

# FAST FACTS

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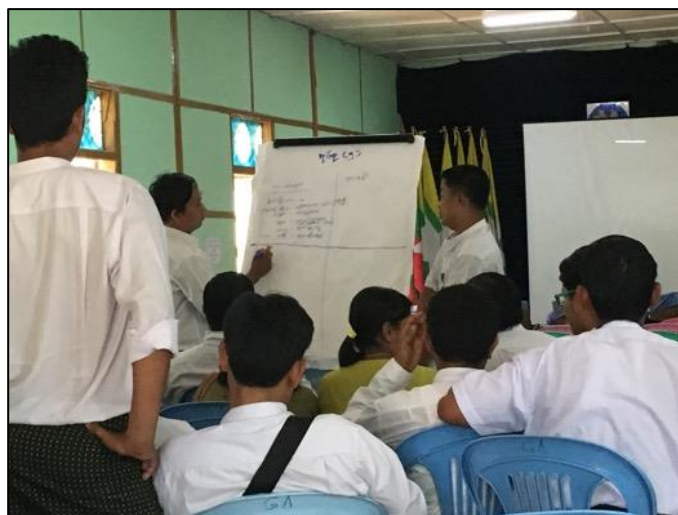
## Township Democratic Local Governance Project

Since the adoption of the new constitution in 2008, Myanmar is on a path towards greater political, administrative and fiscal decentralization. Central to this process is the shift of decision-making power and budgets from the union level to the subnational level. State/Region governments and State/Region parliaments have been established, with their own budgets, their own decision-making power and their own accountability mechanisms, including checks and balances. However, the township administrations have so far been largely left out of this decentralization process.

Yet, it is at the township level where the bulk of public services is delivered and where people interact with public service providers. But so far, the township administrations have little influence over budget decisions. This situation hinders township officials from effectively addressing local needs, discourages public participation in planning and decision-making processes, and sustains a local governance structure with weak accountability and transparency. The Township Democratic Local Governance project (TDLG) is using local government grants to enhance inclusive local governance and decentralization at the township level.

### UNDP's approach

At the heart of a democratic relationship between citizens and the state lies an accountable system of public spending. The overall objective of providing discretionary grants to townships is to assist putting in place a responsive township administration that effectively and efficiently provides basic services to its people in an inclusive, accountable and transparent manner. The cross sectoral, discretionary grant serves as an incentive to test fiscal decentralization at the township level, to strengthen accountable and transparent public financial management systems and to promote participatory and responsive annual development planning. The project is actively supporting democratic local governance by giving people a voice to influence annual township planning and budgeting for public service delivery through the elected representatives, ward and village tract



Workshop participants engaged in a group planning exercise.

administrators, *Hluttaw* members and civil society. The project contributes to the development of a democratic local governance policy framework for the Government of Myanmar to advance its decentralization agenda.

UNDP's strategy in Myanmar for supporting decentralization and strengthened democratic local governance focuses on the following:

- **Strengthening township administrations' capacities for development planning, public financial management and service delivery:**

UNDP provides discretionary funding to township administrations as an incentive to leverage greater engagement and public participation in the annual planning and budget execution cycle. Township administrations are provided capacity development and on the job support to enhance their capacity to facilitate an evidence-based and participatory annual planning process, manage public financial management systems, tender and procurement procedures, involving citizens in establishing social accountability mechanisms and promote customer-oriented public service delivery through the One Stop Shops (OSS).

- **Increased civic engagement and women's participation:**

UNDP promotes opportunities to strengthen democratic and social accountability towards the public by supporting ward/village tract administrators (W/VTAs) to enhance their capacity to act as elected representatives providing

upward and downward information between communities and township administrations. Women are empowered to actively engage in township planning processes and measures will be tested to mainstream gender considerations into planning and public service delivery. Civil society is supported to engage with township administrations in developing social accountability mechanisms and promoting greater civic engagement.

• **Engaging ethnic armed organizations (EAO):**

UNDP supports township administrations to engage with and involve EAO administrations in mixed controlled areas in the township planning processes, and coordinating issues related to inclusiveness and public service delivery in alignment with the interim arrangements under the National Ceasefire Agreement. EAOs are also supported to develop capacities on democratic local governance and to engage in these processes effectively.

• **Facilitating dialogue for policy change:**

UNDP facilitates policy development, using lessons learned from the project and research to inform policy dialogues with state/region and the union government developing national policies for sub-national governance, effective public-sector management and civic engagement.

## UNDP in action

### Improving public service delivery at the township level

The UNDP supported Township Democratic Local Governance project is currently operating in Mon state and Bago region and covers a total of 15 townships. The project is expanding to other states and regions in 2018.

The project strengthens township administrations' capacities to better facilitate inclusive annual planning processes and develops skills in public financial management by providing trainings and on-the-job support in all aspects of inclusive development planning and the budget execution cycle.



Participants at a township planning workshop.

## MATTERS OF FACT

<b>Duration:</b>	1 November 2017 – 31 December 2020
<b>Coverage:</b>	Bago Region – 5 townships representing all four Districts Mon State – covering all 10 townships
<b>Counterparts:</b>	Bago Region Government, Mon State Government, General Administration Department, Ministry of Planning and Finance
<b>Partners:</b>	Oxfam, Search for Common Ground
<b>Budget:</b>	USD 21 million
<b>Donors:</b>	Switzerland, United Kingdom, Sweden, UNDP
<b>UNDP focal:</b>	Ms. Anki Dellnas, Chief Technical Advisor ( <a href="mailto:anki.dellnas@undp.org">anki.dellnas@undp.org</a> )

UNDP assists sector departments in collecting and analyzing relevant data to inform the township annual plans. Access to reliable data will enable risk assessments on issues including inclusion, gender and environment. Promoting the use of data relates to UNDP's assistance to the government to apply the Sustainable Development Goals in government planning processes.

### Promoting participation and inclusion

UNDP emphasizes the importance of promoting women's participation and inclusion of women's needs in public service delivery by strengthening the abilities of female W/VTAs in Myanmar to be active leaders in their townships.

EAOs are engaged to identify their own capacity development needs that will inform an engagement strategy aiming to build EAO capacities to participate meaningfully in planning processes and coordination mechanisms with township administrations.

### Advancing the national One Stop Shop (OSS) action plan

UNDP supports the government in implementing its national action plan for improving OSS, starting in six model OSS, and is piloting new techniques to improve customer oriented service delivery in a transparent and accountable manner together with the government. This contributes to enhanced trust between citizens and their local administrations. Successful pilot initiatives will be suggested for nationwide replication to the National OSS Working Committee.

For more information, visit: [www.mm.undp.org](http://www.mm.undp.org)

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