms of local governance also to rural areas. Elective District Councils were created to perform the same functions as the municipal committees in the larger towns.

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

10. Burma Act III, 1898 (1 July 1898), as amended by Act LII, 1950. An online version of the Act is available at <http://displacementsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/the-municipal-act-1898.pdf>

11. J.S. Furnivall, *The governance of modern Burma*, 1961. For more details on the powers, functions and duties of municipal governments at the time see, "The Burma municipal manual: Containing the Burma Municipal Act 1898 as amended by Burma Act III of 1902 and Burma Act II of 1903, and the general rules, notifications and circulars issued there under", 1 Jan 1904.

12. Detailed qualification criteria aimed at preventing the election of persons who may have a conflict of interest due to their profession or holdings.

The 1920s and 1930s saw Rangoon emerge not only as British Burma's political and administrative centre, but it also became one of South East Asia's foremost cities, leading in architecture, culture, transport and logistics, and economic development. Originally established in 1878 as a college of the University of Calcutta, Rangoon University was established in 1920. In the 1920s and 1930s, Rangoon quickly rose as a hub for intellectuals in the region and the centre of the Burmese nationalist movement with the ultimate goal of independence.<sup>13</sup> Three nation-wide strikes against British rule (in 1920, 1936 and 1938) began at the university. Until the 1950s, the university was among the most prestigious in all of South East Asia, with English serving as its medium of instruction.

The British colonial period left a number of important legacies in the Region, in particular in the form of the world-famous architectural heritage of Yangon city, which housed the colony's administrative buildings, industrial and commercial centres and main transport infrastructure.<sup>14</sup> Also, in terms of the city's and the Region's administration itself, most present-day arrangements and features have their roots during the British colonial period.

Following the war, Yangon became the centre of Burma's independence movement and became the capital of the Union of Burma in 1948. Briefly, the region also witnessed armed conflict between government forces and Karen insurgents fighting for a separate Karen state. Despite the turmoil of World War II, internal armed conflict and the large-scale departure of Europeans and Indians from Yangon following independence, post-war Yangon continued to grow, also leading to massive housing shortages and the emergence of slums and squatter settlements. In the 1950s Yangon was among the most cosmopolitan and globalized cities in Asia and a number of satellite towns were being built near Yangon.

Administratively, Hanthawaddy sub-division was established as a separate division, renamed as Yangon Division and Yangon city continued to serve as the new country's capital for another 58 years. Following independence Yangon Division became part of newly independent Burma as a centrally administered regular division. The territorial subdivisions in village tracts/wards, townships, and districts were retained from the pre-independence period. Parliamentary elections for the House of Representatives took place in 1947, 1951, 1956 and 1960, but no elected body existed at the Division level. At the municipal level, however, the pre-war arrangement on the basis of the British municipal acts continued.

During the colonial period, Rangoon city elections had been based on racial constituencies (as was common practice in former British colonies), with demanding property and educational requirements for registered voters. After independence, elections were much more democratic: the voting qualifications were made less restrictive, and racial representation was replaced with geographical (ward) constituencies, numbering 335. An observer of the politics of Yangon during the 1950s noted that "official tolerance of the often messy and unsanitary *kwet thit* (squatter settlements) guaranteed the ruling party squatter support.

Elections to the municipal council were held every three years until 1958 with a majority of seats going to the AFPFL [the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, the main political party in Burma from 1945 until 1964]; but vote buying and other forms of corruption plagued Rangoon's short-lived experiment with democracy".<sup>15</sup>

13. Many of the young revolutionaries who led opposition to British rule studied here, including Aung San, the country's main independence leader in the 1940s and Ne Win, the military leader who ruled the country from 1962 to 1988.

14. For a good recent and illustrative overview, see "History of the Present: Yangon" by Daniel Brook, September 2014.

15. State and Society in Modern Rangoon, by Donald M. Seekins.



On the basis of the constitutional provision on regional autonomy, the parliament of Burma adopted a Democratic Local Government Act in 1953, which changed the manner of representation at the township and district levels, but left the arrangements for larger urban areas in place. However, the attempts to institute local self-government across the country following the 1953 Act never reached a stage of full implementation and did not alter the fundamental set-up of local government during the 1950s.<sup>16</sup> From the 1960s onwards, the municipal council of Yangon was no longer elected by democratic vote, but was under the firm control of the central government.

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 became firmly entrenched in the Constitution itself.<sup>17</sup> In the mid-1980s, the party claimed that over 2.3 million people were involved in fortnightly party cell meetings and other Party activities.<sup>18</sup> In Yangon Division, this new structure was established in all its territory and at all levels.

The 1974 Constitution introduced the concept that States and Divisions had the same status. Yangon Division thus became one of the 'constituent units' of the 'Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma', made up of 7 States and 7 Divisions. People's Councils were introduced at all levels of government administration where the central government had control. The basic units of villages/village tracts and wards, towns and townships were established in Yangon Division along the lines of how they had been set up in Ministerial Burma the 1920s.

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

The participatory elements of the structure were essentially abolished with the suspension of the 1974 Constitution in 1988, when Yangon Division, as all other parts of the country, were again placed under direct military control and administration. After student protests in 1988, military leaders expanded efforts to dismantle Yangon University, including moving more students to far-flung locations and setting up alternative schools on the outskirts of Myanmar's cities and repeatedly kept the university closed for long stretches.

The territorial organisation remained the same, the dominant role played earlier by the BSPP was essentially substituted by the military in the form of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). In Yangon, the 27 May 1990 elections for 485 seats in a new national parliament resulted in the NLD winning 59 of 61 seats, while the Democracy Party (DP), and the Graduates and Old Students Democratic Association (GOSDA) won one seat each.<sup>19</sup>

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

17. When in 1974 student demonstrations broke out again at the University of Yangon, soldiers once again stormed the campus (as they had done in 1962).

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

19. Both parties were banned by the SLORC in 1992.

Five of the 15 women members elected, all NLD candidates, were from Yangon Division.<sup>20</sup> 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 Yangon Division. Several of the candidates who had won seats in Yangon Division were either arrested or left the country.<sup>21</sup>

Also in 1990, the SLORC adopted the Yangon City Development Committee Law, partially substituting earlier municipal laws and essentially putting the YCDC under the direct command of the SLORC itself (see next section for details).

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 townships across Yangon Division, as in all village tracts and wards. Membership was “essentially compulsory for civil servants and those who sought to do business with or receive services from the state”.<sup>22</sup> 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 (Township Peace and Development Committees, etc.) down to the village tract/ward level.

In 2002, construction for the new national capital Naypyitaw began in Pyinmana Township of Mandalay Division. Government offices and staff were moved there from Yangon between 2005 and 2006. A number of government offices were however retained in Yangon.<sup>23</sup>

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

## 2.3 Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC)

### 2.3.1 *Historical perspective*

For Yangon City not only the architectural heritage and the way the town-plan is laid out is linked to the colonial period; also the way Yangon city and as - by implication - Yangon Region is organized can be traced back to colonial legislation regarding urban development and city management.

The first municipal government of Rangoon and the office of the mayor were established by the British colonial government in 1874. The charter of the municipal government was changed per the Burma Act of 1898, and updated per the City of Rangoon Municipal Act of

20. Daw San San, Seikkan; Daw San May (Shwegu May Hnin), Taikkyi (2); Daw May Win Myint Mayangone (2), Daw Khin Aye Myint, Yankin; and Daw San San Win, Ahlone.

21. Two elected NLD MPs from the Division died in prison (one in 1990, one in 1996). Many were imprisoned or went abroad. Several winning candidates were later expelled from the NLD in 1999, as the party had considered them ‘lackeys of the SPDC’.

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

23. For instance, the Judicial Training Institute under the Supreme Court continues to operate from Yangon Region. Also, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education maintain offices in Yangon.

August 1922. Under the Rangoon Municipal Act 1922, a document, of 117 pages, the municipal corporation of Rangoon City was established as an independent legal entity, a body corporate with all the characteristics of a urban local government with a (largely) elected council as the supreme governance body<sup>24</sup> presided by a mayor annually elected by the councillors from amongst their midst; an administration headed by a chief executive officer - to work, as per the amendment to the act in 1958, under the direct instructions of the mayor; and a clear description of tasks and provision for tax collection to fund the execution of those tasks.

The list of tasks was long but, not surprisingly, mainly focusing on municipal services such as town planning and building regulation, construction and maintenance of drainage systems, water supply, sewerage and solid waste management, road construction and street maintenance, street lighting, management of public spaces, and, finally public health (including disease control, food inspection, management of market places and slaughterhouses). These include permissive functions, for curative health and education. Taxes were limited to a vehicle tax and a property tax, whereby the latter had components -levied on properties- to cover next to the general expenditures for the city corporation to discharge its functions, the costs for sewerage, solid waste management and water supply.

Without formally repealing any section of the Municipal Act, the City of Yangon Development Act, issued by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in 1990, made some fundamental changes to the governance structure for Yangon City. Even though the mandate was reformulated, in a much shorter list of municipal functions, the new act was especially meant to put in place a committee consisting of 7 to 15 persons, to be appointed by the chairman of the SLORC to manage the affairs of the city. The chairman of the appointed committee was called mayor, while one of the members served as a joint secretary. The Act expressly stated that under the provisions of the Act, the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) was to implement the provisions of the Yangon Municipal Act - whilst there were clear contradictions between the two sets of legislation.

Part of these issues were solved with the Yangon City Municipal Law (*Si-pin-thar-yar Ou-pa-day*) of 2013, adopted by the Yangon Region *Hluttaw* following the 2013 Presidential Notification 27 and on the basis of Schedule Two of the Constitution (2008), which assigns municipal affairs (*Si-pin-thar-yar-yay*) to the States and Regions, and which does not make reference to earlier legislation. The main new features of the Law are that a part of the committee (4 of the 8 committee members, excluding the mayor, who is a presidential appointee, and the four members that are appointed by the region government) will be elected representatives for the four districts, while the mayor, who is at the same time the Region Minister for Development Affairs (*Si-pin-thar-yar-yay*) is accountable to the Chief Minister and the Region *Hluttaw*. As such the YCDC can be considered accountable to the Region *Hluttaw* and its budget is part of the region budget.

24. The Law prescribed that the corporation should consist of a maximum of 40 councillors, of which at least 3/4 would be elected, presumably by the citizens, and the rest nominated by the President. With the amendment of 1960, the maximum number was increased to 60, while from then onwards, the appointment of the CEO, as well as of other senior staff, needed the consent of the president, thereby undermining the autonomous character of the city local government. The Amendment of 1961 pushed it an inch further when it inserted the following: "If at any time, upon representation made or otherwise, it appears to the President of the Union that the Corporation is not competent to perform, or persistently makes default in the performance of, any duty or duties imposed on it by or under this or any other Act for the time being in force, or exceeds or abuses its powers, the President of the Union may, by an order, direct that all the members of the Corporation for the time being shall retire from office as and from such date as the President of the Union may appoint, and the President of the Union may [...] direct that general elections take place on such convenient date as may be fixed by the President of the Union".

Although not very succinctly described in the new act, as it falls back to the traditional detailed listing of activities as found in many (urban) local government acts in former British occupied countries, in broad terms the service delivery functions and mandates for YCDC are the core municipal services such as:<sup>25</sup>

1. Urban planning (which includes zoning but also building construction permits);
2. Engineering and all operation and maintenance (O&M) of urban infrastructure such as roads, bridges, drainage and flood control systems, markets as well as public housing;<sup>26</sup>
3. Solid waste management and sewerage;
4. Water supply and sanitation;
5. Management of public spaces such as parks, playgrounds, green areas, but also cemeteries; and cleanliness of the streets, street lighting etc.;
6. Public health notably in relation to food (food and meat inspection, licensing and inspection of restaurants, slaughterhouses, etc.), but also in relation to e.g. licencing morgues, crematoria etc.



### *2.3.2 Organisational structure*

The organisational structure of YCDC has seen changes over the past years, and will see further changes with the elections, held on 27th December 2014, for the four district representatives in to the committee; but typically, and apart from the mayor, who is the overall CEO, and the secretary, who heads a couple of cross cutting and/or 'heavy' departments, a number of committee members each lead a handful of departments. Although, since the 1990s, the Act prescribed a minimum of seven committee members, this number was never achieved and for 2014, the committee has been composed of the mayor (as overall CEO) and 4 members, each heading 4-6 of the in total 20 departments (see Figure 3). Following the elections, the committee will now have 9 members and division of tasks will have to be discussed and decided upon.

25. This categorization is made by the authors of this report, but the 6 points seem to cover most, if not all, of the 27 different duties specifically mentioned in Chapter 3 of the Yangon City Municipal Law (2013). A rational clustering of functions may provide hints to an efficient organogram (see below).

26. This could also be separated as two distinct functions: one for engineering and construction; and one for managing (operations and maintenance) of that infrastructure once in place.

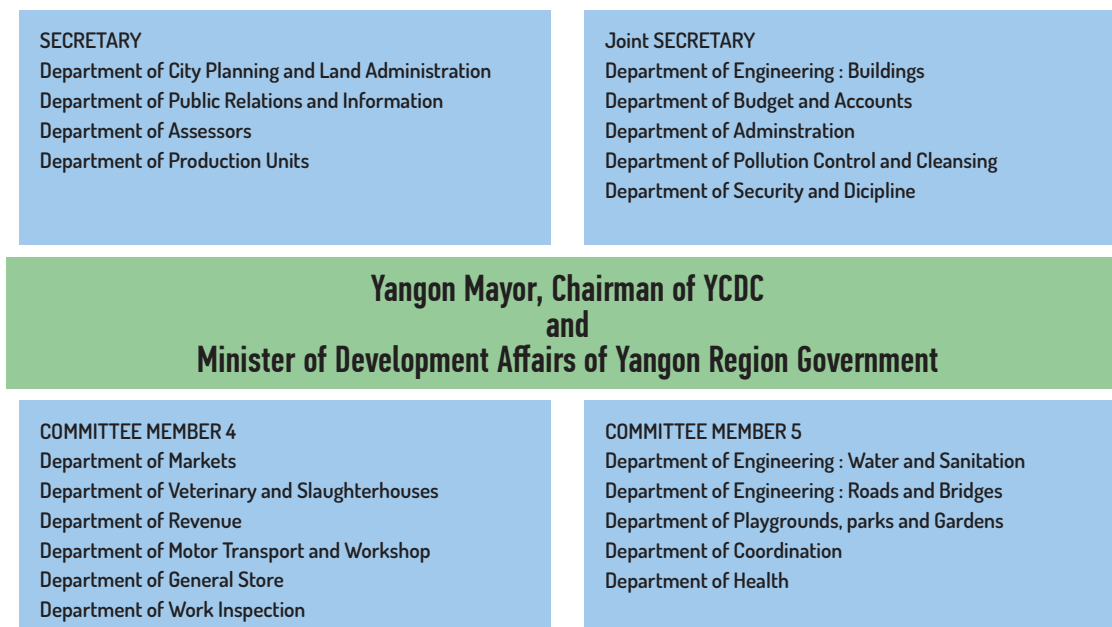


Figure 3: Organogram Yangon City Development Committee

Source: YCDC

Remarkably, and contrary to what is mostly done nowadays in urban governance, the portfolios of the various committee members are not organised around functional related entities (like, for example, the 6 areas identified above), but rather divided in such a way that the ‘weight’ of responsibilities is more or less equally shared. In the present organogram, for example, the engineering activities are divided between two committee members, whilst cross-cutting support services (such as accounts, central stores, coordination and PR) which are usually kept together, are also divided amongst the committee members. As such, the organogram is not reflecting the core functions of YCDC, which makes the establishment of accountability relations more difficult.

Each of the departments in the organogram above has its own internal organisation that may comprise various divisions and sections. In total, the 20 departments as shown in the figure above employ over 10,000 people. At the township level, however, the YCDC only has one office, being the Municipal (or Development) Affairs office, mainly dealing with activities around water supply, waste management and tax collection, while the other functions (urban planning, engineering and public health) are dealt with by ‘city hall’, the YCDC’s headquarter in downtown Yangon.

### 2.3.3 Recent developments: the election of a new committee

In the first half of 2014, the YCDC announced, in a response to some popular pressure and as a result of the new Municipal Law that was required by the 2013 Presidential Notification, that elections for peoples’ representatives in the city, district and township municipal affairs committees were to be held in October 2014.<sup>27</sup> In most other States and Regions, partially elected TMACs had already been formed at the township level as per the overall instruction of the Presidential Notification and as defined in the various State and Region Municipal Laws, but often restricted the right to vote to elders and local community leaders. In August 2014, the YCDC presented the proposed election rules, which - ostensibly for budgetary reasons -, foresaw that only 1.5 percent of the population would be eligible to cast a vote.

27. The YCDC at city level is by nature a municipal affairs committee. However, it is not mentioned in the Presidential Notification, which only refers to partially elected committees at the township level but leaves it to States and Regions to pass legislation for elected committees to be put in place at (urban) district and city level as long as it can be understood as falling under ‘municipal affairs’.

This was later changed to a provision that every household would be allowed to cast a vote, which in terms of representation was an enormous improvement, but concerns were being raised that most likely the majority male heads of the household would cast the household vote, thereby reducing the voice of women in the vote. A system of votes by household is, by definition, at variance with the principle of universal franchise and the equal rights of men and women. It also unjustifiably discriminates against young people.

Under the proposed regulations, the registered households were invited to elect 4 of the 9 city-level committee members, each of them representing one district, whereas the other five will continue to be selected and appointed by Government (sitting members are expected to continue after the elections). The law is not specific on whether this is the Union government or the Region government, but is explicit for the mayor who is appointed by the president, as was the case prior to the 2013 Municipal Law.

The advocates for more inclusive elections expect that these four people's representatives, even if they are in a minority in the nine-member committee, will serve to increase transparency in the decision-making processes of the YCDC, as they will report back to their constituents and the wider public via the media. The extension of the committee from 5 to 9 members is expected to have implications for the organisational structure of the YCDC, but those are yet to be decided at the time of finalising this report (early January 2015). The latest impressions around the first municipal elections in over 50 years are presented in Box 2.

#### **Box 2: Yangon Region municipal elections on 27 December 2014**

Although in the first half of the 20th century Yangon Municipal Corporation was set up as an urban local government with an elected council (see section 2.3.1), such elections were largely abandoned under the military rule. As such, the municipal elections held in Yangon Region on Saturday, 27th of December, were the first such elections in over six decades. They were held as a direct result of the Yangon City Municipal Law (2013) of Yangon Region, that itself was based on the Constitution 2008. Initial plans, under which only 1.5 percent of the Yangon population would have been able to vote, were later replaced by a provision to allow one vote per household, which was estimated to raise the number of voters from 30,000 to 800,000. Eventually, only some 400,000 households met the registration criteria.

In the election for the three levels of committees, voters' - in all the wards and village tracts in the 33 townships - elected four representatives for the YCDC, three representatives (one elder, one professional and one Civil Society Organization -CSO- representative) for the district, as well as members of the township municipal affairs committees. The latter corresponded to similar elections that had been held for TMACs in other States and Regions in 2013. As such, a total of 115 positions were open for election (3 positions for each of the 33 townships and 4 districts, and 4 positions for YCDC). A total of 293 candidates had been registered, including 38 for the 4 YCDC positions, each one representing one district; 40 candidates for the 12 district positions and over 200 candidates for the 115 township-level positions.

Thirty-nine candidates (representing 35 percent of the positions at the district and township level) won unopposed, especially at township level, notably for the category of professionals. Although there were critical discussions about the manner in which the election was organized, in particular with regard to the limited electorate and candidacy restrictions, the Yangon municipal elections exceeded the level of public participation and inclusiveness

seen on earlier TMAC elections held in the other States and Regions in 2013. Most observers agreed that these elections were open and transparent and well organised, although preparation of the electorate could have been better. On the day of the election itself, the number of voters was not overwhelming as turnout was only 25 percent of those who had specifically registered, resulting in some 100,000 voters overall. The organisation of the poll was considered very solid and smooth, the procedures clear and the polling station officials well-trained and applying uniform instructions.

Some of those that did not vote publicly expressed the view that ‘it was useless to do so - as it would not change anything’ which reflects a lack of trust in the institution but is also a self-fulfilling prophesy. Certainly, one important lesson from the Yangon municipal elections is that the publicity around the elections and the procedures on how to register, as well as civic education on the roles and responsibilities of both an emerging urban local government on the one hand and the electorate on the other hand could have been more extensive and more intense. Other reasons for a low turnout can have been that political parties were not allowed to field and campaign for candidates, and the fact that the committee will be in place only for a short period, as its mandate is coterminous with that of the Government.

Some of the complaints of the non-voters can be considered valid in the light of the fact the precise roles and powers of the newly elected people’s representatives are as of yet rather vague and uncertain. Are they only elected representatives with merely consultative status, providing advice to the appointed executive officers (as the mayor seemed to imply in an interview the day before the elections<sup>28</sup>) or are they elected to exert an executive role of municipal governance - with either individual or collective responsibility? A second issue is that the role of the committee for the city (with the YCDC falling directly under the Region government) is different from the role of the committees at the district and township level, with only the latter existing also in other States and Regions and to some extent mentioned in a Union-wide Presidential Notification. Whereas actual service delivery takes place at the township level with the district mainly as an intermediate administrative level, it was surprising that most candidates appeared interested in district positions over township positions. In order to win over scepticism among the electorate, there is a need (and such is part of the main argument of this report) for government to become more explicit ‘on who is supposed to deliver what?’ and ‘who is accountable for what?’ Only then voters can properly evaluate performance in the successive elections.

Both sides - the government and the electorate - will have to make a move for local democracy to work. The population will need to realise that with letting chances to exercise their right to vote pass they may squander the possibility to hold their government accountable in the long-term also. Maybe the stakes for these municipal elections were not considered high enough to warrant a huge turnout. However, these were the first municipal elections in Myanmar’s largest city in decades and they had a much higher profile than those in other States and Regions. They are likely just the starting point of a ‘learning curve upwards’ and could represent an important step towards the development of genuinely democratic local government in Myanmar.

28. Irrawaddy newspaper of 26th December 2014 under the heading “YCDC members ‘not decision-makers’ says mayor.

## 2.4 Yangon Region Government

### 2.4.1 Establishment of the Region Government

The Yangon Region Government, as the governments of each of the 14 States and Regions, was established following the 2010 elections and the transition to constitutional, civilian-led government in 2011. Its structure, powers and relationship with the Union Government are regulated in detail in the 2008 Constitution and the respective subsidiary legislation enacted by the SPDC in 2010. Accordingly, the separation of powers has been guaranteed to some extent, where a legislative, an executive and a judicial branch of government can be distinguished.

As for all Regions and States in Myanmar, the first Region Government for Yangon Region was established on 31st of January 2011 when the Region *Hluttaw* was constituted and U Myint Swe was appointed as Chief Minister and head of the executive, and U Sein Tin Win, USDP, as Speaker and U Tin Aung, USDP, as Deputy Speaker of the Region *Hluttaw*.

### 2.4.2 The Legislative

The elections held on 7th of November 2010 simultaneously elected representatives to the two Houses of the Union legislature (*Hluttaw*) and to the Region *Hluttaw*. They were historic in the sense that these were the first elections after the aborted 1990 elections and after two decades of military rule. Moreover, it was the first time a multi-party representative assembly was elected for Yangon Region at the sub-national level. They resulted in a victory of the USDP, which had emerged from the USDA a few months before the elections and had inherited its assets, networks and leadership, and gained a majority of the elected seats in all elected bodies of Yangon Region. As there were vacant seats in Yangon Region, by-elections were held on 1 April 2012 (see below).

The first Region *Hluttaw* for Yangon Region under the 2008 Constitution was established in January 2011. The Yangon Region *Hluttaw* meets in the premises of the former national parliament building in Yangon.

The elections for the members of the Yangon Region *Hluttaw* were contested on the basis of townships (see Figure 4), which were each, divided in two separate constituencies. As the Region has 45 townships, 90 territorial constituencies were formed. In addition, one constituency was set up for the Kayin and Rakhine ethnic communities of the Region, for whom voters registered as Kayin and Rakhine were entitled to cast a vote in addition to their territorial constituency vote. Altogether, therefore, 92 members were elected for the Region *Hluttaw*.

As such, following the stipulations of the 2008 Constitution, the Yangon Region *Hluttaw* has 123 members, of which 92 are elected, the other 31 (being 1/3 of the elected and hence 1/4 of the total) appointed by the military. The two ethnic representatives, for Rakhine and the Kayin respectively, are also the Ministers for Rakhine and Kayin Affairs respectively (see below under executive).

Given the huge variation in population size across townships, the number of people that each member represents varies widely from 715 (for Cocokyun/Coco Islands) to around



343,500 (for Hlaingtharya). However, the unbalance is mainly caused by a few exceptions of Cocokyun and Seikkan on the one hand and Hlaingtharya on the other. The same problem exists around the country due to significant mal-apportionment of electoral constituencies and could therefore be addressed or improved by a comprehensive process of constituency delimitation that would bring the deviation between these ratios within a range more in line with international standards.<sup>29</sup>

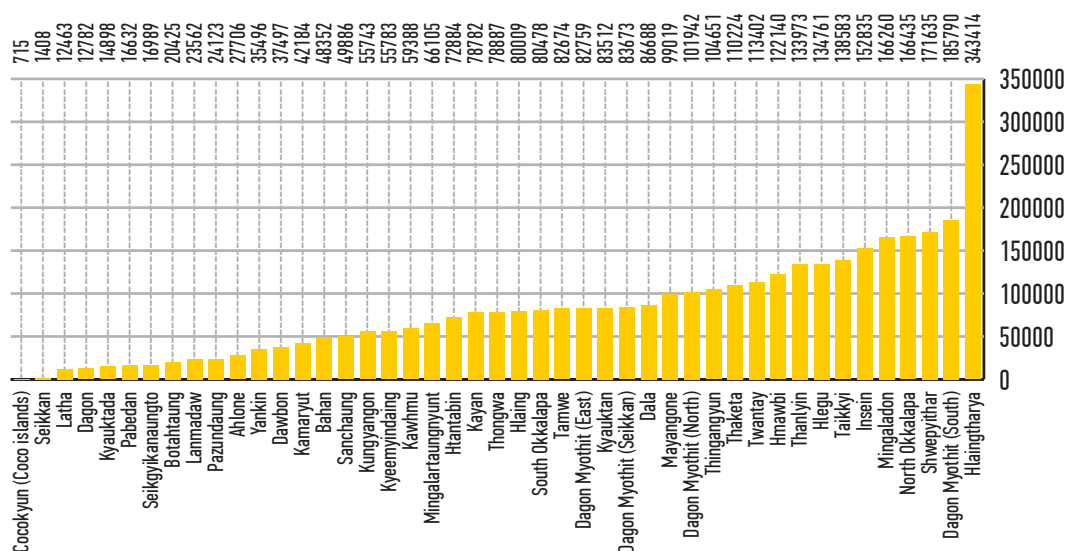


Figure 4: Number of people that each Member of the Region Hluttaw represents, by township

Table 3 shows the election results for the townships that were selected for this mapping. It shows that the USDP won in the rural constituencies (Taikkyyi and Thongwa townships) but that in the more urban North Okkalapa the National Democratic Force (NDF), a split-off from the National League for Democracy (NLD), which itself did not participate in 2010, was stronger and carried the vote for the Region Hluttaw members

Constituency	Party	Candidate	Votes
Taikkyyi 1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Soe Win Maung	39,462
	National Unity Party	Nyan Win	25,680
Taikkyyi 2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Myint Aung	35,397
	National Unity Party	Myint Thein	25,925
Thongwa 1	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Myint Thein	25,950
	National Unity Party	Nay Win	13,350
Thongwa 2	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Mya Thein	24,849
	National Unity Party	Thit Lwin	12,879
North Okkalapa 1	National Democratic Force	Aung Hsan	30,556
	Union Solidarity and Development Party	San Win	24,713
	National Unity Party	Nyunt Tin	8,007
North Okkalapa 2	National Democratic Force	Thet Tun Maung	32,363
	Union Solidarity and Development Party	Khin Maung Myint	23,511
	Independent	Kyi Oo Thein	7,931
	National Unity Party	Htay Myint	6,715

Table 3: 2010 Yangon Region Hluttaw election results (selected townships)

29. The method of a fixed number of representatives per administrative unit is found all over the world. However, for the Yangon townships (Hlaingtharya vs Cocokyun) the ratio between the biggest and the smallest constituency is 1:480, which is excessive. However, without the few outliers (of Cocokyun, Seikkan and Hlaingtharya), the ratio drops to what is usually considered a 'just acceptable' by international standers, being 1:15.

Table 4 shows the combined result of the entire vote in Yangon Region. It shows that, overall the USDP ‘only’ won 56 percent of the vote. Yet, because of the ‘first-past-the-post system’ whereby whoever emerges with the highest number of votes in a given constituency wins the seat, the party has 75 of the 92 seats. On the contrary, the National Unity Party (NUP), which contested in 86 constituencies, and had 29 percent of the vote, got only 8 seats (or 8.7 percent of total) (see Table 4). It shows that the election system as chosen has a big influence on the composition of the Hluttaw. At the same time, a few smaller parties had their supporters concentrated in smaller constituencies and managed to win seats.

**Table 4: Percentage of the vote and of the electoral seats, by party, 2010 Region Hluttaw elections**

	Number of votes	% of the vote	Number of seats	% of seats
Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP)	1,634,679	56.0%	75	81.5%
National Unity Party (NUP)	841,787	28.8%	8	8.7%
National Democratic Force (NDF)	134,296	4.6%	4	4.3%
Democratic Party (DP)	41,820	1.4%	2	2.2%
88 Generation Student Youths	30,000	1.0%	1	1.1%
Kayin’s People Party	84,456	2.9%	1	1.1%
Rakhine Nationalities Development Party	26,251	0.9%	1	1.1%
Independent candidates	79,334	2.7%	-	0.0%
National Political Alliances League	23,257	0.8%	-	0.0%
National Democratic Party for Development	14,605	0.5%	-	0.0%
New Era People’s party	9,929	0.3%	-	0.0%
Total	2,920,414	100%	92	100%

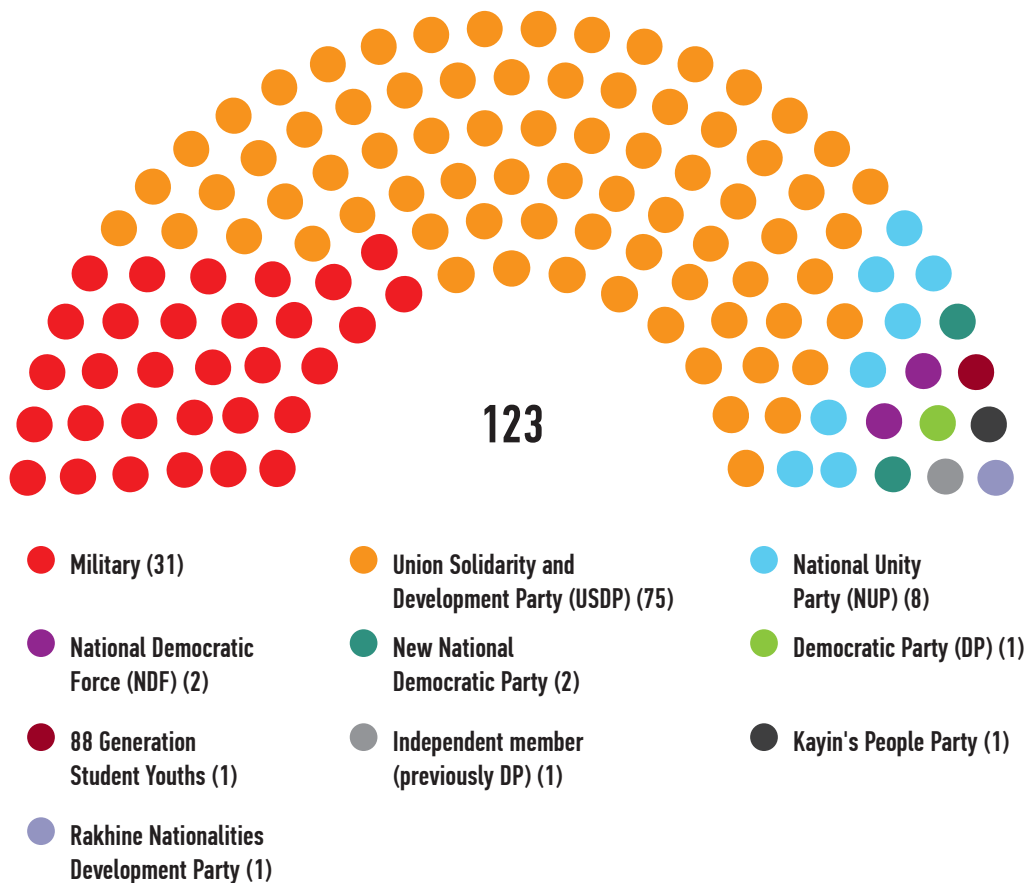
At present, and because since the elections in 2010 one party split up while one Hluttaw member left her party to continue as independent member, the composition of the Yangon Region Parliament is presently as shown in Figure 5. The ruling USDP has an absolute majority (in combination with the military appointed members they have 106 of 123 seats), while the ‘opposition’ is highly segmented. With 8 parties, the Yangon *Hluttaw* is the legislature with the second highest number of different political parties of all States and Regions.<sup>30</sup>

By nature, the role of the legislature is to debate new laws, including the annual ‘budget law’<sup>31</sup>, approving the proposal of the executive to engage expenditure. Whereas the last-but-one budget proposal as submitted to the *Hluttaw* (for FY 2013/14) was labelled ‘confidential’, such words were no longer found on the draft budget 2014/15 - and hence this budget is openly available. However, so far, the Hluttaw has made very few -if any- changes to the proposals, which in part is due to the fact that the government has a majority in the *Hluttaw*. So far, there has been little sign indicating that the Region government has been willing to accommodate requests for modification from the opposition - and given the composition of the *Hluttaw* they also had little incentive to do so.

30. With nine political parties, only Shan State Hluttaw has a higher number of parties represented.

31. Different countries have different names for the debate and subsequent approval of the government budget for next financial year. In the parliamentary cycle, this debate is crucial, as the starting point from where accountability and oversight by the legislative over the executive can be exercised.

Figure 5: Composition of Yangon Region Hluttaw



The term of the Region or State *Hluttaw* is the same as the term of the Union Legislature, i.e. five years, and next elections are due for 2015. Six *Hluttaw* members, i.e. 4.9 percent, are women (the second highest number after Shan State).

Overall, the *legislative activity* of the Yangon Region *Hluttaw* has been above the average of all States and Regions. In 2012 and the first half of 2013, the required Region laws essential for budgetary and planning purposes were adopted.<sup>32</sup> As instructed by the central government, a Municipal Law was passed in 2013, which paved the way for the reorganizing of the YCDC and the election that took place in December 2014 (see above).

### 2.4.3 The Executive

The Yangon Region government is composed of a Chief Minister, who is the head of the executive branch, nine ministers with a technical portfolio (similar to all other States and Regions in the country) and two ministers for Rakhine and Kayin affairs respectively, who are the elected Rakhine and Kayin representatives in the Region *Hluttaw* (see above) (see Table 5). In addition to the aforementioned Ministers, the Region Advocate General, who serves a Public Prosecutor and legal advisor of the Region Government, is also member of the Region cabinet.<sup>33</sup> The Region representative of the GAD of the Ministry of Home Affairs serves as executive secretary to the cabinet (but is not a member of the cabinet).

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

33. The Advocate General is nominated by the Chief Minister (CM) and appointed by the president and answerable to the president, through the CM and the Union Attorney General. The same applies for the region's auditor general (who is answerable to the president, the Chief Minister and the union's auditor general, but contrary to the AG this person is -based on the function of 'independent government auditor'- not part of the government).

Table 5: Yangon Region Government - Members of the cabinet

	Cabinet Position	Person holding the position (Nov 2014)	Party
1	Chief Minister	Myint Swe	USDP
2	Minister of Security and Border Affairs	Col Tin Win	Military
3	Minister of Finance	Daw San San New	USDP
4	Minister of Planning and Economics	U Than Myint	USDP
5	Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Breeding	U Soe Min	USDP
6	Minister of Forestry and Energy	U KyawSoe	USDP
7	Minister of Development Affairs / Mayor of Yangon	U Hla Myint	n.a.
8	Minister of Social Affairs	Dr Myint Thein	USDP
9	Minister of Transport	U Aung Khin	NUP
10	Minister of Electric Power and Industry	U NyanTunOo	USDP
11	Karin Minister	U Saw Tun Aung Myint	KPP
12	Rakhine Minister	U Zaw Aye Maung	RNDP
13	Advocate General	Kyaw Naing Moe	n.a.
-	Secretary of Yangon Region Government	Myat Kyaw Kyaw	n.a.

The Region Minister of Security and Border Affairs is nominated by the military. Apart from the Minister of Municipal Affairs (who had already been appointed as mayor of Yangon when the Region government was formed), all ministers (including the Chief Minister) are members of the *Hluttaw*. However, contrary to the Union Government, they do not resign from their *Hluttaw* seats once they take up a position in the Region Government and continue to serve as regular *Hluttaw* members in their respective constituencies in addition to their executive responsibilities.

The USDP holds most ministerial portfolios except the Minister of Security and Border Affairs which is by constitutional requirement held by a representative of the military, the Ministry of Transport, which is held by the NUP, and the two representatives elected for the ethnic minority constituency in the Region, i.e. the Kayin and Rakhine community are automatically members of the Region Government.<sup>34</sup> The Minister of National Races Affairs (Kayin) is a representative of the Kayin People's Party (KPP) and the Minister of National Races Affairs (Rakhine) represents the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party (RNDP).<sup>35</sup> All members of the Yangon Region Government are men.

Most ministers have very limited number of staff of their own, typically 2-3 persons, including a personal assistant and a driver, but their technical portfolios are somehow linked to selected Union ministries. But the present situation around the Region government is complicated and can only be understood if placed in the context of an evolving situation where the changes are not always consistent or logically sequenced and certainly not yet complete.

Since the creation of the Region governments, and notably over the past 1-2 years, 27 Union departments have shifted part of their budgets to the Region/State budgets. The way the

34. The representative was declared elected, as he was an unopposed candidate.

35. On 17 June 2013, the RNDP and the just recently re-established Arakan League for Democracy (which had won the 1990 elections) signed an agreement to merge under the name of Rakhine National Party (or Arakan National Party). The RNDP was officially dissolved on 6 March 2014.

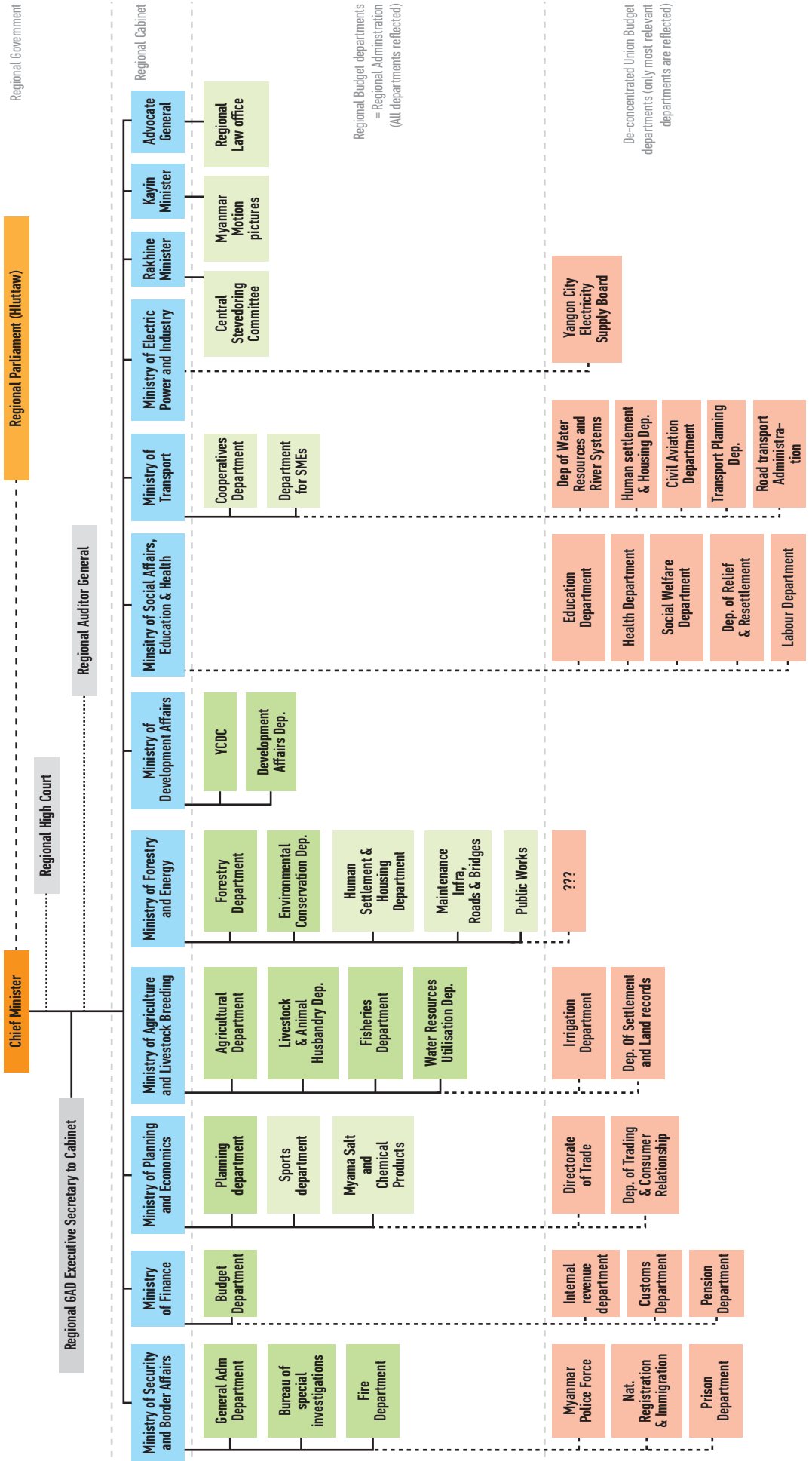
State/Region budgets have been presented up to now follows the structure of the Union ministries (and does not coincide with the structure of the 11 ministries of the Region).

At the same time, the management of and the budget for the 27 'region budget departments' are divided amongst the ministries partly in a functional manner (wherever the name of the Union ministry and Region ministry coincide), partly in practical manner.

For Yangon Region the following observations can be made serving as an introduction to Figure 6 (see page 31) showing the organogram for the Region government as it stands now:

- The Region Minister for 'Security and Border Affairs' takes care of some region departments that, at the Union level, fall under the Ministry of Home Affairs;
- The Minister of Development Affairs is both the Mayor of Yangon and (political) head of the Department of Municipal Affairs. During the SPDC era, the Department of Municipal Affairs at the Division level belonged to the Union Ministry of Security and Border Affairs. But these DMAs nowadays fall under the Region Ministry of Development Affairs that has no link to any particular ministry at Union level. Apart from the ethnic affairs ministers, which however have no associated ministry or department, this post for Development Affairs is the only Region Government without a superordinate ministry at the Union level;
- As the 'Mayor of Yangon' the Minister of Development Affairs is the head of YCDC which provides municipal services within the 630 urban wards in the 33 townships that constitute 'the city of Yangon', but with the 'hat' of the Minister of Development Affairs he also oversees municipal service provision in the municipalities made up of the 112 wards in the 12 townships 'outside of the city';
- Apart from the Chief Minister and the Ministry of Development Affairs (which has a special position because of the municipalities' own revenue collection; see below), eight ministries have one or more 'region budget departments' under them (Border Affairs, Finance, Planning & Economics, Agriculture & Livestock and Forestry & Energy, Transport and the two ethnic ministries, although for the latter two the name of the Ministry has no relation with the topics covered);
- Two ministries (Social Affairs covering health and education; and Electrical Power & Industry) have no 'region budget department' or own budget and their tasks are limited to coordinating Union ministry departments in their respective sectors (although some ministers have been allocated 'sector alien' departments; see below). Even for the Region ministries that have departments and budgets to manage, the budgets are relatively small, and mainly related to salary costs;
- The Ministry of Development Affairs taking care through YCDC of the municipal services in Yangon city as well as the municipal services in the other 12 townships -through the Department of Municipal (or Development) Affairs administers the lion share of the Region budget (see below). This single ministry manages some 76.6 percent of the Region's capital budget and 70.2 percent of the Region's total budget;

Figure 6: Organogram Yangon Region Government



- The Department for Rural Development (DRD), which at Union level was shifted recently from the Ministry of Security and Border Affairs to the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, is not part of the 27 region departments, and hence its budget is at the Union level. This means that funds for services for e.g. roads, water supply for the rural areas in the 12 townships outside of YCDC (as well as for the village tracts in the 33 townships under YCDC) are managed at the Union level.

### Box 3: Supply of basic services by YCDC, DRD and DMA

For basic services such as water supply, roads etc. there are three different situations across the townships and three different providers of municipal services:

- a) For the 26 townships that fall completely under YCDC (because they only have wards, 395 in total), and no village tracts, their total territory is covered by YCDC;
- b) For the 7 townships that fall partly under YCDC, part of the area (the 235 wards) is covered by YCDC/DMA and part is covered by the DRD, although in actual practice the YCDC/DMA also operates in (some of) the village tracts;
- c) For the 12 townships that are completely outside of the city, the DMA, under the Region Minister of Development Affairs, takes care of municipal service delivery in the 112 wards, on the basis of case-by case self-generated municipal budgets, while the DRD, on Union budget, takes care of 582 village tracts.

Apart from western district, which only has wards (and no single village tract) all three other districts have both wards and village tracts and hence coordination structures for all three providers are needed - a situation which seems highly inefficient.

What is striking is that for some Region ministries, such as for Ministry of Social Affairs (covering both the health and education sectors, which are part of Schedule One in the Constitution, hence a Union function) the Region Minister is bound to remain without funds and substantive portfolio (unless the stipulations of the Constitution are changed or differently interpreted, or unless functions including administrative management are delegated from the Union Government to the States and Regions). Yet, for other sectors (like sports) there is a Region budget department, but no clear responsibility of a particular Region ministry. Hence there is a mismatch between the Schedules One and Two of the Constitution, and the actual generic organogram and the services that are being funded under the region budget.

In order to provide each minister with some portfolio, some 'region budget departments' appear to be allocated somewhat arbitrarily, like the 'Department of Housing Development' under the Minister of Forestry or the budget for the Department of Cooperatives under the Region Minister of Transport. Although understandable in the light of 'load sharing', from the perspective of transparency and accountability (and citizens' to know 'who is responsible for what'), such a pragmatic allocation of portfolios is far from ideal.

#### 2.4.4 The Region Government Budget and Expenditure

The Yangon Region budget for 2014/15 (see Table 7) with budget and expenditure data for all the 'Region budget' departments shown in Figure 7, and grouped by Region minister<sup>36</sup>, shows that:

- The total budget for Yangon Region is around 344 billion Kyat (or 344 million USD), almost 68 percent of which is generated by YCDC, the amount reflected as revenue (and a modest loan) for YCDC (63.7 percent of total income) and the 10 percent contribution of YCDC-collected income that is handed over as tax to the Region government (being 4.2 percent of total revenue);<sup>37</sup>
- 18.3 percent of the income originates from Union level transfers, in the budget shown partly as income for the Budget Department received from the Union level, and another part as income from the Union for the Region government, being the Constituency Development Fund (MMK 100 million per township, 100,000 USD) and the Poverty Reduction Fund (MMK 1 billion for the Region, 1 million USD).
- All other departments collect at least some income, but the volume of the amounts collected is fairly negligible, with the exception of the amounts collected by the Ministry of Construction in which operates as a state owned enterprise for public works (6 percent of total income).
- In fact, the three main sources of income for the Region (being municipal taxes, Union grants and income for the public works state own company), account for over 92 percent of the total income, while another 4.2 percent is from direct income for the Region government, which could put into question whether the income-generating activities of all these other sources is worthwhile and cost effective, as their contribution is less than 4 percent of total Region government income.

On the expenditure side, the data shows that:

- Over 70 percent of the available resources under the Region budget is spent on municipal services, almost all (69 percent of total expenditure) by the YCDC, while the aggregate budget for the 12 townships outside of YCDC is only, 1.1 percent of total budgeted expenditure.
- 49.2 percent of the budgeted expenditure is used for capital investments under YCDC and 20.8 percent of the expenditure budget is for recurrent expenditure under YCDC;
- YCDC, which is using 90 percent of its generated income, is self-sufficient (i.e. revenues cover the costs) while the same applies for the three government owned enterprises (Myanmar salt, Myanmar motion pictures and the public works);

36. Table 2.2 is a translation of the data as presented to and discussed by the region parliament. The only presentational changes made are that (i) the departments are grouped by region minister portfolio (in the original budget departments were shown by Union parent ministry) and that (ii) revenue and expenditure budgets are shown on a same line, thus illustrating more easily which departments generate a larger share of its own expenditure.

37. As shown in Table 2.4 the total expenditure budget for YCDC for the FY 2014/15 is evaluated at MMK 238 billion, which at the exchange prevailing by the end of December equals USD 230 million, of which some USD 162 million or 70% is earmarked for capital investments. It is noted that widely different figures for the size of the YCDC budget are in circulation - which is detrimental for general confidence. In an article, Reuters news agency spoke about USD 56 million for 2012/13 (see <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/10/myanmar-yangon-idUSL4NoH2iIL20130910>), while for the same year the regularly quoted Yangon based ThuraSwiss research bureau talks about USD 660 million, 50% or USD 330 million will be used for capital investments (Newsletter, issue 19 dates 05 July 2012). The data as produced in Table 2.4 are those discussed in Yangon Regional Parliament.



- With the Union grant, the various other departments are able to break even, while the general tax income (17 billion Kyats, 17 million USD) is used to top up the capital investment budget of the Region government (from MMK 14 billion to MMK 31 billion - from 14 million USD to 31 million USD);

Overall, the financial data show that the income and expenditure for YCDC totally dominates the Region budget, and that the visibility for other Region ministries, maybe with the sole exception of engineering works under the Ministry of Forestry (12 percent of total expenditure), is fairly limited. By and large the Region budget is the budget of the larger city, which is, in principle, controlled by the Region Hluttaw. This begs the question on the precise role of elected peoples' representatives in e.g. the YCDC: are they 'elected executives' or are they an additional layer for peoples' representation and oversight - and if so, what does that mean for their role?

Overall, the financial data show that the income and expenditure for YCDC totally dominates the Region budget.

## 2.5 Representation of Yangon Region in the Union Hluttaws

For the bicameral Union legislature, consisting of the *Pyithu Hluttaw* and the *Amyotha Hluttaw*, 45 and 12 representatives were elected for Yangon Region respectively.

For the seats in the *Pyithu Hluttaw*, each township served as a constituency. Hence, altogether 45 members were elected from Yangon Region to the larger one of the two Houses of the Union legislature. Thirty-seven of these 45 seats were won by the USDP, while the National Democratic Force (NDF) won 8 *Pyithu Hluttaw* seats in Yangon Region. None of the other parties won any seats, surprising also not the National Unity Party (NUP), that had over twice as many votes for the totality of Yangon Region *Hluttaw* as compared to the Region *Hluttaw* (see Table 6).<sup>38</sup>

Party	Constituencies contested	Votes		Seats	
		#	%	#	%
Union Solidarity and Development Party	46	1,443,700	50%	37	82.2%
National Democratic Force	37	567,007	20%	8	17.8%
National Unity Party	43	370,247	13%	-	-
88 Generation Student Youths	18	174,367	6%	-	-
Democratic Party (Myanmar)	15	121,328	4%	-	-
Independents	19	99,865	4%	-	-
Union Democracy Party	2	22,722	1%	-	-
National Political Alliances	2	16,417	1%	-	-
Kayin People's Party	4	14,871	<1%	-	-
Democracy and Peace Party	2	11,342	<1%	-	-
National Democratic Party for Development	2	7,432	<1%	-	-
Difference and Peace Party	2	7,258	<1%	-	-
New Era People's Party	2	3,468	<1%	-	-
Wunthanu NLD	1	418	<1%	-	-
Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party	1	119	<1%	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>2,860,561</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 6: 2010 Pyithu Hluttaw election results for Yangon Region

38. This could be explained by the fact that for the Region Hluttaw NUP was in many constituencies only up against the USDP, and hence drew the totality of the opposition vote, while for the Union parliaments more opposition parties joined the race, hence splitting the opposition vote.

No.	Item	Revenue							
		Tax	Revenue gained from regional State-owned enterprises	Other ordinary revenue	Capital	Union grant	Loan	Total	
								in Kyat million	as % of total
<b>I. Central organisations</b>				14,939.1	0.0	5,500.0	0.0	20,439.1	5.9%
1.	Regional Government			14,936.9		5,500.0		20,436.9	5.9%
2.	Regional Hluttaw							0.0	0.0%
3.	Regional High Court							0.0	0.0%
4.	Legal Offices			2.0				2.0	0.0%
5.	Audit Offices			0.2				0.2	0.0%
<b>II. Regional Ministries and Departments</b>		0.0	0.0	159,315.9	80,677.0	57,437.9	8,712.9	306,143.8	88.9%
6.	Minister of Security and Border Affairs	0.0	0.0	17.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.3	0.0%
	- General Administration Department			15.8				15.8	0.0%
	- Bureau of Special Investigation			0.1				0.1	0.0%
	- Fire Fighting Department			1.4				1.4	0.0%
7.	Minister of Finance and Revenue	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	57,437.9	4,502.9	61,940.8	18.0%
	- Budget					57,437.9	4,502.9	61,940.8	18.0%
8.	Minister of National Planning & Economic Development	0.0	0.0	144.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	144.9	0.0%
	- Planning department			0.1				0.1	0.0%
	- Sports and Physical education department			11.4				11.4	0.0%
	- Myanmar Salt and Marine Chemical Enterprise			133.4				133.4	0.0%
9.	Minister of Agriculture & Livestock breeding	0.0	0.0	293.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	293.0	0.1%
	- Agricultural Planning Department			4.0				4.0	0.0%
	- Livestock breeding and Veterinary department			31.8				31.8	0.0%
	- Fisheries department			174.2				174.2	0.1%
	- Water Resources Utilisation Department			83.1				83.1	0.0%
10.	Minister of Forestry and Energy	0.0	0.0	20,673.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20,673.0	6.0%
	- Forestry department			85.4				85.4	0.0%
	- Environmental conservation department							0.0	0.0%
	- Human Settlement & Housing Development Department			17.7				17.7	0.0%
	- Maintenance of Buildings, roads and bridges			3.4				3.4	0.0%
	- Public Works (Ministry of construction as enterprise)			20,566.5				20,566.5	6.0%
11.	Minister of Development (Urban) Affairs	0.0	0.0	137,900.4	80,677.0	0.0	4,210.0	222,787.4	64.7%
	- YCDC			134,476.0	80,677.0		4,210.0	219,363.0	63.7%
	- Development Affairs Organisations			3,424.4				3,424.4	1.0%
12.	Minister of Transport	0.0	0.0	15.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.1	0.0%
	- Cooperative Department			9.6				9.6	0.0%
	- Cottage industries department			5.5				5.5	0.0%
13.	Minister of Railway affairs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0%
	- Central inland freight handling committee			0.0				0.0	0.0%
14.	Minister of Kayin affairs								
	- Myanmar Motion Pictures (to be taken back to Union budget)			272.1				272.1	0.1%
<b>III General taxes (for benefit of regional government)</b>		17,609.4	65.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17,674.9	5.1%
	Tax on alcohol	2,448.6						2,448.6	0.7%
	Land tax	14.9						14.9	0.0%
	Dam tax	1.5						1.5	0.0%
	Forest product tax	111.2						111.2	0.0%
	Mineral tax	28.8						28.8	0.0%
	Pond tax	471.8						471.8	0.1%
	Share of taxes collected by YCDC	14,532.6						14,532.6	4.2%
	- Property tax	5,429.8						5,429.8	1.6%
	- Wheel tax	9,102.8						9,102.8	2.6%
	Revenue Regional state owned enterprises		65.5					65.5	0.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>17,609.4</b>	<b>65.5</b>	<b>174,255.1</b>	<b>80,677.0</b>	<b>62,937.9</b>	<b>8,712.9</b>	<b>344,257.8</b>	<b>100%</b>
		5.1%	0.0%	50.6%	23.4%	18.3%	2.5%	100.0%	



On 1st April 2012, by-elections took place in the six constituencies of Yangon Region for the *Pyithu Hluttaw*. All of them were won by National League for Democracy (NLD), which had not participated in the 2010 election. These seats included Kawhmu Township, where the NLD leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi herself won with 55,902 (85.38 percent). The other winning candidates were Myo Aung for Dagon Seikkan Township; Phyo Min Thein for Hlegu Township; May Win Myint for Mayangon Township; Phyu Phyu Thin for Mingala Taungnyunt Township, and Su Su Lwin for Thongwa Township. Given the importance of Yangon Region for the country and the fact that the NLD won with a large margin, these results had a significant impact not only on the political dynamics within Yangon Region, but countrywide. The 2012 by-elections were generally seen as free and fair and generated a great deal of enthusiasm amongst the population.

For the *Amyotha Hluttaw*, each Region and State is assigned 12 seats. These are elected on the basis of groups of townships. As there are 45 townships in Yangon Region, they were grouped in clusters consisting of 2-7 townships in each cluster. The USDP won 8 of the 12 available seats in Yangon Region, while the NDF won 4 seats. None of the other parties or independent candidates won any seats (see Table 8).

Table 8: 2010 Amyotha Hluttaw election results for Yangon Region

Party	Constituencies contested	Votes		Seats	
		#	%	#	%
Union Solidarity and Development Party	12	1,439,118	49%	8	66.7%
National Democratic Force	10	746,697	26%	4	33.3%
National Unity Party	12	441,691	15%	-	-
88 Generation Student Youths	4	138,524	5%	-	-
Democratic Party (Myanmar)	3	77,907	3%	-	-
Independents	2	19,591	1%	-	-
National Political Alliances League	1	17,448	1%	-	-
Kayin People's Party	1	15,461	<1%	-	-
Difference and Peace Party	1	8,532	<1%	-	-
New Era People's Party	1	7,332	<1%	-	-
Democracy and Peace Party	1	5,728	<1%	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2,918,029</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

As the most populous Region, Yangon is the most 'under-represented' constituent unit in the *Amyotha Hluttaw* (where every State or Region independent of population size has 12 seats). In the *Pyithu Hluttaw*, however, Yangon Region is rather over-represented, simply due to its high number of townships. Yangon Region also has the two smallest Pyithu Hluttaw constituencies with Seikkan and Coco Island, which are accordingly the most over-represented constituencies of all.

It may be considered an anomaly that Coco Island (Cocokyun) counts as a township of Yangon Region and is treated as a full constituency for electoral purposes. Already in the 1990 elections, 468 votes were cast among 664 eligible voters (an NLD candidate won). In 2010, the small island elected two members<sup>39</sup> to the Yangon Region Hluttaw, as well as a representative to the *Pyithu Hluttaw*<sup>40</sup> (all three seats were won by the USDP). Seikkan

39. One of the members was elected unopposed, the other won with 425 votes over his NUP opponent who gained 348 votes.

40. The winning USDP candidate received 653 votes, while the NDF candidate won 122 votes.

Township in downtown Yangon is a similarly minuscule township and constituency, with less than 2,000 inhabitants and 1,500 votes in the 2010 elections.<sup>41</sup>

## 2.6 Some of the governance issues that Yangon Region and YCDC are facing

The governance institutions of Yangon Region stand out from other States and Regions in that they feature the country's biggest city and economic centre, and its largest and possibly most politically active urban population. Like no other State or Region Government, the Yangon Region government has to define itself in its relation vis-à-vis the central government in Naypyitaw on the one hand, and vis-à-vis the Yangon municipal institutions on the other hand. Until recently, all of these functioned in a firmly controlled system of hierarchical subordination. Over the past few years that situation has only partially 'loosened up' as all of the institutions remained dominated by the same political party, the USDP. However, in the future the dynamics for Yangon's governance arrangements will likely change substantially. The ultimate shape of that governance framework will largely depend on the manner in which these various bodies and levels (as described in this chapter) will find their appropriate role with regard to the decision-making on revenues, expenditures, rules and regulations, projects and investments in what represents a prime location of Myanmar.

Since 2012, efforts have already been undertaken to reintroduce some forms of popular participation at the local level, in particular the townships, the village tracts and the wards. Yangon is the only Region that has more wards than village tracts, and two thirds of its townships are essentially urban boroughs of Yangon City. Analysing Yangon Region without taking into account the predominance of Yangon city and its administrative structures would therefore fall short of gaining a full understanding of the broader context in which the new participatory processes and accountability mechanisms at the township level have been instituted. At the same time, it is important to ensure that the interests and needs of Yangon Region's peripheral rural areas are not crowded out by the completely different agendas of urban Yangon. It is mainly for that reason that the townships for this mapping were selected to include only one urban township, but two much less densely populated townships whose vulnerabilities run a risk of being neglected by decision-makers in Yangon city.

The fact that all major political parties and movements, civil society and the media, as well as the international community present in Myanmar have their main bases in Yangon has certainly contributed to the fact that voices critical of the prevailing power structures have had more impact in the Region in the past three years than elsewhere. However, due to the problems associated with the 2010 elections the existing legislative and executive institutions may at the present time not be fully reflecting a representative image of the political will of the Region's population. The 2012/2013 elections of the Village Tract and Ward Administrators, managed by the General Administration Department, took place outside the scope of the wider political party spectrum, and returned many individuals who had already served in 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 mapping undertaken by UNDP as a whole focuses on

41. For the Yangon Region Hluttaw, the two USDP candidates were elected with the support of 323 and 842 votes respectively.

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. 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 multi-party environment.

**Yangon city is a candidate for further promoting the concept of municipal self-governance and autonomy.**

In an economically and financially powerful Region like Yangon, such questions will also play a key role in the further development of Myanmar's quasi-federal system overall, and the terms of future fiscal equalization schemes in particular. In the same manner in which Yangon Region is likely to emerge as a champion of a strong role and power of the States and Regions in Myanmar, Yangon city is an obvious candidate for further promoting the concept of municipal self-governance and autonomy. The relationship between the Region, the centre and the local level will therefore continue to evolve and will be significantly affected by ever more open democratic debate and electoral challenges. Only a successful cooperative model and practice of sharing powers and responsibilities, rather than competition, will prove to bring results for the benefit of the people in terms of better living standards and higher quality of public services.

Moreover, 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, or even electoral support. The degree to which Yangon Region will be successful in both reflecting its own diversity while at the same time delivering basic services in an equitable and effective manner will depend largely on the progress made in building local governance institutions and processes that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of the local population.

In the end, and in practical terms, the issue needs to be addressed whether the Yangon city will be managed as a *metropolitan authority*; or whether there will be municipal local governments (YCDC being one of them) that have their own budget and mandate, while the rural areas (the village tracts) will continue to be served by Union ministries; or whether there will be a unified Region or multiple (e.g. township level) local governments that take care of the whole range of services as described in Schedule Two of the Constitution. Although wide-ranging and complicated it will be required to address those issues, to also be able to put in place the appropriate accountability arrangements - as each of the possible models for the organisation of the public sector will have its own specific arrangements for accountability and peoples' participation.



### **3. Organisation of service delivery at the township level**

As part of the local governance mapping three townships were selected in Yangon Region for more detailed data collection (see Figure 7). The content of this and the next chapter are based on these data. A summary of the profile for the three townships in Yangon (North Okkalapa, Thongwa and Taikkyi) is presented in Box 4.

#### Box 4: Main characteristics of the three sample townships

For the Local Governance Mapping three of the 33 townships in the Region were sampled for more detailed research, whereby the variable of geographical spread turned out to be dominating factor for the selection. As such, one township was selected in the northern district of the Yangon Region; being **Taikkyi**; one in the southern district, being **Thongwa**, which is actually located straight east of the Yangon business district; and one township in the eastern district, being **North Okkalapa**, located just south of the international airport in Mingaladon Township, and hence in the northern part of Yangon city area. North Okkalapa is officially fully urban and only has wards, even though it has patches of agricultural land, and is very different from downtown Yangon. No township was sampled in the fully urban western district, which includes the downtown business district.

The three townships are very different in terms of the number of sub-township administrative units, area size, population and density. And although the density in North Okkalapa is 76 times as high as in Taikkyi, it should be kept in mind that the density in North Okkalapa is still relatively low as compared to the real city areas. With the exception of Dagon Township, even for the eastern District, the population density in North Okkalapa is relatively low. Overall, for the urban North Okkalapa, the area size and the number of administrative units is low, while the population as well as the population density are high, while for the rural townships (as more so for Taikkyi then Thongwa) the opposite is the case: Many administrative units and a large area and a low population density.

Township	# urban wards	# village tracts	# of admin units below TS	Population Census 2014	Total Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Density In pers/km <sup>2</sup>
North Okkalapa	19	0	19	332,869	27.76	11,991.0
Thongwa	12	65	77	157,774	721.6	218.6
Taikkyi	20	75	95	277,165	1,764.07	157.1

In terms of economic activities, however, Thongwa is more rural and more agriculture-oriented as compared to Taikkyi, which is located on the main highway to the north, which provides options for alternative income sources. In Thongwa, farming is the main economic activity of the township with green gram (green beans) being the main crop, followed by rice. The township also has a large fishing industry which takes place in the bay to the east. All farming and fishing products are traded and sold in Yangon city, which is two hours away by road. Apart from farming, there is a small industry for rice husking in the township and small manufacturers of parts for rice husking machines. But overall, the economic base is fairly small, and fluctuation in the prices of the main agricultural commodities (rice and green beans) has over the years had a severe impact on the livelihood of many. Fortunately, prices appear to be more stable these days.



The greatest advantages of Thongwa are its proximity and accessibility to Yangon and also its rich, fertile farmland. The main challenges for Thongwa are that there is no underground fresh water table available, as ground water is salty, meaning that accessing drinking water is difficult and that for fresh water supply the township largely relies on rainwater harvesting. Rainfall, with an average of 3800mm/year, is quite high, but drinking water shortages occur every three to four years when the rains are late or below average. On the other hand, during the rainy season flooding is often a problem and areas in the south east of the township become completely inaccessible during that time of the year. Accordingly, water development projects are a key priority for the township.

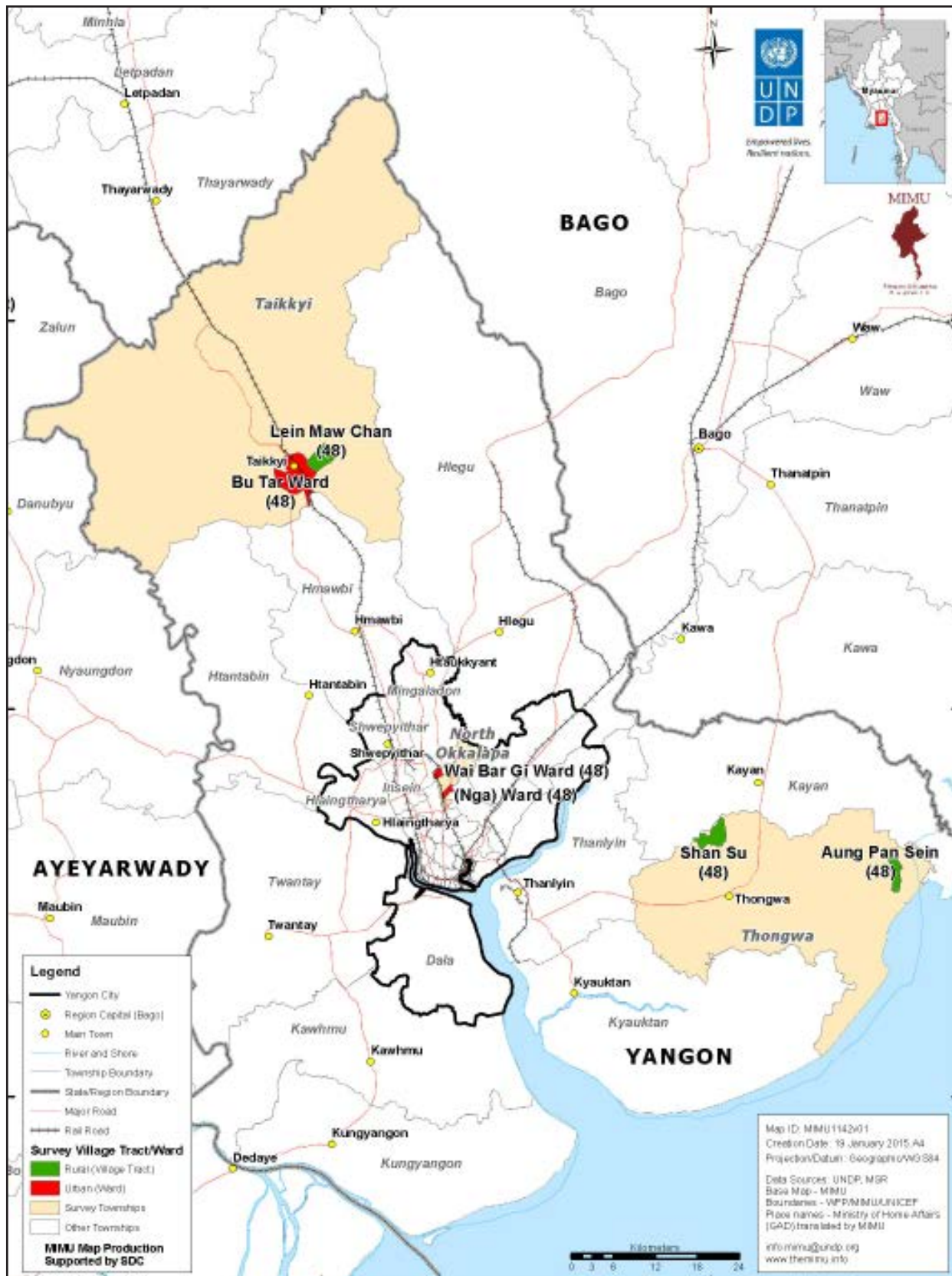
In Taikkyi Township, brick making is a main economic activity. There are brick factories all over Taikkyi and the brick-making industry has a long tradition there. Both machine made and handmade bricks are produced, the most popular type being the traditional red bricks mainly used for construction of houses. Also, many express bus companies are based in Taikkyi which run buses between Taikkyi and Yangon. Well-known companies include Shwe Yangon, Aung Tagon and 132. Near Taikkyi town, there is a large garment factory producing cloths for export to Japan. In terms of agriculture rice is a main crop occupying an estimated 60 percent of all farmland, but the township is especially known for its good agricultural techniques and high quality agricultural production for the higher value crops such as vegetables, fruits (pomelo) and flowers (roses). The township, with a much wider economic base, appears to be fairly stable and balanced (as compared to Thongwa were over the past years fluctuations in agricultural production have had a strong impact on the economy, and where the differences between rich and poor is more pronounced).

The majority of people who live in North Okkalapa township work, either as civil servants, private sector employees or (daily) labourers outside of the township, closer to the inner city of Yangon, even though also in the township itself there are two industrial zones. One is for larger factories, which produce garments for export, and the other is for smaller factories, which produce food products and spare parts for local consumption. Overall, North Okkalapa is maybe best characterised as a satellite town for people who work in downtown Yangon.

One intriguing feature of North Okkalapa is that there is one ward in the most northern part of the township that is much bigger in area than all the other wards. This ward was originally planned to become a separate township, however, the plan never materialised after, in 1991, it was rejected by the central government. Up to to-date the 'odd' size of the ward has remained while the ward is much less urbanised as compared to the other wards.



Figure 7:  
Yangon Region  
and selected  
townships (CRC  
Map)



### 3.1 Governance structures at the township level

As for all townships across the country, also the ones in Yangon Region generally show a presence of over 30 different government departments, usually housed in different buildings across the township, each having its own links upwards to the department of their ‘parent’ ministry at district or regional level (see Table 9 for a list of departments found in the three sample townships).

1	GAD	15	Cooperatives	29	Land Records
2	Police	16	Small Businesses	30	Legislation Office
3	Fire Department	17	Municipal Affairs	31	Law Court
4	Immigration	18	Social welfare	32	Information and Communications
5	Internal Revenue Department	19	Education Office	33	Communication (line)
6	Veterans	20	Health	34	Communication (exchange)
7	Planning department	21	Indigenous Medicine		
8	Agriculture	22	Sports		<b>As State enterprise:</b>
9	Livestock, Breeding & Veterinary	23	Construction/Engineering	35	Post Office
10	Fisheries	24	Electricity	36	Timber mill
11	Irrigation	25	Housing	37	Agricultural Development Bank
12	Industrial Agriculture	26	Geology and Mining	38	Myanmar Economic Bank
13	Industrial Crops	27	Religious Affairs	39	Railways
14	Forestry	28	Records Office	40	Bus-line management

**Table 9: List of government offices found in a typical township**

Source: Township background studies, listed as reported by the GAD offices in the three sample townships.

At township level no distinction is made between departments that organisationally belong to (and that have their budget under) the Region government and those that are related to the Union government. As such no distinction is made between the departments that would relate to Schedule One (Union functions) and those that relate to Schedule Two (State and Region functions) of the Constitution. As listed, for the townships, every government office is the same, and state enterprises are mentioned in the same breath as government offices.

As elsewhere in the country, the typical task of the Township Administrator (TA), as the head of the township’s General Administration Department, is the coordination of this varied group of government offices and departments (next to the tasks of ensuring civil registration -through the ward and village tract administration offices- and solving local disputes). But in actual fact there is very little horizontal contact or coordination between the different departments as there is no such thing as a single township administration, let alone a township government, - rather a large number of loosely connected departments that so far generate only little synergy.

In Yangon Region, and certainly in the Yangon city townships, the position of the GAD office seems to be less dominating as compared to other States/Regions, as the YCDC, through the Department of Municipal Affairs (the heads of which are still called by their former name of ‘executive officer’) (EOs) also play an important overarching role. The municipal elections in December 2014 were organised by the latter offices - with assistance from the GAD-offices (and not the other way around, as was the case in the rest of the country).

**In the Yangon city townships, the position of the GAD office seems to be less dominating**

compared to other states/regions, as the YCDC, through the municipal affairs departments play an important overarching role.

Over the past years, a number of committees have been established at the initiative of the Union government in the context of efforts to promote people-centred service delivery. These are primarily the committees established by State and Region Governments as per the Presidential Notification in February 2013.

- Township Management Committee (TMC), bringing together heads of departments of a number of township departments, including the TA and his deputy, the police and immigration officer, the planning officer and the heads of three service-delivery oriented departments, being agriculture, education and municipal affairs; and
- Township Municipal Affairs Committee (TMAC) - chaired by a peoples' representative, elected by the people living in the municipality (township headquarters), and with members drawn from both government and elected representatives, and which serves more or less as a management committee for the Department of Municipal Affairs, that generates income from urban taxes, fees and levies to finance municipal functions; and
- Township, and Ward/Village Tract level Development Support Committees (TDSCs and W/VTDSC), which are partially elected and serve as a consultative forum bringing together various interest groups to support the township administration on development issues.

In addition to this there are also regular meetings with the Village Tract and Ward Administrators, that are nowadays -indirectly- elected (instead of appointed), following the adoption of the revised Ward and Village Tract Administration Law (2012).<sup>42</sup>

Large number of coordination meetings appear to mainly pass information 'downwards' with little actual decision-making in these meetings.

The GAD is either the chair (through the TA) or the convenor for the above committees. Meeting frequencies and modalities appear to vary from one township to another as is shown in Table 10 for the three sample-townships. In addition to the new committees, in all the three sample townships, there is a 'heads of departments meeting'; although in Taikkyi the committee members are also attending this meeting.

Even if not all meetings as indicated in the schedule actually take place, it is clear from Table 10 that there is already a huge number of meetings being organised 'to coordinate' - without complete clarity on what is precisely to be coordinated. In practise, so far, most of the meetings appear to be mainly to pass information 'downwards' and little actual decision-making takes place in these meetings, neither are they systematically used as an information flow upwards.

In North Okkalapa it appears TMC meetings are law and order oriented; in Thongwa the situation is the same, along with TMAC and TDSC

Apart from the way the coordination is operationalized, the composition of the various committees also varies from one township to another. This is not necessarily bad, as local specification should be encouraged. However, the Presidential Notification was clear on how the committees were to be composed. The interviews illustrated that the existence of so many different types of arrangements simply reflects the fact that the functions of the various committees have not yet fully crystallised. The question can be asked whether this is better left to be determined ad hoc at the local level by flexibly adjusting to local circumstances or

42. For a more detailed description of the various elected bodies and representatives, see the background document on Local Governance Mapping in Myanmar: Background and Methodology.

Meeting	North Okkalapa	Thongwa	Taikkyi
Heads of all Departments	Once per month with the TA alone	Once per month with the TA alone	Twice per month with TMC, TDSC, TMAC & the Security, Solidarity and Rule of Law Committee
TMC	Once per month alone	Twice per month alone	1 per week alone & twice per month with the HODs
TMAC	Not currently meeting regularly	Once per week alone	Twice per month alone & 2 per month with the Heads of Departments
TDSC	Once per month alone	Twice per month alone	Once per week alone & twice per month with the HODs
VTAs/WAs	Once per week alone with the TA	Twice per month but never alone (1 with the HOD and 1 with the HOD, TDSC, TMAC, MPs, WDSCs, NGOs)	Once every two weeks alone with the TA
Hluttaw members	Do not attend any of the above meetings	Attend TDSC meetings and crucial planning meetings	Attend TMAC meetings

Table 10: Frequency and participants to township level coordination meetings

whether the central government should develop a more clearly defined structure on how the various committees relate to and complement each other to avoid duplication of workload and to provide for more transparency and accountability.

When looking at the composition of the TMCs in the three sample townships, different functions emerge (see Table 11): For North Okkalapa it appears mainly as a law and order oriented meeting<sup>43</sup>; for Thongwa the situation is the same, but here high numbers of people's representatives (from TMAC and TDSC) are brought in, presumably in the role of 'informant'. In Taikkyi, the composition is closest to the original Notification, but that notwithstanding it appears that 'law and order' issues are mixed with service delivery issues, while for the latter only few of the departments relevant for service delivery actually participate as members of the committee. Overall, also in relation to the meeting schedules in Table 10 the question can be asked what the TMC-meetings add to the meetings with all heads of departments.

representatives, playing the role of 'informant'. In Taikkyi, 'law and order' issues are mixed with service delivery.

As per instructions		North Okkalapa	Thongwa	Taikkyi
Chair	TA	TA	TA	TA
Member	Deputy TA	Deputy TA	Deputy TA	Deputy TA
Member	Police officer	Police officer	Police officer	Police officer
Member	Law officer	Immigration officer	Immigration officer	Immigration officer
Member	Planning officer	Planning officer	Planning officer	Planning officer
Member	Education officer	Township Law officer	TS Law officer	Education officer
Member	Agricultural officer	-	Chair TDSC	Cooperatives officer
Member	Municipal affairs officer	-	Chair TMAC	Cooperatives officer
Secretary	Revenue officer	-	-	-

Table 11: Composition of the TMC in the sample townships

43. For North Okkalapa, it was explicitly stated during interviews, that rather than discussion of township development issues, the TMC is there for the purpose as signature panel for national immigration cards, birth certificates and death certificates. The TA indicated that he sees 'township development' as an issue for the TDSC and relevant departments.

In Yangon Region (which is different from the situation in other Regions and States because YCDC plays such a dominant role) the members of the TMAC seemed less clear about their role as compared to the members of the TDSC. This may be due to the fact that, at least for the YCDC area, the TMACs had not yet been properly established (until the elections on 27th of December 2014). So far, it seems, either YCDC and/or the heads of the DMA had stayed firmly in control. With only 15 odd months to go until new elections (the various committees follow the mandates of the presidential terms, the committees (or rather the people's representatives on the committees) have very little time to become effective before the next round of elections. From the interviews in Thongwa and Taikkyi, a similar picture emerged that TMAC members were not entirely clear about their roles.

## 3.2 Planning and Budgeting

### *3.2.1 Role of the Planning Department*

**The township planning department is not involved in any actual township planning or facilitating planning consultations at the sub township level for identification of peoples' needs as institutional arrangements for participatory planning are very limited.**

The Township Planning Officers used to serve as the secretary to the Township Administrator before the position of the Deputy TA was created. Nowadays, the Township Planning Department operates from a separate office with a direct line of communication with the Department of National Planning and Economic Development. Information collected and produced at the township level is sent to the Planning Department at district and regional levels seemingly without being used or needed by the GAD or other departments.

The Planning Departments at the township have two main roles. Firstly, they collect all data required to calculate the GDP for each sector on a monthly basis. Secondly, they compile the 'township plans' for the (14) sectors as identified as key sectors at the Union level. The tasks mainly consist of collecting data from township departments on what their plan for next fiscal year will be and then put this together under one cover. Because most, if not all township departments depend for the moment for their planning on the plans made at higher level within their own line ministries, the plan as produced by the planning department is basically aggregating at township level what has earlier been disaggregated at a higher level for each department (and hence is more of pumping information around without adding any value). In both its roles, the Planning Department work independently; Information is just collected, compiled and passed up to the district and regional levels of government, without any concrete use of the data at township level. The Township Planning Department is so far not involved in any actual township planning, and they are also not engaged in facilitating any participatory planning or planning consultations at the sub-township level (for identification) of peoples' needs.

### *3.2.2 Limited opportunities for township level planning at present*

Even if the planning department had a more forward looking vision, the options for township-level planning appear limited so far, firstly because the funds for such planning are generally inadequate and secondly because the institutional arrangements to allow horizontal participatory planning are largely absent.

Discretionary funds for township planning are presently limited to the **Constituency Development Fund** (100 Million Kyats per township, 100, 000 USD) and the **Rural Development Fund**, whereby the latter two are only available for rural townships. The

observations on these two funds in this section therefore relate only to the rural areas examined as part of this study.

Even though for some townships, the per capita available funds seem comparatively larger, notably for Thongwa (see Table 12), in actual they are at best available only in part for township-level (bottom-up) planning and implementation as is illustrated by the following:

- For the RDF, the planning process is described by the DRD as a bottom-up process where priorities are determined by departments, the TDSC and TMAC and the Region Hluttaw members. These are submitted to the DRD, who in turn submits these to the regional level for approval. It was reported that in the first year of operation of the DRD (2013), all projects which were proposed to the regional level had been approved. Once projects are approved, the regional level selects contractors to perform the works without further consultation with the township level. There are no guidelines from the regional level about minimum work quality standards or satisfactory building guidelines. Contractors submit reports with photos about what they have done. Contractors are normally from Yangon, rather than local contractors from the rural areas themselves and they bring their own labour (and all materials) from Yangon as well. Citizens are not always satisfied with the outputs of the contractors and complain that the work is sub-standard.
- In Taikkyi, the TMAC members saw their role, in addition to conveying citizens' needs and proposing potential development projects to the DMA, as 'advising the *Hluttaw* members on how to use the CDF to deliver minor projects, particularly for rural areas'. In North Okkalapa, the GAD claims to make suggestions on the use of the CDF to the *Hluttaw* members based on discussion with people, but also here the 'small nature' of the CDF projects is mentioned as a constraining factor. According to the guidelines, the size of an individual project is limited to 5 million Kyats (5,000 USD), which limits the relevance of the CDF for township level projects, and which gives it the character of a *community* development fund instead of a *constituency* development fund.

	North Okkalapa	Taikkyi	Thongwa
Constituency Development Fund	100	100	100
Rural Development Fund	-	350	1,281
Poverty Reduction Fund	-	209	300
<b>TOTAL in MMK million</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>1,681</b>
Population	332,869	277,165	157,774
<b>Amount per capita, in Kyat</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>2,378</b>	<b>10,654</b>

Table 12: 'Discretionary' development funds by township and amounts per capita

Although consultations are taking place on the use of some of the discretionary (or semi discretionary) funds made available to the townships, quite often it remains unclear who takes the final decisions and hence who is accountable for the selection of the activities and projects. It is also true that this will never be able to satisfy all needs as expressed by the people. In the longer run, this may lead to frustration that suggestions from the people are not being taken into consideration. At the same time, people do not know where to take those complaints (as every committee is responsible in part but nobody responsible in full).

### 3.3 Role of GAD and the VTAs/WAs

#### 3.3.1 Multiple roles of the GAD office

TA see the GAD's 'peace and security role' as the central role, while for their role linking citizens with department the GAD needs to better exploit the role of VTA/WAs as 'voice of the people'.

As reported by TAs and Deputy TAs in interviews, the role of the GAD centres around four main areas: to maintain peace and security within the township; to link citizens with departments, to link departments with each other, and to develop the township.

The role of maintaining peace and security, which is the traditional role of the GAD, is a role where the TAs see themselves as having a central role in improving the rule of law in the township, more specifically, by enforcing laws and working with the police department to resolve social problems. As such, they are the central agency to resolve disputes - through mediation- and only when the GAD cannot resolve the situation the case is referred to the police.

Regarding linking citizens with departments, the TAs see themselves as the bridge between citizens and departments and understand that they need to communicate with departments on behalf of citizens. Notably through the links with the Village Tract and Ward Administrators this is - or rather could be - one of the most important tasks of the GAD, as a coordination mechanism between on the one hand with the public and the rest of the government on the other hand. This is important because most of the departments do not have explicit links with the people at sub-township level. But for that to materialise, the GAD may need to exploit better the role and function of the VTAs/WAs, for them to act as the 'voice of the people'.

When it comes to linking sector departments to each other aiming to create synergy, the GAD certainly plays a useful coordination role by bringing different departments together in different meetings. But it appears that the department is sometimes struggling to combine two roles, the traditional role of law and order (see the role of the TMC in North Okkalapa), which is certainly a delegated Union level function; and a service delivery and development oriented role, which could be the role of an emerging (unified) township administration.<sup>44</sup>

As much as the TAs see themselves as having a role in development of the townships, in particular infrastructure development such as roads and electricity), interviews revealed that TAs do not think that it is their responsibility to improve the economic development of the township. Particularly in North Okkalapa, topics like increasing job opportunities or promoting businesses (in general creating a favourable environment for private sector development) was described as being outside of the scope of the GAD. In Thongwa, the TA had asked the central government for 'a factory' (which was denied), which illustrates the continued old way of thinking where central government takes care of both public service delivery and the economic activities. Yet, and this was strongly expressed by the VTA/WAs, citizens do expect from government that it will create jobs. At the Union level, a more contemporary approach to economic development certainly exists, but it remains

44. In most former British colonies in Africa, these roles are clearly distinguished between e.g. the district commissioner, who is the representative of central government at the local level, and taking care of issues of law and order and coordination of central government agencies at the local level; and the CEO of the district local government, who is responsible for service delivery of most service delivery oriented functions.



to be translated for the township level - and clarity needs to be achieved on how township administrations can facilitate (rather than hamper) private sector development.<sup>45</sup>

### *3.3.2 Restricted role of the GAD in the YCDC area*

Overall, it appears<sup>46</sup> that the role of the GAD in the YCDC townships (in this case North Okkalapa) is less dominant (and may also be less relevant). This results in fewer responsibilities as compared to townships outside the municipal area (such as land registration). In fact, in these townships, the GAD office appears to have fewer opportunities to become involved in township development as the Department of Municipal Affairs works directly with the town hall, independently from the GAD office, using its 'own' budget. In these townships the GAD lacks the availability of RDF or PRF, which have elsewhere served as a tool for the GAD offices to start playing a coordinating role.

### *3.3.3 Role of the WAs/VTAs*

The VTAs and WAs are potentially highly instrumental to support the GAD offices in their coordination role, as they directly interact with citizens, and are able to bring people's development needs to the 'township table' for all departments collectively (so departments will not need to undertake participatory needs assessment and planning exercises at the ward/tract level on their own). But still, both the people as well as the GAD seem to see the WA/VTAs more in their traditional law and order role than in their newly acquired role of representing the population at township level to articulate development needs. In this regard, Yangon interestingly appears to lag behind other States and Regions, where the new role of VTAs and WAs as community representatives has become more pronounced in some places.

The TAs in Thongwa and Taikkyi commented that VTAs/WAs do not have the required training or capacity for administration responsibilities, yet they play an important role (even more important than the police to some extent) in solving domestic disputes and social problems within their areas. For domestic disputes they can call the husband and wife, concerned Heads of 10 Households as well as witnesses for a meeting to try resolve the matter. They act as if they are the police and the town court/judge at the same time, although methods are based on mediation. Only in case the VTA/WA cannot solve the problem -or when the case is too serious- is it referred to either the GAD/TA and/or the police department.

Currently there is no training for the WAs/VTAs, who are almost exclusively men, to manage dispute resolution, yet they regularly handle domestic violence cases. They see it as their role to manage these cases themselves as much as they can and only report them to the police if they deem them necessary. The police is described as 'a last resort' when the WA/VTAs fail in solving various disputes.

**TAs in Thongwa and Taikkyi commented that VTAs/WAs do not have the required training or capacity for administration responsibilities, yet they play an important role in solving domestic disputes and social problems within their areas which may give rise to challenges in accessing formal justice mechanisms.**

45. Especially from emerging economies, there are many examples on how local administrations hamper (rather than stimulate) economic development, e.g. by imposing a plethora of licenses, regulations and taxes and other restrictions rather than providing the necessary space and infrastructure. In Western Europe, local governments -in collaboration with central government- play a major role in promoting economic activities within their boundaries.

46. Although this observation may be biased because there was only one YCDC township in the sample.



As much as the mediation services of the VTAs/WAs are appreciated, it raises the question whether they have the qualifications or experience to make the decisions they make; but also whether they are not playing the role of arbiter and judge at the same time, preventing people to follow formal avenues of justice seeking, particularly in the case of domestic violence cases (which seems to be a high proportion of the cases dealt with as described by the WAs/VTAs). This is obviously highly problematic from a women's rights perspective and deserves to be looked into at more detail.

### *3.3.4 WA and VTA Meetings*

The structure and use of the regular WAs/VTAs meeting in each of the three townships is different. WAs/VTAs are able to provide the GAD office with solid information on the situation on the ground while they are also well-placed to represent the peoples' needs and wishes. Yet in all these meetings their role in terms of being the voice of the people regarding township development and service delivery needs seems underutilised.

**Thongwa is probably the best example of WAs/VTAs expressing people's needs and becoming involved in township development as they meet with the heads of departments and committees on a regular basis.**

In North Okkalapa, the focus of most meetings with the WAs is on solving social problems with each of the 19 WAs describing their ward's disputes and social problems individually to the TA each week while the others listen. In Taikkyi, where agriculture is a main concern, the WAs/VTAs meeting is fortnightly and is more reminiscent of an old-fashioned production planning system focusing heavily on agricultural output, for example, how to get water for farmland, fertilisers, loans for farmers and how to prevent agricultural pests. Thongwa is probably the best example of WAs/VTAs expressing people's needs and becoming involved in township development. In Thongwa, the WAs/VTAs meet with the heads of departments and committees on a regular basis, whereas in North Okkalapa and Taikkyi, they only meet with the GAD (see Table 10). The advantage of the procedure in Thongwa is that WAs/VTAs can directly address their needs to particular departments and committees. Yet, in practice, in a meeting with over 200 people, the VTAs/WAs appear to be taking a back seat

or a support role. Yet, the regular meetings with VTAs/WAs provide both the GAD and the departments with the opportunity to listen to the voices from the villages. But it may require special facilitation, or a special space and training for the VTAs/WAs to take up that role and speak on behalf of those whom they represent - the people of their communities.

### 3.4 The TDSC and the TMAC

#### 3.4.1 Roles of the TDSC and TMAC

The TMACs, in all three townships, felt that there was a lack of understanding and formal guidance regarding their role from the Union and/or Region level. The TDSCs seemed to have a better understanding of their mandate and the objectives. This may in part be due to the fact that the roles of the TMAC in Yangon Region have been limited because of the predominance of the YCDC. The interviews with the various committee members indicate that there is significant overlap between the roles of the TMAC and TDSC.

Members of the TDSCs mainly see their role as suggesting projects - and making decisions - regarding a wide range of township development priorities. It should be noted that the role of TDSCs is not to make decisions but to contribute to discussions on prioritizing activities or projects for township development, and to represent the voice of the different interest groups they belong to (farmers, workers, civic organisations, etc.).

Meanwhile the TMAC members (who do have decision making powers as per the Municipal Law) most commonly see their role as advising the DMA regarding development priorities for municipal services. The fact that the latter is a subset of the activities the TDSC is dealing with causes confusion within the two committees regarding who has the ultimate suggestion or decision-making power. Another reason for confusion is that the areas of intervention are not clearly defined, as the Departments of Municipal Affairs have tendency to also work in village tracts. Reportedly, in Thongwa Township, when making decisions on budget allocations, the TMAC had proposed various projects in the tracts.

In addition, the *Hluttaw* members are also involved in advising on development priorities and making decisions for the use of the CDF, meaning that all three bodies are conducting separate investigations into the same potential project with very little coordination. The large number of meetings and separate investigations was not raised as an issue by any of the committees. However, the lack of efficiency, effectiveness and lack of outcomes from the process was raised repeatedly, particularly in Thongwa and Taikkyi, which also were the townships where the committees were most active.

Although the TDSCs have been designed as an advisory or consultative body, the weight of their advice seems minimal. When suggestions are made by the TDSC to the departments/GAD about township development priorities, the committee members often felt that the projects they proposed were not approved and that their advice is ignored and therefore pointless.

In summary, contrary to the Presidential Notification, the TDSC members tend to think they are decision makers (whilst they are not), whereas the members of the TMACs see themselves as an advisory body (while they actually are a governing body as per the

Municipal Law). This added to the frustration of the TDSC members, especially when their proposals were not accepted, as has apparently often happened. Yet, officially, the mandate of the committees, as described in the Presidential Notification, is clear and does not give any decision making power to the TDSC, but only empowers the members to ‘contribute to township development’ by being consultative or advisory bodies to the Township Administrator and the departments. Yet on the ground perceptions and expectations are different.

### *3.4.2 TDSC and TMAC Citizen Representation*

**In contrast to the TDSC and TMAC, who do not have an office, citizens can visit a WA/VTA office at any time and express their concerns and needs. This system is more accessible to the majority of citizens and more useful in terms of collecting citizens’ needs.**

While the apparent intention of the establishment of partially elected TDSCs and TMACs was to increase bottom-up participation and provide a platform for the ‘voice of the people’, the actual practice so far suggests that little of that aspiration has come to fruition as of yet. The committees do not have offices or places where people can come and find their members or meet with them informally. By contrast, citizens can visit a WA/VTA office at any time (often they are open even at night) and express their concerns and needs. This system is more accessible to the majority of citizens and more useful in terms of collecting citizens’ needs. So whilst it is important that citizens are represented in different committees, the ability of committee members to adequately obtain information from citizens or interest groups, as in the case with the TDSC, about their needs is questionable. Their link to citizens is assumed because the committee members themselves are common citizens rather than state officials; however, this is not an automatic link. Committee members have a stronger link with government as they meet with the government at least once per month; however, their links with common citizens are in reality much weaker while they are assumed to be strong and implicit through informal channels.

### *3.4.3 Citizen participation*

One repeated comment heard in all townships was that with the fact that people are now able to express their needs alone is seen as an important objective of democratic governance in itself, and that success in democratization is proclaimed based on that fact alone, even without addressing those identified and expressed needs. However, expressing needs is not enough to improve people’s quality of life. Those needs actually need to be addressed. Several committee members during the interviews said that allowing people to express their needs is at the moment the start and end point of the process and that it does not matter whether they are met or not - the important thing is that they are expressed. In North Okkalapa suggestions from citizens for new roads to access market places were not prioritized. In Taikkyi it appears that all suggestions put forward through the TDSC were actually ignored when decisions were taken. And although it is clear that in no situation all expressed needs can be fulfilled (as resources always will be scarce and a limiting factor for any government in the world), it is evident that for participation to become meaningful and sustainable, the output of such processes should be able to trace the input from the committees to actual implementation. Compared with the mapping results in other States and Regions, this is rather anomalous, as in general the feedback from committee members and communities, in particular in the central Myanmar Regions, has been that responsiveness has improved and requests and demands are most often respected, within the limits of available resources.

### 3.5 Election and selection processes for peoples' representatives

Since 2012, Village Tract and Ward Administrators are elected indirectly through the 10 household leaders. Candidates for the post of Administrators must, according to the Ward and Village Tract Administration Law (2012) meet a number of criteria (in terms of age, citizenship and reputation), and a special committee comprised of 5 respected elders needs to be appointed to organise the election in each ward and village tract.

From the interviews conducted, it appears that for the first round (held much later than in other States and Regions in June 2013), the actual election process was often more a combination of selection and election. In both Taikkyi and North Okkalapa, the GAD-office selected five respected elders from each ward and village tract, who in turn selected 100 (or less) candidates from amongst all ten-household heads in their area who in turn elected the WA/VTA from amongst their midst.

In Thongwa, the first round selection process was omitted and all Heads of 10 Households joined the election of one candidate that would meet the criteria as stipulated in the law. As compared to the other two townships, the process in Thongwa appears most democratic and inclusive.

Also for the election of the people's and interest group representatives in the TDSC, different methods were used, as described in Table 13:

Township	TDSC (s)election process
North Okkalapa	Initially, all households were asked to attend a meeting during which they could propose candidates from the ward. Subsequently, the meeting voted to determine five candidates for each ward, to form -for 19 wards- a 'shortlist' of 95 candidates. From this shortlist, the GAD-office chose 7 people that fitted the description of various representatives from the Presidential Notification to be on the committee.
Thongwa	The GAD invited approximately 20 selected people to be candidates. They were people that the GAD considered to be respectable, with good character, wealthy and/or wise (be business people or village elders), have good experience socially (i.e. are generous with donations to social welfare groups) and politically neutral (so they will 'not cause problems'). These 20 or so 'selected' candidates then voted amongst themselves to choose the final 7 members into the committee. They were subsequently allocated a group to represent (e.g. farmers, workers, private sector) in relation to their knowledge, backgrounds and interest. The members are then supposed to represent the interest of these particular groups in the committee, but reporting back to the respective interest group seems to happen less frequently.
Taikkyi	A large meeting was organised and attended by NGOs, social groups and political parties, where each group proposed candidates to represent their interest. Then each interest group voted accordingly for one member to represent them. All committee members therefore directly represent a specific interest group relating to the broad sectors as outlined in the TDSC structure. For example, the representative of social welfare is from the blood donation society and the representative of workers is from the rice production society. The TDSC members then report back directly to the groups they represent on township development matters and collect needs directly from these groups as well.

Table 13: Selection of TDSC members as people's representatives in selected townships



For the election of the TMAC, a similar process was followed for Thongwa and Taikkyi, while for North Okkalapa, at the time of the mapping in 2014, they were still awaiting the election procedures to be finalised. For Taikkyi, the elected members suggested that they were allocated an interest group (rather than ‘being elected by the interest groups from amongst their midst’), which looks similar to the way the TDSC was (s)elected in Thongwa.

The procedure as reportedly followed for the TDSC in Taikkyi township (see Table 13 above) is closest to the Presidential notification and appears the most democratic and transparent. As much as some level of local interpretation and adaptation should always be appreciated, the differences as observed in the townships suggest there is need for clearer information and better monitoring of such processes to ensure a minimum level of uniformity in application of basic tenets.

### 3.6 Three concrete services - people’s participation and providers views

#### 3.6.1 Introduction

Presently, at township level, most if not all basic public services are delivered by Union departments on Union level budgets, with the sole exception of those services provided by the DMAs.<sup>47</sup> As such, health and education in Yangon<sup>48</sup> is provided in the same manner as elsewhere in the country, with only that difference that Yangon Region, with the heritage of having been the former country’s capital, has a higher number of referral hospitals, and likely (although there are no reliable data) more private service providers, and more and better known institutes of higher education. Water supply is a service provided, at least in the urban wards, by the YCDC and the DMA - while, officially, the Union Department of Rural Development is in charge of water supply in all village tracts. As already indicated earlier the delineation of the geographic areas of intervention is not very clear, especially because the DMA appears to reach out beyond the urban wards to meet urgent needs (while the opposite is much less the case).<sup>49</sup>

47. Basic public services are roughly those and that fall under the Millennium Development Goals: education, health, water, roads and transport, etc. and that are generally considered a government responsibility. In that sense, different countries interpret the role of the government for ‘housing’ (MDG ‘shelter’) differently. In this report, the term ‘municipal services (see also Chapter 2) is used for those services that are especially (or at least first and foremost) required in urban areas. They typically include solid waste management, drainage and sanitation (including sewerage); street management (O&M of selected municipal roads, keep them clean, organise for street lighting etc.); management of public spaces (such as parks and playgrounds); all kinds of services and enforcement of regulations around public health, and fire brigades. In brief, all those services that becomes necessary in areas with high population density.

48. As explained in the methodology (See Chapter 1 and Annex 1), the governance mapping looked in particular at aspects participation and transparency for three key sectors, being (basic) education, (primary) health and water supply. This paragraph focuses on those three sectors. Obviously, given the nature of this report, the introductions to each of these sectors are only brief and cursory, mainly as an introduction and context to what people say about these sectors, which will be presented in the next chapter.

49. See for example footnotes 4 and 5.

### 3.6.2 Basic education

Over the past decades, and until the present government came to power, the Myanmar Government was often criticized for paying insufficient attention (and allocating insufficient budgets) to the social sectors, notably to health and education, but also of paying insufficient attention to public infrastructure.

Basic education in Myanmar presently consist of 5 years of -compulsory- primary education, four years of lower secondary and two years of upper secondary education. The system is presently under review and the 5+4+2 system is likely to be changed for a 6+4+2 structure. Pre-school facilities do exist, but the pre-school system is not well integrated with the rest of the education system and nationwide only an estimated 20 percent of the eligible students attend pre-school, mainly in the urban areas.

Data from the Ministry of Education shows that the grade intake has increased from 91 percent around the year 2000 to above 98 percent in 2011/12. But for 2010/11 the net enrolment rate was estimated to be only 84.6 percent suggesting that a substantial number of students dropped out of the system before completing Grade-5. Only about half of the students that enter primary school actually enter the lower secondary education. But as a positive development is, that as many girls remain in school as boys, while the girls on average score better results, and are more likely to progress to higher education. 86 percent of the primary education staff is female.

In a study on education it was proposed that apart from Myanmar being a poor country, the under-expenditure on education is in part explained because the military rule undervalued the importance of the education sector.<sup>50</sup> The mapping showed that for the FY 2013/14, 4.4 percent of the budget was allocated to education, an improvement on previous years, but still bleak as compared to the 20.8 percent for defence as well as compared to other countries in the region, where Vietnam, with 20 percent of its budget allocated to education stands out as the leader, but with other countries such as Malaysia not far behind.<sup>51</sup> The report also quoted other sources, showing, unsurprisingly, that the share of the education expenditure as percentage of GDP was also low, being 1.7 percent as compared to the ASEAN average of 3.5 percent (while for the OECD countries, in 2009, the same stood at 5.1 percent.) As such, although there was a clear improvement of the educational sector, a lot remains to be achieved to catch up with the regional standards.

Apart from the increase in the budget, among the major reforms that have already taken place over the past years are the Ministry of Education's initiative to subsidize textbooks for primary school students from 2011 and the substantial increase of the number of teachers.

In FY 2012/13 a nationwide school grant programme was initiated whereby each school, depending on its size, receives an annual amount to support operational costs. The amounts, although still relatively small (USD 250 for a small school to USD 400 for a larger school)<sup>52</sup>

50. This entire paragraph is based on: Martin Hayden and Richard Martin, Recovery of the education system in Myanmar, *Journal of International and Comparative Education*, 2013, Volume 2 Issue 2.

51. A UNDP/UNCDF Local Development Background Study noted in 2012 that "the budget for education is reported to have tripled from 2011/12 to 2012/13" and shows data for it to be standing at 11% of the national budget as compared to 28.9% for defence. Whatever the exact magnitude is, the trends are clear: the budget for education is growing, but still well below international standards.

52. For Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, the amounts are typically around USD 2-3000 per school per year (see draft Preliminary Social Assessment: Myanmar Decentralizing Funding to School program, Myanmar Development Research Institute and the Ministry of Education (undated).

is certainly a step in the right direction in improving education. Such grants will eventually allow the school headmasters - who are presently often mere administrators- to become school managers with their defined own responsibilities, and enhanced accountability relations to both the Ministry of Education, as well as parents and the wider community. As such, and if properly guided, the school grant programme will also allow the school and/or parent teacher association (PTA) committees to become more active and relevant and as such can help to enhance community participation. PTA committees have been in existence for quite a while, but are reportedly, rather dormant in Yangon, while in many cases a school's board of trustees, mainly composed of well-wishers who donate funds to the school, are often more important. In addition to the township-level committees already mentioned, there is officially also a Township Education Committee, with the Township Education Officer (TEO) as the chair, the Deputy TEO as secretary and the Township Administrator as one of the members, but in actual practice, the role of this committee seems fairly limited. In fact, this committee as well as the PTAs seem to have been officially in existence for a long time - but their actual role is limited and they are presently largely dormant.

**PTAs exist in every school as mentioned in sample village tracts/wards, but education service providers also suggested enhanced community involvement as one of the avenues to improve the learning environment and the impact of education.**

In the interviews in the selected townships, both school managers as well as teachers confirmed that they have witnessed improvements over the past years, especially in terms of availability of textbooks and instructional materials. According to several of them, school furniture and even pens and pencils are in short supply. They also indicate that the state of school infrastructure is in many cases still deplorable and that classes are too big (in between 45-60 students), because the number of classrooms is limited.

The interviewees confirmed the existence of the PTAs in every school, but also suggested enhanced community involvement as one of the avenues to improve the learning environment and the impact of education. However, they seem to lack the tools and ideas on how to operationalize this engagement. As suggested above, the use of the direct school grant - especially when the amounts grow - could be a good entry point and similar experiences are available in the region (e.g. Lao PDR, Mongolia and the Philippines).

Meanwhile, the relations of the schools with the other coordinating committees (Heads of Departments meeting, TMC, TDSC and TMAC) appear fairly limited. The question can be asked whether these committees have a possible role to play in re-activating the PTAs or whether this is mainly a task of the Ministry of Education itself. School managers and teaching staff interviewed appeared to imply that the guidance and support they received from the higher echelons in the organisational structure is quite minimal. Most seemed to expect a stronger guidance in their (changing) roles following the on-going governance reforms, which relates to firstly, the governance structures in the schools but secondly, also to the way they teach particular topics.<sup>53</sup>

53. During a preconference on 28th of December 2014, a campaign manager of one of the YCDC candidates mentioned the role of teachers in 'bringing the election messages' into the homes of the citizens. But obviously, the ongoing reform will undoubtedly also have an impact on the content of certain curricula (especially the social sciences) and the approach to teaching itself. So far, these elements still appear undervalued and more explicit cross-connections between the governance reform and the education sector reform should be explored and exploited, as the education sector reform documents do mention the process of decentralization as one of the avenues to improve education.



### 3.6.3 Primary health care

As compared to primary education, the health sector, even for primary health care, is more complicated to describe because of the many vertical health programmes, the different medical supply lines, the cascading system of health provision (with referral facilities), and the presence of the private suppliers. The health care system all over Myanmar is based on Rural Health Centres (RHCs) at the ward and village tract level, being the lowest level of formal public service provision<sup>54</sup> So-called Station Hospitals exist at the township level with usually 5-10 beds - and are supported by the regional and national referral hospitals, the latter usually being found in Yangon Region (and hence offering an advantage for Yangon citizens as compared to those living elsewhere).

Overall public health care in Myanmar only caters for a very small part of the total service provision. Yangon is no exception and is perhaps a front-runner to describe the actual situation. Since the early 1960s, health indicators had stagnated at low levels, and there was little investment by the government in health services. In 2000, the WHO, in an exercise that has been abandoned since, ranked Myanmar at spot 190 out of 191, after Congo and the Republic of Central Africa, and only ahead of Sierra Leone, which was at the time in the middle of a civil war.<sup>55</sup>

The situation is likely to have improved since, but this has much to do with the availability of health care by private providers financed out-of-pocket by people in need. The WHO estimates that people bear over 80 percent of the costs of their health services.<sup>56</sup> Most have turned to a range of private sector providers for the majority of their health requirements. One study suggests that the Myanmar Government fits 12 percent of the bill for health and mentions that, in 2013, there were only 3 radiation machines available in the whole of Yangon.<sup>57</sup>



54. Although below the rural health centers (at the village level) there is a network of sub-rural health centers, staffed with midwives and midwife auxiliaries, partly on a voluntary basis.

55. WHO, *Measuring overall health system performance for 1991 countries*, Ajay Tandon et. al, GPE Discussion Paper series No 30, EIP/GPE/EQC, World Health Organization.

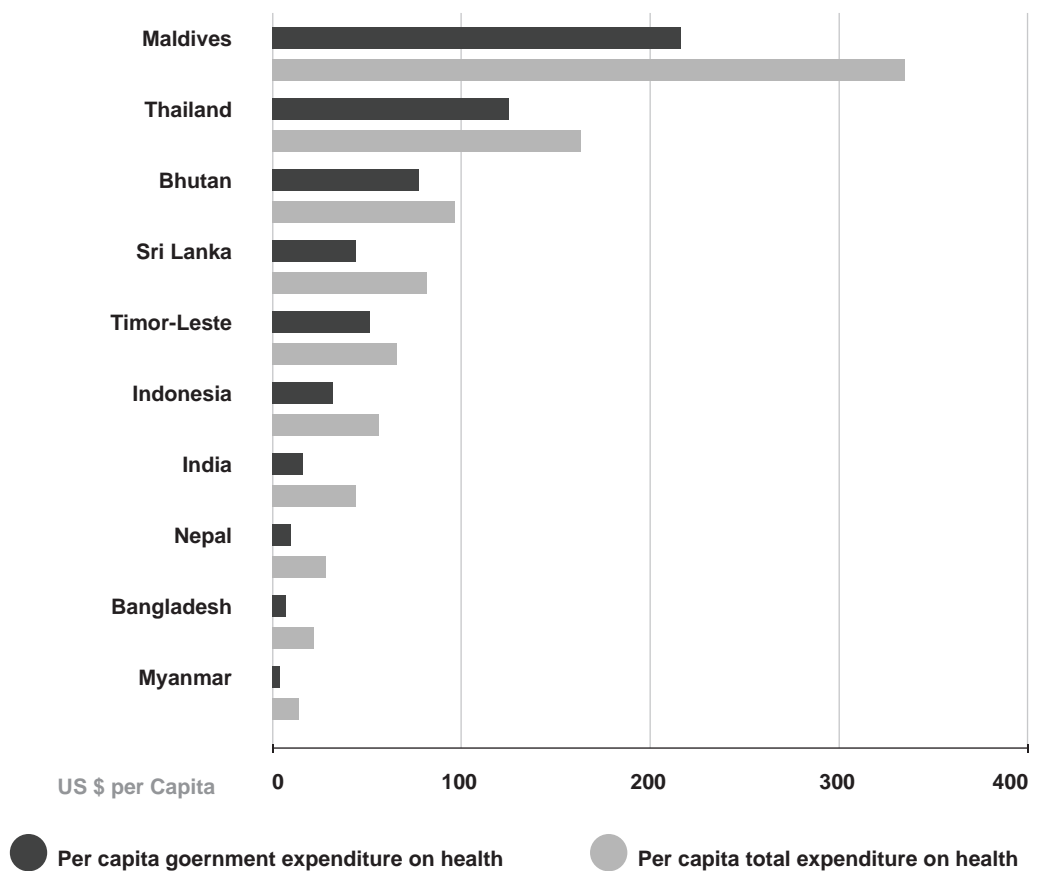
56. See: [www.impatientoptimists.org/Posts/2014/04/Managing-Primary-Health-Care-at-Scale-Myanmars-Sun-Quality-Network](http://www.impatientoptimists.org/Posts/2014/04/Managing-Primary-Health-Care-at-Scale-Myanmars-Sun-Quality-Network)

57. See: [www.forbes.com/sites/benjaminshobert/2013/08/19/healthcare-in-myanmar/](http://www.forbes.com/sites/benjaminshobert/2013/08/19/healthcare-in-myanmar/)

Another recent article using WHO data suggests that in 2009, per capita health expenditure was at a level of USD 25 per capita. Of this, 95.5 percent was paid as out of pocket expenses hence the government was contributing less than 5 percent. With both sets of data, Myanmar stood at the bottom of the list for South East Asian countries (see Figure 8).<sup>58</sup>

**Figure 8: Total per capita expenditure on health, 2009, Southeast Asia**

Source: Grundy et al, 2014 (on the basis of WHO data).



However, the same article also mentions significant improvements in selected health indicators –such as child mortality - over the past few years, especially as a result of the vertical programmes around immunization, malaria and tuberculosis. Over the past years, comparable to the public education sector, the budgets for health have substantially increased to 5.7 percent of the budget (UNDP/UNCDF, 2012) or 2.0 percent of GDP. And yet, the percentages remain low as compared to 4.5 percent for Lao PDR, 5.6 percent for Cambodia; and 9.2 percent as average for 29 OECD countries (in 2012).<sup>59</sup>

While the exact values of the figures may be up for debate, the clear trend is that in the health sector improvements are made. At the same time, Myanmar has a long way to go to catch up with regional standards. Even if the share of the health sector in the national budget triples, the needs are so ‘wide and deep’ that a very careful set of priorities for quick wins may need to be chosen. Moreover, the fact that the government is at the moment just a marginal player in the health sector, and is likely to remain in that position for the near future, must be taken into account when looking at health care from a local governance perspective.

58. J. Grundy, Peter Annear, Shakil Ahmed and Beverley-Ann Biggs, Adapting to social and political transitions - The influence of history on health policy formation in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Elseviers, Social Science and Medicine, 2014, pp179-188.

59. See: [www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/total-expenditure-on-health\\_20758480-tablet1](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/total-expenditure-on-health_20758480-tablet1)

For Yangon Region, the newly introduced system of 'free essential medicine for all' is reported to have led to an increase in the number of visitors to the government health facilities, which are likely to represent the less affluent part of the population. The above-quoted Forbes report quotes research conducted in March 2013 citing 47 percent of people in Yangon and Bago municipalities said their highest preference for improved healthcare was better quality of health facilities, personnel and medicines, while only 29 percent indicated 'costs' as their most important factor in choosing a healthcare provider.

Although there is no health sector-wide reform yet (as for education), some important changes can be noted for the past years, which include, apart from the already mentioned increase in government expenditure, the increase and medical staff and the 'free of charge supply' of basic medication. Also, the attention for preventive health has reportedly increased, but the impact of this is more difficult to appreciate, as the activities are fairly invisible while the impact may take longer to materialise.

In interviews, both health facility managers as well as health staff from the Department of Health confirmed that, in their view, the quality of the public health services has improved, especially with regards to medical supplies and the number of staff. Yet, and as much as basic supplies are said to have improved, four out of the six health facility managers interviewed do not have either a refrigerator or a steriliser, both being very essential tools for even the most basic health facility.

Comparable to the PTAs at the school level, there are health committees at the ward and tract level that are linked to the ward/village tract health centre. Like for education, the health facility managers and staff are of the opinion that this committee is mainly there for minor repairs - while their role in improving community health is understandably fairly limited. Overall, the role of these health committees seems poorly articulated - and most likely their potential is (far) less as compared to the potential of the PTAs - as for the latter the service is more straight-forward while public health is more apt to be managed by professionals.

Overall, the interaction of the Township Health/Medical Officer with the other departments seems fairly limited. As mentioned, the Township Health/Medical Officers are not part of the TDSC or even the TMC.

### *3.6.4 Water supply*

In most countries in the world, supply of safe (drinking) water is considered a responsibility for the government, even though, in most cases, the actual delivery is delegated to a government-owned corporation that charges for the use (either on the basis of a flat rate, or more sophisticated and with the proper incentives for users to bear the costs of use and benefit from any savings - by metric cube). In Myanmar and as described above, the provision of water rests with two different government departments, one functioning on a municipal basis integrated into regional budget and one on a Union budget, namely the DMA for the urban wards and the DRD for the village tracts in rural areas respectively.

As much as water supply is concerned the YCDC area seems reasonably well covered given its administrative and financial resources. However, in practice, both in downtown Yangon as well as in the more up-scale residential areas like Bahan and Kamayut Townships, residents rely for their water supply on their own boreholes - which are likely to provide water - at

**For Yangon Region, the newly introduced system of 'free essential medicine for all' is reported to have led to an increase in the number of visitors to the government health facilities, which are likely to represent the less affluent part of the population.**

**Interaction of the Township Health/Medical Officer with the other departments seems fairly limited.**

least for drinking purposes - of mediocre quality. Organisations like the Yangon Heritage Trust are now warning that this practice may also lead to a shrinking of the soil and prolapse of buildings, potentially damaging historical as well as other buildings downtown. This could lead to huge mitigation cost, which other large cities in Asia, such as Jakarta in Indonesia, have already witnessed. A recent study mentioned that YCDC provides piped water to an estimated 40-50 percent of the urban population, and that some 230,000 connections are on record, some 70 percent of which are metered.<sup>60</sup> It means that more than half of the population of Yangon organises and relies on its own water supply.<sup>61</sup>

#### **Box 5: One-third of Yangon homes off water grid**

One in three Yangon residents up to 1.7 million people - still do not have access to municipal water, according to the YCDC sanitation department. Some townships are long way from the established water pipes and get only a small amount. The department engineer said “if we give one house water supply and then add two or three houses nearby, very little water will be available for all houses”. Some noted that relying on underground water for a long time invites landslides. Realising the challenges, YCDC is developing the Lagunpyin water supply station to increase supply capacity but it will not be finished until 2018.

The Myanmar Times January 2015

Hence, as for health, for the moment the government is only a minor player in the provision of water in the YCDC area, and even though data are lacking, the same is supposedly valid for the non-YCDC townships. In Thongwa, because of the lack of non-salty aquifers, drinking water was indicated as a main problem and residents there heavily rely on rainwater catchment - which is normally privately arranged.

In many countries, and especially in developing countries, the management of smaller water schemes is often put in the hands of water user committees. In Myanmar, however, where committees exist for many other purposes, such committees do not seem have a prominent role in the water sector - maybe precisely because water is either provided by the state or individually arranged, while the space for user organisations has over the past decades been limited.

### **3.7 Major development issues from a service provider perspective**

While the township is sometimes seen as the lowest level of formal governance, for the time being the township administration is no organic administrative unit, but rather a bundle of parallel departments each delivering different services. This applies to all Regions and States in Myanmar, in a context where because of sheer necessity, people are used to take care of themselves, which is certainly the case for health and, to a lesser extent, water. Among the three services examined in more detail, primary education is the only sector where people fully rely on the government. In such a situation, the question is not only how to improve service delivery, but also how to situate future public service delivery in an environment where private initiative is already taking care of part of the needs.

60. ADB, Myanmar Urban Development and Water Sector Assessment, strategy and roadmap, August 2013.

61. The same applies for sewerage (liquid waste management) as the present sewerage system only covers an area slightly beyond the old downtown area. A sewerage plan for the whole of Yangon Region has been proposed, but for the moment most residential plots have to rely on septic tanks.

For the health sector, it is a question what needs the government (as a public sector provider) should fulfil, but also which tasks it should focus on, which also will have a bearing on the future role of the township health departments. At the same time there may be a necessity of redefining public accountability for services that are in nature a government responsibility, yet provided by the private sector - where normally accountability lines are direct and straight-forward but where considerations of equitable and fair access and the needs of the marginalized may be underserved.

In Yangon Region, it appears that the establishment of the TMACs was delayed, as compared to other Regions and States, for both the YCDC townships and the non-YCDC townships. As a result, it appears, the TDSCs enjoy more prominence in terms of coordination of development issues. However, the DMAs with their TMAC committee structure may be the most visible sign of an embryonic local government structure. This is supported by the experiences in other Regions and States and the fact that these DMAs have no parent ministry at the Union level, but are fully managed within the realms of the Region government, and that they generate their own budget based on municipal revenues.

Certainly for Yangon Region, and notably for the Yangon city area, a choice must be made whether this emerging local government only provides municipal services in urban wards or whether the same structure will gradually cover the entire township area and/or will also be involved in other sectors. For the moment, and certainly for Yangon Region, there is an overlap between the functions of the TDSC (which has no budget of its own), and for which local planning has very much remained a sterile exercise, and the TMAC.

At the same time, the examples of the PTAs clearly show the potential for different - and probably more 'down-to-earth' - practical options of citizen engagement that are not fully utilized.

The township background studies indicate the need to streamline the mechanisms for coordination and to eliminate overlap and avoid situations where 'everybody is involved in everything while nobody precisely knows who is responsible for what' - which, at least from a public sector management perspective is a very undesirable situation. Also, care should be taken that the time (s)lected people spend on participation and representation is in a reasonable proportion to the expected output. At the moment it seems too easily assumed that a situation with 'more coordination meetings' is automatically better - while in fact the issue can also be turned around: when so much coordination is needed to make things work, something must be wrong with the basic organisational structure.

Given that, with the on-going reforms, Myanmar has literally become part of the global village, there is need to pay more explicit attention to issues of efficiency and effectiveness in the way the public sector operates also at the local level.

Township level planning in the real meaning of the word i.e. planning of activities against locally available resources is still very limited - and in fact restricted to the DMAs. Funding under the PRF and the CDF could play an increasing role in enhancing the township-level planning efforts - and thereby provide more meaning to the activities of the TDSC and W/VTDSC but for that to happen across the board in Yangon Region such funds - notably the PRF - would also need to be made available for the urban areas. As such, - building on the experience made with the DMA is perhaps a very suitable way for Yangon Region to stimulate local planning and citizen engagement.

Likewise, from a completely different perspective, the education sector in general and - more short term - the role of the PTAs in particular could be expanded as a platform for more active citizen's engagement and public participation. That the demands for this exist at the community level has clearly emerged from the consultations and interviews with members of the public, as will be analysed in the next chapter which focuses on what citizens have said with regard to the services outlined above.



## 4. Quality of service delivery - a citizens' perspective

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents people's perceptions on service delivery, transparency and accountability and the changes they have noticed over the past years. It should be seen as the most important part of the report. The chapter is based on two pieces of work,<sup>62</sup> firstly, the findings of the citizens report card (CRC) exercise for which 288 persons were interviewed in three wards and three village tracts<sup>63</sup>; and secondly, reports from the community dialogues held in each of the sample village tracts and wards, largely used to validate and triangulate the outcomes of the CRCs. The profile of the persons interviewed for the CRC and their main development concerns are summarised in Box 6, Table 14 and Figure 9.

### Box 6: Profile of 288 persons interviewed for the CSC and their main development concerns

Out of the 288 respondents for the CRC exercise, half was living in rural village tracts and the other half in urban wards. The sample included 146 men and 142 women, while all age groups between 18 years of age were represented. Over 75 percent of the interviewees had at least completed primary education. Eighty-six percent of the interviewees were Bamar, but the sample also included Shan (6 percent) and Kayin (4 percent) as well as other, unspecified ethnic groups. Almost all respondents (96%) indicated that Myanmar was the language used in their household.

Over half of the respondents (55%) are still living in the tract or ward they were born, but in the urban wards this percentage was only 33 percent. This means that in the wards two-thirds of the respondents had migrated into that ward. The most important reason for the move was either family reasons (such as marriage) or economic reasons - meaning that they moved to urban areas for employment. 10 percent of those no longer living in the area they were born indicated that they moved for reasons of conflict (7%) or natural disaster (4%), and these people predominantly settled in urban wards.

As much as people moved to urban areas for work, even for the urban wards almost half of the respondents (48%) indicated that they are self-employed (33 percent of the respondents overall). Amongst the urban respondents, 29 percent had formal employment, either in the public or private sector, as compared to only 3 percent for the rural respondents.

For almost half of the rural respondents (48%), farming was indicated as their main source of income, but over 30 percent of the rural respondents indicated that they earned their income as casual labourer (as compared to 9 percent in the wards). This seems to suggest that income security is overall much better in the urban areas.

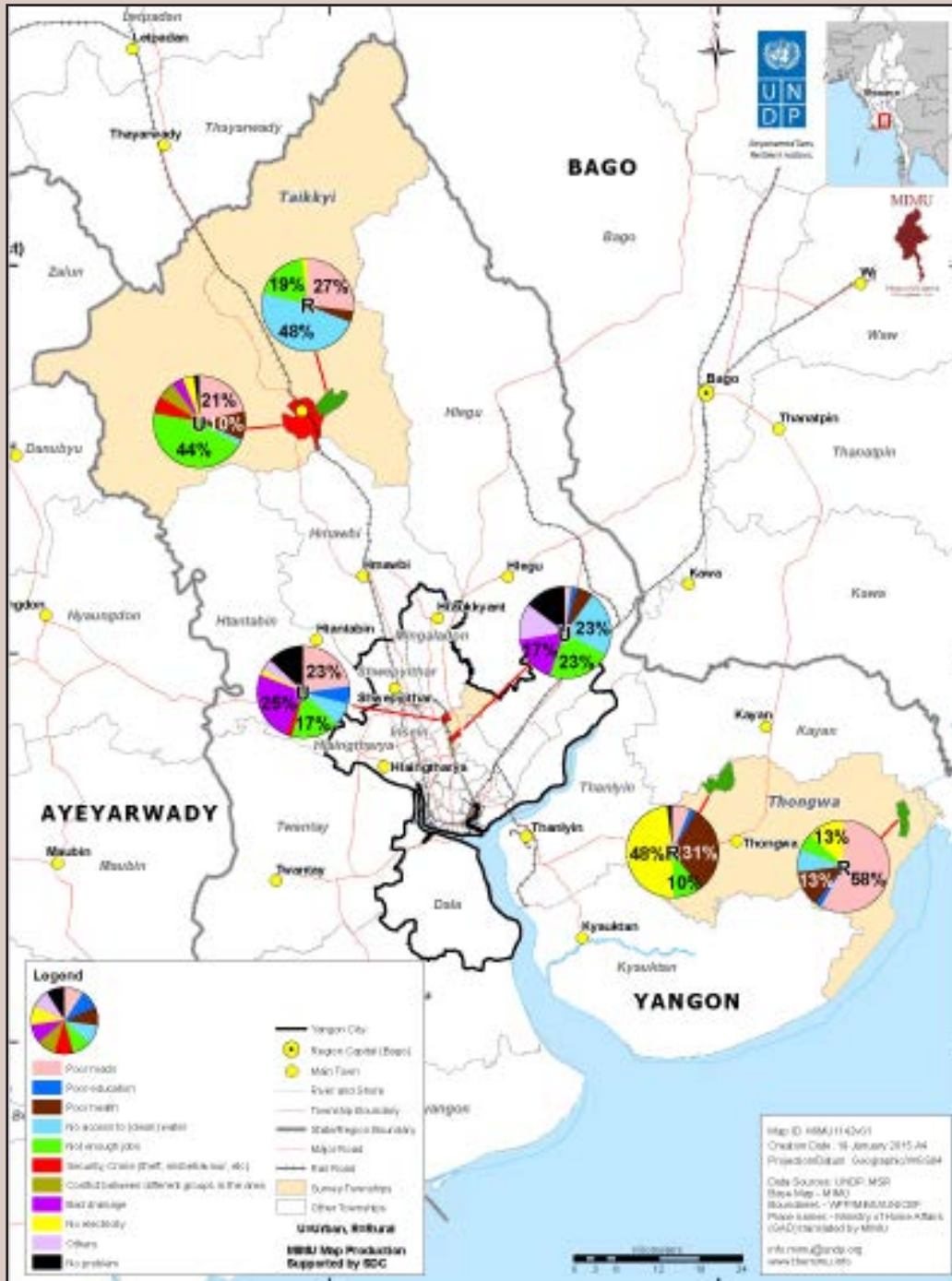
Almost one-third (28%) of the urban respondents and a remarkable 25 percent of the female respondents indicated limited or non-availability of jobs as their main concern. For one-third of the rural respondents (31%) poor roads were the major development issue for their

62. These two pieces of work (Citizen Report Card and Community Dialogue) were carried out by Myanmar Survey Research. See Annex 1 for a more detailed description of the methodology and how the different strands leading to this report fit together. Annex 2 of this report has a more detailed presentation of all the findings of the CRC exercise of which in this chapter only selective pieces are used required to 'tell the story'.

63. Being two village tracts in Thongwa (Aung Pan Sein and Shan Su), one village tract and one ward in Taikkyi (Bu Tar Ward and Lein Maw Chan respectively) and two wards in North Okkalapa (Wai Bar Gi and Nga wards).



village tract. Very few respondents (2% of total) reported education as a main problem. A same small proportion (2% of total) mentioned access to clean drinking water as an issue (which is remarkable given the identified water problem in Thongwa township), but overall, some 15 percent of the respondents reported access to water as a problem, while 11 percent of the respondents identified 'health' as a major issue, whereby in both cases these issues were more pressing for the rural respondents; 16 percent and 19 percent of the rural respondents saw health and water as the major development issue (see the map below and Figure 9).

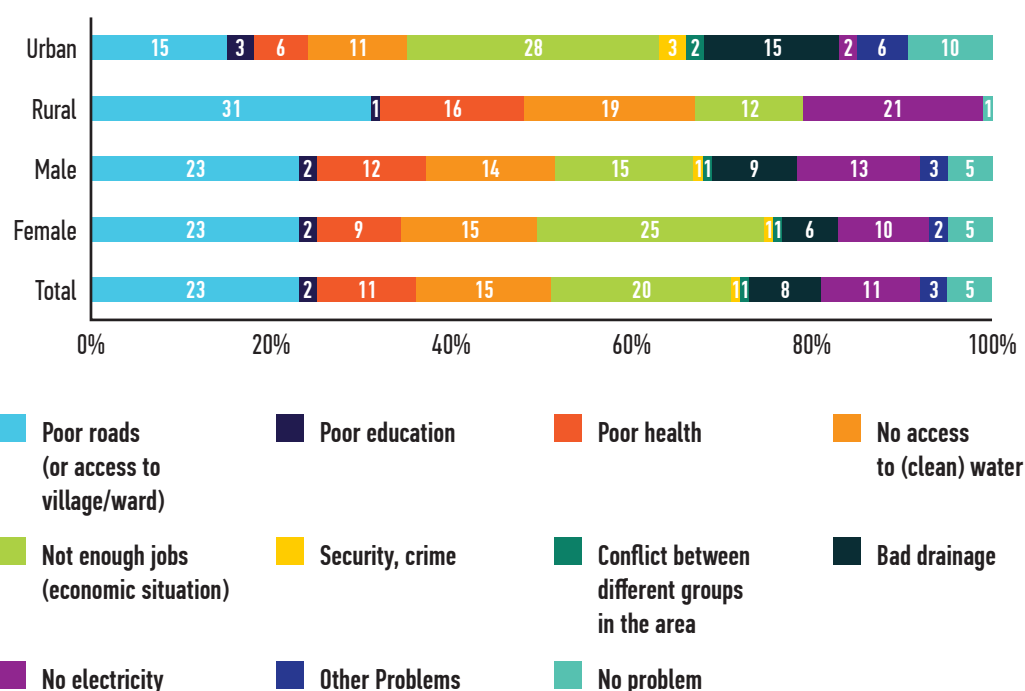


The map seems to suggest that, as in other States and Regions studied, for the urban respondents economic issues have the highest priority ('jobs') while for the rural respondents typical public service delivery issues (roads, water, health) are the most pressing needs. A remarkable 10 percent of the urban respondents indicated that they could not mention any problem at all. Apart from the issue of jobs, higher ranked by the female respondents, there is no clear gender divide in the identified main problems.

Table 14: Data on Profile of the CRC respondents

		PROFILE OF INTERVIEWEES							
		Taikkyi		Thongwa		North Okkalapa		Total	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Urban/Rural	Urban	48	50%	0	-	96	100%	144	50%
	Rural	48	50%	96	100%	0	-	144	50%
	Total	96	100%	96	100%	96	100%	288	100%
Gender	Male	50	52%	48	50%	48	50%	146	51%
	Female	46	48%	48	50%	48	50%	142	49%
	Total	96	100%	96	100%	96	100%	288	100%
Age	18-30	16	17%	13	14%	11	11%	40	
	31-40	30	31%	29	30%	19	20%	78	
	41-50	21	22%	20	21%	17	18%	58	
	51-60	24	25%	17	18%	25	26%	66	
	61-70	4	4%	12	13%	18	19%	34	
	Above 70	1	1%	5	5%	6	6%	12	
	Total	96	100%	96	100%	96	100%	288	100%
Education	No education/not finished Grade 5	17	18%	19	20%	2	2%	38	13%
	Primary school (finished grade 5)	34	35%	40	42%	21	22%	95	33%
	Middle school (finished grade 9)	22	23%	16	17%	29	30%	67	23%
	High school (finished grade 11)	5	5%	4	4%	22	23%	31	11%
	Vocational training	1	1%	0	-	2	2%	3	1%
	Graduate training	6	6%	4	4%	20	21%	30	10%
	Literacy group	11	11%	13	14%	0	0%	24	8%
	Total	96	100%	96	100%	96	100%	288	100%
Ethnicity/race	Bamar	68	71%	94	98%	86	90%	248	86%
	Kayin	4	4%	0	-	8	8%	12	4%
	Shan	16	17%	0	-	1	1%	17	6%
	Other	8	8%	2	2%	1	1%	11	4%
	Total	96	100%	96	100%	96	100%	288	100%

Figure 9: Main development issues as identified by respondents



## 4.2 Views on responsibility of the township and sub-township administration

Most respondents hold either the Ward or Village Tract Administrator and the Region/Union government responsible for addressing the problem they identified as the most pressing, whereby rural people have a bias to the VTA, while the urban respondents look slightly more to the higher levels of government (Region/Union). Only 12 percent of the respondents consider the Township Administration accountable for solving their problem, with similar figures for urban and rural areas. This seems to confirm the impression ventilated in the previous chapters that in the predominately urban Yangon Region the office of the GAD is less prominent and visible (see Figure 10).

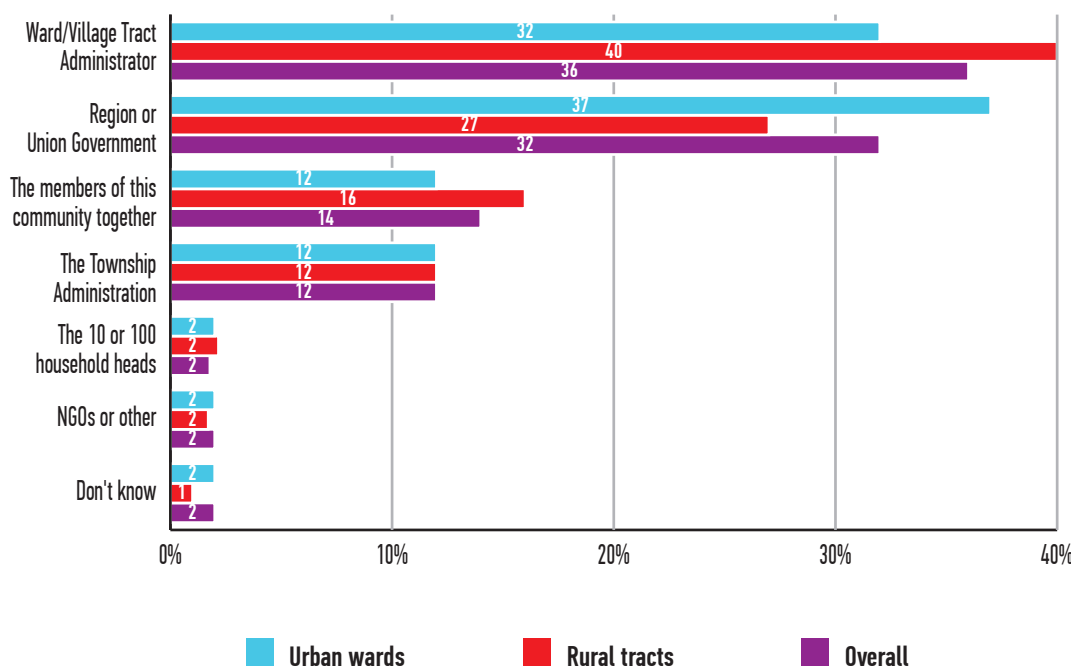


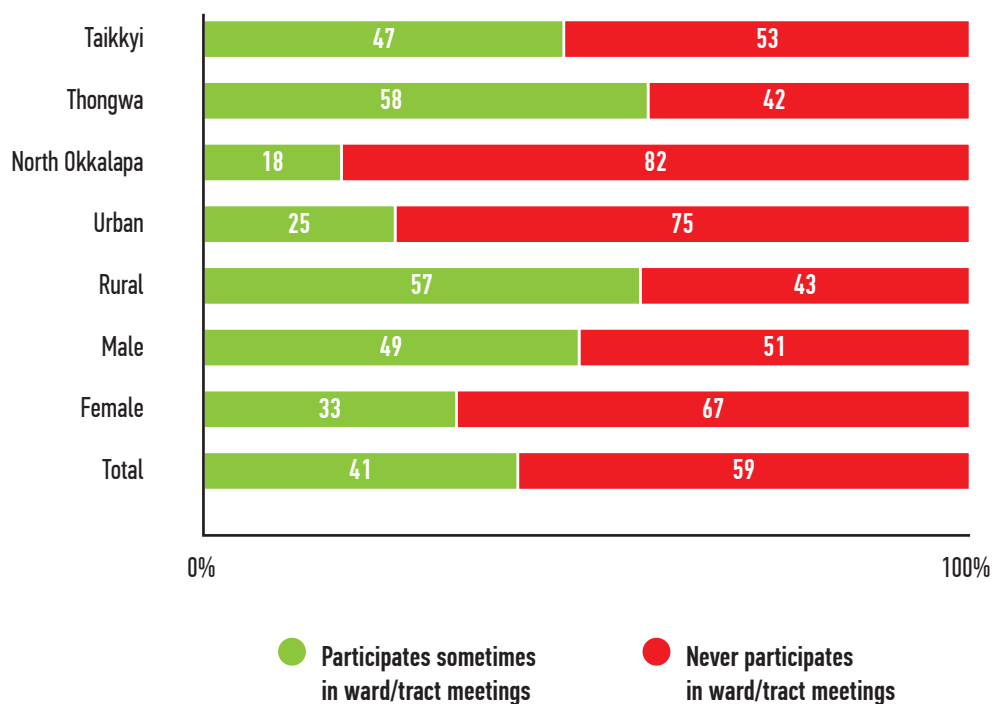
Figure 10: Party held responsible for addressing the development problems

When specifically asked, almost 60 percent for the respondents think that the township administration was aware of their problems, whereby the rural respondents had more trust in their administrators than the urban respondents: 64 percent of the rural respondents think the township administration is aware of their priority problem as compared to 52 percent for the urban respondents. Consistent with this, the majority of the urban respondents (81 percent) thinks that the township is doing nothing to address their problem (as compared to 47 percent of the rural respondents). However, for these more upbeat rural respondents a quarter thinks that ‘the administration is still discussing the problem’; Hence, even for them ‘implementation is yet to come’.

## 4.3 Citizen participation and representation

The majority of the respondents (58%) never attend a ward/tract community meeting, but attendance levels are definitely higher in rural areas as compared to urban areas. Also, participation amongst men is much higher as compared to women (49 percent of the male respondents against 33 percent of the female respondents said that they sometimes attend community meetings) (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Respondents participating in ward/tract meetings



Those that never attended a community meeting gave as main reason that they are either not aware of the meeting (40%) or that they had no time at the time the meetings are held. Only very few respondents (3%) do not attend because they think their voice will not be listened to anyway or that the topics discussed are not important. Hence, despite low participation rates, respondents do not seem to dispute the relevance of the meetings.

When asked whether they were ever invited to a meeting to discuss the problems in the ward/tract, and/or to discuss possible development projects for the ward/tract, the great majority of the respondents (82%) answered negatively (even as many as 88 percent for the urban areas as compared to 75 percent for the rural areas).

Hardly any respondent was aware of any township level committee in which citizens are represented, with 97 percent of both urban and rural respondents saying they were not aware of any such committee. Of the six persons (out of 288) who were aware of such township committees (half urban, half rural), all six knew about the TDSC, while only three (including two of the three urban respondents) knew about the TMAC. Given that the survey was conducted in November 2014, while campaigning for the YCDC/TMACs had already started, this low level of awareness can be considered quite surprising.

Although the level of familiarity was much higher of committees at the community level (24%), still a majority of respondents was also not aware of the Ward and Village Tract Development Support Committees. Those who were aware (33 percent of the rural and 15 percent of the urban respondents respectively) also knew one or more of the committee members, which suggests that those aware are familiar because they are acquaintance of someone represented in the committee - hence knowledge of the committees is still 'personalised' rather than institutionalised. It also seems that the process of consultation needs to be improved: just 30% of respondents (those who knew about the existence of the committees) were in fact consulted. Rural-urban divide shows: rural respondents seem to be far more consulted (40%) than their urban counterparts (9%). For participation in the public debate it is required

that people feel safe enough to say what they think about government performance. And although almost half of the respondents (48 percent) indicated they ‘feel safe to say whatever they want’, another large portion (without any discernible gender difference, yet more prominent in the urban areas), is either very careful in what they say (26 percent) or do not feel free to express any critical opinion (18 percent). Overall, six percent of the respondents (and 10 percent of the rural respondents) felt uncomfortable to even answer the question (see Figure 12). Nevertheless, compared with other States and Regions, the level of comfort with free expression was much higher in the selected townships of Yangon Region.

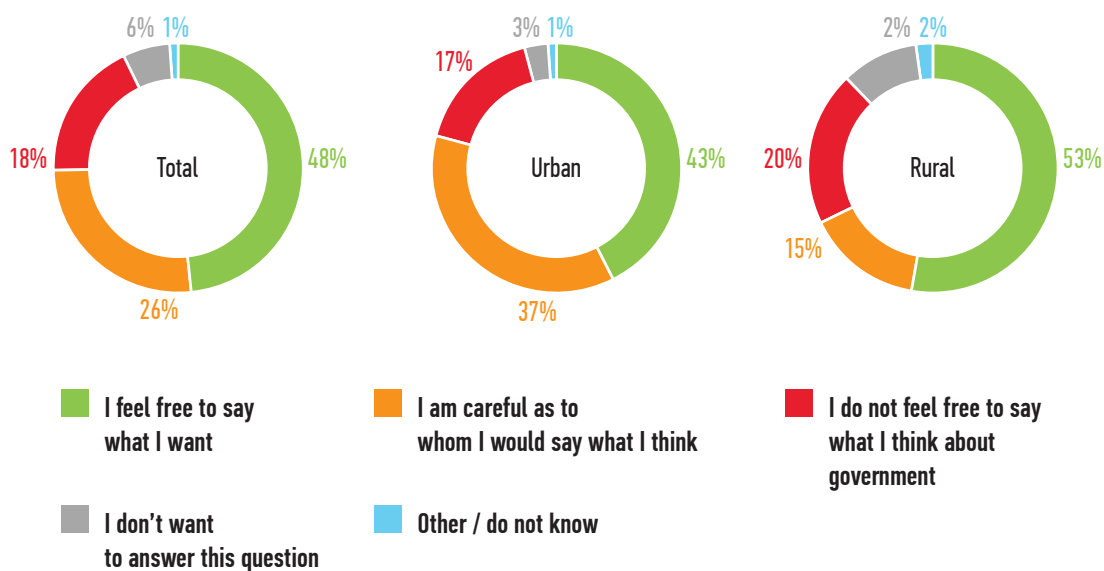


Figure 12: Perception of freedom of expression regarding to government performance

## 4.4 Views on the quality of service delivery

### 4.4.1 Overall

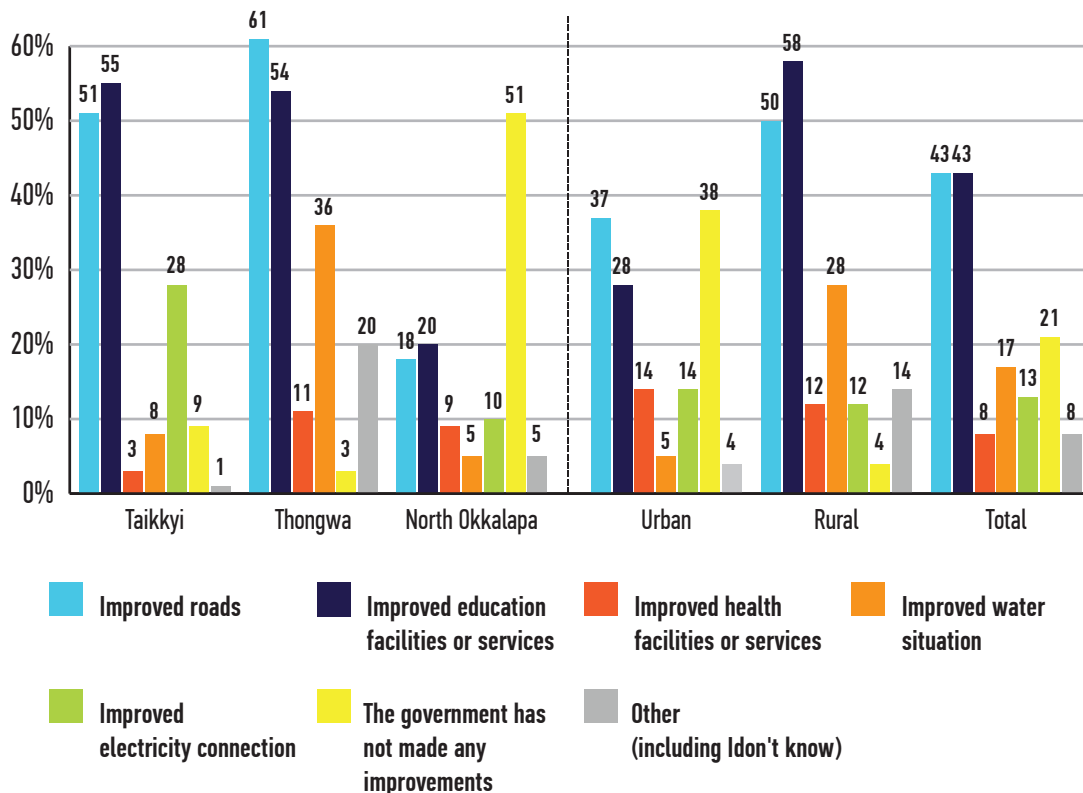
Almost half (43%) of the respondents were of the opinion that there had been improvements with regards to road infrastructure over the past few years, while another 43 percent of the respondents reported improvements in the education sector. At the same time, one fifth of the respondents, especially in the urban areas (21 percent overall and 38 percent in the urban wards as compared to 4 percent in the rural areas), are of the opinion that the government has not done anything to resolve development bottlenecks (see Figure 13).

The reaction of ‘government hasn’t done anything’ was particularly prevalent in the urban wards and as such in the township of North Okkalapa - while the rural wards were much more appreciative of what government had done. This may also well be a reflection of the fact that government has focussed attention on the rural areas, where the needs obviously are much bigger and where the most noticeable changes have taken place.

Other information confirms the same pattern: Citizens clearly noticed (and are appreciative) of improvements with regards to road infrastructure and (primary) education. The same holds true, but at a much lower level of intensity, for the water sector, electrification and health. People in the urban wards found it more difficult to point at any concrete projects they had seen, beyond road works.

**43% of the respondents perceived improvements in road infrastructure and another 43% reported improvements in the education sector over the past few years.**

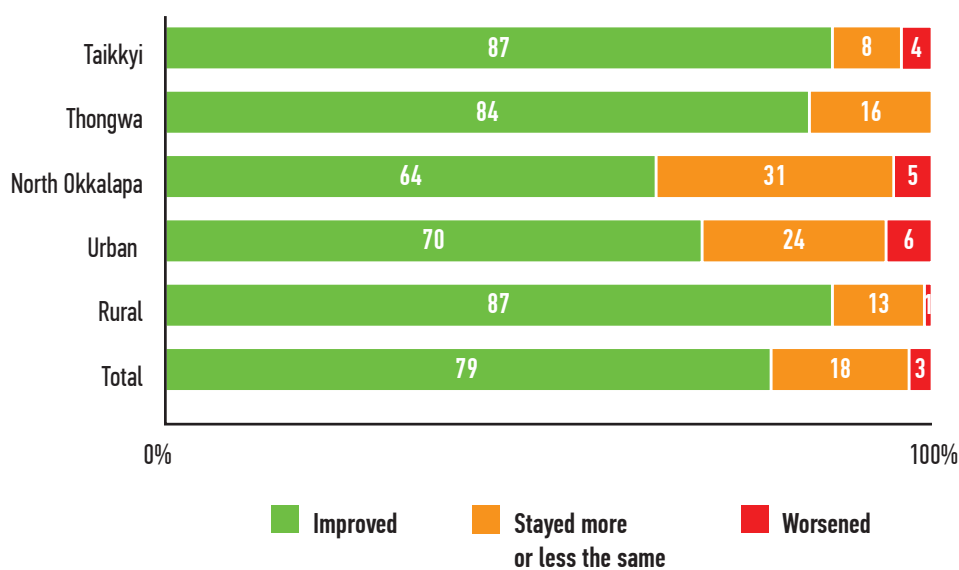
Figure 13: Peoples' perception of what government has done over the past few years



#### 4.4.2 Education

Across the board, in all three townships, and for urban and rural areas alike (while there was no discernible gender differentiation), respondents overwhelmingly (79%) indicated that the quality of primary education has improved over the past few years (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Peoples' perception on the trends in the quality of primary education





The respondents' positive rating on the improvements in education are based on (a) improved and expanded infrastructure (85 percent of the respondents both in urban and rural areas); (b) that the quality of the teaching has improved (35 percent with a higher score in rural areas); and (c) the fact that primary education is now offered 'free' (28 percent overall, but with a score of 43 percent for the urban respondents). Other factors mentioned, although with lower frequency, are that there are more teachers (21%) that more and better teaching materials are available (18%) and that the attitude of the teachers has changed (15%). Overall, in particular the improvements of school infrastructure seemed to have pleased the respondents (see Figure 15).

79% indicated that the quality of primary education has improved over the past few years mainly because of expanded infrastructure, quality improvements in teaching and availability of free primary education.

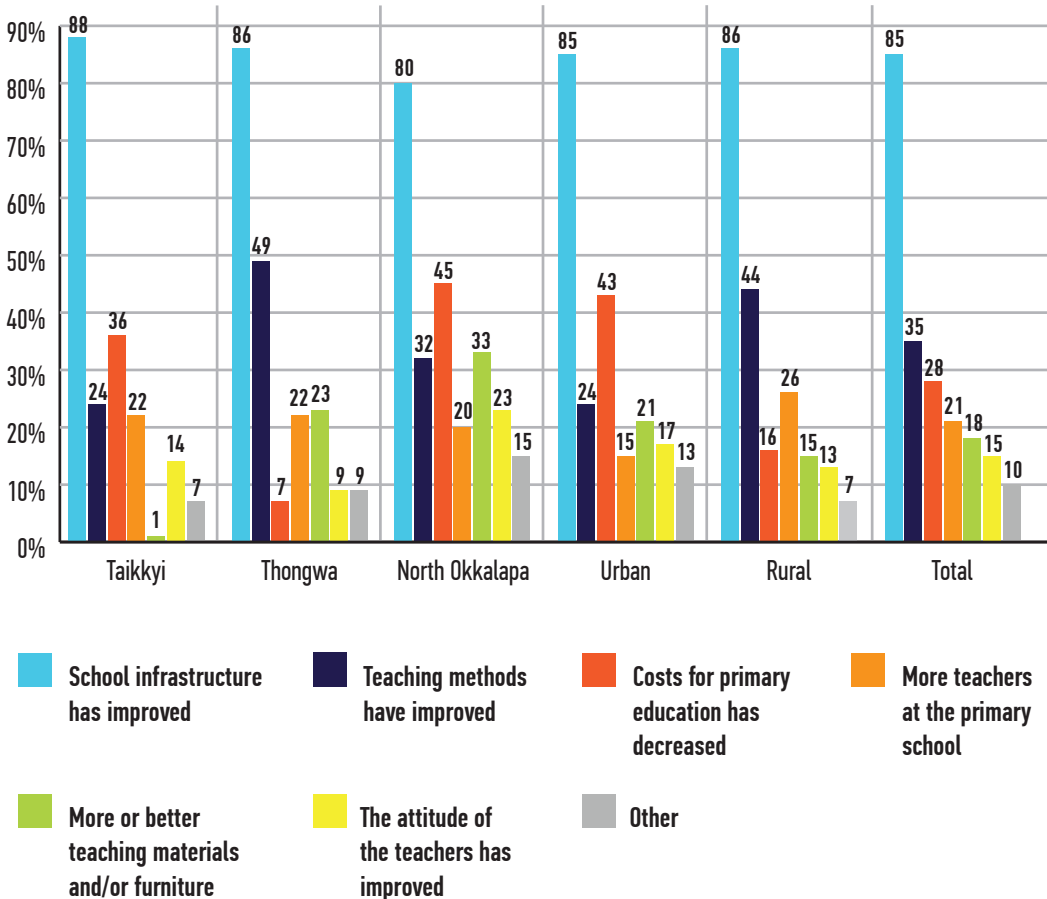


Figure 15: Reasons why in people's perception the quality of education has improved

What was striking is that in Thongwa Township, which for one reason or another appears to have a good ‘spirit’ that is also referred to in other part of this report, the improvements in the teaching methods are appreciated while the reduction of the cost of education is considered less important. And it may be possible to attribute such a ‘spirit’ to particular individuals, yet it seems evident that some townships -for one reason or another- simply do have a better ‘spin’ around them.

When asked about their overall rating on the quality of primary education, overall over 80 percent of the respondents said they were satisfied, whereby the urban respondents are marginally less satisfied. Although one particular school can cause this result, it is consistent with the trend seen throughout this chapter that the urban audience is either more demanding and more critical or indicating that service standards in the urban areas are indeed lower than in the rural areas. It is interesting to note that three times as many female respondents as male ones indicated not to be satisfied, although even this category (of unsatisfied) respondents only from a small minority of the total group respondents (see Figures 16 and 17)

Figure 16: Satisfaction with the quality of primary education in the selected townships

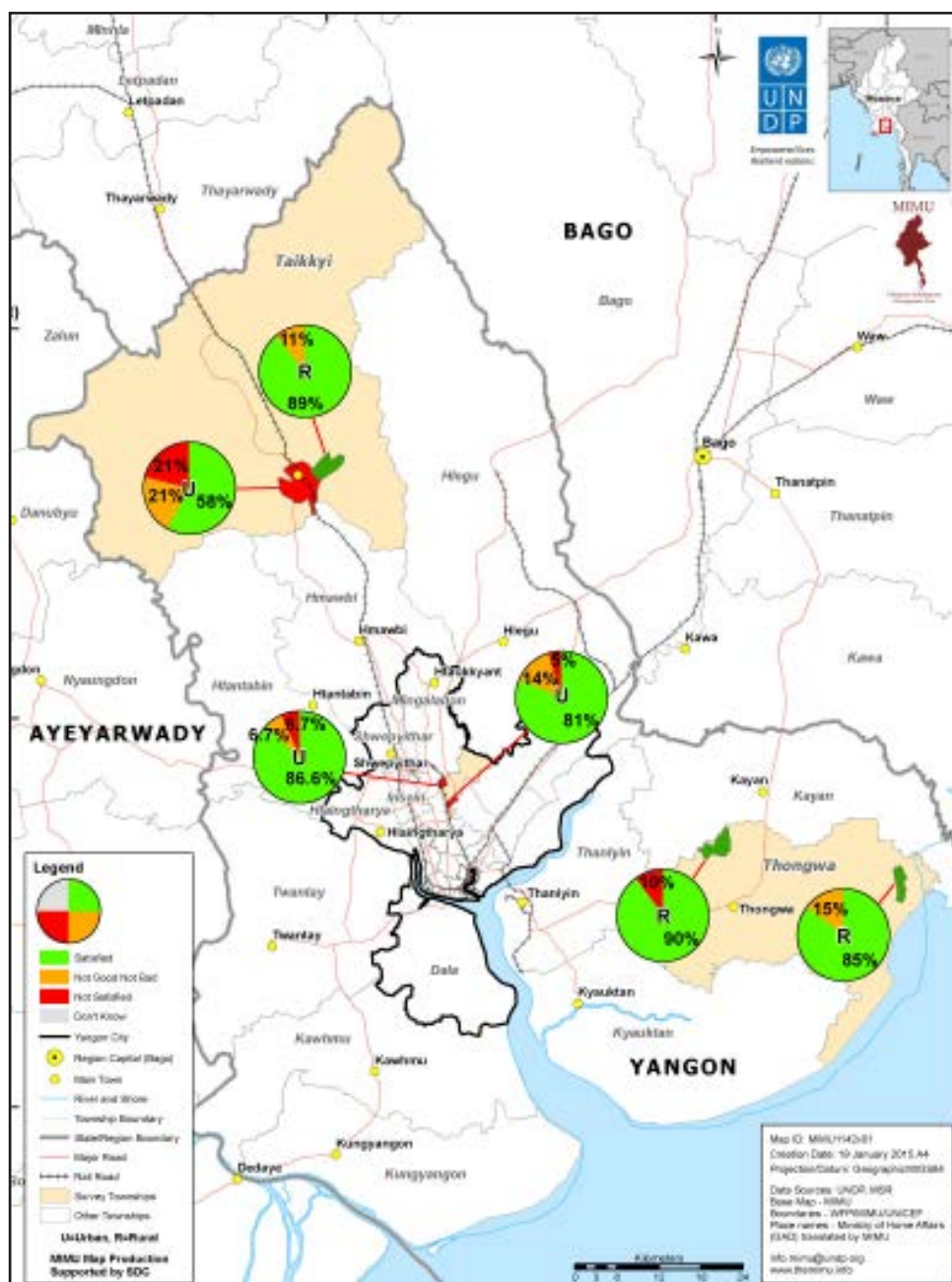






Figure 17: Overall rating on the quality of education

### 4.4.3 Health

Despite the fact that several respondents did not see any government investments in the health sector, when asked specifically, a slight majority (57%) noted that the health services had improved. It remains unspecified whether this relates to government health services or health services in general; in the previous chapter it was noted that only a fraction of the health services is provided by government (see Figure 18).

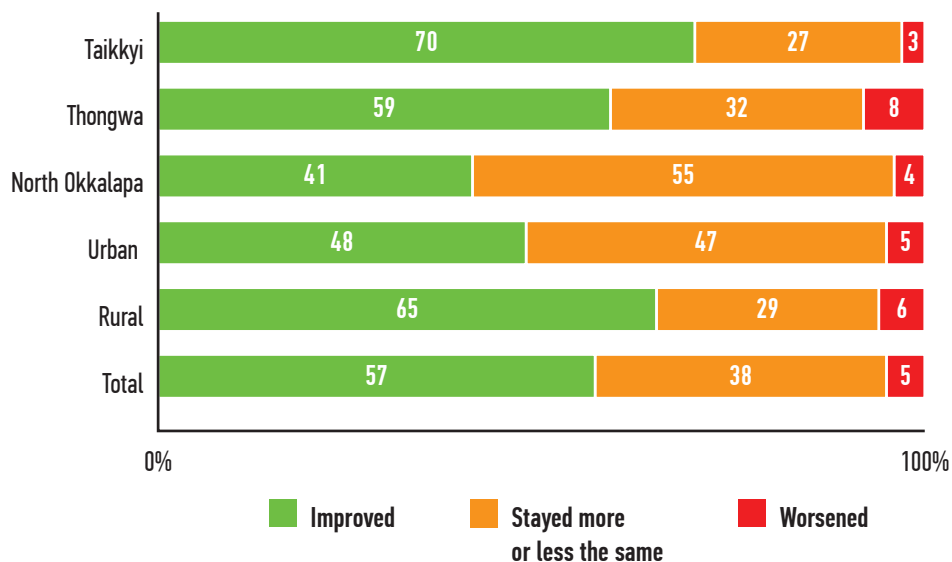
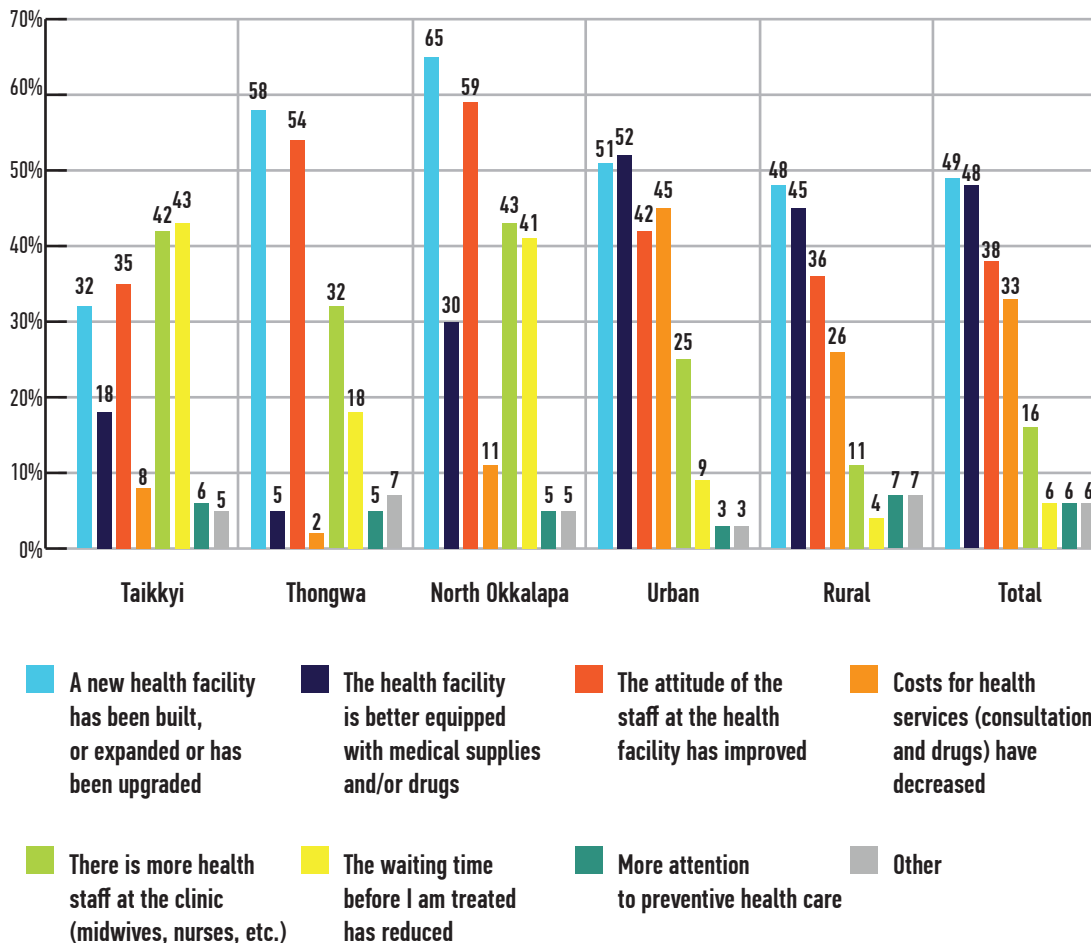


Figure 18: Peoples' perception on the trends in the quality of health care

As examples to substantiate the improvements the respondents mentioned (a) new or improved health infrastructure; (b) more equipment and better availability of medical supplies and (c) improved attitude of the staff (see Figure 19). The urban respondents also appreciated the fact that the costs had decreased and that more staff is available. Hence the reform changes as described at the end of the previous chapter have not gone unnoticed. Especially the policy of free public health care seems to have provided the urban people with an alternative to the private providers. Yet when asked where they would take a sick relative, 94 percent of the urban respondents mentioned the private clinic (while 43 percent

of the rural respondents indicated that they would take the patient to a public provider, notably the sub-rural health centre (81 percent of the rural respondents). Hence, as much as urban respondents know about the free health care, they do not always seem to benefit personally (as they use the private clinics), which may explain the relative low rating for overall improvements in the health sector as noted above.

Figure 19: Reasons why in people's perception the quality of health care has improved



When asked why they go to a private clinic (instead of a public facility) the majority answered 'because we have always done so' (65 percent). Other reasons are because staff is better qualified (41%), because its opening hours are longer (29%) and because the queues are shorter (25%). Thus, the public health sector may need to look into their quality of services and possibly cater for a particular (e.g. the poorer sections of the society) niche.

From the group of rural respondents, who generally use the public facilities (likely because there are no alternatives nearby), some 59 percent indicated that they always paid for medicines, while 42 percent indicated they paid sometimes. In the majority of cases when they pay (69%) they are not told why they have to pay. In case they are told, the answer is that some medicines are for free whilst others are not - which is correct but as said not for all medicines - whilst a large group of respondents indicated they always had to pay which seems in contradiction with the official policy.

In general, when asked about their overall score regarding the quality of health services, the approval rating is below the one for education, but still at least half of the respondents are satisfied with the health services. As opposed to most other data, for the overall health rating, the respondents for North Okkalapa are more satisfied as compared to the respondents for the two rural (out of the city area) townships (see Figures 20 and 21).

Approval rating is below the one for education, but still at least half of the respondents are satisfied with the health services.

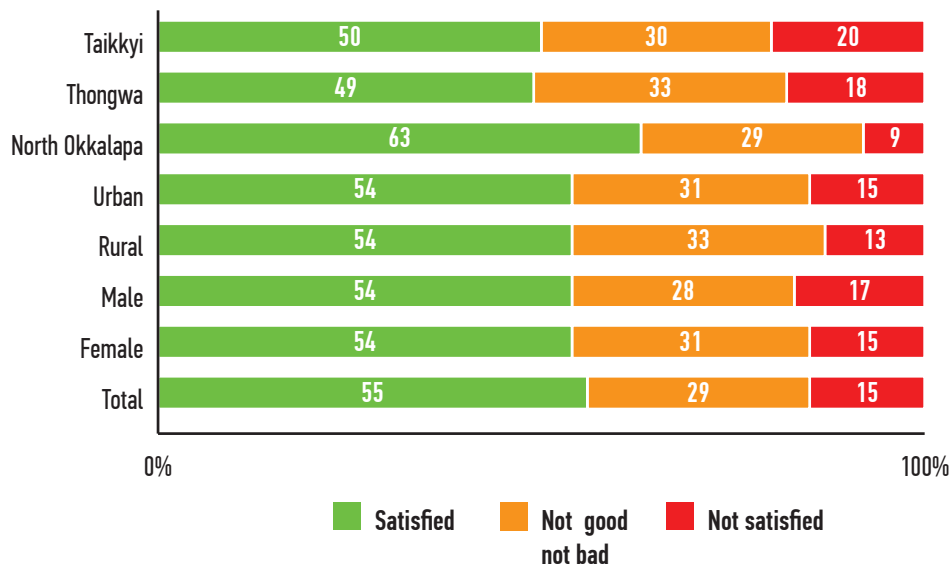
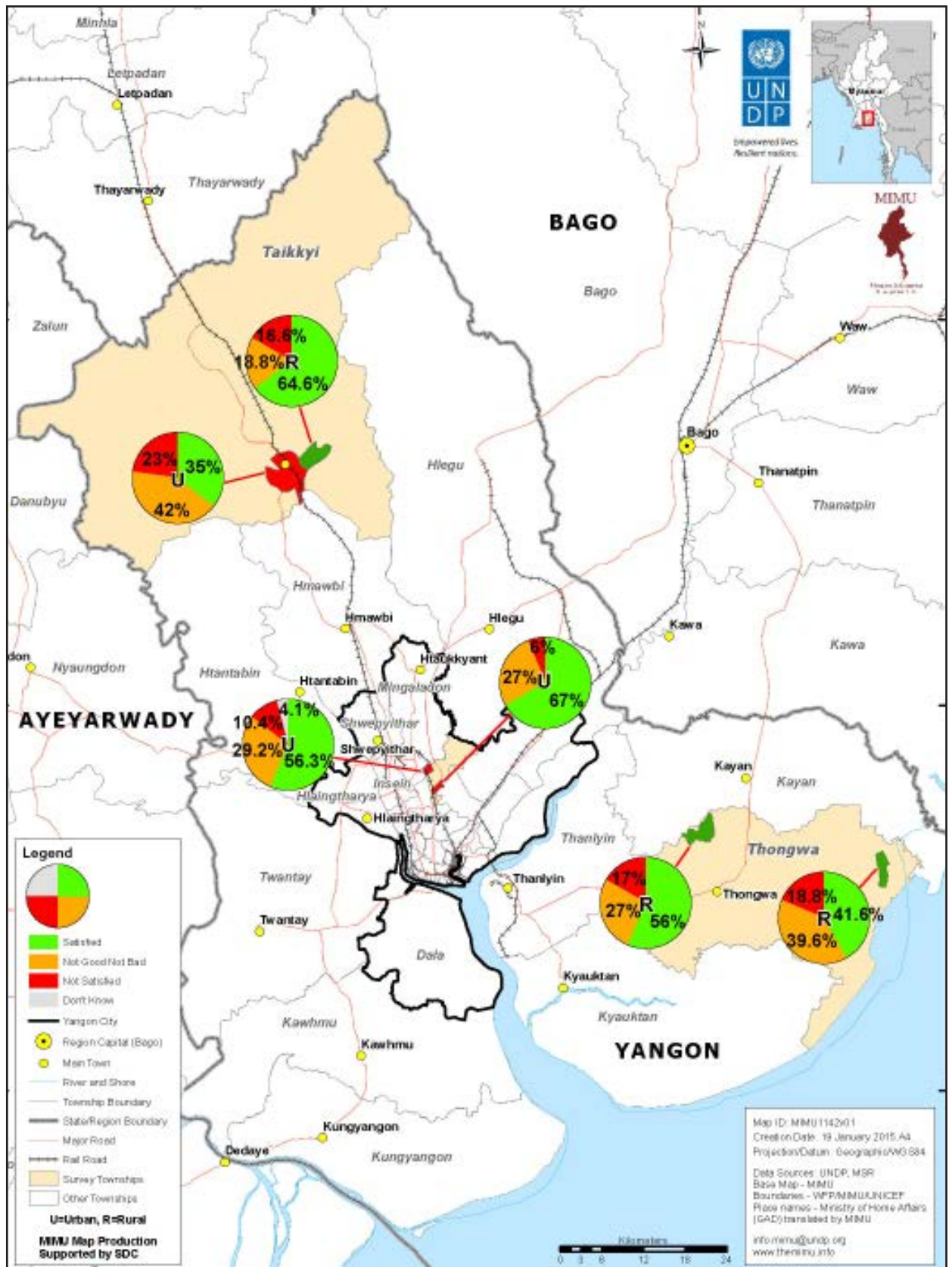


Figure 20: Overall rating on the quality of health



Figure 21: Satisfaction with the quality of primary education in the selected townships



#### 4.4.4 Water Supply

Whereas for education and - albeit to a lesser extent - health positive changes are noted by the respondents, for water supply, the dominating position is that ‘things have not changed’; over 64 percent of the respondents (74 percent for urban) indicate that over the past years the situation has remained as it was. More female respondents (as compared to their male counterparts) indicated that the situation had worsened (see Figure 22).

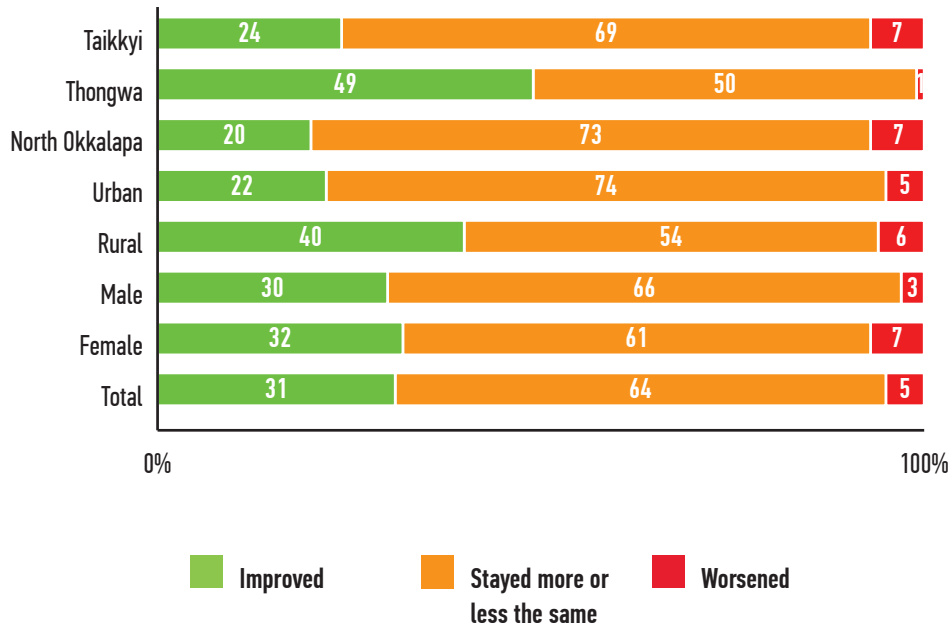


Figure 22: Peoples' perception on the trends in the quality of water supply

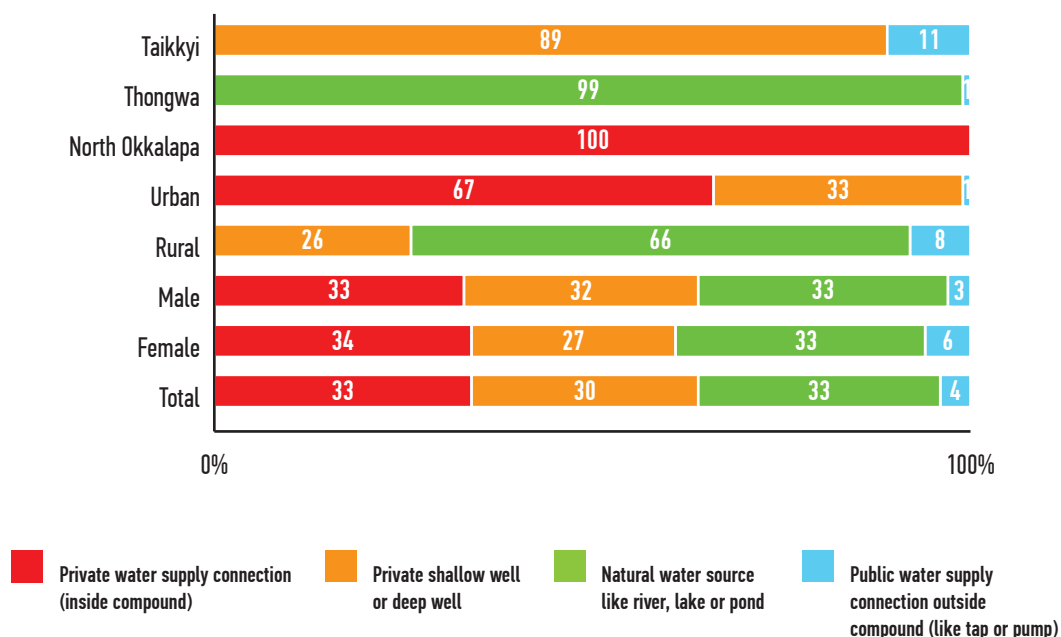
Does this overall sentiment that there were no changes mean that the situation was already satisfactory? Not necessarily. The answers have to be interpreted carefully and must be compared against the water supply sources people use. For the rural respondents, two-thirds (66%) use an open water source (river, lake or pond) for their water supply, while another 26 percent uses a (private) shallow- or deep-well; only eight percent of the rural respondents use a public water point for their water supply. Amongst the urban respondents, one third relies on a (private) borehole, while the other two-thirds have a private (piped) water connection to their compound. Only one urban respondent said to be using a public water point (see Figure 23).

Consequently, two thirds of the urban respondents indicate to pay for water (the piped connections), while for the rural respondents, only six percent pay. Among those using open sources and private wells 94 percent do not pay for their water (investment and maintenance costs for the wells apart; but those costs seem to be ignored or minimal in the long run).

As much as 2/3 of the rural people use open water sources for their (drinking) water supply, whereby 98 percent of the rural people considers the quality to be good or acceptable. Such a high percentage of people considering the quality to be good or acceptable is understandable in Taikkyi where wells are the main source of water supply, but more surprising for Thongwa where all respondents use open water sources.

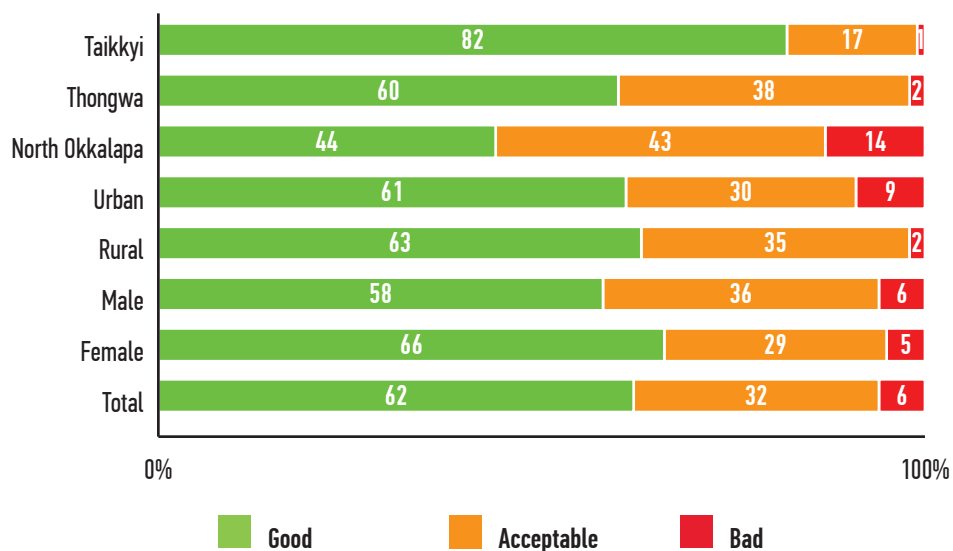
**Two-thirds of the urban respondents indicate to pay for water (the piped connections), while for the rural respondents, only six percent pay.**

Figure 23: Types of water sources used



In the urban areas over 90 percent consider the water source they use to provide good (or at least acceptable) quality water, even though 15 percent of the respondents had indicated water supply to be problematic (see Figure 24). The CRC water-related data did not even reveal any of the water problems in Thongwa as mentioned in the previous chapter. Either the CRC was coincidentally implemented in tracts with no water problem, or, which is also possible, the officials have a different perception on development needs as compared to the population. But as far as the respondents in the CRC are concerned, water does not seem a major development issue, although data for rural areas are somehow contradictory). But for the urban areas where the DMA is responsible, it seems that it will not be easy ‘to score points’ in the eyes of the citizens (as compared to education). As the questionnaire was prepared for nation-wide use and was not specifically adjusted for highly urbanised areas, other municipal services such as waste management, management of public spaces, cleanliness of the streets, etc. were not specifically included at this time. In order to obtain a deeper understanding of municipal governance issues, it would be interesting to investigate people’s perceptions on those issues as well in order to better know the expectations from urban managers, including the YCDC.

Figure 24: Respondents’ perception on the quality of their drinking water



## 4.5 Transparency, accountability and responsiveness

In order for citizens to hold government to account it is necessary that people know ‘who is responsible for what’ - and people should be familiar (at least know by name) the persons that represent them or that occupy crucial positions.

**Name awareness:** In the rural areas, almost all people know their VTA, who, with 98 percent, is even better known by name than the President (known by name by 90 percent of the respondents). In the urban areas, and consistent with findings above, the WA is far less well known - only 58 percent of the urban respondents could mention the name. Yet, this still stands way above of the ‘name awareness’ for other elected representatives, which was around 14 percent for the Chief Minister, 7 percent overall for the region *Hluttaw* member and below 5 percent for the members of the Union *Hluttaw*, whereby, rural respondents were more generally familiar with their Union and Region *Hluttaw* members as compared to the urban respondents.<sup>64</sup> Also the township administrator is not well known; only 3-4 percent of the respondents could mention his name (see Figure 25).

Overall, this seems to show that the intermediate governance level (in between of the Region and ward/tract is not well known to people yet - which is not surprising given the fact that over the past decades the township administration played a very minor role in the lives of people - as service delivery was virtually non-existent and if available delivered at the ward/tract level.

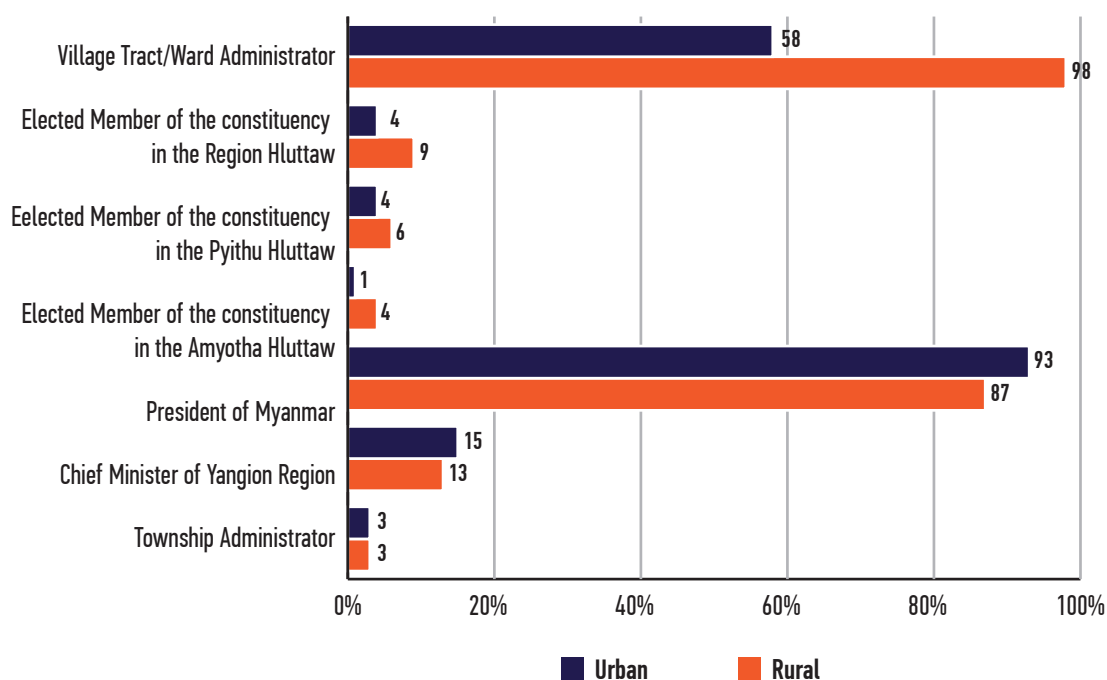


Figure 25: Respondents that know the name of representatives and key officials

64. The questionnaire did not ask about the mayor of Yangon or the township EO of the DMA.

44% people expect WA/VTA to represent them at the township level with their development issues.

**Perceived roles of the WA/VTA:** Mediation and conflicts between villagers and ensuring peace and security in the ward/tract is still seen by most respondents as the main task of the WA/VTA, but 44 percent (41% urban and 48% rural) see a role for them to represent them at the township level to bring up their development issues. Notably, around one-third of the respondents - with a slightly higher percentage in rural areas as compared to urban areas - noted that the Administrator has a role in 'ensuring people's participation in community labour', which, while still included in the applicable legislation, is an 'old role' inherited from the colonial era (associated with forced labour) that may be seen a little at odds with their new role of promoting people's participation.

**Responsiveness:** Obviously, the purpose of participation and accountability is that the quality of the services improves and that government officials take into account the needs and suggestions from the citizens. For education, nearly 80 percent of the respondents say that school managers 'always' take complaints by parents seriously. For water the situation is slightly different: a number of urban respondents indicated to have complained to the DMA about the attitude of the water supply staff (many respondents indicated they 'have to pay' the officials) but five out of 6 who had complained indicated that their problems were not addressed.

## 4.6 Equity, transparency and 'corruption'

Payment for drugs and payment for extra tuition after school was raised as an issue.

An important aspect of the reform efforts, for both education and health, is that services provided by the state are now for free. This is obviously part of the idea that as public goods they should be available and accessible to all, in an equitable manner, irrespective of income levels and wealth status.

Above, it was already discussed that despite a selected range of drugs now being available for free, many respondents answer that they still always had to pay for them.

For education, 86 percent of all respondents say that education is indeed free of charge (78 for urban and 95 for rural). And yet, teachers in a substantial number of schools (75 percent for urban areas, as compared to only 9 percent in rural areas), provide after school tuition in exchange for money or gifts. Overwhelmingly, respondents are not happy with this practice and agree with the statement that 'it is not good that teachers provide extra tuition after school time to top-up their income; government should pay them a decent salary so that they can do a decent job during school hours'.

## 4.7 Information sharing

People see these actors as sources of information - 10/100 Household heads (84%), WA/VTA (46%), elders (40%).

Apart from knowing the persons and knowing 'who is responsible for what', another precondition for active citizen engagement (either directly or indirectly) is having access to information: an active citizenry requires an informed citizenry.

For local level information sharing, the 10/100 household leaders are still an important source of information. Eighty-four percent of the respondents that attended ward/tract meetings were informed about these meetings by the 10/100 HH leaders; other important sources of information are 'other people in the ward/tract (56%), the WA/VTA (46%) and elders (40%); as indicated by the percentages, many respondents got the information through different sources.



Given that over 40 percent of the respondents at least sometimes attend a ward/tract meeting as stated earlier, and given that many of those who attended got the information through different channels, it appears that information about the meetings is widely available.

For more general information e.g. regarding new laws and directives, mass media channels - like TV, radio and newspapers play the most important role, next to the WA/VTA and the elders, who are also for this still an important channel for passing on information, especially in the rural areas. The level at which media is used as a source of information is far above that measured in most other States and Regions (see Figure 26).

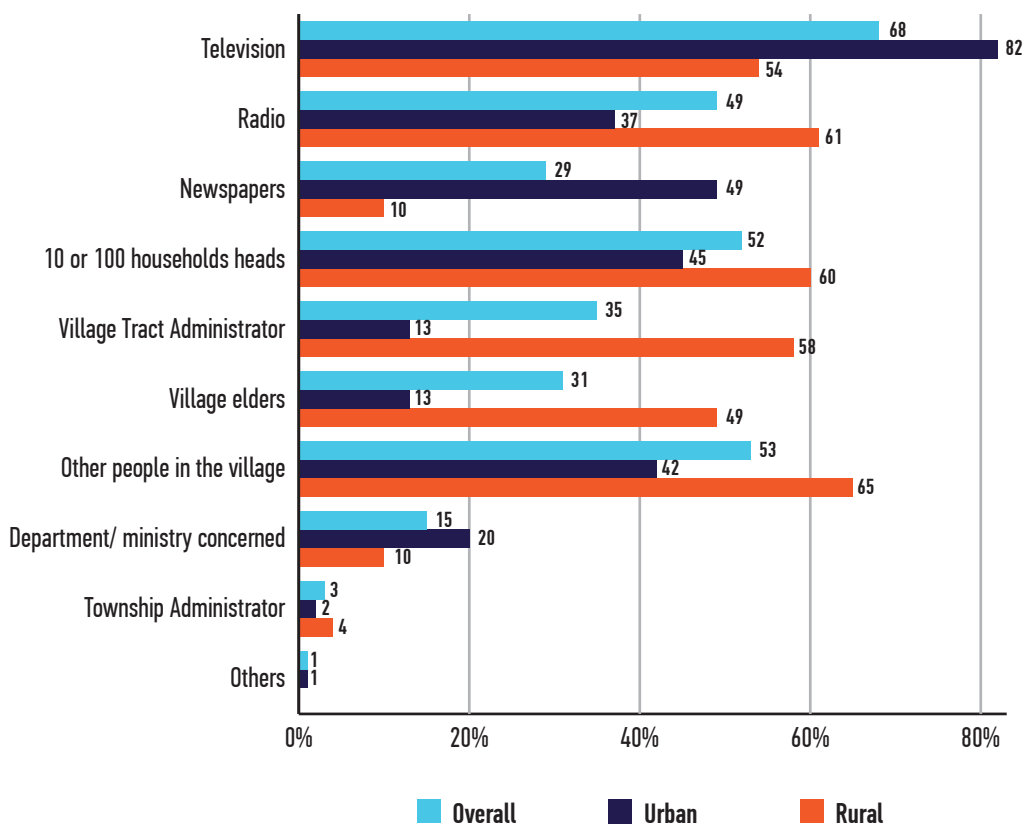


Figure 26: Sources of information for official information (new laws, guidelines, etc.)

Still, the majority of respondents (87%) indicate that they are insufficiently informed about government plans for their wards/tracts, and the projects that are (to be) implemented to improve basic service delivery. This sentiment is most strongly expressed in the urban areas - but also women complain slightly more about not being informed (85 percent for men against 90 percent of the women) (see Figure 27). Thongwa Township, with reportedly a very active TA who has created an atmosphere of openness and transparency, sticks out positively, with 26 percent of the respondents indicating that they are appropriately informed.

Figure 27: Percentage of the respondent that thinks they are sufficiently informed

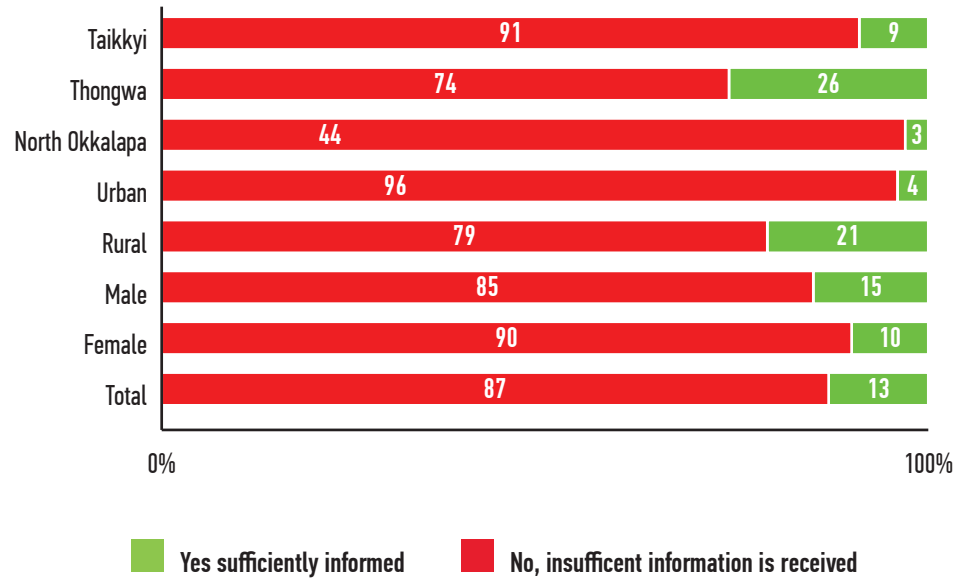
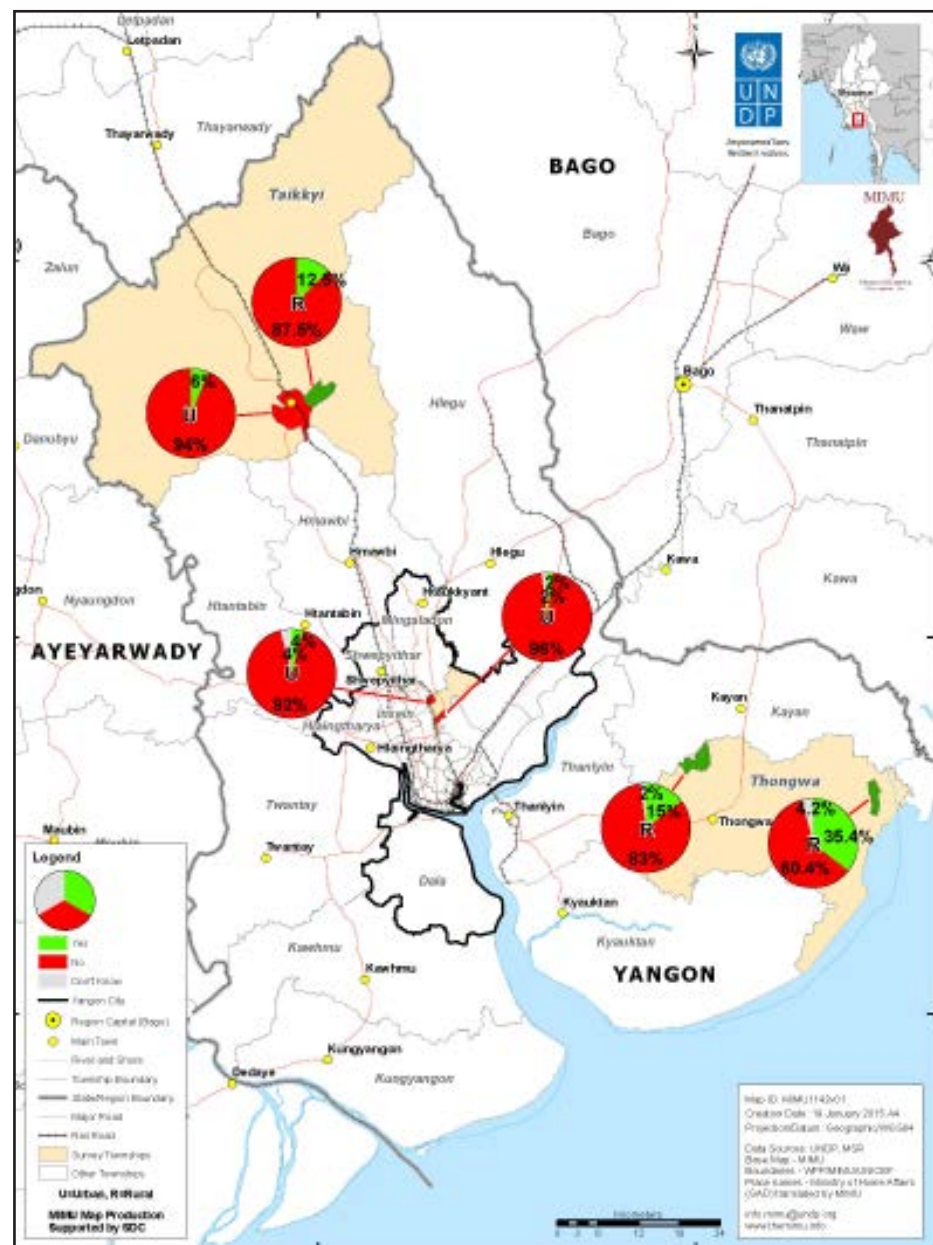


Figure 28: Respondents that think they are being sufficiently informed or not, in the selected townships



## 4.8 Major development issues emanating from the Citizen Report Cards

Overall, the picture that emerges from the CRC-exercise is that citizens are generally highly appreciative of the changes they have seen with regards to service delivery, notably for primary education and to a lesser extent health. Water, the only municipal service investigated, seems to engender less enthusiasm (perhaps because people seem more or less satisfied with the situation as is).

Yet, all the answers need to be seen in the light of the specific context. Firstly, service delivery levels for notably health and education were extremely low a few years ago; and secondly, a large number of respondents themselves indicated to be careful not to be too critical about government performance. The latter is likely to explain that overall, urban respondents seem to be less satisfied as compared to rural respondents - although it may also very well be that major improvements over the past few years indeed benefitted rural areas more.

In terms of local governance, the CRC data illustrate that the citizenry has not yet widely embraced the new tools of accountability and participation in the management of public service provision. Most respondents are simply unaware of the newly established committees or the sources of discretionary township development funds that are available. Overall, for most citizens 'the government' is either the WA/VTA or the more remote Region or Union government. The notion of a township administration as a layer of governance and decision-making on public services is quite low.

**An active TA in Thongwa Township has created an atmosphere of openness and sticks out positively, with 26 percent of the respondents indicating that they are appropriately informed about government plans and projects.**



On the other hand, respondents are ‘not negative’ about the options to participate, but they simply have not yet grasped the opportunities, whereby they also indicated that information for them to ‘understand what government is doing in their wards/tracts’ is lacking. Hence the results seem to call for the development of a communication (or rather civic education) strategy, whilst at the same time for some sectors, specific actions could be undertaken to stimulate direct engagement of citizens in service delivery, e.g. through the PTAs in the education sector.



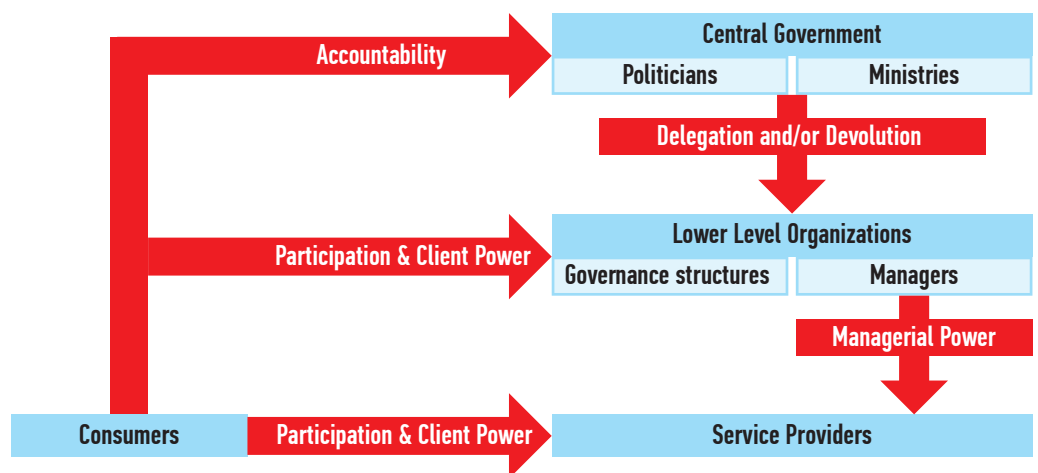
## 5. Conclusions on participation and accountability in Yangon Region

The legendary World Development Report 2004, titled *Making Services Work for Poor People*<sup>65</sup> drew attention to the relationship between accountability and the quality of public service delivery. If beneficiaries are given a voice to articulate their needs and priorities, the quality of services is likely to increase. Ten years on since the publication of this influential report, there is nowadays also recognition of the fact that people's participation does not automatically lead to service improvement - and that certain conditions need to be in place for it to go beyond 'easy tokenism'. In both previous chapters, examples were given where people indicated to be interested in the actual results of 'consultation and participation' and not to be contented with the process of participation as an end in itself.

Based on the aforementioned report, three main types of accountability lines can be distinguished in a democratic system (see Figure 29) with different levels of governance being:

- The line of accountability through the national parliament, where elected representatives have a legislative function (including discussion on and approval of the annual government budget), and are allowed to exercise oversight on the implementation of the laws and the execution of the budget;
- The line of accountability through a region parliament or a local government, which functions similarly to the national line of accountability, with the difference that the representatives are closer to the people they represent. As such the line through a region parliament has a higher chance of 'genuine' and direct representation. For Myanmar, this type of accountability could be seen in the form of i) the Region/State *Hluttaws*, which are - as demonstrated in Chapter 2, gradually assigned their own responsibilities and own budget; and ii) the newly introduced committees -like the TDSC and the TMAC - work at township level partly on the same principles, but as will be discussed below, there are also important differences;
- The third line of accountability is the one where people interact, as 'customers', more or less directly with the provider, such as through the PTA at school level or the health committee at the sub/rural health centre. This type of participation is most direct and easily visible - but not suited for all services, such as for example municipal services that are usually organised at a higher governance level and work through elected representation.

Figure 29: three type of accountability



Adapted from World Development Report, 2004

65. World Bank. 2003. *World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People*.

Normally, for at least the first two types of accountability relations, a distinction is made between the elected peoples' representatives (the legislature) and the government (the executive). In Myanmar this applies to the Union government and to a large extent also to the region government, albeit (as shown in Chapter 2) some ministers do not yet have a department or a budget, which obviously limits their scope to deliver services, which to a certain extent exists for the Union government and to a larger extent also for the Region government, albeit -as shown in Chapter 2- that some ministers do not yet have a department or a budget, which obviously limits their scope to deliver services.

For YCDC and the township committees (YCDC, TDSC and the TMAC) the separation between the legislative and executive is much less evident - especially because the peoples' representatives are co-opted into government management structures, which bears a risk of blurring the lines of accountability.

## 5.1 Mechanisms for popular participation

### 5.1.1 Participation in decision making

The newly created committees (TDSC both at the township and the ward/tract level, as well the TMAC) and the regular meeting of the (now indirectly) elected W/VTAs provide, in principle, an opportunity for people's voices to be better heard and reflected when decisions are taken. In that sense, they provide avenues for 'people's participation' in decision-making regarding certain decisions around public sector management.

So far, however, in Yangon Region, the participation has been restricted to non-binding consultation at best, which in the long run is unlikely to satisfy the citizens. Already, respondents expressed frustration over the limited impact of the consultations, which in part is due to ill-informed expectations (as the TDSC is by nature a consultative body, and nowhere in the world can government satisfy all suggestions). In part, this is most likely also because of the fact that those who used to take decisions on their own are hesitant to give that power away. Addressing these issues must be part of the reform process at all levels: the Union level - the Region/State level and the township and community level.

Given the structure of the Region government as explained, with the YCDC budget being entirely placed under the Region government (and hence the Region Hluttaw), the mayor's statement that the 'YCDC-management committee has no decision-making power' (see Figure 30) is perhaps understandable. Formally the budget is approved by the Region Hluttaw and the ministers are just executives with political accountability to that same Hluttaw. But the question then arises, what the real function is and what the meaning of participation of people's representatives in the management structures of the municipal departments are. Presumably, the committees have at least some executive decision-making powers, and the people's representatives are expected to take part in those decisions on behalf of the population that elected them. At the same time that would mean they become accountable for those decisions to their constituency.

But still the question can be asked -if the YCDC budget is part of the Region budget-, why are two different levels of people's participation needed? Is it because the Region *Hluttaw* only looks at the aggregate data, while the YCDC committee is responsible for the allocation

Figure 30: Is participation limited to 'consultation'?

Source: Clipping from the Irrawaddy Newspaper, dated 26/12/2014.



across departments? If this is the case the committee has executive decision-making responsibilities, and the role of the elected committee members may need to be revised and/or more clearly defined.

### 5.1.2 Participation in electing people's representatives

A second type of participation in addition the one outlined above, is where the population at large joins the decision making process to decide on who will represent them (in the decision making bodies).

As revealed by the CRC-exercise and the recent YCDC/TMAC elections is that local governance at township or city level has not yet become very prominent in peoples' minds. They know the name of the W/VTA, the Region Chief Minister and the head of the Union government, but knowledge of and connection to the township and city administration appears limited.

Despite the effort, from the government and opposition alike, the disappointing turnout of the YCDC elections (only 25 percent of the already small number of registered voters) was indicative. There may be a number of reasons for this low turnout, including insufficient awareness-raising upfront, but normally, a low turnout means that the voters are neither engaged nor thrilled with the subjects at stake - which, as has been argued throughout this report on the basis of findings from the field, may be due to the fact that it is insufficiently clear what the elected representatives are supposed to deliver, which points at both institutional issues as well as 'voter education'.

Figure 31: A happy voter on YCDC elections

Source: picture by Myanmar Times.





It appears that the media that were in favour of the municipal elections were afterwards very keen to paint a picture of ‘apathy amongst voters’ - without analysing in-depth what may have caused that apathy; but also without challenging the voters’ responsibility to use the given opportunity to vote. In the end, people that do not use their vote both lose the right to claim participation in decision-making but also their right to criticise the government. Participation in a vote is both a right and an obligation or civic responsibility.

## 5.2 Mechanisms for accountability

Accountability, for decisions made and actions taken, can only happen when responsibilities are clear. It shall be clear who took the decisions and who was in charge of the actions. In the model described above, officials at each level are accountable to the elected representatives, who are in turn accountable to their voters, which is ultimately reflected in the next elections.

Sometimes the mere principle of the need to be accountable is questioned, for example when it is argued that Hluttaw members do not need to monitor government departments operating on the Region budget that is approved by the same Hluttaw (see Figure 32).



Figure 32: Finding the right balance...

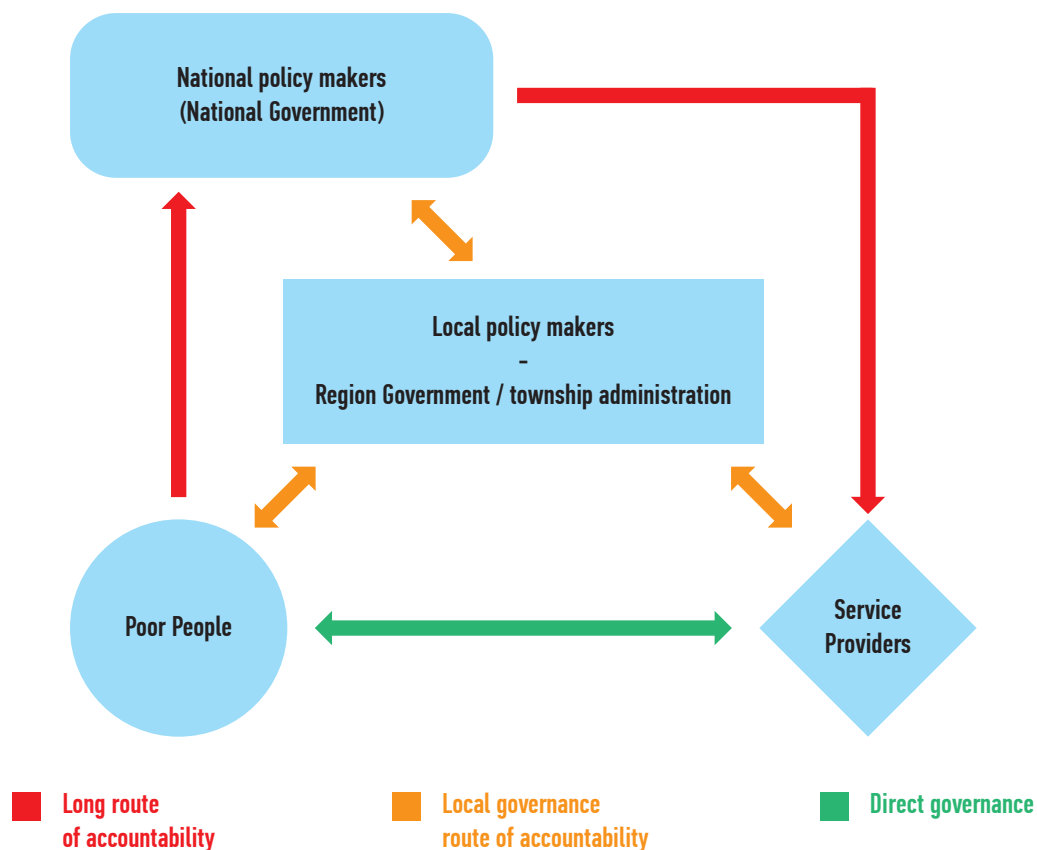
Source: Clipping from Myanmar Times dated 5 May 2014 .

As set out in the previous chapters, part of the on-going reform process is that the structural / institutional arrangements are not yet in place to establish strong accountability relationships. In order for accountability mechanisms to be able to kick in, it will be required to streamline the institutional structure to clearly reflect responsibilities, In Chapter 2 this was illustrated by the fact, the YCDC organogram is not sufficiently clear what the YCDC is supposed to deliver and which department is responsible for a particular service. The fact that different departments deliver the same service while the geographical areas of coverage are blurred is another area where improvements can be made. Finally, the above-discussed unclear role of the elected representatives in the municipal affairs committees is another example: Are they watch dogs, elected executives or just members of a consultative forum? As long as their roles are not clearly defined, it will be very difficult to hold them accountable for anything.

Whereas the long route of accountability seems to be taking some shape, a lot of mileage is to be covered for the shorter local governance and more direct governance routes of accountability that, in principle, should be even more appealing to the population (see Figure 33). As compared to several other Regions and States, Yangon has been behind with the establishment and operationalization of the new committees meant to enhance citizen participation. Following the municipal elections and given the fact that much of the Region is urban and covered by the more autonomous Municipal Affairs Committees, it has a chance to demonstrate how participation and accountability can take effect using the local governance route.

Figure 33: Long and shorter routes for accountability

Source: Dege, 2006<sup>66</sup>.



### 5.3 Pre-requisites for effective participation and accountability

In fact, both types of participation as described above are linked through mechanisms of accountability. This means that government officials are accountable to people’s representatives and these representatives are accountable to the voting population. However, these mechanisms are not automatic and action must be taken to ensure that the right conditions are in place for them to operate. They must also be tested and their effectiveness must be illustrated by examples from fieldwork.

#### 5.3.1 *The accountability lines need to be ‘open’*

First of all, for the two accountability lines to work, there must be a ‘platform’ for the parties to meet. This exists for the Region level, through the Region *Hluttaw*. But at township level it is less clear where the elected people’s representatives can question and hold township departments and government officials accountable. That said, some of the meetings as held (e.g. in Thongwa) start coming close, provided that the elected members the TDSC, TMAC and WA/VTAs are indeed given the space (or even better are encouraged) to speak out on behalf of those groups they represent.

66. Local level service delivery, decentralisation and governance, A comparative study of the situation in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania for the sectors of agriculture, education and health 2008., ([http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/IFIC\\_and\\_JBICI-Studies/english/publications/reports/study/topical/kenya/pdf/ooo.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/IFIC_and_JBICI-Studies/english/publications/reports/study/topical/kenya/pdf/ooo.pdf)).

More efforts must be given to improve the relation between the elected and the electorate - as this link is still weak if not - as in the case of TDSC for some townships - inexistent. The link electorate/elected is best for the WA/VTAs (as most respondents relate to this person; see Chapter 4), but their potential use for development work still seems underutilised, as, at the township level, they are not always seen as representatives of the people. 'For many people they still see them as 'law and order eyes on the ground' that, as subordinates of the TA serve a national interest rather than primarily a local interest.

### *5.3.2 Clarity on roles and responsibilities*

Someone can only be held to account when, upfront there is clarity about areas of responsibilities and tasks. For example, people can only hold YCDC to account when they know what YCDC is supposed (or has committed) to deliver. In Chapter 2 a shorter more guided list of activities that YCDC is supposed to focus on has been proposed as many citizens it is still difficult to actually see what the City Hall is expected to deliver and subsequently they do not know what they can ask for. The YCDC website (<http://www.ycdc.gov.mm/>) is a good initiative to provide information and make it clearer to the people what the responsibilities of YCDC are and what services they are mandated to deliver.

Given the complexity of Yangon Region, where the municipal administration is very important and the fact that part of the functions previously under the Union budget are now transferred to the Region, it becomes even more important to keep people well-informed on who is presently responsible for what. Without that, any discussion on accountability will largely remain illusionary.

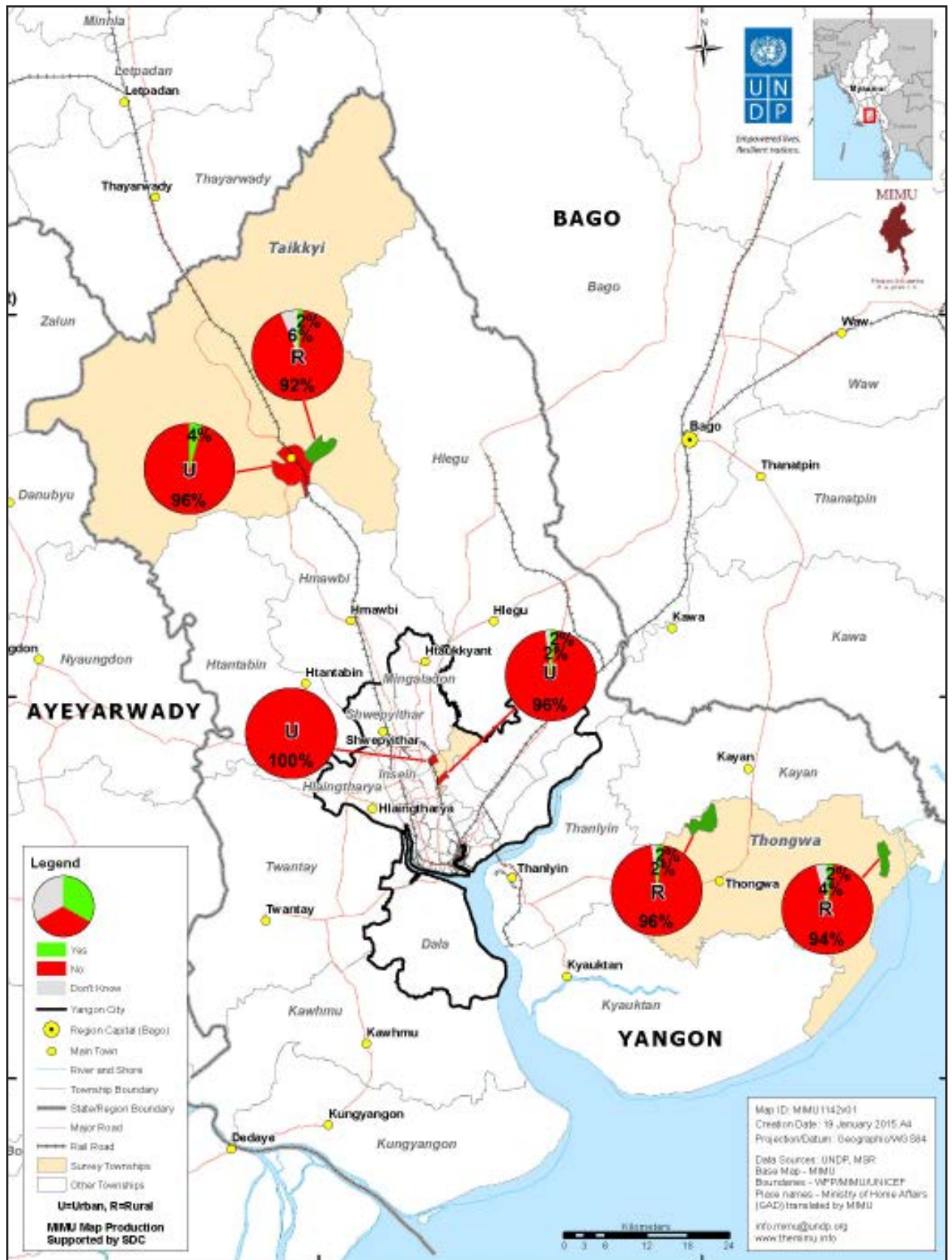
Obviously, as the reform is on-going, the situation will remain confusing, but nonetheless, or rather in particular because of that, it is important to share information, to allow people to get engaged.

### *5.3.3 Invest in information sharing*

Finally, if there is one thing on which respondents (of the CRC exercise) were very clear and unambiguous about, it was the request for more information from and about local governance entities (see Figure 28). Given the wide diversity in the understanding of the role of the various committees and the distance between citizens and government (event though the gap has substantially narrowed over the past years), there is indeed scope for an improved information sharing. This relates to the reform process in general, the envisaged set-up of the administration and the relation between the citizens and the government (see Figure 34).

People need to be well-informed for them to be meaningfully engaged, as was shown by the disappointing turnout at the recent YCDC elections. As much as 'reform is work in progress' and whilst nobody may exactly know the envisaged end-position, it is important for the government to present a vision and a framework for local governance, make this available to all and engage in a discussion with the public and interest groups as to what form local governance should take in Myanmar.

Figure 34: Knowledge of the respondents regarding the committees in which citizens can participate



## 5.4 Suggestions for further discussion

In summary the local governance mapping for Yangon Region shows that an effective and efficient people's participation requires continued re-adjustment of the local institutions. In addition to an institutional structure where mandates and responsibilities are properly defined and clear, good local governance also requires a well-informed and engaged wider public, in particular as electorate. For good local governance, both components are needed and both elements reinforce each other.

Based on this report some of the issues that require attention from an institutional perspective are:

- The delineation of Yangon city area;
- The distinction between wards and village tracts and organising the administration accordingly;
- The territorial allocation of resources and administrative division of the Region. It may not be effective to have Union departments in a township with only 5 village tracts; neither is it cost effective, to have some very small townships (like Seikkan and Cocokyun) and some very big townships (like Hlaingtharya); if townships will continue to be used as the basis for electoral constituencies, nor fair from an electoral point of view;
- The urban-rural distinction, and the question whether or not these areas should have different types of governance set-up. With the TMACs, there seems to be a tendency towards localised urban administrations, while the rural areas are left to the Union ministries. Some sort of alignment between the two models is relevant and would certainly benefit the efficiency of service delivery as well as provide a better anchor point for local accountability.



Issues that require further attention in order to create a more engaged electorate may include:

- Considering programmes for civic education in general as well as specific work through revising the basic education curricula;
- Given that good governance, even through the shorter local governance route, may remain rather abstract for many people, it may be useful to work in parallel on programmes to stimulate 'client power' e.g. empower citizens to be more directly involved in local decision making such as re-activating the PTAs;
- Improve access to information as well as an information strategy to more widely share understanding for the implications of the reform for public sector management;
- Finally, in order to change the mind-set of the people at the local level and make them capable for bottom-up participatory planning, a training programme for relevant staff to enable WA/VTAs to be allowed and capacitated to speak up at township level and be able to understand and play their role as peoples' representatives.

## **6. Annexes**

## Annex 1 : Governance Mapping - Objectives and Methodology

### Background

Since the adoption of a new Constitution in 2008, Myanmar has embarked on an unprecedented programme of reform, with a view to strengthen the democratisation process and to better respond to the needs and priorities of its people when delivering public services. This has translated into an enhanced emphasis on good governance and basic social services, such as primary health, basic education and water supply. Sub national governments and township administrations are supposed to play an important role in the processes of identifying peoples' needs and priorities and in ensuring peoples' participation in the management of public service delivery.

A gradual shift in responsibilities (and corresponding budgets) from the Union level to Region and state/level government is presently taking place, while at same time, the importance of good local governance is being acknowledged. Both the constitution as well as the Framework for Economic and Social Reforms (FESR) 2012-15 are explicit regarding a gradual transfer of political, administrative and fiscal responsibilities to the newly established Region and state governments, but do not extend that transfer of responsibilities to local-level institutions. As much as townships, wards and village tracts are recognized as administrative structures under the jurisdiction of Region/State Governments, they do not (yet) constitute a third tier of government. As such, and even though reforms are being implemented that may ultimately move in that directions, at the moment, at this stage in the decentralisation process, local governments<sup>67</sup> do not exist at (sub) township level.

In fact, at this level, an incremental strategy has been adopted by the Government of Myanmar through legal reforms and more specifically the establishment of new mechanisms and practices to create space for people to participate in setting local development priorities, and improve the ability of government to be more responsive to the needs of the people and their ability to have a voice in decisions concerning the local level.

Whether the township, the lowest administrative level with presence of most departments that deliver basic services as well as the basic unit of constituencies for political representation at the State/Region and the Union level legislatures, will eventually emerge as the nucleus of local government in the country is as yet unclear. But township administrations across the country are increasingly being tasked to improve basic local service delivery, while playing a new role that aims to place the people of Myanmar at the centre of the development process.

Within this context, the UNDP has been working together with the General Administration Department (GAD) of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) to “map” the dynamics of local governance at the township level and below, with an emphasis on the aspects of government interaction with the people.

<sup>67</sup> *Local government* refers to specific, semi-autonomous institutions or entities, created by national or state constitutions, legislation of a higher level of government or by executive order, that are legally considered as independent body corporates, with the tasks to deliver a range of specified services to a specific geographical/administrative area. *Local governance* refers to local-level formulation and execution of collective action, with a focus on citizen-citizen and citizen-state interactions, collective decision-making and delivery of local public services. See Anwar Shah (ed.), *Local governance in developing countries*, Public sector and accountability series, The World Bank, 2006.



## Objectives

The Local Governance Mapping seeks to examine local governance and governance issues related to basic local service delivery across Myanmar's States/ Regions, with the view of better understanding the processes, mechanisms and dynamics of governance at the township level and below. It was designed to predominantly make use of *qualitative data*, related to experiences and perceptions of citizens, government staff and other stakeholders with the following questions in mind:

- To what extent have reforms so far enabled local governance actors and institutions to be more responsive to the needs of people?
- What are prevailing attitudes on access to basic services in the community, and what dynamics underpin the relationship between the state and people with regards to service delivery (i.e. primary healthcare, primary education, drinking water)?
- What new spaces have been created, or are emerging, for the people of Myanmar to participate in community decision-making and have a voice?
- Despite the local governance reforms being applied on a fairly uniform basis across Myanmar's States, what differences are emerging as a result of unique local conditions?

As such, the mapping is not an assessment but an effort to understand the state of play for local governance to-date, and seeks to highlight best practices that are emerging across the country.

## Mapping tools

In Yangon Region, as in other Regions and states, a number of different mapping tools were deployed to understand the existing governance environment at the regional, the township and sub township levels, to shed light on the above mapping questions, and the perceptions of both people and service providers on three key tenants of local governance: (i) participation; (ii) quality of and access to basic service delivery and (iii) accountability, whereby to limit the scope, a focus was put on three sectors being (a) basic education; (b) primary health and (c) water supply.

In each state a number of townships was selected for more in-depth mapping, using a combination of the following tools:

- **Township background studies:** To gain initial understanding, in each selected semi-structured interviews were conducted with key government staff and CSO representatives. These interviews focused on the manner in which governance actors in different townships had interpreted and implemented the recent reforms related to good governance at the local level. For Yangon the background studies were conducted in August/September 2014.
- **Citizen Report Cards (CRC):** In each of the (for Yangon 3) selected township, 2 wards and/or village tracts were selected for a perceptions survey ('citizen score card' - or questionnaire; see annex 2) that was administered to 96 randomly selected citizens

(hence 288 people in total). The questionnaire focused on the core principles of local governance, and the access to, use of and satisfaction with regards to public services, notably for the three selected sectors. The CRC interviews were conducted end of November / early December 2014.

- **Focus group discussion with service providers:** In the same period, and in addition to CRC for service users (the demand side), also the supply side, the service providers in the selected wards/tracts (including school principals, teachers, healthcare facility managers, healthcare staff and the wards/tract administrators) were, group by group, interviewed. The focus of the questions was on the service delivery process and the interaction of the providers with citizens using the services.
- **Community Dialogues:** For purposes of triangulation, similar issues were discussed in each selected ward/tract in a Community Dialogue (CD), with different community groups (including women, youth and elders) in attendance alongside service providers and the W/VTA, nowadays the elected representative of the ward/village tract. The objective of this exercise was to collectively identify the issues of good governance emerging in relation to service delivery and local administration, and to agree on improvements that could be implemented at the community level. These discussions were often seen as a first useful step in a participatory planning process and as compared to the other tools (where the information was flowing 'to the researchers', the community dialogues, were seen by the communities as useful to them - and these activities would merit (or rather call for and deserve) follow up action.
- **Interviews with regional actors:** In parallel with the above, during the period October - December, open interviews (discussions) were held with government officials at the regional level, with an objective to understand both the existing systems and the relation between the Region government and the townships; as well as their perceptions and experiences regarding the functioning of administration at the township level, and to reflect on their own role in providing support to lower level government institutions. During a workshop in Naypyitaw on 22nd of January 2015, preliminary results were presented to some key officials of the Region and the Union government prior to publication of the 1st draft.

### Selected townships

The number of townships selected for more in-depth study varied according to the size and population of each state or Region. For Yangon Region, and in consultation with the Region Government, three townships were selected using the following selection grid:

Table 1.1: Characteristics selected townships, Local Governance Mapping in Yangon Region

Townships	Characteristics
Taikkyi	Northern part, Medium township, high population density, diverse economy (agriculture, industry), mixed urban and rural, better accessibility, mixed ethnic groups (Bamar, Kayin, Shan, Chin), moderate transportation in rural areas and good in urban areas
Thongwa	Southern part, relatively small, diverse economy but moderate economy, moderate ethnic diversity (Kayin, Mon, Bamar), mixed rural and urban area, moderate transportation
North Okkalapa	High population density, only urban, Yangon city municipal area, situated in the East District, large population, diverse economic activities (factories, farming, agriculture, livestock), ethnic and religious diversity and good accessibility

The table below provides a summary of the tools, the number of participants and the actual outcome, which all served as input to this report.

Mapping level	Activity	Participants	Geographical scope	Outputs
Community	Citizen Report Card (CRC)	288 respondents in total (96 in each selected township - divided over 2 wards/tracts)	3 rural tracts (divided over two townships) and 3 urban wards equally divided over two townships	Dataset and reporting on key findings (see Annex 2)
	Focus group discussion with Service Providers	6 Village Tract Administrators 6 primary school principals 19 primary school teachers 6 heads of healthcare facilities 9 healthcare staff	3 wards / 3 village tracts in 3 townships	Summary Report on key-findings
	Community Dialogues (CD)	141 supply side service providers including 38 women 285 demand side service users, of which 100 were female	3 wards / 3 village tracts in 3 townships	Data from scoring exercise and summary for each village tract and ward
Township	Interviews and secondary data analysis	Government staff from relevant departments.	Three townships 1 YCDC 2 non-YCDC	Background study to inform community findings
	Focus group discussions	Committee members and Civil society representatives	Three townships 1 YCDC 2 non-YCDC	Qualitative data to inform integrated analysis
Region	Discussions and interviews	Government staff from relevant departments.	Yangon (Region Capital)	Qualitative data to inform integrated analysis
	Workshop to share interim findings	Government staff and committee members from township level, state level government and civil society representatives	Region	Validation of interim findings, suggestions and ideas from local governance actors

Table A1.2: Local Governance Mapping participants, coverage and outputs for Yangon Region

## Annex 2 : Community Dialogues Action Plans

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

VT/ Ward	Issue 1 (Education)	Issue 2 (Health)	Issue 3 (information flow)	Issue 4 (other issues)
Aung Pan Sein Village Tract	The education staff agreed to keep an appropriate teacher-student ratio and provide better school facilities. The community will offer money and labor to improve the road to schools.	The village administration will report to Township Health Department about the problem of insufficient health staff. The health staff explained that the mosquito repellent spraying could be done upon request.	The village administration said that PA system could be applied once they got authorization from the Township Administration. The VTA will give instructions to the 10/100 household heads to better inform people about the new projects.	For the companies which show their interest of investing in the village, the VTA will provide necessary support, such as suitable land for the plant.
Bu Tar Ward		The midwife will report the lacking of sanitary latrines to the upper level authorities. And the village administration will inform the community when health education sessions are conducted in the ward.	The Ward Administration will share information with the community through 10/100 household heads and/or posting a notice at office. The community agreed to give full attention to any information spread by the Ward Administration.	The Ward Administration will encourage the business owners to provide more job opportunities. It's recommended that the Township Administrator should support small enterprises and business by providing loans and suitable land. The community also requested the members of Parliament to create more job opportunities by setting up industrial zone in this township.
Nga Ward	The education staff will look for potential donors who are willing to provide support for schools. The elders, Parent-teacher Association and school committee will have more cooperation in the future.	The health staff should inform the Union government about the needs of health care service in this ward. The VTA will report to the Township Administration about the needs of medical equipment.	It's suggested by the community that the Ward Administration should disseminate information in time and through more efficient channels.	The community requested that the Ward Administration should shorten the time of permission process, give more clear instruction of the administration procedures and take measures to deal with corruptions.

VT/ Ward	Issue 1 (Education)	Issue 2 (Health)	Issue 3 (information flow)	Issue 4 (other issues)
Lein Maw Chan Village Tract		Midwife will report to the Township health department about the lack of infrastructure for health center and insufficient number of health staff. The health care center promised to provide the community with drugs and immunization equally.	Reelection of the members of the Community Support Committee will be held if the community is dissatisfied with the current members.	10/100 household heads agreed that they would inform the entire community when conducting a meeting regarding the development projects. The community said they would participate in the development projects actively.
Shan Su Village Track	The community asked the school principal to solve an urgent problem of insufficient teachers and bad condition of school buildings. Otherwise the students will suffer from the heat due to no ceilings of school buildings.	The health staff will urge the Township health department to solve the problem of no midwives in the village. The community said they would offer accommodations for any midwife assigned to their village.	The VTA promised to offer more information regarding people's livelihood.	The VTA will encourage the youth group to participate more actively in collaboration with 10/100 household heads and the village elders.
Wai Bar Gi Ward	The principal promised that the expense on repairing school furniture would be paid by school fund. The community would like the member of Parliament to discuss the possibility of reopening the vocational training school.	The member of Parliament who is the representative of the local community should fulfill the health care requirement as much as possible.	The community needs to improve their reading ability and asked the WA to promote information sharing by providing libraries and TVs.	Citizens said that the Ministry of Home Affairs should provide more police force to protect the community. They also required for better roads and loans to the poor.







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