

# LOCAL GOVERNANCE MAPPING

## MAPPING HIGHLIGHTS IN RAKHINE STATE



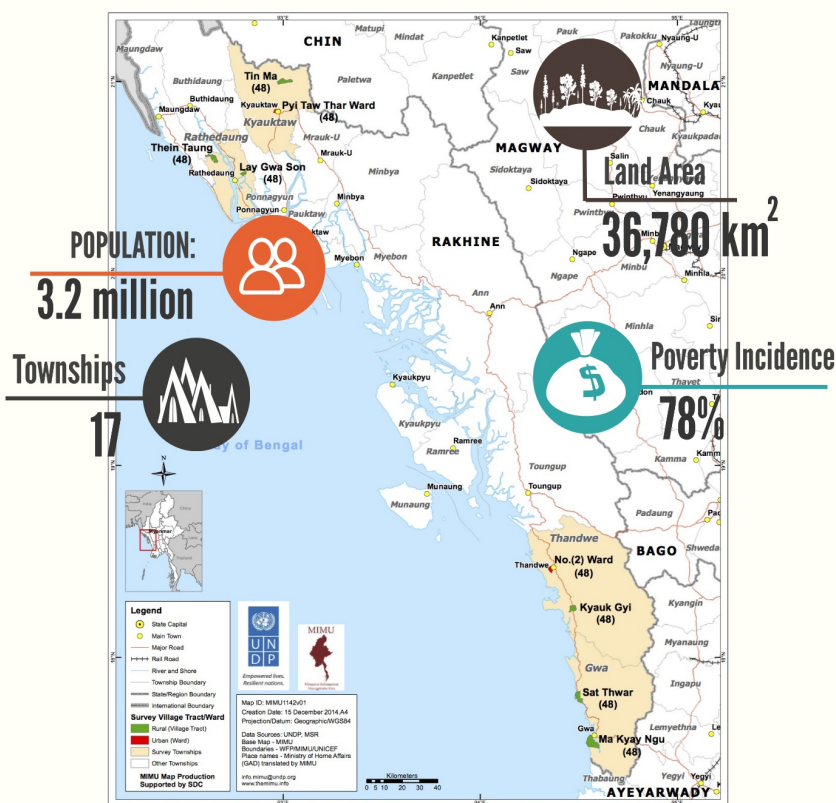
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### Background

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

In Rakhine, the mapping covered Gwa, Kyauktaw, Rathedaung and Thandwe townships, and interviewed people, committee members, civil society representatives, service providers and local administrators about local governance and service delivery.

Approximately 400 people and 120 service providers and local administrators shared their experiences and impressions of **development planning and participation access to basic services** (specifically primary health care and drinking water), and **information transparency and accountability** light shares some of the key findings.



Source: MIMU



### Socio-economic context

Located in western Myanmar, Rakhine shares borders with Bangladesh, as well as internally with Chin, Magway, Bago and Ayeyarwady. Rich in natural resources, Rakhine State is primarily driven by agriculture and fisheries. Rice remains the main crop, occupying around 85% of the total agricultural land, while coconut and nipa palm plantations are also important. Fishing is a major industry, with the majority of the catch transported to Yangon. Wood products such as timber, bamboo and fuel wood are extracted from the mountains.

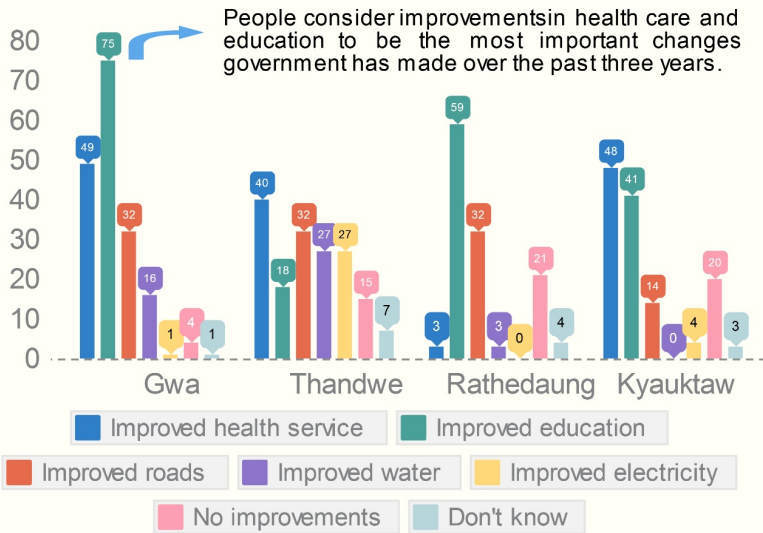
Despite its strategic location and natural resources, Rakhine is one of the poorest states in the country. Poor infrastructure and limited access to electricity continue to be major challenges. Sectors such as tourism, oil and gas production are emerging industries, though they are hitherto untapped.

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## Improvements seen at the community level



What people wish to see improve further are roads (18%), and access to better health services and safe water (16%).

## Development planning and participation

### Township Administration

In the 4 townships covered in Rakhine, the Township Administrator (TA) focussed mainly on maintaining rule of law, peace and security and broader development of the township. The coordination role extends to discussions with the Village Tract/Ward Administrator (VTA/WA) on determining new investments in their areas and this takes place through regular meetings between them which varies by townships. The TAs also indicated a perceived change in their roles from independently taking some of the decisions to now consulting with the Township Development Support Committee (TDSC) and the Township Municipal Affairs Committee (TMAC). This change was being viewed positively as people and various interest groups can participate through these committees.

High staff turnover and a large number of unfilled positions in township administration were areas of concern.

At the sub-national level, there are new funds available for township development, and emerging opportunities for local actors, such as Support Committees, Village Tract and Ward Administrators (VT/WAs) and the people to influence the planning process.

### Development Funds

4 development funds in Rakhine at township level.

Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF)

Constituency Development Fund (CDF)

Border Affairs Fund

Rural Development Funds



### PRF / CDF

The PRF is coordinated by a supervision committee and eight sectoral sub-committees. Based on the State guidelines, the TA is head of PRF supervision committee, while different Heads of the Department are chairing the sectoral subcommittees. The submitted projects are however further prioritised at the state level.

### Citizen awareness of funds

On average, 65% of the people interviewed said they do not know about funds being spent in their VT/WA. There is great variety in awareness across townships. In Gwa and Thandwe 90% and 86% of the people respectively are not aware, whereas in Rathedaung 90% is aware of funds being spent.

### TDSC

Across the 4 townships, the Township Development Support Committee (TDSC) members seemed to function more as independent interest groups with closer affiliations to the TA. In a number of cases the representatives were ex-government staff or more "business" representatives.

### TMAC

The Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA) in Gwa said that before the Municipal law was passed, the DMA was responsible for everything, however, now they need to coordinate with Township Municipal Affairs Committee (TMAC) especially in issues on tendering/selection of contractors and monitoring. The plans developed are sent to the State Ministry of Development Affairs for approval.

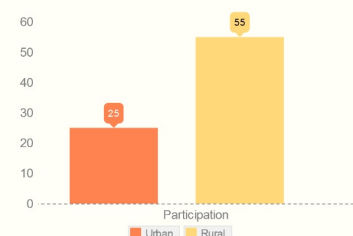
### Women representation

None of the four sample township TDSCs and TMACs had any elected female representatives on the committee.

### Citizen participation in meetings

In Rakhine 48% of the citizen respondents sometimes participates in a meeting on new development projects or problems in the village or ward organised by the VTA/WA and 10/100 Household Heads. When those who did not attend were asked why they did not attend these village meetings, 53% of the respondents mentioned that they were not invited, did not know about these meetings or mentioned that such meetings were not held in their village or ward.

### Citizens participating and being invited to meetings



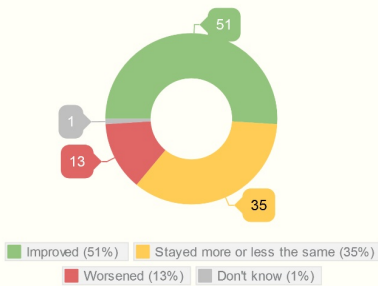
The proposed electrification by the end of 2015 of all townships should lead to greater investment and development in Rakhine. Communication technologies dependent on electricity will then also possibly enhance efficiency, effectiveness, coordination and realization of activities.



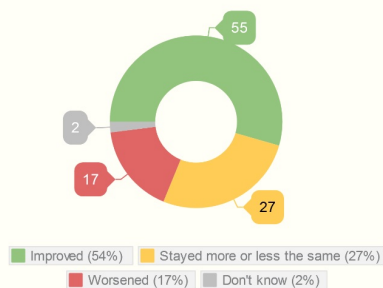
## Basic service delivery

More than half of the people perceive improvements in the quality of health care and education over the past three year. Fewer see improvements in water provision.

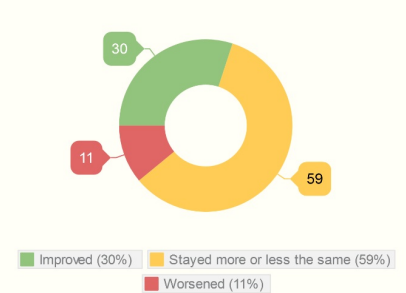
### Perceived improvements in health care



### Perceived improvements in education



### Perceived improvements in water provision



### Increase in budget for health care



The Township Medical Officers (TMOs) confirmed positive changes over the last three years including an increase in budgetary resources across all townships, the provision of more "free" medicines by the government and allocation of more medical staff. The main challenges for the health sector included low staff salaries, still insufficient staff numbers, low professional capacity of staff, and inadequate quality and network of health facilities (including sanitation and electricity). In Rathedaung, there is inadequate number of sub health centres in minority areas.

### Consultation on education



All 4 TEOs in the selected townships agreed that the quality of education has improved and pointed to increased teachers and growing numbers of student prize-winners at township level competitions as evidence of this trend. Service providers considered that they were interacting and consulting parents but parents felt that institutionalized mechanisms for any engagement in school or education activities were quite insufficient.

### Water supply development plans



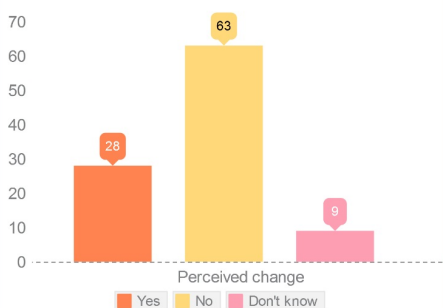
While Rural Department Officers shared that water supply development plans were available for all 4 townships and were being fed into the State's annual and development plans, they noted that this component was frequently under-funded and under-implemented, both owing to funding constraints and limited implementation capacities.

## Information, transparency & accountability

### Elected VTA/WAs

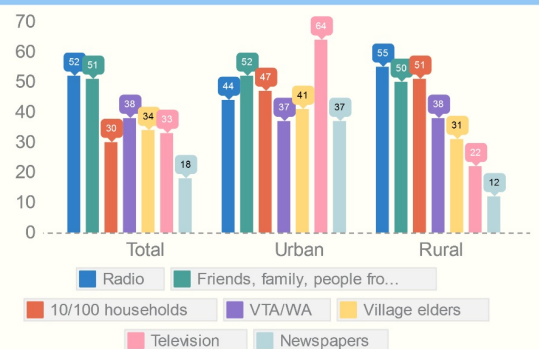
Following the enactment of the 2012 Ward and Village Tract Law, the VTA/WAs are now elected representatives of their communities.

28% of the people notice a change in the way VTA/WAs carry out their functions since they have been elected. Key reasons why people noted a difference include that the VTA/WA was now involved in building hospitals, roads, bridges and schools, and that the VTA/WA listens better to villagers



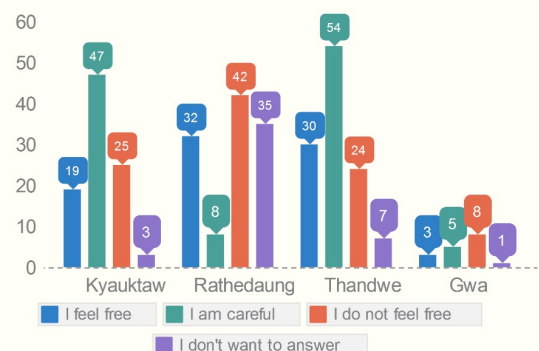
### Sources of information

Different than in other States and Regions, the radio emerged as the major source of information regarding law and directives from the government. The second major source are friends, family or people from the village (51%), followed closely by the 10/100 Household Heads.



### Citizens feeling free to express opinions

Two-thirds of the interviewed people felt restricted to express their opinion (they would not express or be careful). Urban people would be more reserved. Higher number of minority people felt less free to express their opinion.



## Community Dialogue



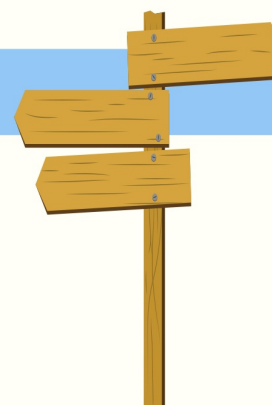
In the community dialogues, different groups from the community such as women, youth and elders, as well as local service providers and the village tract/ward administrator discussed key issues of local governance and service delivery, and brainstormed on possible solutions they could implement.

In one village tract for example, the VTA committed he will call a meeting before and after the implementation of a new development projects to explain it. Villagers said they would attend the meeting if they were invited. In another village tract, the VTA agreed he will present to higher levels of government the need for lamp poles and technicians in order to have electricity/illumination. The Township Officer and the Member of the Hluttaw pledged they would actively support this action.



## Conclusions

- 1 With the levels of Poverty in Rakhine, greater financial investment coupled with greater capacities including administration strength is required.
- 2 The township committees, TDSC and TMAC require clearer guidelines for their mandate and operation. Additionally, their consultation process with the VTA/WA and W/VTDSC needs to be improved.
- 3 The environment for openness and freedom of expression for all groups in the State needs to be strengthened. Information flow about government projects in different townships needs to be shared more widely with people through the government institutional mechanism and the elected VTA/WA.



**For a more detailed report on Rakhine please visit:**  
[www.mm.undp.org](http://www.mm.undp.org)

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