



PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH ON SERVICE PROVISION IN RAKHINE

Final Report

November 2019

**This report is part of the project,
'Social Cohesion for Better Service Delivery'**



**Funded by the
European Union**



FINAL REPORT

Participatory Research on Service Provision in Rakhine State

NOVEMBER, 2019

Produced by Conflict Management Consulting (CMC)

Contact:

Joseph Mariampillai

Country Director

Search for Common Ground

No.457 (A) Pyay Road, Ward (A), Kamayut Township, Yangon

+95 (0) 9 450 058 189

josephm@sfcg.org

Aung Myo Hein

Head of Rakhine Programs

Search for Common Ground

No.457 (A) Pyay Road, Ward (A), Kamayut Township, Yangon

+95 (0) 9 252 301 413

aungmyohein@sfcg.org

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Executive Summary	6
Methodology	7
Key Findings	7
Recommendations.....	12
1. Introduction.....	16
1.1 Background	16
1.2 Structure.....	16
2. Problem Statement and Research Questions.....	17
2.2 This Report.....	18
2.3 Research Questions.....	19
3. Findings and Recommendations.....	21
3.1 Criteria for Selecting Entry Points	21
3.2 An Administrative Overview	22
3.3 Service Profiles	27
3.4 What are the Barriers to Co-production?	61
3.5 What are the Enablers of Co-production?.....	75
4. Recommendations	84
4.1 Project Specific Recommendations	84
4.2 General Recommendations	90
Annex 1: Research Tools.....	97

Acknowledgements

Search for Common Ground Myanmar would like to acknowledge and thank Conflict Management Consulting for leading the research and writing of this report. In particular, Morten Nygaard Christensen as Team Leader and Lead Researcher, Melyn McKay as Senior Advisor, Tun Lin Khaing and Aye Thein as Field Researchers, and Wai Wai Lwein as Research Assistant.

We would also like to recognise and appreciate the coordination and contribution from the project team: Lown Pi, Head of Programs at Scholar Institute, Aung Myo Hein, Head of Rakhine Programs at Search for Common Ground, and Thung Gran Aung, Project Coordinator at Search for Common Ground.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the official position of Search for Common Ground nor the European Union.

Abbreviations

ACF	Administration for Children and Families
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ALD	Arakan League for Democracy
ANP	Arakan National Party
BAJ	Bridge Asia Japan
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CDA	CDA-Collaborative Learning Projects
CDNH	Center for Diversity and National Harmony
CERA	Community Empowerment and Resilience Association
CMC	Conflict Management Consulting
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DALMS	Department of Agricultural Land Management and Statistics
DAO	Development Affairs Organizations
DM	Department of Municipality
DRD	Department of Rural Development
DRD	Department of Rural Roads
DRR WG	Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group
EU	European Union
GAD	General Administrative Department
GAO	General Administration Office
IFRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IoM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LAs	Local Authorities
LIFT	Livelihoods and Food Security Trust (LIFT) Fund
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MD	Municipal Department

MiMU	Myanmar Information Management Unit
MMA	Myanmar Medical Association
MoC	Ministry of Construction
MP	Member of Parliament
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NLD	National League for Democracy
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OSS	The Office of Strategic Services
PGK	Pyi Gyi Khin
SCBSD	Social Cohesion for Better Service Delivery
Search	Search For Common Ground
SI	Scholar Institute
TA	Township Administrator
TAF	The Asia Foundation
TCSCFOL	Township Committee for Scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands
TDAC	Township Development Affairs Committee
TMC	Township Management Committee
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
URC	University Research Co., LLC
VDP	Village Development Planning
WB	The World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WVTA	Ward/Village Tract Administrator (W/VTA)

Executive Summary

While contestations over resources, identity, and autonomy date back centuries in Rakhine State, the past two years have been particularly tumultuous. The dust has not yet settled after ‘military clearance operations’ in August 2017 displaced 700.000 individuals and renewed international pressure on Myanmar after a half decade of democratic optimism. Since around October 2018, increasing armed conflict between the government army and Rakhine nationalist insurgents has displaced another 40.000 individuals across the state.

The project *Social Cohesion for Better Service Delivery* (SCBSD), implemented by Search and Scholar Institute, takes as its point of departure the observation that shortcomings in people’s access to services like medical treatment, education for their children, drinking water, and electricity, contribute to tensions between communities in Rakhine and with the government. More than lack of services in itself being a driver of conflict, the way in which services are delivered and to whom risks entrenching rifts in Rakhine’s social fabric.

At the same time, because of its profound impact on people’s lives, service delivery – if approached right – also represents an area of opportunity. Service delivery may contribute to the reduction of grievances and the building of trust, both horizontally across communities and vertically between communities and authorities. Strengthening service delivery through inclusive engagement between communities and authorities may help to alleviate grievances.

Social Cohesion for Better Service Delivery aims to do exactly this. Focusing on four townships in central Rakhine, it provides capacity building and trust building for constructive engagement between communities and authorities in relation to public service delivery. It offers grants to communities for projects fostering cooperation around strengthening service delivery. Through that, it aims to strengthen social cohesion.

In support of *Social Cohesion for Better Service Delivery*, this report explores the current state of service delivery in Sittwe, Ponnagyun, Taungup, and Rambree townships. With a view to identify entry points and opportunities for SCBSD, it engages with communities and authorities alike to understand:

- Communities’ access to and the quality of services across a range of sectors
- Who currently delivers services
- To what extent communities themselves are involved in service production
- How willing authorities are to engage more with communities around service delivery
- What barriers and enablers there are for further strengthening cooperation between communities and authorities

Based on this, it presents a set of recommendations for SCBSD, with a view to support its focus, implementation, and posture.

Methodology

A total of 15 focus group discussions and more than 50 key informant interviews were held, bringing the total number of people engaged for this research to more than 130 people across the target townships. Interviewees were selected to bring together a range of stakeholders, yet with a special focus on presenting the perspectives of women, ethnic minority, and rural people. Field work was implemented in two waves – the first collecting data from community members and civil society organizations, the second interviewing a broad range of authorities across the four townships.

Key Findings

While more detail is to be found in the report, the following highlights the findings and recommendations from the research.

Access and Quality

Services, as a concept, is not broadly understood. The concept of *services*, defined as something which the state – against the payment of taxes – delivers to its citizens, is a concept with much ambiguity around it. Both among citizens and officials, definitions of what services are, vary broadly – which again reflects historical relations between the state and the individual, characterized mostly by a strong focus on security and regulation. For a program working on services, this highlights the need to explore definitions of key concepts to uncover assumptions, tensions, differences, and to guide the project’s focus. And that there is a need to set realistic expectations.

Health, education, and roads are most important to communities. Across all communities, health, education, and roads are consistently identified as the service areas most important to improve, both in terms of quality and access. Roads are important because they serve as an enabler of other services. Electricity is also a high priority, especially for women, for whom electricity can free up time from chores.

What citizens get varies a lot. While citizens are formally entitled to the same services from the government, in practice it varies a lot what they get. The extent to which authorities are able to cover areas varies by township and by service area.

Under-funded and under-trained: Officials have to choose. The main reason service coverage is uneven, is lack of time, money, and training on authorities’ side. With scarce resources, officials have to choose which communities to cover. This creates tensions and sometimes rumors. For example, over access to the national power grid.

Urban/rural is the greatest divide. The greatest difference in service coverage across all areas exists between people who live in urban versus rural locations. Service coverage is strongest in major towns and decreases progressively with distance from town centers. Officials openly state this.

Other differences matter too. Ethnic minorities feel they are under-prioritized by government authorities. This issue is not recognized by officials who usually think ethnic minorities are treated in the same way as everyone else. Special needs which ethnic minorities might have – for instance due to language barriers – are often not recognized.

Provision of Services

Not only government departments provide services. While the government is the biggest provider of services, other actors contribute too within different areas. The monastic system provides basic education, mostly reading skills, and provides some support to the poor. The so-called blood donation groups and free funeral societies provide health services, small stipends, and care-taking. NGOs funded from abroad also provide services.

Non-governmental support clumps geographically and topically. Some services are more supported than others. Health, education, roads, and WASH are particularly prioritized by INGOs. Geographically, the number of organizations implementing projects varies too. While Sittwe – as the capital of Rakhine state – has substantial presence of INGOs, Taungup, Ponnagyun, and Ramree have significantly fewer organizations implementing projects.

Citizens are often themselves involved in the provision of services. Whether through civil society organizations or structured more loosely, communities often contribute in different ways to the provision of services, whether through building roads, donating blood, hiring teachers, digging ponds, or generating power. In some cases, they are self-servicing.

... though often in less influential roles. Select citizens, often those who are influential in different ways, get to exercise influence over services through participating in committees that oversee service providing departments, e.g. the Municipal Department. But most of the time, citizens' engagement in relation to services is more practical. The report develops a 'taxonomy of co-production' to describe the extent to which citizens' engagement in the provision of services implies actual influence. The report finds that most of the time, communities' engagement in service production takes the form of doing things themselves, or paying out of pocket for others to do them, as opposed to providing feedback or participating in the design of services.

Still for some, self-servicing is a matter of pride, and it builds communities. While the day-to-day reality for some communities is to fill the gaps in services which others have provided by the state, the status of being self-servicing is also – to some – a sign of autonomy and a mark of pride. Some – as an interviewee said – become more united in their plight.

Some authorities are more keen to engage citizens than others. Departments, and individuals within departments, vary greatly with regards to how inclined they are towards engaging citizens in the provision of services. Where some think it's a waste of time, while others think it's the way forward. But even among those who think the latter, practical and systemic constraints often get in the way (see below).

Generalist and local authorities are more willing (and able) to engage. As the level of technical specialization increases, willingness to include citizens in decisions over services tends to go down, e.g. the Department of Health. Conversely, departments with larger portfolios of more ‘mundane’ tasks like waste disposal, street lights, or park management appeared more open to including citizens. Departments governed locally (Municipal Departments) also appeared more able to respond to citizens’ input than departments linked to the union government in Naypyidaw.

Strengthening Citizens’ and Local Authorities’ Engagement: Barriers and Enablers

The research documented a number of barriers and enablers to productive interaction between authorities and communities. From communities’ and authorities’ side respectively:

It’s not natural for (some) people to get involved with authorities. For some citizens, especially rural citizens who have had limited exposure to authorities, speaking to them is simply not natural. They may be afraid to speak to them because they don’t know how to do it, or because they feel inferior.

Some fear retribution. For some, there is a fear that making suggestions to authorities or complaining about their performance may be sanctioned. They may fear that ‘if they are being difficult,’ officials may not only be rude towards them, but actively seek to punish them. Such beliefs are not least linked to a history of contentious relations with the (union) government and the military rule of the latter half of the 20th century. Especially older generations are fearful of officials.

Many citizens don’t know which entry points exist. Some citizens may want to engage authorities but don’t know how to do it. While formal channels like the committee system exist, very few have heard of them or know how to channel influence through them. In many cases, community members’ only entry point to the state is the local ward/village tract administrator.

Communities don’t have the resources to get involved. There are costs when taking time out to pursue influence in questions related to services. Whether in the shape of direct costs for transportation or accommodation, or indirectly as opportunity costs, the costs of pursuing a case with authorities may in many cases be enough to prevent communities from doing so. Especially when it is unclear what will come of it, communities may decide it is not worth the time and risk to engage with officials.

Citizens may forego involvement, because “no-one wants to be a hero.” Social norms of staying unnoticed, or keeping one’s head down, may in some cases prevent citizens from participating more actively in activities related to service delivery. In some contexts, making oneself noticed too much may be met with suspicion of ulterior or self-serving motives.

Clientelism and lack of clarity in administration may disappoint people and discourage them from trying. Communities may be discouraged from trying to engage authorities over questions related to services, because they have little way of predicting what will happen. Communities may feel that lack of transparency due to a culture of person-based and clientelist administration makes

it less predictable whether they will succeed in achieving what they wish to achieve. And failing to get satisfactory responses may frustrate future attempts.

Staff are rude. Complicating relations between officials and communities, citizens often report that government staff are unwelcoming to speak to or even rude. While ward/village tract administrators, GAD township officers, ministerial department workers, and court staff have been seen to be rude, the perception of government staff as rude is particularly linked to staff in hospitals and clinics.

From Authorities' Perspective

Some officials don't find it important to engage with communities. Like communities, authorities may not want to seek input from or engagement with communities, because they don't find it important, or because it doesn't seem natural to them. They may think it is not their responsibility to reach out to communities.

Some officials don't find it useful to engage with communities. Authorities may think consulting communities is not relevant, because they have insufficient knowledge to be able to deliver qualified input. Officials in many cases believe there is an information asymmetry, where they know more than communities, and where their preferred solutions are therefore necessarily better. There is not always an understanding that citizens' unique perspectives may be useful for their work.

Some officials think communities are 'grabby.' Some officials think engaging with citizens is unpleasant, because they are grabby. Such officials may think communities are therefore less deserving of support.

Authorities don't have the time and money to engage citizens. Engaging with communities costs resources in the shape of time and money, because in many cases personal interaction is the only way to speak to communities. Many offices are not able to do that because of resource constraints. Especially in rural communities, their voices are cut out because of this.

Authorities see a conflict between their mandate and listening to communities. In a hierarchical culture with an emphasis on obedience, officials often worry that taking communities' perspectives into account would imply that they are veering away from what they are mandated to implement by their superiors. This problem is compounded by the fact that many services are implemented by departments which report to the union government, as opposed to state or district level institutions (e.g. health, education, transportation).

For all the barriers to strengthening communities' cooperation with local authorities, the research also identified a number of *enablers* (i.e. elements to build on) to take into account when implementing SCBSD.

Committees at township level are – probably – the most influential body for citizens. In lieu of democratically elected bodies at the district and township level (and de facto the village tract/ward level, where administrators are selected by the most powerful households), there exists

a web of committees where citizens can exercise influence. They exist both at the village tract/ward level and at the township level, where there are up to 40 committees in each township. Strengthening their performance is a natural entry point for strengthening communities' cooperation with authorities.

... but there are many of them, and not everyone has access to them. Still they exist. There are, nonetheless, arguably too many committees, and in practice it is difficult for them to coordinate effectively. They are (therefore) at risk of being captured by powerful committee members or becoming irrelevant. It also varies to what extent officials take them seriously, and those citizens who have access to them, are often powerful individuals, rather than 'ordinary' people who can provide a 'common' perspective. Given that they exist and are embedded within the administrative framework as an opportunity for community involvement, they are nonetheless important 'stubs,' both at village and township level.

MPs don't make (many) laws – but they represent communities. Since the state level parliament/Hluttaw (particularly in Rakhine) is rather inactive, MPs have the time to do other things. Under the National League for Democracy (NLD)'s government, MPs have increasingly taken on a role as community advocates, both on committees and in more informal ways through lobbying authorities. While some feel they focus most on their own (narrow) constituencies and are mostly active around elections, they have democratic clout which can be leveraged.

Ward/village tract level administrators have one foot in, one foot out. Ward/village tract level administrators (W/VTAs) are many communities' first and only entry point to government. They are not, technically, government staff, and they are not quite democratically elected. Still (for that reason?) they occupy a special hybrid role between communities and authorities, making them a crucial link and an important potential for strengthening citizen/authority relations.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play an important and complementary role. CSOs fill important gaps in service provision, not least with regards to the education and health sectors, as well as in emergency responses. They are often faster at mobilizing than the government or INGOs, and they are able to sustain presence and activity beyond project timelines. It is not always the case that CSOs are inclusive, and they do not always have strong relations with government authorities. It is also the case that CSOs in some cases serve as more or less personal platforms for individuals to wield influence. Nonetheless, in many cases they have clout within the communities, which can allow them to mobilize people and speak to authorities with added weight.

Concerning Authorities

Authorities' already existing outreach to communities is something to build on. While it varies substantially how much they do it, authorities existing outreach is an important entry point for further strengthening cooperation between authorities and citizens. Authorities' outreach takes different forms – either in-person outreach through field visits or office meetings, or through various media. Some use billboards, and a few have started using social media. The most commonly used medium for outreach is being available via phone. While it varies considerably how much these communication efforts actually enable conversation with communities, they do

remain important opportunities for communities and authorities to engage, and they indicate authorities feel they need to do it.

Informal feedback channels are opaque, but probably effective. Feedback about service delivery – while still limited in extent – is often provided outside the formal system through influential community members who are able to speak to authorities with greater weight due to their community role. While it is not always clear which community members become influential, and whether they are inclusive in their approach to representing communities’ interests, they remain enablers of cooperation between authorities and communities, because they can engage authorities more easily.

Communities’ existing service production communities can be strengthened. Communities are already in many ways involved in the production of services, through funding services directly or carrying out the work themselves – whether in the areas of education, health, road/infrastructure, water, electricity, or sanitation. While driven by necessity in the absence of state provided services, these groups are existing structures to build on and strengthen.

Emerging norms around community engagement. Both among communities and authorities, the research identified emerging norms around striving towards increased, meaningful engagement between authorities and communities. Communities are more assertive in their right to influence, and among authorities it is increasingly difficult to *not* say that including communities’ perspectives is important. To be sure, just because officials say community involvement is important, it does not automatically make it practice. It is nonetheless important to remember that shifting the ways in which the state and its citizens interact, and what they expect of each other and which obligations they feel, implies deep changes to dynamics constituted over hundreds of years. The emergence of norms around increased citizen/authority cooperation is a first step.

Recommendations

In light of the findings above, the report makes the following recommendations to *Social Cohesion for Better Service Delivery*:

In urban areas - work on health, waste management, and street lights. While health already receives a lot of attention, it remains very important to communities and there are promising entry points here, with regards to shifting mutual attitudes between patients and staff. While the mundaneness of waste management makes it an unpopular thing to support, it has a big impact on people’s everyday lives, and there is a potential to build stronger communities around cleaner and more healthy city-spaces. While parts of waste management are semi-cost intensive (fuel, vehicles), awareness/behavior change elements are less cost-intensive. In addition, the Municipal Departments which provide waste management are organizationally better able to engage citizens than line ministries. The same goes for street lights, which contribute to safety and are visual marks of whether local administration is working.

In rural areas - work on health, roads, electricity, and protection against natural disasters. As an enabling feature for other services, roads and transportation were identified as a priority by most rural communities. While requiring some technical skills, communities are already engaged

in road construction, providing structures to build on. Electricity too has profound impact on communities, and in some cases unequal access to electricity has caused tension. While access to the national electricity grid is considered resource intensive and a high-skill endeavor, solar power is not. Given their impact – not least going forward – protection against natural disasters is a high-stakes area. While some forms of risk mitigation can be costly and skill intensive, other areas including awareness and training are feasible. Communities are already involved in protection against natural disasters and relief.

In addition, the report makes a number of general recommendations:

Design

Selection of priority service areas for engagement: Be flexible. Despite the above recommendations, in the spirit of genuinely supporting communities' and authorities' cooperation through a fully participatory approach, give leeway to beneficiaries to propose projects which fall outside these areas.

Use good practice and peer-to-peer: Streamline a good practice and peer-to-peer approach into the program, meaning good examples are consistently identified and showcased to other beneficiaries. Where possible, beneficiaries themselves should share their experiences with other beneficiaries.

Selection of influential citizens ('influencers'): Pay attention to representation. Influencers are relevant for SCBSD, but SCBSD must pay special attention to ensuring that the selection of beneficiaries remains diverse.

Retention: Compensate participants' time. To avoid a social gradient in the participant profile for SCBSD, compensate participants for their time and expense.

Content - SCBSD's Curriculum

Ambiguous concepts: Keep exploring definitions. Central concepts used in SCBSD are understood in very different ways among and within communities and authorities. Rather than settling on one definition and stamping out others, actively explore and stay perceptive to differing definitions of such concepts to uncover diverging understandings, expectations, and tensions.

Impact: Set realistic expectations. Acknowledge that changing state/citizen relations takes time and set expectations thereafter.

Curriculum content I: Include content on *The Social Contract*. Include content on *The Social Contract* to discuss with beneficiaries (do not dictate) the rights and obligations between citizen and state: "What is the state? What does it mean to be a citizen?"; "What can the state demand from the citizen and why? Why should I pay tax?"; "what can citizens demand from states/what is the state accountable for?"

Curriculum content II: Explain why community/authority engagement is good. Throughout the implementation of SCBSD, identify and showcase examples of positive change brought about

by community/authority engagement to demonstrate its usefulness to both communities and authorities.

Curriculum content III: Include content on the administrative system to deliver services, including entry points and complaint mechanisms. Include an introduction to the administrative system, including ‘citizen entry points.’ Also include content on how to deal with authorities’ underperformance.

Curriculum content IV: Include content on constructive complaining (and other forms of feedback). Include content on how to complain constructively – that is, how to present complaints and other feedback in such a way that it does not come across as an attack on authorities, but rather that it appears fact-based, reasonable, and realistic.

Curriculum content V: Include content on receiving complaints (and other forms of feedback). Conversely, also include content on ‘how to receive complaints well.’ For instance, assuming that the sender of a message has good reasons to send the message, even if he/she is not able to articulate it well.

Curriculum content VI: Include content on how to include communities – communication. Include content on inclusive communication. E.g., focus on sender/message/receiver awareness for authorities’ outreach to communities. Also focus on citizen-engaging, in-person communication during field visits. Specifically, focus on self-awareness, non-threatening communication, rapport building, and active listening.

Curriculum content VII: Include content on how to spot and mitigate issues of inclusion/exclusion. Include content on how to spot and mitigate issues of inclusion/exclusion of people from different groups of society. This may be based on wealth, status, gender, religion, ethnicity, education, etc.

Curriculum content VIII: Include content on rumor management (on both sides!). Include content on how to spot and mitigate rumors about partners.

Curriculum content IX: Include project management and community mobilization skills. To allow community participants to maintain ownership over grants projects and support successful implementation, include content on project management skills. Also include community mobilization and coordination skills.

Curriculum content X: Conflict mitigation and stress management. To mitigate issues arising during community/authority interaction, include conflict mitigation and stress management skills to support officials as well as citizens to deal with such situations constructively.

General Posture Towards the Program’s Surroundings

Approach to authorities I: Be transparent, build relationships. While negative stereotypes around international organizations exist, authorities interviewed during this research were mostly forthcoming and, in most cases, expressed willingness to cooperate. Pay significant attention to

further developing these positive relations. Appoint one or more known and dedicated liaison officers to engage with authorities on a regular basis. Keep authorities appropriately informed of SCBSD's activities (e.g. through monthly written updates and/or in-person meetings). Make sure to attend when invited to participate in events (authorities keep track).

Approach to authorities II: Stay compliant. Leverage government contacts to stay abreast of (the frequent) changes in rules and laws, particularly around 'foreigners' work. Prioritize complying with rules and regulations (e.g. around travel permissions - to not risk causing negative effects for other organizations operating in the context).

Approach to authorities III: Avoid politics (or balance it). The government and authorities in Rakhine are not a monolithic entity, but consists of different factions with differing and (at times) competing interests. Remain vigilant to ensuring contact with, and ideally collaboration with, all factions. Consider choosing 'low-profile' topics such as waste management (at least to begin with).

Approach to general surroundings I: Be transparent. To counter popular suspicions of foul play among international organizations, be transparent – also towards the broader society. Rather than being 'secretive,' go the other way and systematically share information SCBSD's work (so much that potential singular misappropriated facts are watered down). Use Facebook and other social media, and produce and distribute written content at meetings, presentations, and events. Place flyers at the GAD One Stop Shops (if they're willing). Make content available in Rakhine and Burmese, but also ideally in ethnic minority languages (i.e. Mro, Daignet, etc.).

Approach to general surroundings II: Brand recognition is low – claim wins. As 'ordinary' citizens don't often recognize organizations, be persistent in claiming wins, if building recognition is important. Coincidentally, with regards to the recommendations above to be transparent, one positive of having a low level of brand recognition means that if negative stories do emerge around SCBSD and/or SEARCH/SI, they are likely to be relatively short-lived. This means a slightly less risk-averse posture can be taken.

Approach to general surroundings IV: Avoid contributing to salary inflation (and other mishabits). Be careful not to contribute to (or at least not lead) salary inflation. Also be cautious of 'living up to' other stereotypes associated with NGOs, including equipping staff with overly valuable work tools, cars, accommodation, etc.

Approach to general surroundings III: Rename SCBSD. *Social Cohesion for Better Service Delivery* is a long and potentially ambiguous name. Identify a short, catchy name in the everyday style of project names used by Search elsewhere (e.g. "Demain est un autre jour" or "Zo Kwe Zo").

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In October 2018, Search for Common Ground (Search) in Myanmar and Scholar Institute (SI), contracted Conflict Management Consulting (CMC) to carry out the assignment *Participatory Research on Service Provision in Rakhine*. A dual research process, this assignment aimed to establish a better understanding of two pertinent topics in the context of Rakhine, more specifically in the townships Sittwe, Ramree, Taungup, and Ponnagyun, focusing on local authorities (LAs) and civil society organizations (CSOs). With a particular focus on women, youth, and marginalized communities, it aimed to provide a better understanding of access, needs, and social dynamics in relation to public services, and it aimed to deepen knowledge about community information flows, including about the ways in which information is shared and received, who is trusted with information, and through which media communication takes place. The research was undertaken to inform the project *Social Cohesion for Better Service Delivery (SCBSD)* – a 36-month EU-funded project aiming to strengthen CSOs and LAs, particularly women and youth organizations, in working with LAs to improve service delivery to populations in Rakhine.

The research has resulted in the publication of two separate reports for the benefit of Search and a broader Rakhine orientated community. This is one of them, and it focuses on service provision, not least the extent to which communities and authorities are engaged in cooperative modalities for service provision. It also looks at which entry points there might be for further strengthening such cooperation. This body of work has contributed to the building of research capacity with Search's partner organizations on the ground, whose knowledge, insights, and support in return has formed a strong resource for the research. In addition, it has supported trust-building and relationship building with the stakeholders. As such, the research was carried out in a way that embodies the principles of collaborative and participatory research.

1.2 Structure

In the following section, we present the questions pursued in this research, including the more specific lines of inquiry which have been explored. The report's methodology and the process through which the research was undertaken is presented in annex form. In the subsequent section, we present the research findings and insights from the primary data, which was collected through this research, as well as evidence from extant literature. The findings section is structured as follows: for each of the service sectors explored in the report, a brief 'service sector profile' is first presented. Based on these profiles, a section follows in which overall challenges to community/authority cooperation are presented, first from the community side, then from the authority side. After this, a section presents different enabling factors for community/authority cooperation, demonstrating stepping stones and entry point for further engagement. The final part of the findings section focuses specifically on the 'space of opportunity' for the SCBSD project. It identifies a set of criteria and discusses, based on these and the findings from the report, relevant service sectors for the project, as well as more general recommendations for the project.

2. Problem Statement and Research Questions

This section outlines the topical focus of this report. This focus was established in cooperation with Search for Common Ground (Search) and Scholar Institute (SI). Having restated the topical focus of the report, it further conceptualizes this focus into research questions, which in turn guide the structure of this report.

2.1 Topical Focus: Services and Social Cohesion

“Once we had someone, I think it was the deputy township education officer, coming to our village. He said he would do things for us and ate a meal with chicken. Then someone else came, made the same promise and ate another meal with chicken.” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree)

The impetus for the project is the observation that shortcomings, with regards to service provision, are a conflict driver that also contributes to the environment that sustains tensions between ethnic communities in Rakhine as well as with the government.

More than lack of services in itself being a driver of conflict, the way in which services are delivered and to whom can be a source of contention. Inadequate and poor service delivery, but also conflict insensitive expansion of service provision in ethnic areas, which are also some of the poorest areas of the country, fuels ethnic grievances, conflict, and distrust between the central union, largely Bamar led government administration, and ethnic communities, especially in Rakhine State. In many ways, services are a central, yet delicate component playing into a greater bargain between different communities and in relation to the state over who gets what (from whom), and who makes decisions about it (see e.g. TAF, 2018). Services, and the way they are delivered, may be a central grievance, especially for those who feel left behind or discriminated against and may work to further entrench social divisions. As documented in this research, such feelings are prevalent not only within ethnic minority communities, but also exist among other groups of people and across other social fault lines (e.g. among those who live in remote, rural areas who feel they are left to themselves). Service delivery is an element in what Gabrielle Aron calls the “web of grievance” which characterizes Rakhine State (Aron, 2018).

But service delivery is also, if approached right, an area of opportunity. Where communities can see tangible benefits, service delivery may contribute to the reduction of grievances and the building of trust. Service delivery can be a key entry point for fostering horizontal cohesion between communities if inclusive consultative processes are held around shared issues of concern.

Box 1: How do we define services?

“Services” is normally thought to span a range of benefits from water, electricity, education, and health provision, to social services, transportation, justice mechanisms, security provision, clean air, etc. Benefits which are often assumed to be provided, guaranteed or regulated by the state.

This working definition has guided the scope of the research. At the same time, it has nonetheless been a central point to problematize the concept and its application in the Myanmar context. As such, the report also explores how beneficiaries and providers of services alike understand the concept of “services”, and what that tells us about the relationship between communities and authorities as well as the space for strengthening collaborative service provision.

Addressing service issues can be a vector for fostering dialogue and interaction between communities.

Importantly, service delivery can also be a vector for building trust between the state and its people, contributing to vertical cohesion. Historically, the state and government have been seen as enforcing rules and order – not, as owing anything to citizens who have the duty to follow the rules. In this sense, the social contract contains less of a notion of exchanging sovereignty for service, as is most commonly seen for instance in the Western context. Compounded by six decades of military rule and a longer history in Rakhine of center-periphery contestations between the union government and the people of Rakhine, the day-to-day relationship between citizens and officials in Myanmar is often strained. Strengthening service delivery through inclusive engagement between communities and authorities can help to transform this relationship and ultimately ease the web of grievance. Getting communities and authorities to work together in constructive ways to address service issues can foster trust and create better lives and conditions on the ground. SCBSD - implemented in partnership between Search and SI - aims to do exactly this. It provides capacity building and trust building for constructive engagement in relation to public service delivery, and offers grants to communities to strengthen service delivery through that social cohesion.

2.2 This Report

The purpose of this report is to support Search and SI in identifying concrete areas of service delivery within which SCBSD may successfully contribute. As illustrated above, the linkage between social cohesion and service delivery is complicated and requires thorough analysis. The purpose of this report is to explore the barriers and enablers for better engagement between authorities and communities.

The report will guide Search through the various factors Conflict Management Consulting (CMC) believes must be considered in deciding where, how, and with whom to engage. It will provide the necessary formative inputs to enable Search to adopt a research-backed implementation approach.

In identifying potential entry points for SCBSD, a number of criteria are taken into consideration:

- Which services do communities feel there is a need for strengthening? The report does not carry out a full-scale needs assessment, but rather, engages with diverse communities to allow them to identify potential areas for engagement. The report does not comment on the degree to which community-identified service needs are, or are not, justified.
- Of these areas, where is there relatively little being done by other actors, meaning that the engagement avoids duplicating other efforts?
- In which areas are authorities open to engaging more with communities?
- Which areas – by their nature – have more potential to increase social cohesion?
- In which areas is it technically and practically feasible to pursue engagement?
- Donor’s strategic priorities (linking up and down)

With this purpose and these criteria guiding the inquiry, the report aims to shed light on the research questions described below.

2.3 Research Questions

The research pursued three streams of questions.

2.3.1 Who Gets What from Whom and Why (Not)?

In the first stream, the focus was on service provision through a ‘classical’ prism, in which beneficiaries are passive consumers of one or more services, which in turn is produced and given by one or more service providers (see figure 1). The relation between service producer and beneficiary is assumed to be simple and largely one-directional. In this stream, the focus was on mapping the extent to which different communities have access to particular services, and what they – and other stakeholders – think of them. Formally, this stream asked: “*Who gets what from whom?*” but also asked: “*What are the barriers and facilitators for this service delivery?*” Research questions implicated in this stream include:

1. Which services do communities articulate a need for?
2. Who (if anyone) provides these services to the target beneficiaries, and to what extent?
3. What is the quality of this service?
4. What are the barriers to this form of service delivery?
5. What are the enablers to this form of service delivery?

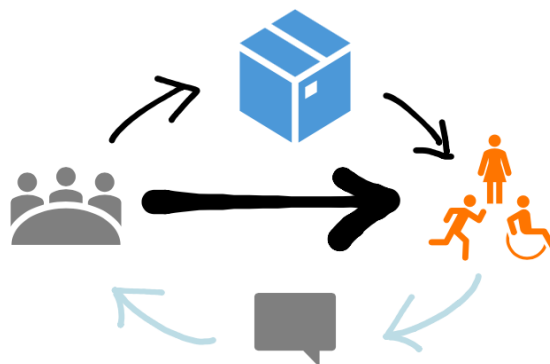


Figure 1: Classic service provision. Beneficiaries are on the receiving end of services provided by authorities. Feedback is limited or absent.

2.3.2 To What Extent are Beneficiaries Involved in the Production of Services and Why (Not)?

In the second analytical stream, the focus was on service provision through a prism of *co-production*, in which beneficiaries in varying degrees are involved in the production of services through different forms of collaborative solutions, including with ‘classic’ service providers (see figure 2). This may include beneficiaries investing their time and resources and encompasses a certain level of meaningful dialogue between beneficiaries and ‘classic’ service providers. The relation between service producer and beneficiary is thus

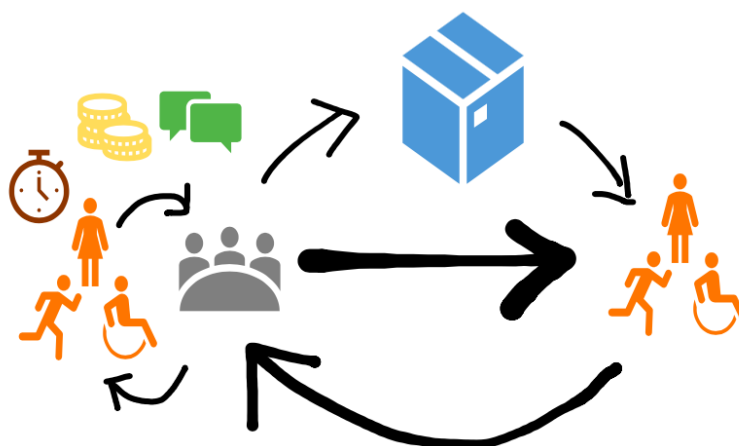


Figure 2: Co-production. Beneficiaries contribute actively to the production of services, providing input/feedback, time, resources.

assumed to be more complex and two (or multi)-directional – for better or for worse¹. In this second analytical stream, the focus was on mapping the extent to which different communities are involved in the production of particular services and how this affects their access to services. Formally, this stream asked: “*To what extent are beneficiaries involved in the production of services?*” It also asked, “*What are the barriers and facilitators for this modality service delivery, and how do they affect different communities’ access to services?*” Research questions implicated in the second stream therefore included:

6. To what extent are beneficiaries involved in the production of services? In evaluating communities’ involvement, a ‘taxonomy of involvement’ was developed, informed by the empirical findings of the research (see following section)
7. What are the barriers to this form of service delivery?
8. What are the enablers of this form of service delivery?
9. Which existing stakeholders, relations and mechanisms may be identified as entry points for SCBSD to facilitate and further strengthen co-production of services within each of the target townships?

2.3.3 The space for engagement – what are the ways in which SCBSD can (not) facilitate co-production of services?

The third stream more specifically explored the dimensions of the space for SCBSD to engage with service delivery to facilitate co-production (see figure 3). In attempting to identify entry points, we leveraged the preceding streams, focusing more specifically on the way in which communities interact with actors like Search and SI within the local context. Formally, this stream asked: “*What are the ways in which SCBSD can (not) facilitate co-production of services?*” Research questions implicated in the third stream therefore included:

1. What are the barriers for SCBSD engagement?
2. What are the enablers of SCBSD engagement?

To explore these streams of research, three sets of research tools were developed – for communities, for CSOs, and for authorities. Please refer to Annex 1 for these tools. Please refer to Annex 2 for a description of the report’s methodology.

¹ Recent works have served to nuance the assumptions in play with regards to the paradigm of community collaborative service delivery. Specifically, it has been proposed that the notion that communities are to demonstrate a willingness/ability to collaborate on development projects may in some contexts serve as a challenge to longer-term goals. A hypothesis is that it may disenfranchise particular communities who are unable to enact this commitment. This may include poorer communities, communities with low levels of efficacy (meaning they have a hard time coming together, often a sign of existing tensions, past conflict, etc.), and communities with weak or corrupt leadership (often where leaders already have a stranglehold on resources). The study will aim to explore this dimension, both through the interview guides themselves and/or through the analytical framework.

3. Findings and Recommendations

This section presents the findings of the research. It provides first an overview of the administrative structures for service provision in Myanmar and Rakhine, before addressing more specifically the conditions encountered in the target townships for this research. It presents for each of the services explored a ‘profile’ focusing on access, quality, and provision. These profiles also provide evidence of the extent to which communities are currently involved in its production. In presenting this evidence, a ‘taxonomy of co-production’ will be employed (see the box to the right).

Finally, the ‘service profiles’ contain - as a summary of the information presented in each profile - a set of ‘scores’ on a list of criteria which are meant to help identify what would constitute good entry points for *Social Cohesion for Better Service Delivery* (SCBSD) programming. These criteria were identified in collaboration between Search, Scholar Institute and Conflict Management Consulting (CMC). The criteria were identified iteratively over the period of the research to reflect evolving priorities, programmatic developments, and insights from the research process. The criteria are presented and defined below and will be further utilized in the subsequent section on recommendations to identify tentative suggestions for focus areas for SCBSD.

3.1 Criteria for Selecting Entry Points

The following criteria were identified as relevant for identifying what constitutes a relevant entry point for SCBSD:

- **An articulated need within communities:** The service in question is under-served at the moment; communities indicate that they find it important to improve
- **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** Few or no other actors work to address the needs gap which exists in relation to the service in question. The contributions made by SCBSD will be discernible
- **Authorities’ openness to engagement:** The relevant authorities to the service in question are open to engaging further with communities to address the needs gap which exists in relation to the service in question. Authorities are (also) willing to engage with SCBSD.
- **Potential to increase social cohesion (stakes, structure):** The service in question is relevant from a social cohesion perspective. The stakes are sufficiently high to have an impact on social cohesion. The structure of the service in question is such that it invites collective action (e.g. immunization)

A taxonomy of co-production

Co-production implies that beneficiaries to varying degrees are involved in the production of services through different forms of collaborative solutions, including with ‘classic’ service providers. Co-production is often associated with greater efficacy of communities and/or empowerment, and with improved quality and effectiveness. Yet, not all co-production is equally so. It is possible to construct a ‘taxonomy of co-production’, noting the different levels of community efficacy implied:

Design: Communities are involved in decisions about the design of services, impacting what, how, where, when they are delivered.

Feedback: Communities provide input in response to service delivery decision made by others.

Pay: Communities contribute to service delivery through money and other resources.

Labor: Communities provide services themselves or contribute to them with their own labor.

- **Feasibility (entry points):** The service in question is something which SCBSD can feasibly contribute to, given the skills, connections, and entry points available to it
- **Donor’s strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Addressing the needs gap in relation to the service in question aligns with donors’ strategic interests

The second part of the section focuses on ‘the opportunity space’ for co-production at a more general level. It draws on the service specific profiles above as well as general observations from the empirical data to synthesize insights about the challenges faced by communities and authorities in pursuing cooperative solutions to service delivery, but also enabling factors for it.

While initially a strategy of using the four target townships as unit of analysis was foreseen, the analysis carried out revealed that other divisions were as relevant or more relevant than township borders – urban/rural differences in particular. The section therefore adopts a functional unit of analysis, meaning differences between different subsets of the data will be noted where they are relevant.

3.2 An Administrative Overview

This section provides an overview of the state administration with a focus on the system in place to provide public services at the township level and below. The township level – according to a 2018 publication by The Asia Foundation (TAF) – is “at the heart of subnational administration; Myanmar’s 330 townships are the building blocks of public administration and service delivery” (TAF, 2018). TAF quotes Kyi Pyar Chit Saw and Arnold (2014) for noting that “[t]ownships have been the ‘central unit of local government’ for centuries.” It first goes through the implementing administrative units, before identifying a number of potential entry points for community engagement².

3.2.1 Implementing Units

3.2.1.1 Big Picture: The 2008 Constitution

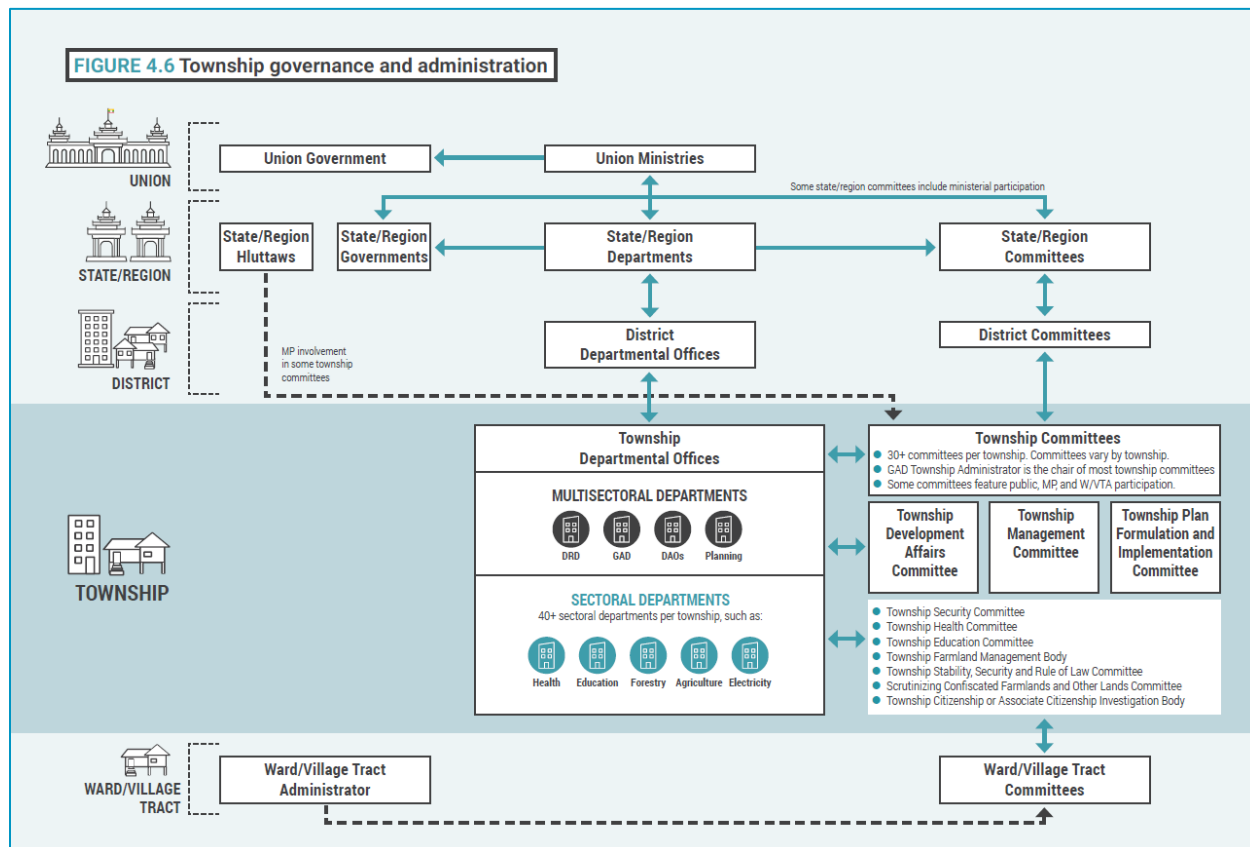
There are five main layers in Myanmar’s administrative setup: The union, the state/region, district, township, ward/village tract. Myanmar’s administrative setup is special in the way that the 2008 constitution did not create a 3rd tier government (e.g. municipalities led by a mayor), and at the 2nd tier (the state level), it did not create an executive branch. Instead it retained the existing governance structures at the township level – namely first of all the General Administrative Department (GAD) anchored in the Ministry of Home Affairs and overseen by the Tatmadaw (Armed Forces of Myanmar), and second the Union government’s ministries³⁴. The third cluster of agencies relevant to service provision, are the Municipal

² The Asia Foundation, 2018. State and Region Governments in Myanmar

³ An important exception – not least in the context of SCBSD – is the Development Affairs Organizations which exist in every township in Myanmar and represents an exception to the rule that 3rd tier governance units do not exist. The DAOs – themselves reminiscent from colonial times – are self-run at the municipal level, including with regard to funding. See further below.

⁴ After a number of ‘failed’ attempts, the GAD was transferred to the Ministry of Union Government, a new ministry under civilian control, in early 2019. Time will tell the extent to which this will make a difference for service provision. For the immediate future, little change is envisioned, not least because the staff employed by the GAD remain the same.

Departments (MD) which serve urban areas and the Departments of Rural Development (DRD) which serve rural areas. These are reminiscences from colonial times and are self-run at the municipal level, including with a right to collect tax. Please refer to the illustration below, which stems from the TAF 2018 report on state and region governments.⁵



3.2.1.2 General Administration Department – GAD

An administrative octopus, the GAD exists at all subnational levels and is by this virtue an important element in the Myanmar public administration. At the township level, it plays a central coordinating role for all public administration units, including the union ministries and the MD/DRDs. As such, the number of units which the GAD coordinates, is often around 40 or more, according to TAF’s 2018 report on states and region governments⁶. A graph from this report showing an example list of common departments at the township level is included in Annex 2 “Research Methodology and Limitations”

The GAD is run out of the General Administration Office (GAO) which is where “key functions of government take place, including population registration, land registration, and many forms of tax collection”. In addition, the “GAD township administrators hold the responsibility to investigate complaints and mediate and resolve them.” It is led by township administrators “who

⁵ The Asia Foundation, 2018. State and Region Governments in Myanmar; page 60.

⁶ The Asia Foundation, 2018. State and Region Governments in Myanmar

identify their roles as the promotion of social and economic development through the management of township affairs, oversight of implementation for development projects, and coordinating with other parts of government.” Furthermore, the GAO “leads on the oversight and granting of township-level permissions and has an overarching mandate that extends over the other departments.”

By virtue of their coordinating and convening function, the township administrators (TA) are considered by the (TAF, 2018) report as the most powerful township level unit and a main entry point for stakeholders. This is seconded by the (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2015) assessment which ascribes the responsibility for both vertical and horizontal coordination to the GAD⁷. The TA also plays an important role in the township committees (see below) which – in theory – constitute a mechanism/entry point for community participation. For these reasons, the GAD is an important stakeholder for SCBSD – at least at a higher level. Day-to-day interaction will more likely be with more specialized units, but securing buy-in from the GAD will be an asset. In interviews conducted for this study, GAD officers (administrators, planning officers) were found to be willing to engage with SCBSD (see service sector profiles below).

Recommendation: Maintain good relations with the GAD

3.2.1.3 The Union Sector Ministry Departments

As previously mentioned, the Union level sector ministries implement directly at the township level through specific departments. Referring to Nay Pyi Taw (although still coordinated by the GAD), the ministry departments implement ‘on their own behalf’. They may nonetheless also have responsibilities on behalf of the state level government (which doesn’t have an administrative body). Their competence may include taxation and licensing.

The specific constellation of departments present will reflect the activities of the specific township. In any township, there may be numerous departments. Again, reference may be made to the example list in Annex 2, produced by TAF (2018).

For the services, which this study focuses on the most relevant ministries are the ministry of education, health, construction, and border security. During interviews conducted as part of this research, ministry department officials were found to demonstrate varying degrees of willingness to engage with SCBSD and with communities more generally. Health and education ministry officials were seen as less open to community/authority cooperation (see service sector profiles below).

3.2.1.4 Development Affairs Organizations (also known as Municipal Dep.) and Dep. of Rural Development

An exception to the general rule that subnational governance is ‘attached upwards’, either directly through the Union ministries’ departments or via the GAD to the state government or the Ministry of Home Affairs, is the Development Affairs Organizations (DAO), also known as (and in this study referred to as) the Municipal Departments (MD). The MDs – while coordinated by a state

⁷ UNDP, 2015: Local Governance Mapping: The State of Local Governance: Trends in Rakhine

level MD – are self-run entities at the township level and also self-financed through revenue collection, “primarily from the businesses concentrated in urban areas” (TAF, 2015)⁸. Their mandate is related to immediate, public-facing service provision. The box to the right contains an overview of the MDs’ responsibilities.

Notably, the MDs consist of two elements – an MD office led by a civil servant with his/her deputy who is an engineer and a committee to oversee its work the Township Development Affairs Committee (TDAC) – see below). With their public-facing mandate and less complicated governance framework, the MDs – and the TDACs accompanying them – are a relevant stakeholder for Social Cohesion for Better Service Delivery (SCBSD). It is also worth noting here, that a report observed that “[c]ontrary to Health and Education [these agencies are] involving people in its planning process more actively⁹” (UNDP, 2015). TAF in 2015 noted that “to date, almost no [MD] staff have received training from international organizations and experts”. While it is unclear whether this has changed, it suggests that supporting the MDs is a less ‘crowded field’ than other organizations.

DRDs function much in the same semi-autonomous way as MDs and provide largely the same services in rural areas that MDs provide in urban areas. Again, these include “local infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, water supply, electrification, micro financing, canals and ponds, and community-driven development projects” (TAF, 2018)¹⁰. DRDs too have a practice of “involving people in its planning process more actively” (UNDP, 2015).

During this research, both MD and DRD officials – but in particular the latter – were found to be willing to engage with SCBSD.

Recommendation: Prioritize (not exclusively) working with MDs and DRDs

3.2.1.5 The Ward/Village Tract Level Administrators

Below the township level is the ward/village tract, which is the most local administrative level in Myanmar, and which plays a key role in public administration as the “interface between the central state and most of Myanmar’s population.” The local extension of GAD, the Ward/Village Tract Administrator (W/VTA) administration is led by an administrator under the supervision of the township GAD and with the support of a GAD clerk. Notably, the W/VTA – since reforms in 2016 – is elected and thus neither constitutes a GAD staff member nor receives any substantial salary, although basic remuneration was instituted by the National League for Democracy (NLD). The W/VTA is therefore – according to (TAF, 2018) – seen as “support[ing] local development and represent[ing] local people to the authorities” in addition to maintaining its administrative duties, which include tax collection, land registration, reporting on demographics and collecting information for township departments. On the other hand, the W/VTAs – who cannot be promoted, but can be dismissed by the townships GAD “for abuse of power, incompetence, or corruption” – according to the TAF (2018) report vary substantially with regards to capability. The report says “senior GAD officials have bemoaned the inexperience and lack of knowledge of ward/village-

⁸ The Asia Foundation, 2015: Municipal Governance in Myanmar: An overview of Development Affairs Organizations

⁹ UNDP, 2015: Local Governance Mapping: The State of Local Governance: Trends in Rakhine

¹⁰ The Asia Foundation, 2018. State and Region Governments in Myanmar

tract administrators.” Nonetheless, as previously mentioned, “[c]itizens consistently regard their ward and village-tract administrators as the authoritative, and often trusted, voices for dispute resolution and decision-making in their area¹¹” (TAF, 2018).

3.2.1.6 The 10-Household and 100-Household Leaders

In addition to the GAD clerk, W/VTAs are often supported by the so-called 10/100-household leaders, which appear in some areas to function as a form of support system or network around the W/VTA for information gathering and dissemination, and likely for other forms of consulting functions. The 10-household and 100-household leaders – who themselves are selected by household representatives (who are usually men) – “play a role in the election of the W/VTAs” (TAF, 2018).

3.2.2 Entry Points for Community Engagement

Within the formal system administrative setup, two arrangements are worth mentioning, which allow citizens to take part in decisions or to provide input.

3.2.2.1 The Township Administration Committees

At the township level, there exists a substantial number of committees (up to 30 or more), which – at least in theory – aim to provide a channel for involving community members in decision making processes. While they are often led by GAD, and officials occupy a number of their seats, community members normally also have representation. Such seats are most often occupied by individuals who have a certain standing in the community, e.g. Civil Society Organization (CSO) leaders (see section 3.4.2). The role of the committee is to provide “oversight and coordination among departments” (TAF, 2018). As such, TAF notes, the committees are “a key institutional mechanism of local governance without local government” (TAF, 2018)¹².

Four committees tend to be the most prominent: The Township Management Committee (TMC), the Township Committee for Scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands (TCSCFOL), the Township Plan Formulation and Implementation Committee (TPFIC), and the Township Development Affairs Committee (TDAC), also known as the Municipal Committee. The latter is the one which oversees the MDs. It is particularly relevant, insofar as the majority of its members (4 out of 7) are usually from the public, and they are chaired by a member of the public. According to TAF, 2018, the actual strength of the TDACs and their chairmen - in their oversight of the MDs - varies contextually, often depending on the chairman’s personal authority (TAF, 2018: 61). For more detail of each of the four influential committees, please refer to Annex 4: Account of the Administrative System for Service Provision.

Insofar as the committees are a vehicle for citizen influence, they are important arenas for SCBSD. At the same time, the research demonstrated that the committee system – as it is – doesn’t

¹¹ The Asia Foundation, 2018. State and Region Governments in Myanmar

¹² The 2008 constitution did not establish dedicated implementing bodies to the state/region governments. This in turn means the state/region governments (with the exception of the DRDs) rely on other bodies to implement things - most notably the GAD and the Naypyitaw-linked line ministries.

necessarily contribute substantially to broader citizen engagement. We return to these issues at a later point, but in short form, the committees are generally unknown to ‘ordinary’ citizens. The citizens who sit on them are typically privileged citizens. It is also not clear that the committees are always taken seriously by authorities – to some they are a waste of time. One reason for this may be that – as TAF notes – “the sheer number of committees [...] often impedes the GAD’s work¹³” (TAF, 2018).

3.2.2.2 Members of Parliament (MPs)

A second vehicle of popular influence in public decision making, is members of (state and union) parliament (MPs). There are (usually) two members of state parliament per township, elected locally. These MPs typically see direct community advocacy as an important part of their work (TAF 2015¹⁴ and 2018); UNDP 2015¹⁵) and thus travel to communities to discuss community issues and identify potential solutions (including by locating available funds). This has been the case particularly under the NLD government, where MPs have more often taken on the role of ‘community activists’, also by participating in committee work at the township level, e.g. the TDAC committees. The NLD has encouraged this engagement because MPs ‘by virtue of their election’ are seen as carrying a popular mandate. Especially in Rakhine, where the state parliament is relatively ineffective due to political competition between NLD and The Arakan National Party (ANP), it is questioned whether MPs have more time for such engagement. Interviews with MPs conducted for this study indeed suggested MPs were busy and keen to visit communities. Among the community members interviewed, experience with engaging MPs was nonetheless limited.

3.3 Service Profiles

The following section provides for each service type explored a profile focusing on access, quality, and provision. It also provides evidence of the extent to which communities are currently involved in its production.

3.3.1 Defining “Services”

Before discussing communities’ access to and needs for services, it is nonetheless useful to reflect on how the basic concept itself – *services* – is understood in the program context, and what that means for implementing a program that focuses on service delivery.

To this end, we asked both community members and authorities to say what “services” meant to them. In doing so, we used the Myanmar term Pyi Thu Yay Yar Won Saung Mu, which connotes. In addition, the term A Soe Ya's Won Saung Mu was used.

These terms are not perfect translations of *services*, and over-interpretation should be cautioned. The responses from interviewees nonetheless clearly showed that *services* - as demonstrated below - is understood in very different ways across and within communities and authorities, espousing great differences not least with regards to what is expected (from whom) around services.

¹³ The Asia Foundation, 2018. State and Region Governments in Myanmar

¹⁴ The Asia Foundation, 2015: Municipal Governance in Myanmar: An overview of Development Affairs Organizations

¹⁵ UNDP, 2015: Local Governance Mapping: The State of Local Governance: Trends in Rakhine

On the community side, a general finding was that in many cases, community members struggled to define services. When they were able to do so, definitions were often limited or narrow in scope (*“it’s building roads and bridges. And schools and hospitals” - FGD, youth participants, rural Ponnagyun*). In some cases, definitions were by most accounts wrong; some interviewees for instance said service delivery was *“paying taxes such as land taxes” (FGD, youth participants, rural Ponnagyun)* or that services were “a mutual understanding” (FGD with female participants, rural Taungup). In other cases, definitions mostly centered on civil servants’ behavior (“quality service is providing equally to local communities without any discrimination” (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree). In some cases, *services* were defined more broadly as something *“fulfilling people’s needs” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree)*.

Recommendation: Throughout the project, explore definitions of key concepts to uncover assumptions, tension, differences, and to guide project focus

Community members were, in other words, in many cases less accustomed to thinking in terms of services and articulating demands or expectations towards authorities. Some interviewees linked this to Rakhine’s historical position as a fringe territory in the Bamar-dominated Burma/Myanmar, as well as to the modern history military rule (KII, Member of Parliament 1, Taungup). This estrangement from or ambiguity around *services* is of course important for a program like SCBSD which aims to address service delivery mechanisms and community/authority cooperation over them, as it pertains to (and aims to shift!) more fundamental configurations in the relationship between the state and the individual. This point does not suggest that the notion of services is entirely alien in the communities explored, and that demands regarding services are absent (they are not!). It is to point out that what can realistically be achieved, is both enabled and limited by socio-historical ideas about who gives what to whom (and that attention should be given to the different ways in which people understand *services*).

On the authorities’ side, definitions similarly varied, and ambiguities in many cases mirrored those of communities’ definitions. A notable element, however, is that for many of the authority officials interviewed, the most salient element in their definition of *services* was that they are something which is mandated from ‘above’. As the GAD officer in Ramree said: *“The definition of public services is: taking responsibility to get done those duties or assignments given by District Level, State Level, and Union Level” (KII, General Administrative Department, Ramree)*. This emphasis on bureaucratic hierarchy is important, because it precipitates one of the potential limitations to strengthening authorities’ and communities’ collaboration on service delivery, which authority officials articulated: namely a (perceived) tension between listening to communities and implementing what comes from above (we return to this point later).

Another important observation which emerged from conversations with authority officials, and which has implications for the implementation of a program which addresses service delivery, is to do with competing views on the social status associated with delivering services. When officials reflected on their (personal) motivations, many referred to an ethos of being servants to or being dedicated to the public (*“Public service is working for the communities” (KII, Dept. of Planning, Taungup)*; *“Public service is: ‘Working for the people!’ - KII, Dep. Officer, Department of Education, Ramree*). Regardless of whether this shows in their dealings with communities (many

community members did not think so), the articulation of this as an ideal is important, and appealing to it constitutes an entry point for SCBSD. At the same time, a similarly important finding was that some authority representatives appeared to regard service delivery as a low-status undertaking. One official for instance explained to the interviewer that his job “is *more* than service delivery” in a tone which made it clear to the interviewer that to him, ‘servicing communities’ was looked down on. *Services* is – in other words – a concept, which is associated with different levels of social status, which in turn may have implications for how (much) some actors want to engage in the delivery of it.

In conclusion, the research found that *services* as a concept is something which has a multitude of meanings in the program context and in many cases is a lens through which both communities and authorities for historical reasons are less accustomed to viewing their mutual interactions and obligations. This, in turn, means that there is a need for SCBSD – and any other program aiming to address service delivery – to streamline throughout its implementation an awareness of not just how “services” may be understood (and misunderstood) by different actors, but also how its embeddedness in broader socio-historical configurations are likely to present both limits and opportunities for engagement. In plain speak: Making changes to how communities and authorities work together on service delivery is ambitious, because it tackles deep-seated ideas and roles between authorities and communities. While this does not make the program less worthwhile, it highlights that understanding and working with different actors’ understanding of *services* will be or should be a central element in implementing SCBSD.

Recommendation: Set realistic and patient goals for what can realistically be achieved

With the above in mind, findings for each type of public service explored are presented in the following profiles. They are created with the input of communities, providing them an opportunity to articulate what *they* believe are the most important services to improve in their area. They also draw on authorities’ input and findings from the literature where available. For each service, the profile begins with an account of its availability and quality, before turning to its provision. Under this header, an account is first given of the production of the service through a classic lens in which services are produced by a service provider and consumed by beneficiaries in a primarily one-directional sense (see figure 1). Subsequently, evidence is presented of communities’ current involvement in the production of the service (co-production, see figure 2). Each service profile concludes with a table which summarizes the information presented and ‘scores’ each service on a set of criteria meant to help identify appropriate entry points for SCBSD for future programming.

3.3.2 Education

3.3.2.1 Access and Quality

Primary and secondary level enrolment rates in Rakhine are among the lowest in Myanmar at around 70% and 30% respectively, compared to union averages of 88% and 53%. The adult literacy rate stood at around 84.7% % in Rakhine State in 2015, compared to a national average of 89.5%¹⁶(Plan International, 2015)_Literacy rates are higher for males 92.2% than females

¹⁶ PLAN, 2015. Joint Education Sector Needs Assessment, North Rakhine State, Myanmar

78.7%¹⁷ (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2015). Almost 30% of all children in Rakhine State are not enrolled in primary education, and only 5% of children have access to pre-school education compared to the national average of 23%¹⁸.

Consistent with the Center of Diversity and National Harmony's (CDNH's) Rakhine Needs Assessment II¹⁹, nearly all communities said they have access to education in some form (CDNH found 90% of respondents had access to a school in their own village with an additional 6% reporting having access to school in another village). Government schools cover around 60% of villages in Rakhine, (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2015) but education is also available from monasteries and non-government schools (see below). Hardly any interviewees said they did not have access to basic education. This was consistent across townships and urban/rural locations. At the same time – while education in some form was generally accessible – nearly all interviewees consulted during this research identified education as a priority service to improve. This included both rural and urban interviewees.

Issues occur with regards to the *type* of education available and its *quality*. On the former, access to education at more than entry level is strongly correlated with interviewees' location in urban versus rural locations. Schooling after primary level (after grade six) is generally available only in towns (FGD with youth participants, urban Ramree, FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup), meaning rural citizens have less immediate access to this type of education. Children must travel further afield to pursue further education, which in turn increases costs. It also exposes children to increased risks, particularly during the rainy season when road conditions rapidly deteriorate (KII, CSO leader 4, Ramree), or when water transportation is necessary. This adds to parents' concerns and in some cases prevents children from attending more than basic education:

“When it comes to education, it’s easy if you want to attend high school. However, for those living in remote areas, it is quite difficult. Transportation is difficult. In some areas, children still have to go by water transportation. In the past, school children have died from boats capsizing. Although the government has made primary school education compulsory, some families still can’t send their children to school due to their socio-economic situation.” (KII, CSO leader 1, Ponnagyun)

“It is difficult for villages; children have to go through paddy fields and fish ponds to get to the school [the middle school] ... During the rainy season, children have to go over a water canal with strong currents.” (FGD, youth participants, rural Ponnagyun, p3)

“There are no bridges. The roads get really muddy in the rainy season, which makes it difficult for children to attend school. The water in the creek flows from the mountains, so the currents are very strong. Children drop out of school when they reach the 7th or 8th grades. Parents can’t afford it anymore” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, p1)

“Children need to walk for 6 to 7 miles to attend high school in a different village” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, p2)

¹⁷ UNFPA, 2015. A Changing Population: Rakhine State Figures at a Glance- May 2015

¹⁸ UNICEF, 2015. Rakhine State. A Snapshot of Child Wellbeing

¹⁹ CDNH, 2016: Rakhine State Needs Assessment II

In one focus group discussion in Taungup, a participant said rural students also face enrollment issues: *“It has been seen that students from rural areas can’t enroll at the schools in town”* (KII, CSO leader, Taungup). The participant nevertheless did not offer further explanation.

Concerning quality, a number of concerns were registered by interviewees across the four townships. Generally, they affected rural locations more than urban locations. These concerns related to:

- Presence of teachers**²⁰: In many cases, communities report that teachers’ presence is irregular. Some report teachers are only present a few days a week. In some cases, headmasters were reported to only show up on a monthly basis: *“Things are okay for primary school students. But the middle school teachers come like three days a week”* (FGD, youth participants, rural Ponnagyun, p5). *“The last headmaster we had in Oo Yin Tha Village was the worst. He’d show up only a few times a year. He came with some regularity just before he got assigned to a different location.”* (FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun, p3). In Sittwe: *“Teachers don’t have the interest of school children at heart. And they don’t fulfil their duties -mostly absent from work in rural areas. Lack of commitment to their job. I know a school master who goes to school like only once a month despite the fact that the school is really close to his house.”* (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Sittwe). On days when teachers appear, they appear for only a few hours. *“Sometimes they [teachers] get to school at 11 in the morning and they get ready to leave at 3 in the afternoon.”* (FGD, youth participants, rural Ponnagyun, p3). The problem affects rural communities in particular, where access is difficult for teachers whose travel and accommodation in many cases is underfunded. Communities frequently attempt to mitigate the problem by improving teachers’ conditions (see below on co-production). *“Two teachers have been transferred from our school and their replacements haven’t arrived yet. Even when teachers show up at school, they don’t stay long. They dismiss school after a class or two. Everyone wants their children to receive an education.”* (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, p3; FGD with female participants, rural Taungup; FGD, ethnic minority participants, Ponnagyun; FGD, youth participants, rural Ponnagyun; FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun). For female teachers, security is a concern, and some villagers requested better protection of female teachers *“The issue of female school teachers not going to their duty stations in remote areas is a long-standing one, for which the teachers aren’t entirely to blame. First of all, there is little economic security for them [meaning low salaries]. Safe accommodation is an important element of this issue; the government should arrange appropriate accommodation for teachers in this situation”* (KII, CSO leader 2, Sittwe).
- Performance of Teachers**: Teachers themselves are insufficiently educated, their didactic styles are outdated and premised on rote learning (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree; KII, CSO leader, Taungup; FGD, ethnic minority participants, Ponnagyun; FGD, mixed, rural Rakhine). *“The school teachers are like an axe which has not been sharpened for a long time. They need additional training on a regular basis”* (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree). Curriculum doesn’t teach critical thinking: *“In basic education, there are weaknesses in quality. In Myanmar, only those who passed the matriculation exam are recognized by*

²⁰ See also UNDP 2015

society. However, the education lacks practical skills and knowledge, which can actually be used in real life. I think education is the most important – not just the formal education but also the general knowledge and critical skills are important for our township/State to develop” (FGD 1, mixed youth participants, Taungup; FGD, ethnic minority participants, Ponnagyun)

- **Buildings are of poor quality:** Buildings last only for a short time (in one community in Ramree, a new school had lasted for three years due to poor construction (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree) or are too small (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree)
- **Materials:** Schools don't have sufficient books and educational material.
- **Language barrier:** (Some) ethnic minority children don't understand Rakhine, and teaching is not available in their language. Noted by an ethnic minority focus group participant in Ponnagyun: *“It's important that each sub-ethnic group has school teachers who speak their own dialect. They need to be qualified in accordance with government standards. We need at least two of these teachers.”* Another focus group participant said: *“That's what I want to say too. I am not being egoistic or anything like that. Children learn best when taught in their mother tongues. Younger kids actually don't understand Rakhine.”* Also in Ramree, Hindu interviewees noted language as a barrier.
- **Accessibility for people with disabilities:** School buildings are not built to accommodate students with physical disabilities (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree; FGD, ethnic minority participants, Ponnagyun). Education is not available for students who are hearing impaired (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree).
- **Discrimination:** Ethnic students reported being discriminated against. Chin focus group participants in Ramree: *“They take out their salaries and shirk their responsibilities. I think they have a tendency to discriminate against us because we're Chin. Teachers must treat school children like their own children. They need to educate them for the villages and for the country”* (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, p1). *“Good quality education is quite rare in our area. The kind of education our children receive is not up to the standard of elsewhere. Those students who can go to school in town have better quality education. Not even one out of 100 of our ethnic people receives such education. There are many students in the 10th grade who don't understand much of what is in the curriculum”* (KII, CSO leader 2, Ponnagyun).
- **Quality disrupted by conflict:** Education quality is negatively affected by conflict. Ponnagyun was particularly affected by this during the time of data collection. Both from Tatmadaw/AA fighting and from ethnic tensions: *“In places where there's fighting and conflict [...], the level of education is zero.”* (KII, CSO leader 2, Ponnagyun)
- **Cost of education:** As found by previous research and confirmed here, education is by many found to be too expensive, especially for poor families: *“Maybe things are slightly better now than in the past. But in rural areas, parents don't take their children's education seriously, and so they don't send their children to school. Of course, it has to do with the fact that they live in poverty. When children reach a certain age, their parents take them out of school and make them help with housework or livelihood [...] There are many 6 or 7-year old children who are working. There is no such thing as free school they could go to. So, I see that people have difficulties accessing education.”* (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Sittwe, p1). Save the Children and UNICEF in a 2013

Rakhine needs assessment found that 10 and 15% of urban and rural parents respectively explained drop-out or non-attendance with prohibitive costs (Save the Children and UNICEF, 2013)²¹. In focus groups conducted in 2015, PLAN International/REACH found that “[c]ost-related factors were overwhelmingly cited as the main reason keeping children out of education” (Plan International/REACH, 2015²²)

In Sittwe, Taungup and Ramree, the research teams were able to interview officials from the Department of Education. In both towns, they expressed regret not having sufficient budget to cover their respective areas. They admitted that hard-to-reach are generally not served “*They [our services] are not sufficient and not of adequate quality. Especially it is not that easy to reach all remote areas.*” (KII, Dep. Officer, Dept. of Education, Sittwe).

3.3.2.2 Production

Basic schooling is provided by the Department of Education in cooperation with the GAD and the state and union level government (KII, Dep. Officer, Department of Education, Ramree). The construction of schools is coordinated with the Department of Planning. As previously mentioned, government schools cover around 60% of villages.²³

Education is further – to varying degrees – complemented by International Non-Governmental Organization (INGOs) and CSOs. According to the Myanmar Information Management Unit²⁴ (MiMU), education is the fifth main sector in Rakhine in terms of areas receiving support from foreign donors, measured by number of organizations involved and number of projects (health, protection, WASH, livelihoods are bigger). According to interviewees, UNDP have built schools (KII, Dept. of Planning, Ramree; KII, Dep. Officer, Dep. of Education, Sittwe), while UNICEF, Plan International, and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) provide educational programs, including (according to an official from the Department of Education in Sittwe) providing training of teachers, schools renovation, child friendly spaces, schools materials, water and sanitation (KII, Dep. Officer, Dep. of Education, Sittwe; KII, Dep. Education Officer, Dep. of Education, Taungup). In Ponnagyun, Myitta Foundation and the Community Empowerment and Resilience Association (CERA) have built schools (FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun), and Bridge Asia Japan (BAJ) have reported implementing projects in the township²⁵. BAJ as well as PLAN International further implement projects in Taungup. There appears to be more extra-governmental service provision in Sittwe than in other areas - simply because it is the ‘capital’ of Rakhine (KII, Dep.

²¹ Save the Children and UNICEF, 2013: Education Rapid Needs Assessment and Response Recommendations Part 1 – Report Sittwe Township, Rakhine State, Myanmar. https://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Ref_Doc_EiE_Assessment_Report_Rakhine_SCI_Apr2013.pdf

²² PLAN International/REACH, 2015: Joint Education Sector Needs Assessment, North Rakhine State, Myanmar. Assessment Report November 2015 https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/reach_report_rakhine_joint_education_needs_assessment_november_2015.pdf

²³UNICEF, 2015. Rakhine State. A Snapshot of Child Wellbeing

²⁴The Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) is “a service to the UN Country Team and Humanitarian Country Team, under the management of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator. Its purpose is to improve the capacity for analysis and decision making by a wide variety of stakeholders [...] maintains a common data and information repository with data from various sources on all sectors, countrywide, at the lowest administrative unit for which it is available.” <http://www.themimu.info/about-us>

²⁵ <http://themimu.info/3w-dashboard>

Officer, Dept. of Education, Sittwe). In Sittwe, BAJ, LWF, JIA, PLAN, UNICEF implement, as well as the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

A sometimes-overlooked contributor to education services, are the monasteries, which – in addition to religious teachings – provide elementary skills in reading and writing skills (KII, Dep. Officer, Dep. of Education, Sittwe). The monastic school system largely complements the formal education system, offering services during weekends and during holidays/school vacations.

3.3.2.3 Co-Production

3.3.2.3.1 Forms of Participation, Higher End of Co-Production Taxonomy

Communities are involved in the production of education services in different ways at different ‘levels’ of the co-production taxonomy. At the ‘higher end’, there exists in most villages a local school committee (‘School Management Committee) which provides oversight with local schools and to some extent participates in decision making, for instance regarding where schools are built. It appears the Departments of Education to some extent delegates decisions to these committees (FGD 1, mixed, rural Ponnagyun; KII, CSO leader 1, Ramree). Respondents nonetheless said it varies considerably from committee to committee to what extent real influence is had. A decisive factor in this, is the approach of the local headmaster who is deployed to a community by the Ministry of Education. For some, there were also doubts over whether engagement would lead to concrete change:

“Those in charge are more concerned about holding on to their chairs [their office], which means there is no space for honest and open feedback within the system.” (KII, CSO leader 2, Ramree)

“I can’t say anything to the teachers, so now the school committee has given up hope and they don’t say or do anything anymore.” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, p3)

Others worried getting involved might lead to a worse outcome. A poorly performing teacher might be replaced with an even worse teacher or no teacher. Especially in rural communities, where retaining teachers is difficult, and services are ‘patchy’, communities are vulnerable to such outcomes, and a simple cost-benefit analysis ultimately lands in favor of the status quo.

“Once we went to the township education department to complain about a bad female teacher. But it made things worse; she came even less regularly afterwards. We asked the township education officer to force her into becoming more dedicated to her job. But they [perhaps both the Township Education Officer (TEO) and the school teacher] came to think of us as their enemy” (KII, CSO leader 2, Ponnagyun, p2)

“We opened the Post-Primary School last year. We want to be able to provide each grade up to 8th grade. The closest middle school is about 4 miles away. There aren’t enough teachers. If we complained about it now, they [teachers] would run away” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, p1).

In some cases, when teachers are from the villages they teach in, social dynamics make it awkward for communities to provide feedback to these teachers. As one interviewee in Ramree noted:

“A teacher in the school in my village is from my village. So she prioritizes her own interests instead of good teaching. And she can’t be controlled/engaged for providing regular and good teaching to students by villagers, as they are from the same village” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree)

There were, however, exceptions, and some villagers reported having complained about teachers with positive results:

“Sometimes teachers come to school regularly, and sometimes they don’t. I’ve personally made complaints about this. P2: Yes, we must definitely report this. I can’t just stand by when this is happening to our children.” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, focus group participants p1 and p2)

Others, however, were frustrated:

“We’ve got the school committee for example. We need to provide for teachers’ accommodation and build the school fence. As the committee, we’ve said things but they [teachers] don’t take us seriously. Some teachers listen, but some get upset and angry. We had a case in the past; the school master hadn’t shown up for three months and we complained to the township education officer. But he never acted on our complaint” (FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun, P1).

“It gets us nowhere. We have organized ourselves. For instance, we have come together to complain about teachers’ absence, but nothing came out of it” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramre p2)

3.3.2.4 Forms of Participation, Lower End of Co-Production Taxonomy

At the ‘lower end’ of the taxonomy, in rural areas, where retaining teachers is a frequent problem, a number of communities reported being involved in attempts to mitigate the problem by pooling resources to improve teachers’ conditions. Communities in some areas build accommodation for teachers and provide them food and other gifts. Such practices were for instance reported in a focus group in Ramree:

“We’ve built two hostels for the teachers. And they also have close access to water. People from the village also do everything they can to take care of their health care needs. Although we do all these things for them, they still aren’t happy in our village. We can’t do any more than this.” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, focus group participant 1)

In Sittwe: *“In some cases, parents of school children have to build houses for teachers who are from places far from the village they get assigned to so that they have regular attendance.” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Sittwe, p1)*

A focus group participant in Ponnagyun said this practice had caused disagreement in their village, because some felt the teachers were being pampered (FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun).

In some areas, community members contribute to providing education by standing in for teachers, when they are not present. In Taungup: *“Education - the services provided by government are not sufficient and we are arranging the education services by ourselves.”* (FGD 2, mixed youth participants, Taungup). In Ponnagyun: *“There are primary schools, but we have to do middle school education on our own. We’ve recruited volunteers from our own village to teach at the middle school [...] Because it’s a rural area, school teachers do not come to school regularly”* (FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun, P1).

Also at the lower end of the taxonomy, a common practice reported by several focus group participants – also in urban areas – is attempts to meet education needs through direct purchase. While it was recently banned, communities frequently reported that teachers – occasionally at the dispense of their formal duties – offer so-called tuition to communities to earn extra income. Given shortcomings in the public schooling system, tuition is often seen as necessary for students to proceed to further education, and parents therefore opt to purchase tuition (FGD with female participant, rural Taungup; 3.1.4; FGD, ethnic minority participants, Ponnagyun; FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun). For poorer families, this offers a further setback for their opportunities to secure an education for their children.

“We heard that students will not get a good education if they cannot take tuitions [evening classes]. We heard the lessons are not thoroughly explained in the school, but in tuition classes, the lessons were explained many times. We observed that there is a significant gap of understanding/learning between the students who could join the tuition and who couldn’t. Particularly from the children from economically disadvantaged families.” (FGD 1, mixed youth participants, Taungup)

3.3.2.5 Authorities’ Willingness to Engage

The extent to which the local branches of the Department of Education engage with communities appeared largely similar. None of the officials interviewed said they engage organizations outside the school system systematically (e.g. with CSOs/CBOs). Most expressed a certain level of commitment to engaging with communities, acknowledging the importance of eliciting community input. In Taungup, the official said he frequently interacts with students and parents: *“We, education staff, work with communities, especially students and parents. So it is therefore very important for us to listen to their voices [...] There are so many activities and engagement with communities such as parent and teacher meetings, educational exhibitions, and multiple educational festivals”* (KII, Dep. Education Officer, Dep. of Education, Taungup). Similar outreach was described in other townships.

Officials acknowledged that education committees were a channel for communities to “give some input” (KII, Dep. Officer, Dept. of Education, Sittwe). At the same time, as described by community members, it was less clear that this input was consequential. In Sittwe:

“There are schools committees in each village, village tract and ward, and they give some input. For example, they express needs for providing enough teachers, and schools if needed. However, it is still inadequate [...] To be honest, we can’t say the input of the communities is

useful, because even ourselves, we are not decision makers” (KII, Dep. Officer, Dept. of Education, Sittwe).

The officials in Ramree and Taungup similarly said it was difficult to incorporate communities’ input, because *“we are not the decision makers” (KII, Dep. Education Officer, Dep. of Education, Taungup).*

3.3.2.6 Scorecard: Criteria for a Good Entry Point

- **An articulated need within communities:** High: Identified as a priority area by nearly all interviewees
- **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** Low: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), others support education
- **Authorities’ openness to engagement:** Low: Officials did not demonstrate substantial openness
- **Potential to increase social cohesion (stakes²⁶, structure):** High: Edu. is high priority, stakes are high
- **Feasibility (entry points):** Medium: SCBSD may provide input to curricula
- **Donor’s strategic priorities (linking up and down):** High: European Union (EU) wish to link top-down/bottom-up

3.3.3 Health

3.3.3.1 Access and Quality

Myanmar’s health sector – as reported in previous studies, e.g. by the The World Health Organization (WHO), CDNH, UNDP – remains challenged by under-funding, poor infrastructure and low capability. The WHO has recommended that the minimum number of health workers to maintain a functional health system is 22 health workers per 10,000 inhabitants. Currently, there are only 5 health workers per 10,000 people in Rakhine, compared to the national average of 16 per 10,000 people²⁷ (WHO, 2019). A UNDP report from 2015 reported some progress due to increased funding, staff, equipment, medicine, but still highlighted substantial shortage of skilled staff²⁸.

Nearly all interviewees identified health care as a priority area of improvement. This is consistent with the 2016 CDNH statewide study, in which 52% of all respondents reported that they do not have access to adequate health care²⁹(Rakhine Commission, 2017). In interviews for this study, most interviewees reported having access to basic forms of health services, although answers were strongly correlated with focus group participants’ location. In a number of cases, interviewees from rural locations either said they had no access to any form of health service, or that travel

²⁶ “Stakes” in this context refers to the relative importance of a specific service, either due to its importance for a community’s sustenance or for its indirect importance to achieving other services. Access to water, for instance, is more important than streetlights, and roads are particularly important because they enable access to other services like health.

²⁷ WHO, 2019. List of Health Facilities and Hospitals in Rakhine State

²⁸ UNDP, 2015: Local Governance Mapping: The State of Local Governance: Trends in Rakhine

²⁹ Rakhine Commission, 2017. Towards a Peaceful, Fair and Prosperous future for the people of Rakhine

distances were so long that health services effectively were unavailable, particularly during the rainy season. Participants in a focus group with Chin communities outside Ramree said they had no or limited access to health services: *“P1: seven miles away from Ramree, and transportation is very difficult during the rainy season. We don’t have any health [care] in our area. We urgently need a village health center.”* (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, p1). Villagers from different remote villages in Ponnagyun similarly told about great difficulties accessing health services:

“P1: Health care is very bad; there aren’t any clinics in the villages. “

“P2: We have great difficulty accessing health care. Health care staff don’t regularly come to our villages. “

“P3: We have to walk one and a half hour or 2 hours to reach the hospital in Poe Ri Pyrun. “

“P4: There have been cases where pregnant women have to be carried to the hospital on a stretcher. I think health care is very difficult for everyone sitting here. “

“P5: We could use the speed boat in the past for health emergencies. However, we can’t use it anymore because we can’t afford the fuels.”

(FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun)

As with education, the more advanced the form of health care in question, the stronger the correlation between location and (lack of) access. In Rakhine, there are 6 main hospitals which are located in Sittwe, Mrauk Oo, Kyaukpyu, Ann, Thandwe, Taungup. Among these, the largest and most advanced is in Sittwe.

In addition to these hospitals, smaller towns have health clinics / village health centers, which offer less advanced treatments. They often have the responsibility for two to five village tracts (FGD with youth participants, urban Ramree). In Sittwe, there are 24 smaller clinics and five larger branches; in Ponnagyun, there are 24 and four; in Taungup 37 and six; in Ramree 39 and eight³⁰ (WHO, 2019).

In rural areas with no clinics, travelling nurses are assigned and appear with a certain frequency. They do not, however, appear in all places, and typically have many communities under them and limited capacity (often appear only once a week or once a month (FGD, mixed, rural Rakhine). They deal with minor diseases or sickness. In some rural areas, where access is particularly limited, different measures like training lay people to perform emergency treatments like malaria treatment or child delivery (KII, CSO leader 2, Ponnagyun; FGD, youth participants, rural Ponnagyun). Advanced treatments are only available at the hospitals in Taungup or Sittwe and for more complicated matters, patients may need to travel to Yangon. This contributes to a strong social gradient in access to healthcare, where wealth and proximity to towns play a very strong role in determining people’s ability to achieve treatment (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree).

“In our villages, [...] only the families with good financial situations can go to town and deliver babies. I myself decided not to have babies if I don’t have enough money, because the services

³⁰WHO, 2019. List of Health Facilities and Hospitals in Rakhine State

in our villages are very poor and very risky. Many of my friends with good economic conditions went to Kyauk Phyu or Pyay to deliver their babies.” (FGD 1, mixed youth participants, Taungup)

Quality issues raised by interviewees span a range of areas:

- **Lack of materials and medicine:** In contrast to a UNDP-mapping from 2015, which found that supplies of medicine and materials in health facilities were generally sufficient in Rakhine³¹(UNDP, 2015) focus group participants in a number of cases reported that quality of treatment is compromised due to lack of materials, including basic necessities like bandages, syringes, catheters. Medication is similarly restricted. interviewees reported having to pay for materials and medication, including in cases where they were meant to be free. True or not, a frequent assertion is that nurses make money by selling medication to patients (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree; FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup; FGD 1, mixed youth participants, Taungup; FGD with ethnic minority participants, Sittwe). In emergency situations, the lack of materials may be confusing to next of kin: *“The quality of healthcare is bad: No clinic, wrong injection, difficult to communicate. A person in a death faint was sent to Ponnagyun hospital; they gave a list for taking medication, but no medicine. And the recommendation letter [presumably doctor’s prescription] was difficult to understand.” (FGD, ethnic minority participants, Ponnagyun)*
- **Lack of skills:** Consistent with previous studies, interviewees for this study complained that the skill levels of health care staff is low, with high fatality rates ensuing. A common experience for patients is to be diagnosed in several different ways by different doctors, diminishing trust in doctors’ competencies: *“The hospital here is still unable to find accurate diagnoses for many serious conditions. Patients still have to buy medicine from the outside, and a lot of poor people can’t afford to do it. When one of my grandchildren was ill, we had one diagnosis; when we went to Kyauk Phyu we had a different diagnosis. So we went to Yangon and yet we had another diagnosis. It’s highly questionable whether medical doctors and engineers actually meet professional standards. The education department should regulate and certify these professional standards.” (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree; FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup)*
- **Lack of staff:** Hospitals and clinics are under-staffed, particularly in rural locations (FGD with female participants, rural Taungup).
- **Staff attitude:** Also consistent with previous studies, several focus group participants complained that health staff are dismissive, impatient or even rude towards patients with the effect that people delay treatment, contributing to further health risks: *“Villagers are disappointed with the service that are provided. People are forced to decide ‘next time I am not going to there anymore due to government staff’s relation to villagers’. People are afraid due to nurses’ and doctors’ reaction when they get in hospital.” (FGD, mixed, rural Rakhine). Others say nurses “don’t have a sense of responsibility” (FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup) or that they do not have a service mentality “The way government staffs treat us is very bad. Everyone who has been to the hospital knows what the conditions there are, lack of equipment, ill treatment from government staff,*

³¹ UNDP, 2015: Local Governance Mapping: The State of Local Governance: Trends in Rakhine

and everything is money [...] As far as I understand, a civil servant needs to be service minded, and they had to swear to serve the public. But they now forget everything.” (FGD 1, mixed youth participants, Taungup). On the other hand, some villagers expressed sympathy for staff. As one Buddhist respondent said: *“Well, you can’t always blame the nurses. Sometimes they may be overstretched and busy. Sometimes, patients make a mountain out of a molehill and want non-stop attention. I think people interpret the same situation in different ways. As they are all Buddhists, I think they are kind-hearted people.”* (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree, p1)

- **Lack of coherence:** Patients are ‘cycled’ between staff. *“Nurses hand over patients to each other. It affects the patients’ ability to recover. Sometimes a patient dies without treatment from being handed over between doctor and nurses.”* (FGD with female participants, rural Ramree, p1). Some think this practice is driven by doctors’ fears of being blamed for patients’ death: *“Doctors refuse to treat patients who they think are terminally ill and refer them to hospitals in places like Sittwe. Cases in which such patients die in transit are not few.”* (FGD, mixed, rural Rakhine, p3). It is unclear - and up to further research to establish - whether this assumption is true.
- **Discrimination – on wealth and ethnicity:** Poor patients receive lesser treatment. *“Health staff favors patients based on rich and poor. Sometimes, lives are lost unnecessarily because nurses/doctors don’t care”* (FGD with female participants, rural Ramree, p5). *“Nurses discriminate against people of poor socio-economic backgrounds”* (KII, CSO leader 2, Sittwe). It is also well-documented in previous studies that discrimination against Muslim patients occurs, not least in Rakhine (see e.g. CDNH 2016³², and UNDP 2015³³).
- **Limited emergency coverage:** Rural communities – in particular – are vulnerable to health incidents during the night, as nurses *“cannot be called at night”* (FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup; KII, CSO leader, Taungup). Generally, emergency patients wait for a long time when seeking treatment (KII, CSO leader, Taungup). *“Regarding the health services, when we go to OPD [Outpatients Department] at Sittwe General Hospital, there is a long queue. OPD as an emergency department is meant to diagnose and treat patients as quickly as possible. It may be because they do not have enough staff in their department. There are also unnecessary deaths because of their ignorance.”* (KII, CSO leader 3, Sittwe)
- **Lack of natal health care:** Emergency care for women in labor pain was mentioned particularly frequently as an issue of concern. Rakhine has a higher child mortality rate than the national average, and only 19% of women give birth in professional health facilities (compared with 37% nationally)³⁴(Rakhine Commission, 2017). As expressed by a villager in Sittwe: *“Getting nurses in the middle of the night to help women in labor is very difficult. For the poor people, they can’t afford to go to hospital to give birth, so they want to do it at home. But the thing is, they can’t get any nurses to help. Nurses are always like ‘I am not free, I’m not free’. Nurses say they can’t come to people’s houses in the middle of the night. However, that’s when a lot of pregnant women need them!”* (FGD, mixed, rural Rakhine, participant from MG). *“In some cases, women have to*

³² CDNH, 2016: Rakhine State Needs Assessment II.

³³ UNDP, 2015: Local Governance Mapping: The State of Local Governance: Trends in Rakhine

³⁴ Rakhine Commission, 2017. Towards a Peaceful, Fair and Prosperous future for the people of Rakhine

rely on traditional midwives, and women in difficult labor have to be carried for 2 or 3 days to reach the hospital in Paletwa” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Sittwe).

- **Lack of recreational facilities:** Patient care does not sufficiently take restitution into account. *“It’s marked by poor planning. For instance, they are now constructing a whole new building but haven’t made any allowance for recreational spaces for families of the patients; it seems like they want to fill up the entire compound with buildings” (KII, CSO leader 2, Sittwe).*

The research team were able to interview health officials in Ponnagyun, Taungup and Ramree who all explained that they work under severe budget constraints and lack of human resources:

In Ramree: *“We try our best, but it is not easy. For example, we have limited access to provide medical services to some hard-to-reach villages due to having difficult access in terms of transportation and facilities and human resources. There have been challenges such as shortage of medical equipment, medicine, lack of required skills for different treatments, and transportation including budgets, etc. [...] I just try my best to provide medical treatment and public health services” (KII, Dept. of Social Welfare, Ramree).*

In Ponnagyun: *“We try to deliver our medical services to everyone in Ponnagyun township. However, in these days, we cannot cover every single village due to lack of medical staff and facilities and budget. For example, there are some hard-to-reach villages which take one or two days by boat. Therefore, it is not easy to reach them” (KII, Dept. of Health, Ponnagyun).*

3.3.3.2 Production

Health care is the responsibility of the Department of Health. In addition to the Department of Health, several non-government actors contribute to the provision of health services. As previously mentioned, according to the MiMU, health is the most widespread intervention” in Rakhine with 18 organizations working on the matter. 10 of these are present in Sittwe (UNICEF, LWF, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Jhpeigo under John’s Hopkin’s University, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), the local women’s health NGO Pyi Gyi Khin (PGK), Myanmar Medical Association (MMA), PSI, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Health Organization (WHO)). In Ponnagyun, IRC, PSI, UNFPA are active. In Ramree UNFPA and UNICEF, in Taungup MMA, PSI, and UNFPA. According to the MiMU, “[m]ost health interventions focus on maternal and child health, tuberculosis, and malaria.

3.3.3.3 Co-Production

3.3.3.3.1 Forms of Participation, Lower End of Co-Production Taxonomy

At the community level, participation in delivering health services is relatively common. As previously mentioned, communities in many cases contribute funding to health care directly when receiving treatment (payment for materials and medication). In addition, important factors in the makeup of health service provision, are the so-called funeral societies and blood donation groups. Despite the name, these organizations offer a broad array of services. They include care-taking of

patients and their families, food, stipends, funeral services, (emergency) blood donations (KII, Dept. of Rural Development, Ramree).

In Sittwe: *“There is a group of well-wishers who are giving free break [rice porridge] to patients and family members who come with them. Our organization is also giving free meals to those who are poor – both patients and their family members”* (KII, CSO leader 1, Sittwe).

In Ponnagyun: *“Funeral and other emergency social services are done on our own [i.e., without any government support]. For instance, when there’s an urgent need for blood, the blood donors’ association respond to it. Sometimes, they go to the military unit for help [with blood donation]. There are still problems, but the situation isn’t that bad. There is an ambulance, so transportation is not a problem. There aren’t any major problems with funeral services either.”* (KII, CSO leader 1, Ponnagyun).

Blood donation groups exist in all townships. In addition, interviewees reported, villages tend to support each other when health related events occur – for instance when pregnant women need transportation: *“As I told you, the village help out when, for example, a woman needs to be taken to hospital for giving birth, regardless of their economic situation”* (KII, CSO leader 2, Ponnagyun).

3.3.3.3.2 Forms of participation, higher end of co-production taxonomy

At the higher end of the co-production taxonomy, communities appear less involved in the co-production of health services, compared to education. There are no dedicated health committees providing input to the health sector. Interviewees were generally unaware of and did not use other formal influence mechanisms to influence health care service delivery (e.g. direct access to Departments of Health). The issue of lack of approachability on the part of health staff was documented above. Several interviewees reported being loath to provide feedback or attempt to affect health provision out of fear of repercussion or making things worse:

“In our village, there’s only one nurse, and she speaks quite crossly to everyone. But sometimes she’s quite nice. The problem is, when we go to get her help in the middle of the night, during an emergency, she’ll say ‘I don’t work at night!’ We aren’t happy with her attitude, but as she’s nice to us sometimes, we don’t dare criticize her openly. If we get together to kick her out, what if the next one is worse than her? So, you need to be careful before you make a rash decision.” (FGD, mixed, rural Rakhine)

There were, however, exceptions. In Taungup: *“We have the right to complain to the respective government department that provides a service if we are not satisfied with their service. For example, a nurse treated a patient with disrespect in a hospital in Taungup town, so the patient complained about it to the Health Department. Then this nurse was transferred to another location as punishment”* (FGD with female participants, rural Taungup, p11).

In Ramree: *“Yes, feedback can be given to service providers – for example, if there is no doctor at the hospital. Then people engage with the health department to have a doctor in it”* (FGD with youth participants, urban Ramree, p3).

3.3.3.4 Authorities' Willingness to Engage

The health officials interviewed for this study – while expressing a high degree of dedication to helping communities – expressed low degree of commitment to engaging with them around the ways in which health services are delivered. The Departments of Health do not appear to engage much in community outreach outside hospitals (and inside hospitals do not systematically have information counters for patients, etc.) (KII, Dept. of Rural Development, Ramree; KII, Chairman of Municipal Committee, Taungup). Citing a high degree of specialization in their field, officials do not appear to believe that involving citizens is helpful. When asked whether he thought improved public participation could strengthen health care, an official from the Department of Health in Ramree, replied: *“No. The ways medical services can be improved, is to provide medical equipment, skills works/medical staff and medications”* (KII, Department of Health, Ramree).

In Ponnagyun: *“It may be necessary to hear the voices of the public. However, in our medical field, all services directly connect to skills and expertise [...] In terms of consultation with communities, we merely do it [...] Our services are significantly different from other public services, and it needs specific skills and knowledge. Without these, input will not be good enough and useful”* (KII, Dept. of Health, Ponnagyun).

The health official interviewed in Taungup – while still admitting community input was not collected – said he thought it *“would be useful”*. He also said it was important to him to listen to communities, because otherwise *“we will be removed to other areas”* (KII, Medical Officer, Dept. of Health, Taungup).

An area in which health staff *do* cooperate with outsiders, is the blood donation organizations which coordinate with hospitals (KII, Dep. of Rural Development, Ramree). It is not clear, however, that the coordination is strong. As one interviewee in Ponnagyun said: *“There are a lot of blood donors' associations. However, the government gives very little support to them [lack of cooperation]”* (KII, CSO leader 2, Sittwe). Coordination with funeral societies appears to be less strong; *“No CSOs come and offer input or feedback to us,”* as a Medical Officer from the Department of Health in Taungup noted.

3.3.3.5 Scorecard: Criteria for a Good Entry Point

- **An articulated need within communities:** High: Identified as a priority area by nearly all interviewees
- **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** Low: UNICEF, UNDP, others support health care
- **Authorities' openness to engagement:** Low: Officials did not demonstrate substantial openness
- **Potential, social cohesion (stakes, structure):** High: Health. is high priority, stakes are high
- **Feasibility (entry points):** Medium: SCBSD may feasibly address health staff/community relations
- **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

3.3.4 Roads and Transportation Infrastructure

3.3.4.1 Access and quality

Roads and transportation infrastructure – together with health and education – was the area which most of the interviewees interviewed identified as a priority area for improvement. Some interviewees recognized that over the past years, substantial improvements of the road infrastructure have taken place in Rakhine, thanks to increased government spending (this is consistent with findings by TAF, 2018. In Ramree: *“Transportation is getting much better; there are now roads connecting Ramree to other places”* (KII, CSO leader 2, Ramree; KII, CSO leader 2, Ponnagyun). In Ponnagyun:

“I think transportation is in a state of much progress; it is so different from what it used to be when we were kids. It’s getting more convenient. In the past, it’d take an entire day to get to a place like Poe Ri Prun [a nearby village]. Now it takes a maximum of 45 minutes to get there. It’s not too high quality, but it’s convenient.” (KII, CSO leader 2, Ponnagyun)

Yet, roads and transportation remain a substantial challenge and – according to interviewees – something people in their communities frequently complain about (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree; FGD, youth participants, rural Ponnagyun; FGD with ethnic minority participants, Sittwe; FGD 1, mixed youth participants, Taungup). Roads and transportation are particularly important features, because they function as enabler services to other services. As noted in the profiles above, what decides communities’ access to health and education services, for instance, is often their ability to travel there. Needless to say, rural communities are most dependent on good infrastructure in this regard, but urban interviewees too expressed frustration. A participant in a focus group discussion with rural villagers in Taungup said:

“If the roads were good enough, it would be easy to [access] education, health and income. Students could go for higher education in town. People could work in town and return after work. Patients could also go to hospital in an emergency situation. But everything is hard to reach or access.” (FGD with female participants, rural Taungup)

Quality issues related to roads and infrastructure included:

- Durability:** Complaints most frequently focused on durability. When roads are finished, they quickly deteriorate due to poor construction skills and due to inferior materials being used: *“People mainly complain about the road here because the newly constructed road is now damaged, a few months after it was been constructed. The road was built in bad quality because the contractor didn’t use the budget and materials necessary for having good quality [...] The road to Kyauk Chaung is very bad. The foundation of the road disappears with no bricks and stones”* (FGD with youth participants, urban Ramree). Several interviewees believed construction companies build too cheaply to maximize profits and that they are unreliable: *“Though we have road connectivity, the quality of the roads is very poor. The roads are deteriorated within a year’s time. Our motorbikes are also in a bad condition due to bad the roads”* (FGD 2, mixed youth participants, Taungup). *“Road builders disappear after roads have been dug and messed up by road*

machinery [...] It causes disagreement between service provider and communities”. “On one occasion, they (private contractors) left a road unfinished. They said they couldn’t continue because the rainy season had come. However, they never showed up even after the rainy season ended – we didn’t know what became of the road!” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Sittwe). “Regarding the road construction, the contractor didn’t construct the road completely and left it unfinished” (FGD with youth, urban Sittwe).

- **Comfort:** A common saying in Rakhine which mocks the discomfort of using many of its roads goes *“If you have eaten stone, you can digest it, if you use [some] road” (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree)*. Participants – particularly rural participants – complained that roads are often dirt roads and have large holes in them: *“No words can describe how difficult it is. It took me ages to get here this morning. The roads inside the village aren’t any good either” (FGD, youth participants, rural Ponnagyun)*. *“There aren’t any concrete roads, which makes transportation to town very difficult. The worst thing is that the roads are quite bad for pregnant women to go to town for giving birth to babies. It’s quite bad in our area” (FGD, mixed, rural Rakhine, p1)*.
- **Vulnerability to the rainy season:** Compounding the durability and comfort issues mentioned above, roads rapidly deteriorate during the rainy season when large amounts of water wash roads away. As a result, roads are muddy and less safe, not least for children commuting to school *“In the rainy season, school children have to walk for about three miles in the rain and mud. By the time they get back home, they’re too tired to study” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, p1; FGD with youth participants, urban Ramree; FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup; FGD 1, mixed, rural Ponnagyun)*.

3.3.4.2 Production

A number of departments contribute to or have historically contributed to the construction of roads, and it appears that the administrative setup for road construction differs somewhat across townships. The NLD-led state level government – otherwise to a certain degree ‘hung’ over parliamentary dynamics – have “largely prioritized spending on roads” (TAF, 2018). Other agencies constructing roads include the DRDs (under the Ministry of Construction, Road and Bridge (KII, Ministry of Construction (road and bridges), Taungup). To varying degrees, MDs and DRDs also build roads in urban and rural locations, respectively (KII, Department of Municipality, Ramree; KII, Department of Rural Development, Ponnagyun) (In Sittwe, the Municipal Department builds roads in town, but the Department of Rural Development no longer builds roads in rural locations (KII, Senior Assistant Engineer, Construction Dep. (rural roads), Sittwe). The Department of Border Affairs and the Department of Ethnic Development are also said to construct roads. The Department of Planning appears to have a coordinating role. The agencies – as indicated above – frequently use external construction companies for the actual building of roads (KII, Senior Assistant Engineer, Construction Dep. (rural roads), Sittwe).

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and INGOs also contribute to the construction of roads. UNDP for instance provides funding for the construction of roads in some villages, according to an official from the DRD in Ramree (KII, Department of Rural Roads, Ramree). Connection roads have been constructed in Htaung Nay Village, Pyin Chay Village, Prine Chaung Village, and

Maung Bway Village. A ridge was constructed in Nga Sa Mi Village. In Ponnagyun, villagers said CERA had built a concrete road. The World Bank’s (WB) Community Driven Development project has also contributed roads - mostly in Ponnagyun³⁵, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have offered support. The national organization Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD) have also built roads in the state.

3.3.4.3 Co-Production

3.3.4.3.1 Forms of Participation, Low on Taxonomy

In addition to government agencies and (I)NGOs, communities themselves frequently play a substantial role in the construction of roads – particularly in rural communities (FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun). While materials and funding are usually provided by the state, it is commonplace that communities themselves contribute labor to construct roads. In some cases, communities simply construct roads themselves or decide to undertake restoration of existing roads – as in Taungup where villagers decided to fix a road which motorbikes were not able to drive on (FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup; FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun). While this has safety implications and ostensibly has a negative impact on the quality of roads, it also – in some cases – appears to be something associated with a certain degree of ownership. As discussed in the section “defining services”, the expectations levelled against the state are not always clear, and it would appear that road construction – at least in the context of smaller rural roads – has been and is to some extent seen as a community undertaking. Here in Ponnagyun:

“We don’t usually go and ask people about these things. If the road in front of your house needs fixing, you fix it yourself. We don’t usually go and ask about public services. Well, even if you go ask, they won’t [help] you. Last year, the NLD came to the village to ask about building a small bridge in the village, but they never came again to do it. If we do it ourselves, it can get done quickly. If you speak with them, it wastes your time and energy.” (KII, CSO leader 2, Ponnagyun)

3.3.4.3.2 Forms of Participation, High on Taxonomy (including formal mechanisms)

At the higher end of the co-production taxonomy, the extent to which communities are involved in the design and planning of road provision appears to depend to some degree on which agency is the main implementer. Several community members reported having been “consulted” when authorities were building roads, particularly by the DRD: *“Yes, there is some space for us villagers to influences upon particular service delivery. For instance, when the Department of Rural Development came to us to dig a pond or build a road, they consulted us”* (FGD 1, mixed, rural Ponnagyun).

3.3.4.4 Authorities’ Willingness to Engage

Several agencies are involved in the construction of roads, of which some are more ‘client-facing’ than others. An official interviewed from the Ministry of Construction in Taungup said they did

³⁵ <http://projects.worldbank.org/P132500/myanmar-national-community-driven-development-project?lang=en&tab=details>

not engage with communities, because they are an “inter-governmental” department. The official nonetheless maintained that in 2020, *“our regular working body will be changed to being centered around people [...] All of our work will be people centered”* (KII, Ministry of Construction (road and bridges), Taungup). Officials interviewed from the Department of Rural Development – as suggested above – generally proclaimed support to community involvement. In Sittwe, the Senior Assistant Engineer at the DRD said *“it’s important for us to hear the perspectives of communities.”* He explained that once budgets for a particular road are made available, the department consults with village heads to provide information about *“how the road will be built and by whom”* (KII, Senior Assistant Engineer, Construction Dep. (rural roads), Sittwe). The Departments of Planning similarly express support to community inclusion in relation to road construction, which *“cannot be implemented”* without communities’ input (KII, Dept. of Planning, Taungup).

While the authorities responsible for road construction thus appear relatively interested in community engagement, a note of qualification applies: It appears that road construction is in fact the service area in which most conflicts have emerged between communities and authorities, at least judging by interviews with officials. More than ten times – in different interviews and independent of one another – officials referred to stories in which communities had allegedly attempted to extract unreasonable amounts of money from authorities to compensate for expropriation. Communities had agreed to a certain level of compensation for expropriated land, only to later demand higher compensation, disrupting construction projects. Officials on the other hand said this had the consequence that such communities would (then) be bypassed in future projects. The team was not able to establish whether these conflicts had happened more than once – the sheer frequency of the account taken into consideration, it would seem that the same story was being retold. This, in turn, highlights a notable dynamic, namely rumor circulation about citizens within government circles (we return to this later).

3.3.4.5 Scorecard: Criteria for a Good Entry Point

- **An articulated need:** High: Identified as a priority area by nearly all rural interviewees
- **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** Low: UNDP, The World Bank (WB), others support road construction
- **Authorities’ openness to engagement:** Medium: Department of Rural Roads (DRD)/Municipal Departments (MDs) open; Ministry of Construction less
- **Potential, social cohesion (stakes, structure):** High: Roads as enabler service; stakes are high
- **Feasibility (entry points):** High: Less skill intensive; communities already involved
- **Donor’s strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

3.3.5 Water

3.3.5.1 Access and Quality

Compared to education, health and roads, access to water (drinking water and ‘use water’) was articulated as a priority service by fewer interviewees. In the 2015 UNDP mapping, access to safe drinking water stood at 79% for Rakhine State as a whole in 2010, which is *“slightly below the*

*national average of 82%*³⁶ (UNDP, 2015). In this study, most reported having access to water, although urban/rural differences displayed again. Of the interviewees who did report not having access to water or who identified it as a priority service, all were located in rural areas. In addition, interviewees in Ponnagyun more frequently identified water as an issue of priority (notably, differences in access to water varied strongly place for place). Communities in Ramree too identified water as an area of priority. *“Drinking water in summer is scarce. Residents in Ponnagyun depend on Gu Wa lake, but it’s difficult in the summer”* (FGD, ethnic minority participants, Ponnagyun). *“During the summer, we spend the entire day in the hot sun getting water, leaving us no time to do other things”* (FGD, youth participants, rural Ponnagyun, p2).

Issues with access to water are typically seasonal. During the hot season (November to May), certain areas ‘dry up’, meaning community members are forced to move (further) to collect water.

When asked about water services, the following issues were most frequently raised:

- **Purity:** Water is impure and not suited for drinking. In such cases, and where cleaning is not affordable or accessible, communities are forced to drink it (anyway). As one CSO leader said in Ponnagyun: *“The quality of water can’t be compared to that in developed countries. It is not good at all. There are no such things as tests to find out which germs there are in the water. People are just making do with what they have. People survive on small hand-dug holes for drinking water during times of water shortages. Hygienic use of water is still very poor. It’s not good at all”* (KII, CSO leader 1, Ponnagyun).
- **Salinity:** In some areas, water is saline, making it less drinkable. This problem was brought up in/on Ramree, which ‘sticks’ into the Bay of Bengal
- **Shortage, particularly during summer time:** Water shortage is frequent, particularly when it hasn’t rained enough during rainy season and was reported by communities in Ramree and Taungup. In Sittwe too, water scarcity during summer time was reported (FGD, mixed, urban Sittwe), although by fewer respondents. In a Chin village in Ramree, participants said water had already – at the time of data collection, in January – nearly dried up. *“There are so many issues with education, and the same can be said about transportation and portable water. The water has already dried up now; there’s only a small well”* (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, p1). Other Ramree citizens similarly reported shortage (FGD with female participants, rural Ramree). Focus group participants also reported problems in Taungup, saying it was *“[d]ifficult in the summer – it takes about one hour to get water. Underground water is not available. Perhaps if digging over one hundred feet underground”* (FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup). These communities rely on drinking water delivered by car, as water from their wells is only suitable for other use (water is drinkable in other parts of Taungup). One interviewee said in his village, there was access to water from 9am to noon (FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup).
- **Lack of ponds/reservoirs:** Water storage is not available. *“When it comes to availability of drinking water, I think our village is the worst. It dries up during the summer; about a month from now, the water in village pond is going to dry up. We are about 50 households; we would like you to help us with it if possible. We used to have a 120 feet wide water pond, which was destroyed during the last flood. The Municipal Department*

³⁶ UNDP, 2015: Local Governance Mapping: The State of Local Governance: Trends in Rakhine

came to build a new one, but it is not good enough; it doesn't hold water long enough” (FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun).

3.3.5.2 Production

Different government institutions are responsible for water access, pending location. In urban communities, access to water is mainly provided by the MDs (KII, Department of Municipality, Ramree; FGD with youth, urban Sittwe), whereas in rural areas, it is mainly undertaken by the DRD (KII, Department of Rural Development, Ponnagyun). In rural areas, a number of NGOs and iNGOs have also supported the digging of ponds as well as the establishing of irrigation systems. UNICEF are currently active in Ramree and Sittwe. ACF, Japan's International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Danish Refugee Council-Danish Demining Group (DRC-DDG) are also active in Sittwe.

3.3.5.3 Co-Production

3.3.5.3.1 Forms of Participation, Lower End of Co-Production Taxonomy

Similar to roads, the digging of wells is an area in which communities are often 'self-servicing' in the sense that communities contribute labor and/or resources themselves. A participant in a focus group in Taungup said that to his knowledge, *“there are no villages which face water shortage. However, it doesn't mean that we get great service from the government: The wells are dug by the communities themselves” (FGD 2, mixed youth participants, Taungup)*. Generally, interviewers were left with the impression that rural communities in particular did not necessarily expect authorities to provide water (FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun). The broader point here – which we return to later and which was broached earlier – is that what communities expect from the state appears to be linked not least to what the state has historically provided. And water access is not one of them.

3.3.5.3.2 Forms of Participation, High on Taxonomy (including formal mechanisms)

At the same time, when authorities and others *are* involved in digging wells, it is an area in which communities are more frequently consulted about their placement. Simply because villages' residents are often better placed to determine where water might be encountered, but also because the digging of a well typically implies expropriation of land.

3.3.5.4 Authorities' Willingness to Engage

As previously described, officials from the MDs and DRDs were generally found to signal openness to involving communities in decisions regarding the provision of water services – not least for the reasons mentioned above.

3.3.5.5 Scorecard: Criteria for a Good Entry Point

- **An articulated need within communities:** Medium: Priority area for many, (mostly rural)
- **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** High: Others' involvement unclear
- **Authorities' openness to engagement:** High: DRD/MDs open

- **Potential, social cohesion:** Medium: Stakes high, particularly for women. Not source of conflict
- **Feasibility (entry points):** High: Less skill intensive; communities already involved
- **Donor’s strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

3.3.6 Electricity

3.3.6.1 Access and quality

While efforts are being made to electrify Rakhine, only 27% of the state’s households are currently connected to the electric grid³⁷(Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2015). Access to the national electricity grid is first and foremost correlated with urban/rural location. Most towns are connected to the grid and therefore have *some* access to electricity, and the number of villages connected to the national grid or who have access to electricity in other ways, is increasing. At the same time, it remains the case that only 35% of Rakhine as a whole are linked to the national grid, and access decreases with distance to towns. Villages may apply for connection to the national grid, but only few are successful, given the lack of resources. Electricity was identified by around half of the interviewees interviewed for this research as a service of priority.

Within villages, access occasionally varies from household to household. As such, it is not uncommon that only 20% of a village has access to electricity (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree). This occasionally provides ground for tension between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Access to electricity as an enabler service has profound impact on communities’ ability to improve their standard of living, because it frees up time for alternative use, especially for women. Characteristically, it was women who shared this point in focus groups in Ramree and Taungup: *“People have to get up very early and go to the mountains to collect firewood. It takes 3 or 4 hours to collect and get back home. So, if the fire wood could be replaced by electricity for cooking and other purposes, people can give their time for other work”* (FGD with youth participants, urban Ramree, p3). *“Time can be saved when the electricity is available. Wood is also collected and stored for rainy season that makes time consuming instead of working on others. Some amount of money can be saved if electricity is available”* (FGD with female participants, rural Taungup). Lacking electricity, households also tend to rely on burning firewood and animal dung for lighting and cooking, *“causing widespread acute respiratory problems”*³⁸(World Bank, 2017).

For those who had access to electricity, quality issues centered around the following:

- **Stability.** While households may be connected to the grid, electricity may only be available for a few hours a day. Especially during the rainy season, stability issues are frequent with blackouts (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Sittwe).
- **Accidents:** Electrocutation from hanging cables represents a notable risk.

³⁷ ADB, 2015. Power Sector Development in Myanmar

³⁸ The World Bank, 2017. Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2017

The research team interviewed officials responsible for providing electricity in Ponnagyun and Ramree. Officials regretted not being able to provide services to more villages due to lack of funding (KII, Dep. of Electricity and Power, Ponnagyun). The official in Ponnagyun further explained that the department struggles to collect payments for the use of electricity due to *“lack of knowledge about the use of electricity in the public,”* the implication being that fewer installations can be made elsewhere (KII, Dep. of Electricity and Power, Ponnagyun). Villagers (albeit from Sittwe) on the other hand said that *“collectors seem to be charging electricity fees in an arbitrary manner, not in accordance with what the meter shows. Collectors charge without reading the meter”* (FGD, mixed, rural Rakhine).

3.3.6.2 Production

Within the government, the main responsibility for providing electricity services depends on location. Generally, in urban areas, the Department of Municipality are responsible (KII, Chairman of Municipal Committee, Taungup), whereas the DM are responsible for rural areas. Within these departments, there are sub-departments dedicated to electricity (Departments of Electricity). The DRD – in rural areas – *“help rural communities get access to the national electric grid or through alternative electrification”* (KII, Department of Rural Development, Ponnagyun). This has taken place not least under the National Electrification Project in partnership with the World Bank. Over the past five years, an explosive growth in access to solar powered electricity has taken place in Rakhine with solar system use going from 3% in 2014 to 48% in 2017³⁹ (World Bank, 2017). The ADB and JICA have also supported electrification.

3.3.6.3 Co-production

3.3.6.3.1 Forms of participation, lower end of the co—production taxonomy

Communities – as with access to water – are often self-servicing when it comes to off-grid electricity provision. In the absence of connection to the grid, many rural communities rely on self-financed solar power and generators (FGD with youth participants, urban Ramree; FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup; FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun; FGD, mixed, urban Sittwe).

3.3.6.3.2 Forms of Participation, Higher End of the Co—Production Taxonomy

As with other service areas, communities may request access to the electric grid through their W/VTA – it is then up to higher authorities to decide which communities to grant electricity to. From this point, it appeared that authorities – then – occasionally decided to delegate decision power to communities when identifying which households within a community would gain access. When authorities have fewer electricity boxes than there are households in a village, the research team learned, some villages would be asked to nominate recipients themselves, while in other cases allocation may be decided randomly. Officials ostensibly favored different allocation methods but shared a desire to minimize the risk of conflict.

³⁹ The World Bank, 2017. Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2017

3.3.6.4 Scorecard: Criteria for a Good Entry Point

- **An articulated need within communities:** Medium: Priority for many (mostly rural)
- **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** High: Others' involvement unclear
- **Authorities' openness to engagement:** High: DRD/MDs open
- **Potential, social cohesion:** High: Stakes high, particularly for women. Source of some conflict
- **Feasibility (entry points):** High: Less skill intensive (solar); communities already involved
- **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

3.3.7 Sanitation, Waste Disposal, Sewage

3.3.7.1 Access and Quality

Like electricity, sanitation, waste disposal and sewage services are correlated with urban/rural location. In rural communities, these types of services are generally not available (4.1.3), with the exception that the government in some areas provide squatting toilets to citizens to prevent open defecation. Less than half (48%) of the people have access to a hygienic toilet – one of the lowest levels in Myanmar⁴⁰ (UNICEF, 2018); the state has the highest incidence of open defecation (40.7%) in the country, as opposed to a 7% national average⁴¹ (Livelihoods and Food Security Trust (LIFT) Fund, 2016).

In towns, sanitation and (mostly open) sewage is usually available. Waste disposal services are also provided, although according to interviewees it varies how well it works – causing frustration within communities between communities and authorities. The head of the Municipal Committee in Taungup said:

“The Municipal Committee is experiencing most friction around garbage collection and electricity. The laws and policies of electricity and garbage collection need to be amended by the government – if it can't be amended, more friction and confrontation will ensue.” (KII, Chairman of Municipal Committee, Taungup)

Quality issues related to sanitation, sewage, and waste management include:

- **Garbage trucks don't come often enough or don't go everywhere:** Garbage trucks appear rarely (FGD with female participants, rural Taungup). In Ponnagyun: *“You can say that there is no system for waste collection or disposal. I mean, the garbage truck comes only once, and they don't reach the entirety of Ponnagyun town. Of course, there are roads which the truck can't pass through because they're too narrow. I think its coverage is quite good in the downtown areas. But because it comes only once, we end up with people throwing rubbish everywhere”* (KII, CSO leader 1, Ponnagyun). Similar issues were reported in Taungup, Sittwe, Ramree.

⁴⁰ UNICEF, 2018. Community members take the lead to improve sanitation in Rakhine

⁴¹ LIFT, 2016. Development In Times Of Transition: The Socio-Economic Status Of Rakhine State, Myanmar

- **Waste is dumped near town:** Waste is not disposed of properly, causing inconvenience to citizens. In Ramree: *“The garbage/waste management system of the Municipal Department is not good. They collect garbage from homes and markets, but they throw it on the streets near the port. They don’t dispose off our garbage in a systematic way. The smell of the garbage affects people. The town is also dirty and looked down on by guests who visit Ramree town”* (FGD with youth participants, urban Ramree, p1).
- **The public throw litter everywhere:** Efforts to manage waste levels are futile because citizens are unsupportive. A volunteer in a CSO in Ramree for instance said: *“Now we’ve got a rubbish collection system, which we never had in the past. There are notice boards all over town. However, some people still don’t throw rubbish systematically. A lot of people are still dumping it into the creek. There are too many plastic bags in the creek now; we could swim in it in the past, but we can’t any more these days”* (KII, CSO leader 2, Ramree). In Sittwe: *“People just dump rubbish into the drains. I don’t think the township committee can do anything to make them perform better. They might have a lot of rules, but they don’t publicize them so that people are aware of them”* (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Sittwe).
- **Drains are blocked:** Drains have insufficient capacity and are blocked by rubbish. *“The drainage system hasn’t changed in a timely manner to respond to the changes in urban development. There are many more people and many more houses, but the drainage system has remained the same”* (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Sittwe, p3). *“Drainages are blocked”* (FGD with female participants, rural Taungup).

The research team interviewed officials from the DM in Sittwe, Taungup, Ramree. In all cases, they explained that they are unable to provide full garbage collection services, because they do not have sufficient budget for fuel or to purchase a new truck. In Taungup:

“There are only two garbage cars that run and collect garbage in town, so, it can’t cover fully. People get angry about it. And there is a lack of budget for fuel, so budget is usually taken from other lines to cover fuel for garbage cars.” (KII, Chairman of Municipal Committee, Taungup)

In Sittwe: *“One of the major challenges is rubbish – provision of cleaning services. We do not have enough waste collection vehicles and labor. The reason behind this is we do not have enough budget.”* (KII, Assistant Director of Municipal Dept., Sittwe)

A reason for the MDs’ lack of funding, is that they struggle to collect taxes from communities (as mentioned above, the MDs are self-funded and run on taxes collected locally). As described by one official, this may both be because people can’t afford to pay, and because the system for collecting tax is outdated:

“All our services run with taxpayers’ money. But with regards to tax collection, we need to look at local people’s economic condition. We have difficulties to increase the municipal tax levels, even if the current rate of tax payment per head is very low. And we have many unregistered properties in town, and it is difficult to collect taxes for them. In other states, they conduct assessments of the market price of a property, so they can calculate council tax on each property. In Rakhine, all the records were used by the British colonial government. So we need a new assessment for tax collection.” (KII, Assistant Director of Municipal Dept., Sittwe)

Some community members, conversely, felt the tax collection taking place for garbage collection was not justified: *“I heard that they’re collecting taxes from shops in the market for rubbish collection. I don’t know how much they’re collecting or who is paying or not paying this tax. I haven’t heard that the garbage truck is actually collecting any garbage from the market. Our center has a lot of youth who worked in the market; I haven’t heard from any of them that garbage is being collected from the market.”* (KII, CSO leader 1, Ponnagyun)

At any rate, officials also recognized that beyond increased budget, what was needed was also *“help to provide awareness to the communities on how to litter properly. Even if we give them a bin bag, they won’t use it. They are in the habit of dumping rubbish into the creeks and rivers”* (KII, Assistant Director of Municipal Dep., Sittwe).

3.3.7.2 Production

Sanitation, waste disposal and sewage services are the responsibility of the DM and – to the extent it is provided in rural areas – the DRD. Sewage and sanitation are supported by international organizations, including UNICEF. Waste management does not appear to be supported by other actors in the target townships. One CSO in Ponnagyun led a *“rubbish collecting campaign,”* placing rubbish bins in the street (KII, CSO leader 2, Ponnagyun).

3.3.7.3 Co-production

Rural communities are largely self-servicing when it comes to the provision of sanitation, waste management and sewage. In urban communities, sewage and sanitation appears to be largely provided by the government, while waste management – where it is unavailable – is taken care of by citizens themselves (typically by dumping waste in landfills, sewers).

At the higher end of the taxonomy, interviewees in a few cases reported having attempted to provide feedback or otherwise influence government decisions around sewage, sanitation and waste management, although only to find that resource scarcity meant improvements were not possible (KII, CSO leader 1, Ponnagyun). In Taungup, however, workshops had been conducted between the Municipal Committee and communities, during which sanitation had been requested and provided to four of five participating wards. According to the head of the committee, who told of this process, the ward administrator in the fifth ward *“seemed to lack interest in the process”* (KII, Chairman of Municipal Committee, Taungup).

3.3.7.4 Authorities’ Willingness to Engage

The MDs and DRDs – as previously stated – generally express commitment to engaging with communities around the production of services, and in particular in relation to waste management – ostensibly because it evidently requires behavior change. In Sittwe, the Assistant Director of the Municipal Department said they *“involve CSOs and elders of the town”* and said they *“once had a meeting with local businessmen and CSOs in Khine Tha Zin Hall to discuss the Sittwe town cleanliness.”* He said he thought it was important to engage CSOs and CBOs – *“at least they can teach the town population to collaborate or to follow the municipal rules. People will listen when CSOS tell them”* (KII, Assistant Director of Municipal Dep., Sittwe).

3.3.7.5 Scorecard: Criteria for a Good Entry Point

- **An articulated need within communities:** Medium: Priority for some (urban)
- **Limited engagement:** Medium: UNICEF, UNDP, others support sanitation, not sewage/waste
- **Authorities’ openness to engagement:** High: MDs open
- **Potential, social cohesion:** High: Stakes medium. Source of some conflict
- **Feasibility (entry points):** High: Less skill intensive; communities already involved
- **Donor’s strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

3.3.8 Protection Against Natural Disasters

3.3.8.1 Access and Quality

According to PreventionWeb, *“from April 2016 to February 2018, a total of 155 natural disasters occurred in Rakhine State. Of these, 62 were storms, 48 fires, 13 floods, seven lightning strikes, three river bank erosions, one earthquake and 21 other types of natural disasters”*⁴²(PreventionWeb, 2019).

In this study, protection against natural disasters – such as flooding, cyclones, landslides, earthquakes – was nonetheless only identified by a smaller number of communities as priority areas for improvement. This may not necessarily reflect a lack of need as much as limited awareness of preventative measures or general acceptance that natural disasters are part of life. A United Nations (UN) Multi Hazard Risk Assessment in Rakhine State conducted in 2011 found that *“very few Rakhine residents reported having received any exposure to Disaster Risk Reduction. Even though early warning systems may be available via radio broadcasts, many people still find it difficult to interpret those messages. When disasters hit the area, there is no systematic evacuation plan. People tend to rely on higher-risk, ad-hoc disaster shelters such as monasteries and schools.”*⁴³

Communities’ articulated vulnerability to natural disasters is to a large degree a function of where they live. More interviewees from Taungup appeared to articulate a need for prioritizing protection against natural disasters. More generally, rural communities too are more vulnerable to natural disasters, because they have less access to shelter and amenities and are located further from critical services, including health. In Ponnagyun, risk of floods and landslides was noted as particularly significant (FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun).

When requesting further protection against natural disasters, interviewees in particular focused on increasing preventative measures and plans, including to secure safe and timely evacuation. But also to provide fast support for recovery after incidents, including shelter (FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup). *“There is still a lack of information about natural disasters so people can’t evacuate before it. After the natural disaster happened, there is also no systematic*

⁴² PreventionWeb, 2019. Myanmar: Rakhine’s preparedness for disaster 26 cyclone shelters in the pipeline for Rakhine State

⁴³ PreventionWeb, 2019. Myanmar: Rakhine’s preparedness for disaster 26 cyclone shelters in the pipeline for Rakhine State

and planned supports and rehabilitation for displaced persons who are affected by natural disasters” (KII, CSO leader, Taungup).

3.3.8.2 Production

From the government side, protection against natural disasters is provided by a number of agencies, pending scope, need, location. In rural areas, the DRD for instance provides shelter to communities affected by disasters (KII, Department of Rural Development, Ponnagyun). UN organizations like UNDP, International Organization for Migration (IoM), and UNICEF, as well as INGOs like Red Cross and Action Aid are also active with regards to natural risk disaster mitigation. Much of this work is organized through the Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group (DRR WG), which was established in 2008 in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis and aims to support the government’s work to promote disaster resilience.

In addition, monasteries play a role in providing immediate relief after disasters, including providing food and shelter. Some interviewees believed that given monasteries’ old age, they were proven safe (they would have otherwise deterred). In the event something were to happen to a monastery, this belief might increase the risk of casualties, if it leads many people to congregate in old buildings (see also UN, 2011).

3.3.8.3 Co-production

As with sanitation, waste management and sewage, communities are themselves closely involved in the provision of protection against natural disasters. Basic measures such as building on stilts or building on higher ground are usually integrated into the way in which communities build and have traditionally built.

In addition, a substantial part of the support provided to communities when disasters strike, is organized through CSOs (KII, CSO leader, Taungup) who are in many cases able to respond to disasters faster than the government and (international) NGOs. During the time of research, acute assistance was procured to communities displaced by fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army (see below). Efforts were also made to provide assistance to Buddhist communities who ‘resettle’ in the Northern parts of Rakhine, where the Rohingya⁴⁴ minority used to live (The Rakhine Resettlement Committee). In addition, monasteries play a role in attending to the needs of disaster affected people, including by providing shelter and food.

3.3.9 Safety/Security/Justice

3.3.9.1 Access and Quality

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, given the extent to which Rakhine has been affected by tensions, especially since 2012, access to safety, security and justice was identified in relatively few conversations as being a main priority for improvement. This may reflect a certain level of resilience to ‘background conflict’. It is also undoubtedly a reflection of the fact that this study did

⁴⁴ This paper uses the word “Rohingya” to refer to those who identify themselves as such. We recognize that this is a contested name by many in Myanmar. These names and terms are used for the purpose of clarity and consistency in this paper and do not imply a value judgement regarding different perspectives about terminology relating to people and places in the country.

not include interviewees from the Muslim groups which have been subject to most violence. On the other hand, there were of course exceptions. Towards the end of the period of research, fighting escalated between the Tatmadaw (the military) and the Rakhine nationalist insurgency Arakan Army. As a result, upwards of 40,000 have so far been reported displaced in Rakhine (April numbers), of whom around 2000 are in Ponnagyun (one of the four townships targeted in this research)⁴⁵. This development displays in the data, both in the sense that many interviewees in Ponnagyun expressed increased need for security, but also in general concerns about the situation and in a tendency for interviewees to relate general conversation topics to the fighting. In short: this fighting occupied people's thoughts.

Also notably, interviewees in/on Ramree in particular identified safety, security and access to justice as priority services to improve. In Sittwe, it was in particular interviewees from a community close to a Muslim village who articulated a need for stronger security (FGD, mixed, rural Rakhine).

When interviewees discussed quality issues with regards to safety, security and justice, they related to:

- **Availability at night:** interviewees – especially rural interviewees – complained that when incidents occur during night time, police don't show up (KII, CSO leader 4, Ramree)
- **Corruption:** Some interviewees spoke of corruption. *“Compared to the past, the rule of law is better. However, it is not free from corruption yet”* (KII, CSO leader 1, Ramree). *“There is no rule of law; to be frank, these days money has won over the rule of law. It's as easy [breaking the law] as crushing an ant. When something happens, the law is never on the side of the poor”* (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, p1).
- **Unequal access:** In some incidents, when communities want to report issues to the police, they need a “recommendation letter” from the local ward administrator, before police will “take action”. This means – in the words of a focus group participant in Taungup – that *“some complainants who don't get on well with the ward chairman do not get recommendation letters, [so] police doesn't take action”* (FGD with youth participants, urban Ramree).
- **Underenforced areas:** interviewees reported particular areas underenforced. These included the stealing of motorbikes (FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup); land ownership issues (KII, CSO leader 3, Ponnagyun), cattle theft (FGD, mixed, rural Rakhine), and in some cases violent crimes. *“Police can't provide enough security. Perhaps, they are understaffed. In other countries, police go on patrol around town on a regular basis so that they can deter crimes. We're seeing serious crimes like murders and knifing in broad daylight”* (KII, CSO leader 2, Sittwe).
- **Arbitrary use of force in fight against drugs use:** While some communities said the use of drugs was not combatted sufficiently (FGD 2, mixed youth participants, Taungup), some said drugs charges were pushed arbitrarily, creating concerns among communities. In Ponnagyun: *“I've heard that police go to some places to check whether there is drug use. The police just want to find out if young people use drugs or not. But young people in*

⁴⁵ Rakhine Ethnic Congress, 21 April 2019 (Search internal reporting) and Center for Diversity and National Harmony Early Warning Situation Update 156 (May 22nd to 29th, 2019). https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kSlEnVs0_o-CFU5YT4lLkdb_id8083FE/view

general get scared of getting arrested. I don't think that the public feel safe. To be frank, security is very weak. Even within the confines of your own house, you're worried about whether they would bring trumped up charges against you, about drugs for example. Just recently, someone got a package of drugs as a present from an unknown sender. So now, people are asking their relatives not to send any presents to them. It seems like people no longer trust one another. I don't know much about the rule of law, but I don't think it prevails at the moment."

- **Lack of security within family life:** Authorities are reluctant to interfere in 'private' matters, typically leaving women under-protected: *"For marital problems, responsible persons rarely take responsibility to solve those problems as they assume problems between husband and wife can be automatically sorted out without their interference"* (FGD with youth, urban Sittwe).

3.3.9.2 Production

From the government side, security, safety and justice is provided by a number of different units, most notably the police, the army, and the courts. The Ministry of Border Affairs plays a substantial role in overseeing security provision.

Religious figures often play a role in dispute resolution. INGOs provide a range of protection programs⁴⁶. In Sittwe, DRC-DDG, International Rescue Committee (IRC), NRC, PLAN, UN Women, UNFPA, UNHCR, and UNICEF implement protection programs (of which many focus on the Sittwe camps). While UNHCR and UNICEF implement protection programs in Ramree, and UNHCR and UN Women implement protection programs in Ponnagyun, no protection programs were reported in Taungup⁴⁷.

In addition, some organizations provide legal advice, especially to poorer parts of the population. One example of these organizations is the Mra Thuza Legal clinic in Sittwe, which pursues and refers cases for citizens.

3.3.9.3 Co-production

It is difficult to say exactly to which extent communities can be said to be directly involved in the provision of safety and security measures or justice. Over the past years, civilians have been both the victims and perpetrators of violence and organized along different fault lines. For some groups in Rakhine, other armed actors than the ones mentioned above may play a bigger role in securing safety and safety (Arakan Army, Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army), though this topic is outside the scope of this report.

Interviewees generally did not indicate that they provide feedback to or in other ways engage with security and justice actors. An exception is the legal support organizations mentioned above, which coordinate to some extent with the Departments of Social Welfare (KII, CSO leader 3, Sittwe).

⁴⁶ UNICEF, 2018. UNICEF Results in Rakhine State

⁴⁷

http://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/3W_MapnReport_Rakhine_VT_All_Sectors_MIMU861v14_08Apr19_A3.vm19.pdf

3.3.9.4 Scorecard: Criteria for a Good Entry Point

- **An articulated need within communities:** Low: Priority for few (near Muslims)
- **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** High: Safety/security not supported (justice exception)
- **Authorities' openness to engagement:** Low: Officials not assumed to be open
- **Potential, social cohesion:** High: Stakes high. Source of conflict
- **Feasibility (entry points):** Medium: Search expertise, risk of escalation
- **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

3.3.10 Markets

3.3.10.1 Access and Quality

Access to markets – as many of the services previously discussed – varies by location. According to interviewees, markets are generally available where they are economically viable. As such, all urban interviewees had access to markets, whereas many rural interviewees – particularly the more remote ones – did not. In communities where markets are not available, people buy and sell things among themselves, relying on travelling vendors or travel to markets (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree). Here, as previously discussed, they are dependent on the quality of roads available to them. A major distinction is the variety of produce available in markets. Unsurprisingly, supply is more varied in more urban locations.

When asked in which service areas they felt there was the strongest need for improvements, focus group discussion members identified markets in two places – in a community in Ponnagyun and in one in Sittwe.

When interviewees complained about markets, it related to crowdedness or what some sellers perceived as unjustified levying of taxes on them by authorities (Sittwe).

3.3.10.2 Production

Official markets (some emerge autonomously) are built and maintained by the Department of Municipality in urban areas and Department of Rural Development in rural areas. A range of INGOs and development partners support the broader livelihoods area, In Sittwe, this includes ACF, DRC-DDG, DRD, JICA, ICCO⁴⁸, International Committee of the Red Cross (IFRC), Relief International (RI). In Ramree and Taungup, Pact Global Microfinance Fund (PFMG). In Ponnagyun, DRD, ICCO, and Swisscontact. It is unclear, however, whether these actors contribute to the building of markets.

3.3.10.3 Co-production

In some areas and for some communities, markets are self-built or emerge autonomously. An example is intermittent market stalls which have appeared alongside certain roads in Sittwe, and

⁴⁸ Previously Interchurch Coordination Committee Development Aid

which are mostly run by Muslim sellers (among whom some live in the Sittwe camps) who are not able to sell elsewhere.

3.3.10.4 Scorecard: Criteria for a Good Entry Point

- **An articulated need within communities:** Low: Priority for few (urban)
- **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** High: Others' involvement unclear
- **Authorities' openness to engagement:** High: DRD/MDs open
- **Potential, social cohesion:** Medium: Stakes medium. Not conflict-affected
- **Feasibility (entry points):** High: Less skill intensive; communities already involved
- **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

3.3.11 Streetlights

3.3.11.1 Access and Quality

Street lights are by and large an urban phenomenon and as such do not (to our knowledge) exist outside the bigger towns in all four townships. Within townships, streetlights are mostly present in central areas and around bigger roads. One focus group participant estimated that half of Ponnagyun town has streetlights. Streetlights were only identified as a priority service in few urban areas, including in Sittwe, likely because only in towns are street lights seen as achievable.

Quality issues in relation to streetlights mainly centered around poor maintenance (KII, CSO leader 1, Ramree; FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup). When bulbs break or other malfunctions occur, maintenance is slow - *“Street lights are available in some wards in town, but the light bulbs are broken, and repairing is very rare. In the villages, there is no street light”* (FGD, mixed, urban Sittwe).

3.3.11.2 Production

Street lights are maintained by the DMs (KII, Department of Municipality, Ramree). It is not clear whether other actors contribute to street lights.

3.3.11.3 Co-production

In some cases, however, focus group participants reported that when street lights do not work, residents are requested to pay for their maintenance (FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup; KII, CSO leader 1, Ponnagyun).

3.3.11.4 Scorecard: Criteria for a Good Entry Point

- **An articulated need within communities:** Medium: Medium: Priority for some (urban)
- **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** High: Others' involvement unclear
- **Authorities' openness to engagement:** High: DRD/MDs open
- **Potential, social cohesion:** Medium: Stakes medium, potential security implications
- **Feasibility (entry points):** High: Less skill intensive

- **Donor’s strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

3.4 What are the Barriers to Co-production?

As demonstrated in the profiles above, communities are in many ways involved in the provision of basic services. As the profiles also show, the ways in which communities are involved, can mainly be classified in the ‘lower’ end of the co-production taxonomy previously introduced. This means communities rarely participate in the design of or in decisions around service delivery. Rather, to the extent communities are involved in service production, it is primarily through contributing their time and money to fill the gaps.

This section looks - at a more general level - at the different factors which prevent ‘higher-end’ cooperation around services between communities and authorities. Based on the service sector profiles above, it first summarizes and adds more insights to the barriers which communities encounter when interacting with authorities, before shifting to the perspective to the authorities side. Finally, it also identifies resources to build on with regards to increasing the involvement of citizens in service production at the higher end of the co-production taxonomy. Covering both the community side and the authority side, it identifies enabling factors for co-production.

3.4.1 Barriers – As Seen By Communities

When engaging with authorities, communities face a range of barriers. These barriers – whether true or something which exists more as stories or rumors in communities – have the effect of reducing the extent to which communities are effectively involved in the production of services. As such, they are important to keep in mind in the context of SCBSD, which should work to mitigate these barriers systematically.

3.4.1.1 It’s Not Natural for (Some) People to Get Involved with Authorities

For some citizens, speaking to authorities is simply not something which is natural. As discussed in the section on how to define *services*, this may be because they haven’t interacted with the state much historically and have little expectations towards the state. The government is traditionally seen as enforcing rules and order – not, as owing anything to citizens. Citizens, on the other hand, have the duty to follow the rules and behave. In this sense, the social contract, as it is seen in Myanmar, contains less of a notion of exchanging sovereignty for service, as is most commonly seen in a Western context. Recall community members who said they would rather fix their roads themselves than waste time on engaging officials. It may, however, also be because community members – especially those from rural locations who don’t have much interaction with authorities – are afraid of speaking to officials, simply because they don’t have this experience, and because they feel inferior to civil servants. As one focus group participant from Taungup explained, when he was asked whether citizens can give input to authorities:

“Not at all, zero. It is not possible to suggest/complain on the services at all. The power holders don’t allow [people] to criticize or complain about them. In a family, the parent always says ‘we are the parent, and we will make all decisions’. It is the same for the relationship between the

public and the government who regard themselves as the parent. Many bottom up initiatives are turned down by higher authorities. These are the things we have inherited from many years of military rule – we live in fear. In our opinion, to change this relationship, we first have to provide training to the parent – in this context, the government officials. Giving you another example, if the student sees something is not right in the lesson he is delivered in the class, he dares not to point out/correct it at all. Observers such as concerned citizens or parents are not allowed to give feedback – it is claimed that it is none of their business.” (FGD 1, mixed youth participants, Taungup)

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, include content on state/citizen relationship, including social contract, accountability

3.4.1.2 Not Involved by Authorities

Linked to the above, communities may also be uninvolved in decisions over how services are provided, because they are not consulted by authorities and are waiting for authorities to take the lead. As we will see below, authorities may have various (good or bad) reasons for not involving communities, but for many community members, who assume that the onus is on authorities establish contact, a first potential avenue for involvement – being asked – does not occur, because authorities do not choose to do so (either). As such, most communities – when asked whether authorities have come to talk to them about services – say that that has not happened. *“No. It’d be great if they came to talk to us about it all” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, p2). “No one came and discussed service delivery with us. We have to learn about the service delivery by ourselves to improve our community” (FGD 1, mixed youth participants, Taungup).*

Rural focus group participants in particular reported not being consulted by authorities. Authorities on their side openly admit that they do not have the resources to visit communities – and rural communities in particular.

3.4.1.3 Lack of Understanding, Entry Points

Often community members do not engage authorities in respect to service provision, because they don’t know how to do it – which entry points to pursue: *“We need to know the way to approach to provide feedback. If we don’t know the way to approach, how will feedback be given to them?” (FGD with youth participants, urban Ramree, p2).* As previously laid out, there exists certain mechanisms through which communities can pursue influence, such as committees and through MPs, or by contacting authorities directly. As we will see, most authorities (say they) are open to citizens getting in touch directly on the phone or in person. However, communities often don’t know these channels. In most cases community members’ only entry point to the state is the local ward/village tract administrator; a community member elected locally, living within communities, who goes to bi-weekly meetings with higher authorities for coordination. This goes particularly for rural communities who – given their placement away from the offices where most services are coordinated or from the centers from where they are distributed (e.g. hospitals or schools) – have a harder time ‘stopping by’. These communities become particularly vulnerable to poorly performing village administrators. As demonstrated in the profiles, there *are* community members

who have a good understanding of their possible entry points for engaging authorities. The research nonetheless clearly shows that most do not.

“I think 8% [sic] of the people in my community understand public service. The rest of the people don’t know that different departments are responsible for providing different services. For example, most people don’t understand that government staff and service providers such as teachers, doctors, nurse and village administrator take a monthly salary from the state, and that they are [then] responsible for providing services.” (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree)

In response to this knowledge gap, several interviewees said that the *“level of knowledge and experience of communities needs to get increased”* (KII, CSO leader, Taungup). *“A lot of awareness meetings about public participation and the concept of service delivery will need to be conducted”* (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree).

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, include (focused) content on state/administrative setup, including entry points for citizen engagement

3.4.1.4 Communities Don’t Have the Resources to Get Involved

“People are busy trying to make a living for themselves and their families. They don’t really have the time to complain about these things [...] People are at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, and their morale is quite low. They’re struggling to make a living and don’t have time to do these things.” (KII, CSO leader 2, Ramree)

Even if community members feel they have relevant and justified input to communities, they may abstain from providing it, because they – themselves – do not have the resources it takes to do it. They may be too busy, or they may not be able to afford it. For the poorer communities in the target townships (and elsewhere!) who toil to make ends meet, the prospect of expending money to travel to a different location to provide feedback may be prohibitive, especially for poorer communities (!). Taking out the time it takes to pursue greater involvement in the ways in which services are delivered may also be prohibitive. If the opportunity costs of not being able to work to provide for themselves and/or their families are greater than the expected outcome of engaging in (often tedious) processes with relevant authorities, then the decision will often be against participating more. As one villager from a focus group in Ramree said:

“Thingan Chay Village had a shortage of teachers, and they took two from our village. We don’t know that much, so we didn’t take up the matter. If we did, it would have cost us money and many other difficulties. As there are too many poor people in our village as well, we didn’t further pursue this issue.” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, P1)

As demonstrated in the following quote, the costs of engaging authorities may sometimes be hard to see at first – here in the shape of a meal with chicken:

“People don’t have any right to make decisions. We can report things to them. When we report something to them, they are like ‘Yes, we’ll take care of it [...]on’t worry,’ but they never do anything in reality. We just waste our time waiting for them to do something about it. Once we had someone, I think it was the deputy township education officer, coming to our village. He

said he would do things for us and ate a meal with chicken. Then someone else came, made the same promise and ate another meal with chicken. And nothing happened afterwards.” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree)

This quote reveals the ‘uneven playing field’ between authorities and communities, where communities have little chance of knowing whether their efforts will lead to anything. To be sure, some officials are aware of the problem. A DRD official from Sittwe for instance (against his boss) argued that participants in their Mya Sein Yaung program should be reimbursed for travel costs:

“For some other projects, the management team can take out 2% of the loan to pay for their [members’] travel expenses. It is just 6 lakh of kyats per year. When we called [on] them [members] to attend trainings on budget management, they came and told us that they don’t want to continue as committee members anymore [...] because they have other business [...] There is no incentive for the committee members who are implementing the project we have provided. Hence, they are losing their interest. So, it would be better if they receive a small amount of salary as committee members.” (KII, Head of Dept. of Rural Development, Sittwe)

Recommendation: Compensate participants for their time in the context of SCBSD. Educate officials about the (opportunity) costs citizens face when engaging with officials

3.4.1.5 Community Suspicion (no-one wants to be a hero!)

P1: *“Once I worked as a volunteer for an organization. Then people in the village started saying things like “this guy is wasting his time instead of trying to earn a living.”*

“Others think that when you take up something for the community, you’re doing it for your own interests. And they say things like ‘there’s nothing this person has done for the community.’” (FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun)

For some community members, social dynamics within their communities may also play a role in preventing them from participating more actively in activities related to service delivery. In some contexts, interviewees explained, making oneself noticed too much may be seen with a certain degree of suspicion:

“I’m not sure if it’d be possible to organize people. If you pick up these issues, you get a lot of flak from other people, so people feel discouraged from continuing.” (KII, CSO leader 1, Ramree)

Interviewees say that in some cases other community members may suspect that people who play an active role are in it for themselves, or in other ways have ulterior motives. One community who indeed expressed such suspicion, said:

“There are too many self-serving organizations, and we don’t want ones like that [...] There are so many groups in the village such as youth groups, women groups, blood donor associations and funeral services group, but they aren’t doing much work. Too many groups and too little work!” (KII, CSO leader 2, Ponnagyun)

As we will discuss below, being part of a CSO may indeed be an avenue for accruing personal influence. But reluctance may also stem from a deeper skepticism towards ‘sticking one’s neck out’ or drawing too much attention towards one-self. As one focus group participant said:

“No one wants to be a hero!”

3.4.1.6 Lack of Coordination

At the community level, presenting a joint position between community members would in many cases generate the best results when engaging authorities, but for some communities, doing so is difficult, because it is not possible to coordinate effectively. Whether it is because of knowledge or resource gaps or because of suspicion from fellow community members, there may in some cases not exist individuals who are willing or able to coordinate joint action: *“No-one neither takes the lead nor follows after”* (FGD with youth participants, rural Taungup, Ko Nyi Pu). *“It is possible to organize, but it would take time. Some people might have contradictory views and feel jealous [about others leading]. And it would only be possible to lead them after resolving those”* (FGD, ethnic minority participants, Ponnagyun).

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, include project management and community mobilization skills

3.4.1.7 A Sense That Nothing Happens – Not Taken Seriously

If and when communities are willing and able to engage authorities over service delivery, one of the barriers most often reported by interviewees, was that they felt nothing happened. This in turn served to deter future efforts. Whether true or not, community members may feel that authorities simply ‘do not care’:

“No matter how people complain about their unhappiness with public services, action isn’t taken.” (KII, CSO leader, Taungup)

In Ponnagyun: *“We have gotten ourselves organized and raised these issues. Nothing has changed. We have asked for a village health clinic and they said they’d come and build it. But they haven’t shown up so far”* (FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun, P1).

Participants in a focus group in Ramree were similarly frustrated: *“We have organized ourselves to solve communal problems, but we can’t [...] We can’t say anything. What we say doesn’t carry any weight [...] People don’t have any right to make decisions. We can report things to them. When we report something to them, they are like “Yes, we’ll take care of it”, “Don’t worry”, but they never do anything in reality. We just waste our time waiting for them to do something about it”* (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree).

Such sentiments of disempowerment were repeated in all townships. Notably, however, nearly all interviewees who expressed the strongest degree of disenfranchisement (e.g. those quoted above) were either from very rural communities or from ethnic minority communities.

Recommendation: Celebrate and showcase examples of positive change brought about by citizen engagement

3.4.1.8 Non-rule-based, Personal, or Clientelist Administration (response is difficult to predict!)

“The quality and extent of municipal services are determined by the attitude and capacity of whoever is in office.” (KII, CSO leader 2, Ramree)

“There are people who are influential because they are members of particular committees. They can complain about things they don’t like. However, sometimes they abuse their power for their own sake.” (KII, CSO leader 3, Sittwe)

“I think they have a tendency to discriminate against us because we’re Chin.” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree)

In the classic Western ‘bureaucracy’, administration is premised on rules, which again aims to guarantee predictability and equal treatment. A complicating factor for communities’ engagement with authorities may be that in the context of a more ‘personality-based administration’ as demonstrated in the quotes above, communities may not have the personal connections needed. This may affect their ability to obtain a positive outcome when interacting with authorities, or it may mean they are actively disfavored by officials, including because of their gender, ethnicity, or religion. With civilian government built on the rule of law still being a relatively new aspiration in Myanmar, many community members express a feeling that what happens when they engage officials, is more often a question of who they meet, than what the rules – and their rights – prescribe. And not least that it’s a matter of who they are themselves. In Ponnagyun:

“We cannot do anything. We think there are places where we can make our complaints, but we’ve never done such a thing. Yes, everyone can make complaints, but in reality, only those who dare to complain and are good at speaking, like elders of the village [can].” (FGD 1, mixed, rural Ponnagyun)

In Sittwe: “They’re not interested in solving our problems [...] They care only for those who are rich and have high level positions in their jobs.” (FGD with youth, urban Sittwe)

Some interviewees felt officials use and abuse their authority and influence to the benefit of those they like, and to the disadvantage or detriment of those they don’t like:

“I once went to ask for a testimonial from the village administrator, and he said it would cost me 3000 kyats. I didn’t get one. When I went back again, he said it would now cost me 5000 kyats. Things are like this: the strong bully the weak.” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, P3)

A particular variation of the assertions made with regard to self-serving behavior among civil servants, is the idea that clientelist distribution of goods extends to the distribution of government jobs themselves. Ethnic minority interviewees in particular in some cases – again also documented

by CDNH 2016 and in other research carried out by the research team – suggested that government jobs were not available to them because of their ethnicity (CDNH, 2016; British Council, forthcoming). This notion reveals an interesting perspective on the idea of working for the state. Rather than government jobs being seen as a transaction in which labor is sold for hire, government jobs are seen as a good or service that the state gives to certain people. True or not, this perspective has a number of implications. Firstly, those who are given jobs in the government, are not necessarily those most qualified for it. Second, those who work for the government, are not rewarded for their effort, but for who they are. This has a third implication, namely that government officials are seen as less accountable for their performance – again because they are ‘given’ their job because of who they are, rather than what they do. Taken together, this view of the state is – naturally – not particularly conducive for communities’ engagement with government officials, at least if they are not connected to them somehow. It makes it crucial who sits where in which positions – is it one of ours? – and particularly for the ‘non-connected’ may fuel a sense of the state as being something not there to serve one, but to serve as an instrument for the connected.

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, include content on rules-based administration and on options for complaining in case of malperformance

3.4.1.9 Staff Are Rude

As displayed in the service sector profiles – particularly on health, and to some degree on education – interviewees are in some cases deterred from interacting with officials because they are seen as rude towards community members:

“When my aunt lost her daughter a while ago, she passed out from grief. And when I brought it to the attention of the nurse on duty, she didn’t even take her eyes off her phone. Such respectable nurse [being ironic]! Since then, I don’t go to the hospital even when I get really sick because I don’t want to see such a situation again.” (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree, P1)

It is unsurprising that those sectors are often mentioned, as they are the ones communities most often interact with. Yet health and education staff were not the only government staff whom communities reported were sometimes rude. Ward/village tract administrators, GAD township officers, ministerial department workers, and courts were also accused of being rude in different ways to citizens. *“They’d even shout at people,”* one interviewee said (KII, CSO leader 1, Ramree). Another interviewee thought it was something about being a civil servant that made people rude:

“People who previously worked for community development have changed their attitudes negatively. For example, a village administrator who had previously helped positively in the community by coordinating with elders, changed his attitude when he joined GAD. I don’t know how GAD control him.” (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree)

As previously discussed, the issue might appear to hark back to more fundamental relationship dynamics between authorities and citizens.

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, consider including content on conflict mitigation, stress management

3.4.1.10 Fear of Retribution

“You can’t criticize. If I criticize someone by name, I might get arrested or something. The situation is like this.” (KII, CSO leader 1, Ramree)

Finally, the service sector profiles demonstrated that communities are sometimes held back from engaging with government officials over service delivery, because they fear that if they are being difficult, officials may not only be rude towards them, but actively seek to punish them. This concern was mentioned in relation to different authorities. Most immediately ‘dangerous’ was upsetting doctors. There exists among some people an idea that doctors who people have made upset may – actually – take revenge by killing patients or mistreating them (FGD with female participants, rural Taungup). Highly unlikely, the existence of this rumor nonetheless reveals a lot about the extent to which some communities feel alien to authorities. Others believed that criticizing government could lead to jail:

“People can criticize the services provided by the private sector, e.g. transportation. But we have no such experience of making suggestions to or criticizing the government’s services. If we criticize them, we will be sent to jail.” (FGD 1, mixed, rural Ponnagyun)

One youth participant in a focus group discussion in Taungup thought elders, in particular, were fearful of the government.

“Especially the older generation have poor understanding of these mechanisms. They live in fear that if they criticize or complain about police or other government officials, they will be in trouble. They are thinking more of negative consequences rather than speaking out or taking action.” (FGD with female participants, rural Taungup)

Fear of retribution was also mentioned in less extreme cases, where communities said they worried that if they complained about services, they might end up worse or simply be cancelled:

“Sometimes, government departments have to take action when they receive a complaint or suggestion letter about some issue. But then the organization or person who complained or suggested is not invited for the next meeting conducted by government departments.” (KII, CSO leader 3, Ramree)

It should be noted that this assertion may in fact occasionally be true. In interviews, officials occasionally hinted at moving projects to other locations when communities complained too much. While it is difficult to know how common this practice is, fear of it nonetheless exists as a common concern among citizens.

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, include content on ‘how to complain in a constructive way’. Also include content on how to spot and mitigate rumors about authorities

3.4.2 Barriers – As Seen By Authorities

On their side too, authorities indicated a number of factors which limit their cooperation with communities. These challenges in some cases mirrored those identified by communities, and in some cases highlighted different aspects.

3.4.2.1 Not Important or Natural

Like communities, authorities may – as a first point – not *want* to seek input from or engagement with communities over their ways of service provision, simply because they don't find it important, or because it doesn't seem natural to them. They may think it is not their responsibility to reach out to communities. Only a few officials directly said this, and there appears to be an emerging norm that seeking input from communities is something authorities *should* do (see below). This is an important 'stub' to build on, but as demonstrated in this research, it remains in many cases a stub. There were, however, exceptions where officials directly said that they did not find it important to involve citizens. These exceptions were most often more specialized sectors such as the health sector, where there is a perception that communities have nothing relevant to contribute. As in Ramree, where an official from the Department of Health was asked if he thought improved public participation could strengthen health care:

“No. The ways medical services can be improved, is to provide medical equipment, skills, medical staff, and medications.” (KII, Department of Health, Ramree)

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, include content on state/citizen relationship, including social contract, accountability

3.4.2.2 Lack of Understanding, No Qualified Input

Closely related to the above, a reason for why authorities may think consulting communities is not relevant, may be that they think communities have insufficient knowledge to be able to deliver qualified input. Officials in many cases believe there is an information asymmetry, where they know more than communities, and where their preferred solutions are therefore necessarily better. As discussed before, this particularly the case for the more technical sectors, but is not limited to them. Here the One-Stop-Shop in Taungup:

“There are no community members who come with useful input, and perhaps they do not understand or they do not know our services [...] I haven't heard any ideas from any community members during my visits, and we do not have any mechanism for communities for that yet.” (KII, Deputy Township Authority, GAD One Stop Shop, Taungup)

The Department of Electricity in Ponnagyun: *“We haven't seen any community members come with useful input yet.” (KII, Dep. of Electricity and Power, Ponnagyun)*

It is of course true that community members generally possess less *technical* knowledge about the services in question. The research nonetheless demonstrated that there is a potential in working with authorities to appreciate that technical knowledge may not be the only relevant knowledge for improving service delivery.

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, include content on the importance of incorporating citizen input (co-production)

3.4.2.3 Communities Are ‘Grabby’

Officials in some cases indicated a level of hesitance towards engaging with communities, because they are seen as ‘grabby’. This in turn makes them less deserving of support, or simply induces a general discomfort about working with them. Officials said communities *“assume that government will provide whatever they claim or propose”* (KII, Dept. of Planning, Ramree; KII, Deputy Authority, General Administrative Department, Ramree). In Taungup, an official from the OSS said:

“People lack awareness and knowledge – the public just think about complaining about what the government does for them. They do not realize that [we have] limited budget, that our GAD junior staff lack skills in providing services, and that lack of facilities at GAD makes it very challenging to do public service delivering.” (KII, Deputy Township Authority, GAD One Stop Shop, Taungup)

More than being seen as undignified or unpalatable behavior, it also appeared from some interviews that this perceived ‘grabiness’ was loathed because it puts officials in a (personally) uncomfortable position. As an official from the DRD in Ramree said:

“They want beyond the limits, and they request, suggest and want us to do it. However, within [our] limitations, sometimes we cannot use their inputs. It is difficult, when they need more than we can afford to provide.” (KII, Dept. of Rural Development, Ramree)

A particularly ‘harsh’, but also very frequent assertion was the claim previously discussed that communities actively speculate in making money off authorities when giving up land for infrastructure.

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, include content on how to receive complaints well. Also include content on how to spot and manage rumors about communities

3.4.2.4 No time, no resources (especially far-away communities) (include can’t reach faraway)

Even if authorities *want* to engage with communities, officials indicated a number of reasons they were unable to do so, of which lack of time and resources – however mundane – was the most frequently cited factor. Authorities may (say they) want to engage with communities but may not have the means available to do it – whether this is lack of transportation or time. The GAD in Taungup for instance said:

“We do consultations with communities, and we would like to do it more. However, it is still limited due to the limitations we have. For example, we have very limited logistics support from

District and State government.” (KII, Township Officer, General Administrative Department, Taungup)

The Department of Planning in Ramree: *“As Head of the department, whenever I go on field visits, I explain what our department works for [...] We are assigned to go on field trip 24 times per year, but we can make it only 12 times with the support we have from DRD or GAD for transportation. We do not have an office car”* (KII, Dept. of Planning, Ramree).

The DRD in Ponnagyun too said *“the main obstacle [...] for reaching people with information” was poor transportation capacity”* (KII, Department of Rural Development, Ponnagyun).

Rural communities are particularly disadvantaged by this. In remote areas, where authorities are already struggling to provide services, engaging in conversation with communities is seen as (even) more insurmountable. The DRD in Ramree for instance said quite openly that they *“approximately reach 20% of the total villages only. There are 80% of the villages which we haven’t reached”* (KII, Dept. of Rural Development, Ramree). In Taungup, an official from the One Stop Shop there estimated their reach to *“only around 10 to 15% of the public in Taungup”* (KII, Deputy Township Authority, GAD One Stop Shop, Taungup).

Recommendation: Consider setting funds aside for enabling authority/community interaction through field visits or community-to-town visits

3.4.2.5 Difficulties Reaching Ethnic Minority Communities

A few officials noted that they struggle in particular to reach ethnic minority communities. When discussing reaching ethnic communities, most said they did not see a problem, because *“they understand Burmese language well, we do not have any difficulty in communication”* (KII, Dept. of Social Welfare, Ramree).

In some cases, authorities recognized that there might be problems communicating with ethnic minority citizens. For instance in Taungup, where an official from the One Stop Shop said that *“it is certain that some groups such as Chin and Khome/Mro will have difficulties to communicate to government authorities because they may not have connection with those”* (KII, Deputy Township Authority, GAD One Stop Shop, Taungup).

The overriding sentiment among authorities was nonetheless that communication with ethnic minorities was not an issue. Given that ethnic minority focus group participants in this study said they felt authorities discriminated against them (FGD with ethnic minority participants, Ramree), the lack of appreciation of an issue on authorities’ side may as well be an expression of lack of sensitivity to minority exclusion dynamics.

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, include content on how to spot and mitigate issues of inclusion/exclusion

3.4.2.6 Lack of Knowledge of CSOs/CBOs/NGOs

While it was not said directly, it would seem from the interviews conducted that in some cases, a reason authorities interact less with communities, is that they – like community members themselves – lack understanding of entry points for doing so. More specifically, it was clear from the majority of the interviews, that officials in many cases are not precisely aware which initiatives are undertaken by citizens and their representatives in the form of CSOs. There were of course exceptions, and in some cases officials themselves double as active community members. Often, nonetheless, where officials made reference to initiatives carried out by such actors, they were ‘general’ or vague.

“I have seen that they have been doing some work in the communities, although it has been limited – independently or in collaboration with NGOs sometime. But I do not know exactly what they have been doing, and with whom.” (KII, Dept. of Rural Development, Ramree)

“I have seen that there are some local NGO and CSOs/CBOs who work for communities, based on their interests. But we haven’t consulted with them.” (KII, Dept. of Social Welfare, Ramree)

The department of planning in Ramree: *“[In: Do CBOs and CSOs also involve themselves in service delivery work either independently or in collaboration with NGOs? If yes, how?] They only collaborate with the hospital to my knowledge”* (KII, Dept. of Planning, Ramree).

It should be noted that the terms “CSO” and “CBO” may to some extent have been less well-understood by interviewees, as they may be said to be Western constructs – a point which should also be kept in mind during implementation of SCBSD as well.

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, include content on cooperation between the state and external parties, specifically various interest groups. Include tools for identifying relevant partners

3.4.2.7 Lack of Trust, Communities are Scared

In what would perhaps be a surprise to some community members, several officials in fact regretted that in some cases a limiting factor in their engagement with communities, is that communities – they say – appear afraid of them. This observation of course overlays with the point above that communities expressed fear of authorities. The (fortunate) point here is that authorities in many cases are themselves aware of it.

Some attributed this to the legacy of military rule with its less predictable degree of accountability and predictability towards communities. Officials said they felt communities had limited trust in them, meaning it was difficult to engage productively with them. As one official from the One Stop Shop in Taungup said when he was asked if he had heard about misunderstandings between communities and authorities:

“We haven’t heard of it related to our OSS services. We assume that there would be some, but the reasons are that they are afraid of speaking out about the issues related to government.” (KII, Deputy Township Authority, GAD One Stop Shop, Taungup)

An MP in Taungup had a similar experience: *“Communities have grown up with fear. They feel less confident to speak and present [...] The mindset of both staff of government departments and communities needs to change, [but] it is not easy to change their mindset in two or three years”* (KII, Member of Parliament 1, Taungup). In both the Planning Department and the Department of Rural Development in Ponnagyun, officials acknowledged a responsibility to reduce communities’ fears of authorities. An official from the Department of Planning said:

“We coordinate across all the departments to make this process happen. I think we should be providing training to government staff particularly to change their perspectives towards rural community members – to be friendlier, be able to mobilize and understand the community needs, be able to be supportive to the community. We should also give training to the community members – to develop their knowledge and skills, to eliminate their fears to deal with government officials and government offices – to be free from fears.” (KII, Planning Department, Ponnagyun)

“We coordinate across all the departments to make this process happen. I think we should be providing training to government staff particularly to change their perspectives towards rural community members – to be friendlier, be able to mobilize and understand the community needs, be able to be supportive to the community. We should also give training to the community members – to develop their knowledge and skills, to eliminate their fears to deal with government officials and government offices – to be free from fears.” (KII, Planning Department, Ponnagyun)

An official from the DRD shared a positive experience of a “Public Talk,” a recent initiative initiated by the Union Minister and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. In this meeting, villagers had first been apprehensive, but the situation had turned into a good example of community/authority relations strengthening:

“The villagers, as they never had a chance to directly interact with the township officers, were afraid. Many times, they receive information through the village administrators, and they have not seen or interacted with local officials before. Initially, they were afraid to talk to us but after they had listened to our explanation and had photos taken together, they became very happy and confident. They have been visiting and contacting us since then.” (KII, Department of Rural Development, Ponnagyun)

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, include content on self-awareness, non-threatening communication, rapport building

3.4.2.8 Mandate Overrides Communities’ Input

As discussed in the section on how to define “services”, authorities also face administrative difficulties which make it more difficult for them to engage with communities. A challenge alluded to by several officials for engaging actively with communities and eliciting their input, is a notion

that communities' wishes, inputs, directions are seen as pulling in a different direction than or even going against what authorities are (actually) meant to be doing; communities' ideas and input are seen as a detraction. In Taungup, for instance, an official from the GAD said he found communities' input important, *“but it is still difficult to consider it for the administrative bodies and other departments, as they work on mandated assignments”* (KII, Township Officer, General Administrative Department, Taungup). An official from the Department of Planning said:

“We wish we could use their inputs. However, following the order from State and Union level and their framework of policies and procedures, their [communities'] inputs are just noted.” (KII, Dep. of Planning, Taungup)

In Ramree, an official from the Department of Social Welfare explained:

“We assume that hearing the perspectives of the communities is important. However, regarding our activities and services, we have to work on what we are responsible for [...] For the time being, we mainly focus on what our department has been assigned from the State and Union Level governments. And we deliver those services in a timely manner.” (KII, Dept. of Social Welfare, Ramree)

The official said this was also the case for the different committees:

“Currently, in collaboration with the Township Planning and Implementation Committee and Township Development Committees which GAD leads, at the regular meetings, some committee members give inputs. However, as mandated, we have to focus on our activities that are assigned by the Ministry.” (KII, Dept. of Social Welfare, Ramree)

There exists, as mentioned, a schism for many officials between what is seen as their mandate, and what communities want. They feel 'caught' between two imperatives – one from above, and one from the ground. In navigating this tension, officials say they feel compelled to air on the side of their mandate, cautious to not run the risk of overstepping it. Ultimately, this vertical orientation means they are less able to engage with communities.

It is important to note here that the extent to which agencies are vertically aligned, differs substantially – with their anchoring 'upwards' being a decisive element. Agencies linked to the union level (ministries) tend to be more vertically aligned than agencies like the DRD, which is linked at state/region level, or the MD which is a self-contained unit at the township level (though with district-level coordination) with a mandate to collect taxes and provide services (see also TAF, 2018 for a discussion of the autonomy of the different government agencies. It should be noted, however, that these organizations are also embedded within legal frameworks which may be perceived as diminishing their space for engaging citizens.

Recommendation: Identity and showcase examples where community input has helped authorities implement their mandate. Challenge notion that community input detracts from mandate

3.5 What are the Enablers of Co-production?

While the above section demonstrates a number of obstacles for communities' and authorities' interaction around service provision, the research also revealed enabling factors for strengthening cooperative modalities for service provision – utilized or underutilized. This section presents a number of these enabling factors, both from the community and authority side.

3.5.1 Formal Entry Points

3.5.1.1 Committees – Township Level

As noted earlier, formally the various committees which exist at the township level arguably remain one of the entry points with the greatest potential for community participation in decision making over service provision (and governance more generally), at least at a high level. The research has demonstrated that these committees are not broadly known to the public, and also that those who get to sit on the committees are typically people of privilege. As an interviewee in Ponnagyun said:

“We have only the Township Development Committee in Ponnagyun. Of course, the members of that committee are already influential people in the community. They became committee members, because they are influential people in the community.” (KII, CSO leader 3, Ponnagyun)

It is also clear that it varies to what extent officials take them seriously. For instance, an official from the department of electricity in Ramree:

“At monthly meetings, weekly meetings, educational seminars or conferences, some committees gave inputs. However, their inputs are just being noted, not used. We have realized that receiving inputs is useless.” (KII, Dep. Officer, Department of Education, Ramree)

Or the department of education in Taungup: *“[In: What about committees? Are there committees that give input? If so, what kind?] Schools committees in communities and wards give inputs sometimes. However, it is difficult to say whether it is useful or not, because we are not decision makers ourselves.”* (KII, Dep. Education Officer, Dep. of Education, Taungup)

Other agencies nonetheless appeared to take the committees more seriously, including not least the DRD Departments, the Departments of Planning, and to some extent the MDs.

At any rate, while the community involvement potential in township committees currently appears under-utilized, the township committees remain relevant enabling factors for strengthening co-production. Given that they exist and are embedded within the administrative framework as an opportunity for community involvement, they may be viewed – programmatically – as useful ‘stubs’.

Recommendation: Work with township committees (but remember the ‘elite nature’ of committees). Include content inclusion/exclusion

3.5.1.2 Committees – Village Level

As discussed in the service sector profiles, there are also committees at the ward/village level. There are standing school committees and ad-hoc basis established specifically in relation to different projects or initiatives taking place. The DRD’s Mya Sein Yaung program for instance involves the setting up of local community committees.

Community members were more often aware of or engaged with committees at the village level. Given that these committees exist close to participants, they – especially in relation to education – represent an opportunity for further engagement.

3.5.1.3 Members of Parliament

MPs – according to themselves and previous research – play a certain role as community representatives towards authorities (TAF, 2018), not least given the relatively inactive Hluttaws⁴⁹. According to TAF, this inactivity means that MPs have pivoted towards ‘fighting’ single cases, representing communities, and given their public mandate, they have the clout to speak to authorities at most levels.

In this study, focus group participants generally did not mention that they had been in touch with MPs about public services, and CSO leaders interviewed only in a few cases said they saw MPs as an important potential channel for addressing service provision issues. Given MPs’ potential for moving around and across administrative layers, they – like committees – should nonetheless be seen as potential ‘stubs’ for strengthening community involvement.

Recommendation: Work with MPs as influencers who can traverse administrative layers

3.5.1.4 Ward/Village Tract Level Administrators (W/VTA)

“If there’s anything, you can go and speak to the ward administrator.” (KII, CSO leader 1, Sittwe)

Ward/village tract level administrators are – generally speaking and as found in previous research (see CDNH, 2016; Asia Foundation, 2018) – the entry points to the state which communities feel most comfortable approaching to discuss service delivery. As such, a considerable number of interviewees identified W/VTA as the primary go-to entity for engagement over service provision.

W/VTA are elected by 10/100 household members. The limited access to participate in these elections means they do not sit on a solid public mandate. It still means, however, that they appear to occupy a special role between communities and authorities which make them somewhat more approachable than other authorities. When asked whether there were *“particular types of people*

⁴⁹ “Hluttaw” is the generic term for a council or assembly - in this context the state/region level parliament.

that the authorities listen to more than others?,” interviewees occasionally pointed to village administrators, demonstrating how village administrators are to some extent seen as community members as such, in addition to being authorities.

In addition to their proximity to communities (as embedded within them), this means there is a stronger link between them and communities. To be sure, the semi-professional nature of ward/village tract administrators also brings about challenges. According to focus group participants, it varies considerably to which extent ward/village tract administrators are seen as reliable and useful entry points, and whether their requests “*reach the higher levels*” (FGD with youth, urban Sittwe).

Regardless, given ward/village tract administrators’ proximity and in-between position with regards to authorities and communities, they are an important entry point for cooperation between communities and authorities.

Recommendation: Work with ward/village tract administrators as community advocates

3.5.2 CBOs and CSOs

As shown in the service sector profiles, CSOs play a certain role in the provision of services in communities. It varies from place to place and over time to which extent they play a role, and in which areas. The health sector – with blood donation groups and funeral societies playing a role in many places – appears to be the sector within which CSO/CBO contributions are most solidified and routinized. In addition, CSOs/CBOs play a substantial role in the context of emergency responses. CSOs and CBOs in other words fill out important gaps in relation to service provision – they play an important role at the ‘lower end’ of the co-production taxonomy.

It is less clear from this research, nonetheless, to what extent CSOs and CBOs as such constitute a channel for communities to engage with authorities, and whether the organizations as such serve to amplify communities’ voices vis-à-vis authorities. Community members interviewed did not appear to view CSOs/CBOs as such. Officials only in very few cases said they engage with CSOs/CBOs. As will be discussed below, CSOs and CBOs nonetheless remain relevant as enablers of co-production, because in many cases they are, however, not irrelevant with regards to higher-taxonomy co-production of services, because in many cases the leaders of CSOs and CBOs are able to engage with authorities with more gravitas – even as individuals – *given* their positions within the CSO/CBO.

Recommendation: Work with CSO/CBO representatives (but in SCBSD curriculum, include content on inclusion/exclusion)

3.5.3 Authorities’ Different Forms of Outreach

Generally speaking, the different ways in which authorities ‘reach out’ to communities are 1) actions which in practical terms are important for equipping communities with requisite

knowledge to engage with authorities, but also 2) evidence of authorities buying into or acknowledging the idea that to exist as entities, they have to interact with communities to some extent. It therefore makes sense to look at authorities' outreach practice as enabling factors for co-production.

3.5.3.1 Field Visits

Field visits during which authorities interact with communities, are perhaps the most broadly reaching form of outreach done by authorities. The number of visits done per agency varies substantially as a function of the resources they have available (see section on limitations above) as well as the type of work an agency does. There appeared to be slightly idiosyncratic factors at play as well, nonetheless. The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Taungup, for instance, had visited 60 communities (***“To cover all communities in Rakhine, we just did a one-time visit to 60 village tracts, but not to each village” (KII, Deputy Township Authority, GAD One Stop Shop, Taungup)***). The DRD – unsurprisingly – appeared to be the agencies who conduct most field visits. Others – e.g. the departments of social welfare – said they were less able to go to the field. The same was the case for the GAD (at least in Taungup), the Department of Planning in Ramree, and in fact the DRD in Ponnagyun.

It is not clear that field visits automatically increase communities' influence on decisions made by authorities. In some cases, they do – for instance as previously discussed in the case of locating suitable places for boreholes. But in other cases, from the interviews conducted it would appear in some cases that the communication which takes place during field visits, is somewhat one-sided. Officials go to communities to “explain” them things and “announce” things. Nevertheless, field visits of course remain an important opportunity for communities and authorities to engage.

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, include content on how to conduct citizen-engaging visits (communication, planning, meeting forms)

3.5.3.2 Outreach Through Various Media

Authorities' outreach also happens through different forms of media, with billboards being the form most frequently used. It is mostly used by agencies 'who build things', where billboards are posted in strategic places and often by new constructions. Websites are used by a few agencies but are often seen as too technical or resource heavy or bureaucratic (some agencies report having to seek authorization from the GAD before they can post content). A very limited number of agencies had experience using radio (none had used television). Some agencies reported not doing any outreach – most notably health authorities. Again, it is not clear that mediated communication translates into two-directional engagement between authorities and communities, but the agencies who invest in communication do appear to be committed to engagement with the population.

The form of communication most often cited when authorities were asked how they stay in touch with people, were phones. Nearly all officials interviewed said citizens were welcome to call them directly on the phone. The fact that only few officials said they actually received calls on these phones perhaps suggests that the ease with which authorities imagine that communities 'can just call them' is not fully aligned with the realities on the ground and doesn't factor in the barriers

discussed earlier, including practical obstacles like phone coverage as well as discomfort or fear around reaching out to authorities.

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, include content on communication quality. Focus on sender, message, receiver awareness, including barriers to communication

3.5.4 Informal Feedback Through influential Community Members

Discussions with communities also revealed that community members – while still limited in extent – also find other ways to provide feedback about service delivery which take place outside the formal system. In these cases, information is often provided through influential community members who are able to speak to authorities with greater weight due to their community role. In some cases – as explained above – W/VTA appear to take on this role as advocates for communities. In other cases, other community members take it on.

It is not possible to establish with confidence which community members necessarily become influential, as the extent to which community members are influential, is contextually constituted and is fluid. The clout which influential community members must have to be able to speak to authorities with weight, may draw on a number of different ‘social capital’.

When community members were asked to identify individuals with particular access to authorities in relation to public services, the categories people most frequently highlighted were nonetheless 10/100 household leaders as well as Elders – in other words social capital stemming from ‘traditional’ leadership structures. Monks – drawing on ‘religious’ social capital – were also occasionally mentioned as influential individuals taking up the role as advocate or community mediators. In most cases, monks were nonetheless said to play a role mostly in relation to religious matters. CSO leadership is another significant claim to social capital. The leaders of CSOs and CBOs are often able to ‘stand’ on these organizations to elevate their own personal profile. CSOs and CBOs in this sense serve as a ‘platform’ through which citizens can be ‘propped up’ to a position of influence.

These influential individuals are – within their given context – relevant to consider as enablers of co-production, insofar as they can engage authorities more easily.

It is worth noting, however, that there may be an ‘issue of positionality’ in relation to particularly influential community members. As detailed, influential community members often come from positions of privilege, which may favor some people’s access to influence over others. CSO/CBO leaders are, for instance, often men of a certain age with a certain education, and they are usually Buddhist and (ethnic) Rakhine. This may also imply that they represent certain groups more than others. While indeed this ‘class’ of privileged community members who become able to serve as advocates is relevant in terms of identifying existing enabling factors for co-production, there is nonetheless a risk that other less-privileged groups or individuals may be under-represented.

Recommendation: Work with significant community members but maintain focus on representation. In SCBSD curriculum include content on inclusion/exclusion

3.5.5 Service Production Communities (co-financing and self-servicing)

As detailed in the service sector profiles in the previous section, community members are in many cases involved in the production of services, although most of the time this involvement takes place in ways which may be said to belong at the lower end of the co-production taxonomy: They fund services directly, they carry out the work themselves. Self-servicing takes place in the areas of education, health, road/infrastructure, water, electricity, sanitation. While in many ways this form of co-production is driven by necessity in the absence of state provided services, it nonetheless demonstrates (typically remote) communities' ability and propensity to organize and mobilize in relation to services. This propensity in turn may to some extent be seen as existing structures around service delivery with the potential of serving as stepping stones to community involvement at the higher end of the co-production taxonomy.

The self-servicing communities – born out of necessity and/or habit – might face certain shortcomings. One interviewee from Ponnagyun for instance said the servicing of teachers had led to a certain “*misunderstanding*” among community members, where striking a balance between securing stable education in the village versus “*pampering*” teachers had caused some disagreement. It is also clear that the extent to which families can afford to contribute to self-service solutions may affect the extent to which they get to benefit from them (access to education, for instance). These issues of inclusion/exclusion and of tension management aside, self-servicing communities are nonetheless enabling factors of co-production.

Recommendation: Work with self-service groups of citizens as a stepping stone for community engagement in other forms of service delivery. Include SCBSD curriculum include content on inclusion/exclusion

3.5.6 Emerging Norms: A Co-production Mindset?

3.5.6.1 Communities

Finally, in identifying enabling factors for co-production, it is worth asking whether there are signs – on both the community and the authority side – of an emerging norm of striving towards increased, meaningful engagement between authorities and communities. Throughout the report it has been argued that historically given habits and practices around ‘services’ place certain limits on community/authority interaction. Given these limits – which are themselves changeable – it is nonetheless worth exploring whether there are changes to the ways in which communities and authorities think of their mutual relationship.

On the community side, the research carried out for this study indeed suggests that this is the case – according to community members themselves led by youth in the context of a changing political landscape, marked by democratic rhetoric, but also outside interventions. In some cases, officials interviewed for this research were the ones to point out changes in the degree to which ‘ordinary’ citizens are comfortable asserting themselves. An official from the Department of Planning in Taungup described the change in the following way:

“The government administration system has been changing gradually, and people in the communities are also becoming aware of what and how they can demand from the respective

departments of the government. In this regard, hearing the voices of communities has become critical. Without hearing their voices, and reaching agreements with them, it is difficult to implement any project activities.” (KII, Dept. of Planning, Taungup)

The head of the Municipal Committee – also in Taungup – said he saw a trend towards communities becoming more assertive and aware of their responsibility, taking their (quasi-democratic) influence more seriously:

“Previously, local communities were not aware of the important role of ward administrators, so they elected a person without assessing their capacity, but now they do. They understand that if the administrator they elected is unqualified, they won’t get good services. Administrators were also not very interested in the work, but they also realize that if they work the way they did in the past, they won’t get any support from communities.” (KII, Chairman of Municipal Committee, Taungup)

In conversations with communities, this assertiveness came out in different ways, for instance in the frustration expressed by a focus group participant in Ramree over a road construction project that had gone wrong:

“They do something like One Stop Shop, but I don’t think people have any say in this. There is something called Township Management Committee with the head of township GAD being its chair, but it would function better if there were representatives from the town population. Civil servants think differently from ordinary members of the public, who can give them important feedback and also act as checks and balances [...] Had there been meaningful participation from the public, this wouldn’t have happened.” (KII, CSO leader 1, Ramree)

Or in statements like the following from two focus group participants: *“The government needs to make it known that civil servants are the people’s servants, not the other way around. Unfortunately, civil servants think they’re masters of the people, and it’s quite hard to change this mentality” (KII, CSO leader 1, Ramree)* Or: *“As far as I understand, a civil servant needs to be service minded, and they have to swear to serve the public. But then they forget everything.” (FGD 1, mixed youth participants, Taungup).*

As previously discussed, some interviewees believed youth in particular – with fewer years of experience under the more closed military regime – were less inclined to fear authorities and more ready to speak their mind. A participant in a youth focus group in Ramree had the following appeal:

“People need to be interested. Organizers should mobilize and invite people in the communities in order to increase participation [...] Consultation and negotiation should be conducted between communities and local authorities or government departments [...] Sometimes the opportunity of participation is given to people in communities, [but] people joining the meetings are less confident to discuss and raise concerns and questions in the meeting [...] People also need to have enough knowledge and experience to get involved in the process. How can people get involved if they don’t know or have knowledge and experience about the respective services?” (FGD with youth participants, urban Ramree)

The chairman of the Municipal Committee in Taungup made the interesting suggestion that communities in rural locations were in fact ‘heard’ the most, because their remoteness forced them to speak up in ways not seen in towns:

“The voice and perspectives of people who live in the villages are heard more than people who live in towns, because villagers face daily challenges such as lack of electricity, bad conditions of roads, etc. People from the urban show a lack of interest in participating in such activities, because they think that they don’t need to worry about receiving such services. It is because they live in the town.” (KII, Chairman of Municipal Committee, Taungup)

This may in some ways be said to strengthen the point made earlier that self-servicing communities are in some ways (better) prepared to enter co-production arrangements. A community member from a village far away from connecting roads said in his community *“We are all like brothers and sisters. We’re in fact becoming more united due to our shared plight”* (FGD 2, mixed, rural Ponnagyun, p1).

Finally, it is also worth noting that increasing awareness of or tendency towards formulating demands or expectations towards the state, there was also – among a number of interviewees – a fair appreciation of the difficulties faced by the authorities in their provision of services. Rather than conforming to the stereotype held by some officials that communities are ‘grabby’ and unreasonable in the demands they place on them, community members in many cases expressed understanding of the reasonable limits to which demands are feasible. This awareness – and with it the ability to engage productively with authorities is a notable and important factor in enabling fruitful cooperation between authorities and communities.

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, build on emerging norms around and provide further awareness of the roles of ‘citizens’

3.5.6.2 Authorities

Also on the authority side, the research captured signs that there exists a norm among most authorities which suggests that consulting and engaging with communities is good and important. Only in very rare cases did officials interviewed declare that they did not think that involving communities was a good thing. On the contrary, officials in most cases demonstrated support to community inclusion. Here, it is the Department of Planning in Taungup, describing the importance of involving communities:

“Without community input, we cannot implement any projects [...] Therefore, at monthly meetings held at GAD, sometimes in the villages, or when village administrators request it, we consult with them [and] make decisions with their agreement. For example, if we receive a request from a village for a road, we give it priority [...] And then when we receive budget [...], we again consult with that community [...] To get a piece of land for constructing the road, we call village hall meetings and explain them how the project will be implemented.” (KII, Dept. of Planning, Taungup)

In Ramree: *“It is important [to hear the perspectives of communities], because communities have different perspectives [...] Whenever I visit the field, I meet with communities and consult*

with them about their needs and explain about services, because based on that, we will have to collect data and submit proposal for review in collaboration with the TPIC.” (KII, Dept. of Planning, Ramree)

The DRD in Taungup: *“Without their voices heard, we cannot implement our projects, which will be rejected or fail” (3.2.4).* In Ramree: *“Listening to the voices of the communities is part of our work before any projects gets started [...] DRD is always in the field meeting with villagers, having consultations with villagers to make sure they become a part of it.” (KII, Dept. of Rural Development, Ramree)*

The DRD in Sittwe told the interviewer about the “Village Development Planning (VDP)” which the agency was pursuing: *“The initiative was launched in early 2015 with the aim to support and facilitate the process of people-centered participatory village development planning, identification of village development priorities.” (KII, Head of Dept. of Rural Development, Sittwe)*

To be sure, while community involvement was evidently articulated as a norm by officials in most cases, it is – as discussed earlier – not necessarily the practice. As such, during interviews officials who had expressed high degrees of support to consulting communities and seeking their input, would occasionally shortly after saying that they were either not able to do it, or that they had never in fact found communities’ input useful. This might make the ‘confession’ to community inclusion ring somewhat hollow. It is nonetheless important to remember (as previously discussed) that shifting the ways in which the state and its citizens interact, and what they expect of each other and which obligations they feel, implies deep changes to dynamics constituted over hundreds of years. The existence of a norm of co-production among authorities is thus a first step which should not be underestimated.

Recommendation: In SCBSD curriculum, appeal to and strengthen emerging norms of citizen engagement

4. Recommendations

The previous sections of the report focused on the provision of public services in Sittwe, Ponnagyun, Taungup, and Ramree townships in Rakhine, including the extent to which communities and authorities cooperate around it, which issues they face in doing so, and which enabling factors exist for such cooperation. Bringing that together, this section focuses on *Social Cohesion for Better Service Delivery* (SCDSD) as a project and draws on the preceding sections to identify recommendations for the implementation of it. The section first identifies a number of criteria for selecting service sectors for SCBSD to focus on, before applying them to identify what the research team think are relevant services to focus on. Subsequently, it opens up to focus more broadly on recommendations for the implementation of SCBSD, providing suggestions around its design and content, but also meta-suggestions around its general approach, including its posture towards authorities and communities.

4.1 Project Specific Recommendations

The purpose of this report was to support Search and Scholar Institute in identifying concrete areas of service delivery within which SCBSD may successfully contribute.

To do so, a number of criteria were identified in collaboration between Conflict Management Consulting (CMC) and Search and SI. The criteria were identified iteratively over the period of the research to reflect evolving priorities, programmatic developments, and insights from the research process. These criteria were presented and defined above and are repeated here. In the subsequent section, they are utilized to identify tentative suggestions for focus areas for SCBSD. It should be underscored that a purpose itself of identifying these criteria is to stimulate further discussion over competing priority areas.

4.1.1 Principles for Selecting Entry Points

The following criteria were identified as relevant for identifying what constitutes a relevant entry point for SCBSD:

- 1. An articulated need within communities**

The service in question is under-served at the moment; communities indicate that they find it important to improve

- 2. Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors**

Few or no other actors work to address the needs gap which exists in relation to the service in question. The contributions made by SCBSD will be discernible

- 3. Authorities' openness to engagement**

The relevant authorities to the service in question are open to engaging further with communities to address the needs gap which exists in relation to the service in question. Authorities are (also) willing to engage with SCBSD.

4. Potential to increase social cohesion (stakes, structure)

The service in question is relevant from a social cohesion perspective. The stakes are sufficiently high to have an impact on social cohesion. The structure of the service in question is such that it invites collective action (e.g. immunization)

5. Feasibility (entry points)

The service in question is something which SCBSD can feasibly contribute to, given the skills, connections, and entry points available to it

6. Donor’s strategic priorities (linking up and down)

Addressing the needs gap in relation to the service in question aligns with donors’ strategic interests

4.1.2 Suggested Entry Points

In this section, the criteria identified above, and scorecards developed for each service sector, are used to identify tentative suggestions for focus areas for SCBSD. The figure below summarizes the score cards (which are re-printed for easy reference). Red indicates a low score, yellow indicates a medium score, green indicates a high score Further below, we give our tentative suggestions on which service sector areas to target.

	Education	Health	Roads	Water	Electricity	Sanitation, waste, sewage	Protection, natural disasters	Safety, security, justice	Markets	Streetlights
1. An articulated need within communities	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Red
2. Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
3. Authorities’ openness to engagement	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green
4. Potential, social cohesion (stakes ⁵⁰ , structures)	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
5. Feasibility (entry points, skills)	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green

⁵⁰ “Stakes” in this context refers to the relative importance of a specific service, either due to its importance for a community’s sustenance or for its indirect importance to achieving other services. Access to water, for instance, is more important than streetlights, and roads are particularly important because they enable access to other services like health.

6. Donor's strategic priorities	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
---------------------------------	-------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Red indicates low degree of compliance with the criterium in question, yellow indicates medium compliance, green indicates a high degree of compliance.

4.1.2.1 Education

1. **An articulated need within communities:** High: Identified as priority area by nearly all interviewees
2. **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** Low: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), others support education
3. **Authorities' openness to engagement:** Low: Officials did not demonstrate substantial openness
4. **Potential to increase social cohesion (stakes, structure):** High: Edu. is high priority, stakes are high
5. **Feasibility (entry points):** Medium: SCBSD may provide input to curricula
6. **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** High: European Union (EU) wish to link top-down/bottom-up

4.1.2.2 Health

1. **An articulated need within communities:** High: Identified as a priority area by nearly all interviewees
2. **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** Low: UNICEF, UNDP, others support health care
3. **Authorities' openness to engagement:** Low: Officials did not demonstrate substantial openness
4. **Potential, social cohesion (stakes, structure):** High: Health is high priority, stakes are high
5. **Feasibility (entry points):** Medium: SCBSD may feasibly address health staff/community relations
6. **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

4.1.2.3 Roads

1. **An articulated need:** High: Identified as a priority area by nearly all rural interviewees
2. **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** Low: UNDP, The World Bank (WB), others support road construction
3. **Authorities' openness to engagement:** Medium: Department of Rural Roads (DRD)/Municipal Departments (MDs) open; Ministry of Construction less
4. **Potential, social cohesion (stakes, structure):** High: Roads as enabler service; stakes are high
5. **Feasibility (entry points):** High: Less skill intensive; communities already involved
6. **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

4.1.2.4 Water

1. **An articulated need within communities:** Medium: Priority area for many, (mostly rural)
2. **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** High: Others' involvement unclear
3. **Authorities' openness to engagement:** High: DRD/MDs open
4. **Potential, social cohesion:** Medium: Stakes high, particularly for women. Not source of conflict
5. **Feasibility (entry points):** High: Less skill intensive; communities already involved
6. **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

4.1.2.5 Electricity

1. **An articulated need within communities:** Medium: Priority for many (mostly rural)
Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors: High: Others' involvement unclear
2. **Authorities' openness to engagement:** High: DRD/MDs open
3. **Potential, social cohesion:** High: Stakes high, particularly for women. Source of some conflict
4. **Feasibility (entry points):** High: Less skill intensive (solar); communities already involved
5. **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

4.1.2.6 Sanitation, Waste, Sewage

1. **An articulated need within communities:** Medium: Priority for some (urban)
2. **Limited engagement:** Medium: UNICEF, UNDP, others support sanitation, not sewage/waste
3. **Authorities' openness to engagement:** High: MDs open
4. **Potential, social cohesion:** High: Stakes medium. Source of some conflict
5. **Feasibility (entry points):** High: Less skill intensive; communities already involved
6. **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

4.1.2.7 Protection Against Natural Disasters

1. **An articulated need within communities:** Low: Priority for few (rural)
2. **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** Medium: UNICEF, UNDP, others support
3. **Authorities' openness to engagement:** High: DRD/MDs open
4. **Potential, social cohesion:** High: Stakes high.
5. **Feasibility (entry points):** Medium: Somewhat skill intensive; communities already involved
6. **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

4.1.2.8 Safety, Security, Justice

1. **An articulated need within communities:** Low: Priority for few (near Muslims)
2. **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** High: Safety/security not supported (justice exception)
3. **Authorities' openness to engagement:** Low: Officials not assumed to be open
4. **Potential, social cohesion:** High: Stakes high. Source of conflict
5. **Feasibility (entry points):** Medium: Search expertise, risk of escalation
6. **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

4.1.2.9 Markets

1. **An articulated need within communities:** Low: Priority for few (urban)
2. **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** High: Others' involvement unclear
3. **Authorities' openness to engagement:** High: DRD/MDs open
4. **Potential, social cohesion:** Medium: Stakes medium. Not conflict-affected
5. **Feasibility (entry points):** High: Less skill intensive; communities already involved
6. **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

4.1.2.10 Streetlights

1. **An articulated need within communities:** Medium: Medium: Priority for some (urban)
2. **Limited engagement by other NGOs/donors:** High: Others' involvement unclear
3. **Authorities' openness to engagement:** High: DRD/MDs open
4. **Potential, social cohesion:** Medium: Stakes medium, potential security implications
5. **Feasibility (entry points):** High: Less skill intensive
6. **Donor's strategic priorities (linking up and down):** Low: Not aligned with donor priorities

In conclusion, the research team recommend that SCBSD consider focusing its activities on the following service sectors:

For rural communities:

- Health
- Roads
- Electricity
- Protection against natural disasters

For urban communities:

- Health
- Waste management
- Streetlights

Why Health?

Health care is fundamentally important and was as such identified as a priority area by nearly all people interviewed for the study. Due to its importance, stakes are high and improvements in the area of health are likely to have a high yield from a programmatic point of view. The health sector is highly specialized, and authorities (therefore) are less accustomed to engaging with communities. The research nonetheless demonstrated a non-health-technical area in which SCBSD might be able to make a positive difference – namely in the interaction between health staff and patients. ‘Rude’ staff are a concern to patients, one which ultimately deter some from using health services. Health staff, conversely, are under pressure from resource constraints. Other areas of opportunity include natal care and auxiliary services to core health services, including transportation for rural communities.

Why Roads?

Roads are recommended as a possible area of engagement in rural communities. Roads and transportation were identified as a priority by most rural interviewees. As an enabling feature, roads are important for communities’ access to other services, including education and health services. While road construction requires some level of technical skills, communities are already engaged in road construction, and initiatives may involve transportation solutions more broadly. Authorities responsible for rural road construction (Ministry of Construction and DRDs) were found to be open to community engagement. At the same time, there appears to be frequent tensions over expropriation compensation, which SCBSD may be able to explore.

Why Electricity?

Electricity is recommended as a possible area of engagement in rural communities. Electricity was identified as a priority by a number of rural interviewees. It has profound impact on communities’ ability to develop, meaning stakes are high. In some cases, unequal access to electricity has caused tension. While access to the national electricity grid is considered resource intensive and a high-skill endeavor, solar power is not.

Why Protection Against Natural Disasters?

Protection against natural disasters is recommended as a possible area of engagement in rural communities. While natural disasters pose a great risk to communities in Rakhine, only few interviewees identified protection against natural disasters as a priority. Given the impact of natural disasters, protection against them nonetheless remains important and a high-stake area. While some forms of mitigation can be costly and skill intensive, other areas including awareness and training may be less cost intensive. Communities are already involved in protection against natural disasters and relief.

Why Waste Management?

Waste management is recommended as a possible area of engagement in urban communities. Waste cluttering roads, creeks, increasing risk to public health is a concern in towns and was identified as an area of priority by a number of communities and authorities. The spread of waste has been a source of tension. The authorities responsible for waste management (MDs) were found to be open to engagement. Some community members are already involved in waste management campaigning. Waste management is a medium/low-skill endeavor. While parts of waste

management are semi-cost intensive (fuel, vehicles), awareness/behavior change elements are less cost-intensive.

Why Streetlights?

Street lights are recommended as a possible area of engagement in urban communities. Street lights contribute to safety and were identified by some communities as a priority. Dysfunctional or poorly maintained streetlights have been a source of annoyance. The authorities responsible for street lights (MDs) were found to be open to engagement. Streetlight construction and/or maintenance are a medium/low-skill endeavor. While the construction of streetlights may be semi-cost intensive, maintenance is less cost-intensive.

4.2 General Recommendations

The above sector recommendations notwithstanding, this section focuses more broadly on recommendations for the implementation of SCBSD. Drawing insights gathered through the research process, it provides suggestions in relation to the design and content of SCBSD, as well as with regards to its general approach, including its posture towards authorities and communities.

4.2.1 Design

- **Geographical design: Streamline project to distinguish between urban/rural locations, rather than by township.** The research did not find clear, township-based differences in the need's communities face, however differences between communities in rural and urban locations abound. For this reason – and potentially to simplify the project design – it is recommended that SCBSD distinguish between urban/rural communities in its design and implementation, rather than on townships. This recommendation may need to be revisited in the face of evidence from quantitative research to the contrary
- **Selection of priority service areas for engagement: Be flexible.** The team recommends focusing on health, electricity, roads/transportation, protection against natural disasters in rural areas and health, waste management, street lights in urban areas (see above). Communities and authorities are to develop projects within these areas (or whichever areas SCBSD select). In the spirit of genuinely supporting communities' and authorities' cooperation through a fully participatory approach, the team nonetheless recommends that beneficiaries are given leeway to propose projects which fall outside these areas
- **Good practice and peer-to-peer: Showcase examples of co-production and use a P2P approach.** However skillfully SCBSD staff approach communities and authorities and compose the different parts of the project (including its training curriculum), there will be unknown unknowns about the realities project beneficiaries face. The team recommends that SCBSD streamlines good practice and peer-to-peer approach into the program, meaning that good examples are consistently identified and showcased to other beneficiaries. Where possible, beneficiaries themselves should share their experiences with other beneficiaries

- **Selection of influential citizens (“influencers”): Pay attention to representation.** “Influencers” are relevant for SCBSD, insofar as they are able to engage in dialogue with authorities with a weight which other community members may not have. The team nonetheless recommends that wherever “influencers” are involved, special attention is paid to ensuring that the selection of beneficiaries remains diverse.
- **Retention: Compensate participants’ time.** A substantial barrier for people’s engagement within communities and with authorities is inability to take time off due to lack of resources. To avoid a social gradient in the participant profile for SCBSD, the team recommends compensating participants for their time and expenses related to the program. This includes transportation, food, accommodation, but also time (recommend average salary in Rakhine). Generally, stay mindful of utilizing participants’ time to the fullest – including that of authorities.

4.2.2 Content – Curriculum

- **Ambiguous concepts: Keep exploring definitions.** The report found that central concepts used in SCBSD are understood in very different ways among and within communities and authorities alike (and perhaps within and between Search and SI). Rather than settling on one definition and stamping out others, the team recommends that SCBSD actively explore and stay perceptive to differing definitions of such concepts with a view to uncovering diverging understandings, expectations, tensions in relation to them. An example: “services” (and its derivative “to serve”) may be seen as honorable to some officials but humiliating to others, meaning different terminology should be used with the latter, and focus be on deeper shifts in community/authority relations.
- **Impact: Set realistic expectations.** The report has made the argument that changing the ways in which communities and authorities relate to each other – including what they expect from each other, how they see their respective positions towards one another, what they think about each other’s motives are, etc. – touches on deep-seated and historically contingent dynamics. This should not discourage SCBSD. Rather, it should inspire to set realistic (and patient) goals for what can be achieved.
- **Curriculum content I: Include content on ‘the social contract.’** The idea of “services”, particularly as provided by the government, is embedded in a broader framework or “social contract” between the state and its citizens – which the research found that beneficiaries (both citizens and authorities) are occasionally unclear about. The team recommends that the SCBSD curriculum include content on this social contract to discuss with beneficiaries the rights and obligations which the contract involves on both sides. The content should cover questions like “what is the state and what does it mean to be a citizen?”; “what can the state demand from the citizen and why? Why should I pay taxes?”; “what can citizens demand from states/what is the state accountable for?”. Note that the content should be presented not as the ‘right’ form of organizing a society, but more as a springboard to discussion.

- **Curriculum content II: Explain why co-production is good; identify and showcase good examples.** The research found that while there are signs of emerging norms around co-production of services, it is unclear for many why it is good, including what the benefits of it are. The research found that communities and authorities alike are often apathetic about cooperating over service delivery. Authorities may think communities don't know enough to be relevant, that they are difficult or 'grabby', that it's inappropriate, or that listening to communities' input goes against implementing their mandate. Communities may think authorities are hostile to citizens or don't care, and that engaging with them is a waste of time. Throughout the implementation of SCBSD, the team recommends identifying and showcasing examples of positive change brought about by co-production, which can demonstrate its usefulness to both communities and authorities.
- **Curriculum content III: The administrative system, incl. 'entry points' and complaint mechanisms.** The research also found that communities often have limited understanding of the administrative system, including which entry points exist for them to engage authorities. They often lack understanding of who provides what, but also how they can provide ideas, input, feedback to the system. The team recommends that the SCBSD curriculum include an introduction to the administrative system, including 'citizen entry points'. It should also include content on how to deal with mal-performance on authorities' parts – that is, options for complaining
- **Curriculum content IV: Include content on constructive complaining (and other forms of feedback).** Officials in many cases think communities are 'grabby' or only complain about what they do, and communities often fear complaining (or providing other feedback) can get them into trouble. The research team recommends that the SCBSD curriculum include content on 'how to complain constructively' – that is, how to present complaints and other feedback in such a way that it does not come across as an 'attack' on authorities, but rather that it appears fact-based, reasonable, realistic.
- **Curriculum content V: Include content on receiving complaining (and other forms of feedback).** Conversely, the SCBSD curriculum should also include content on 'how to receive complaints well'. That is, for instance, assuming that the sender of a message has good reasons to send the message, even if he/she is not able to articulate it well.
- **Curriculum content VI: Include content on how to include communities – communication.** The research found that while officials may often profess support for (increased) community participation, they may not always be sufficiently equipped to do it. They may have limited experience with or understanding of how to communicate with communities and how to elicit information. The research team recommends that the SCBSD curriculum include content on this. It should focus on sender/message/receiver awareness for authorities' mediated outreach to communities. It should also focus on in-person communication in relation to field visits, including content on how to conduct citizen-engaging field visits (communication, planning, meeting forms). Specifically, it should include content on self-awareness, non-threatening communication, and rapport building.

- **Curriculum content VII: Include content on how to spot and mitigate issues of inclusion/exclusion.** SCBSD will engage with a broad range of stakeholders, both on the community and authority side. While these stakeholders will represent a broad variety of people, positions, and interests, the research team recommends that the SCBSD curriculum include content on how to spot and mitigate issues of inclusion/exclusion of people from different groups of society. This may be based on wealth, status, gender, religion, ethnicity, education, etc.
- **Curriculum content VIII: Include content on rumor management (on both sides!).** The research came across stereotypes – both held by communities about authorities and vice versa. Rumors for instance circulate about doctors ready to kill complaining patients, and rumors exist about communities who speculate in maximizing expropriation compensation. The research team recommends that the SCBSD curriculum include content on ‘how to spot and mitigate rumors about partners’
- **Curriculum content IX: Include project management and community mobilization skills.** SCBSD intends to give grants to communities and authorities in partnership. If community participants are to maintain ownership over these projects, and if they are to be implemented well, the SCBSD curriculum should include project management skills. It should also include community mobilization and coordination skills. These skills were specifically requested by some community members.
- **Curriculum content X: Conflict mitigation and stress management.** Community members and officials alike told of stressful or antagonistic situations emerging in the meeting between citizens and officials – including for example in the health sector where citizens feel staff are rude, or in road construction where officials feel citizens are cheating them. The research team recommends that the SCBSD include conflict mitigation and stress management skills to support officials as well as citizens to deal with such situations constructively.

4.2.2 General Posture Towards the Program’s Surroundings

- **Approach to authorities I: Be transparent, build relationships.** International organizations have come under increased scrutiny since August 2017, and skepticism towards NGOs and other ‘foreign’ entities remains prevalent in some layers of society (see e.g. CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA), 2017)⁵¹. Authorities interviewed for this study were nonetheless forthcoming and, in most cases, expressed willingness to engage (as evidenced by agreeing to participate in interviews). SCBSD should pay significant attention to further developing the positive relations which have been built, including through this research. Specifically, SCBSD should appoint one or more known and dedicated liaison officers to engage with authorities on a regular basis. Liaison officers should keep authorities appropriately informed of SCBSD’s activities, e.g. through monthly written updates and/or in-person meetings. Liaison officers should also make sure to attend when invited to participate in events (authorities keep track)

⁵¹ CDA, 2017: Navigating Change: Crisis and Crossroads in the Rakhine State Context

- **Approach to authorities II: Stay compliant.** Rules and laws, particularly as they pertain to ‘foreigners’ and work involving external organizations, change frequently (“by the minute”, according to one interviewee) and are often not communicated. The liaison officer should leverage government contacts to stay abreast of such developments. Generally, SCBSD should prioritize complying with rules and regulations, including with regard to obtaining due permission to travel and conduct activities. Not least because violations risk having a negative effect for other organizations operating in the context.
- **Approach to authorities III: Avoid politics (or balance it).** “The government” or “authorities” in Rakhine are not a monolithic entity, but rather consists of different factions with differing and at times competing interests (the NLD-led state government; the Tatmadaw and Tatmadaw-leaning GAD; the Arakan League for Democracy (ALD)-led parliament). SCBSD should remain vigilant to ensuring contact with and ideally collaboration with representatives from all factions. In its choice of service areas, SCBSD consider choosing ‘low-profile’ areas (such as waste management)
- **Approach to general surroundings I: Be transparent.** “NGOs” and other organizations doing work in Rakhine have on occasion suffered from poor reputation and have been accused of secrecy and hidden agendas. These organizations have in turn been reluctant to release information about their work out of (more or less well-founded) fears that it would be misappropriated and used against them (see CDA, 2017). Thus becoming ‘secretive’, they have on occasion fueled suspicions against them. The team recommend that SCBSD ‘goes in the other direction’ to systematically share information about its work (so much that potential singular misappropriated facts are ‘watered down’). SCBSD should use Facebook and other social media and should produce and distribute written content at meetings, presentations, events. The GAD One Stop Shops may also be willing to host informational flyers. Content should – at a minimum – be available in Rakhine and Burmese, but also ideally in other ethnic languages (i.e. Mro, Daignet, etc..). Hindu community networks may also recommend additional translations.
- **Approach to general surroundings II: Brand recognition is low – claim wins.** The study found that ‘brand recognition’ among ‘ordinary’ citizens and even CSO/CBO leaders is low. With the exception of UNDP, community members generally struggled to name agencies which had performed work in their area. To the extent that SCBSD wishes to be ‘recognized’, this suggests that a ‘persistent’ approach to ‘claiming wins’ (and losses?) may be beneficial. Coincidentally, with regards to the recommendations above to be transparent, the low level of ‘brand recognition’ also means that if negative stories emerge around SCBSD and/or SEARCH/SI, they are likely to be relatively short-lived. This means a slightly less risk-averse posture can be taken (at least towards communities)
- **Approach to general surroundings III: Rename SCBSD.** “Social Cohesion for Better Service Delivery” is a long name and contains words which are ambiguous and potentially negatively loaded (‘social cohesion’ in particular has come to have a negative ring to some people). The team recommends that SCBSD identify a short, ‘catchy’ name. It could follow the ‘style’ of project names which SCFG have used elsewhere, e.g. “Demain est un autre jour” or “Zo Kwe Zo”

- **Approach to general surroundings IV: Avoid contributing to salary inflation (and other mishabits).** NGOs have been criticized for draining skilled employees from other organizations (including public ones) by offering markedly higher salaries. SCBSD should be careful not to contribute to (or at least not lead) this development. SCBSD should also be cautious of ‘living up to’ other stereotypes associated with NGOs, including equipping staff with overly valuable work tools, cars, accommodation

5. References Cited

1. USIP, forthcoming: *Rakhine Religious Landscape Mapping* (authored by Senior Adviser Melyn McKay)
2. Save the Children, forthcoming. ‘Peace and Tolerance through Social Media Initiative: Empowering Myanmar Youth as Changemakers in the Digital Age’ (produced with support from Senior Advisor Melyn McKay)
3. PreventionWeb, 2019. Myanmar: Rakhine’s preparedness for disaster 26 cyclone shelters in the pipeline for Rakhine State
4. WHO, 2019. List of Health Facilities and Hospitals in Rakhine State
5. UNICEF, 2018. UNICEF Results in Rakhine State
6. UNICEF, 2018. Community members take the lead to improve sanitation in Rakhine
7. The Asia Foundation, 2018. State and Region Governments in Myanmar
8. The Asia Foundation, 2018. Myanmar Democracy: Small Steps on a Long Journey
9. Aron, Gabrielle, 2018. USIP: Reframing the Crisis in Myanmar’s Rakhine State
10. ICG, 2018: The Long Haul Ahead for Myanmar’s Rohingya Refugee Crisis
11. RERA, 2018: *NGO Aid Map*
12. Fortify Rights, 2018. They gave us long swords
13. The Asia Foundation, 2017. The Contested Areas of Myanmar
14. Rakhine Commission, 2017. Towards a Peaceful, Fair and Prosperous future for the people of Rakhine
15. CDA, 2017: Navigating Change: Crisis and Crossroads in the Rakhine State Context
16. World Bank, 2017. Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2017
17. CDNH, 2016: Rakhine State Needs Assessment II
18. CDNH, 2016: Conflict Assessment of Five Villages in Rakhine State
19. Aron, Gabrielle, 2016. CDA: Reshaping Engagement – Perspectives on Conflict Sensitivity in Rakhine
20. Internews, 2016. Rakhine State News and Information Eco-system – An Internews Rapid Assessment Report
21. NLD, 2016. Programme of Health Reforms: A Road Map Towards Universal Health Coverage in Myanmar (2016-2030)
22. LIFT, 2016. Development In Times Of Transition: The Socio-Economic Status Of Rakhine State, Myanmar
23. The Asia Foundation, 2015: Municipal Governance in Myanmar: An overview of Development Affairs Organizations
24. UNDP, 2015: Local Governance Mapping: The State of Local Governance: Trends in Rakhine

25. The Asia Foundation, 2015: Municipal Governance in Myanmar: An overview of Development Affairs Organizations
 26. PLAN, 2015. Joint Education Sector Needs Assessment, North Rakhine State, Myanmar
 27. UNFPA, 2015. A Changing Population: Rakhine State Figures at a Glance- May 2015
 28. UNICEF, 2015. Rakhine State. A Snapshot of Child Wellbeing
 29. PLAN International/REACH, 2015: Joint Education Sector Needs Assessment, North Rakhine State, Myanmar. Assessment Report November 2015
 30. ADB, 2015. Power Sector Development in Myanmar
 31. OCHA, 2014. Humanitarian Bulletin
 32. Save the Children and UNICEF, 2013: Education Rapid Needs Assessment and Response Recommendations Part 1 – Report Sittwe Township, Rakhine State, Myanmar.
-

Annex 1: Research Tools

Tool 1: KII with CBO/CSO leader

No.	Question
INTRODUCTION	
	<p>My name is ... I am an enumerator for a project run by Scholar Institute and Search called.... (in Myanmar) - collaboration for better public service delivery. We are a CSO who does consultations with people in Rakhine to learn about their conditions. We are interested in learning about you and your community and your access to different forms of public services. We do this as part of a program that aims to support civil society in its collaboration with local authorities. We hope the information you provide will benefit your community, and we will provide the results of the findings in workshops, if you would like to join please stay in touch with us.</p> <p>There are no right or wrong answers, and if there are questions you don't wish to answer, then that's fine. If you want to end the interview at some point, then that's also totally fine. We would also like to record the interview. This is only so we can make sure that we don't miss important answers. The recording will not be given to anybody else. In general, your identity will not be disclosed to third parties. Would you like to participate? And are you ok if we take a recording? If not, we will just take notes.</p> <p>Finally, if you have any questions you would like to ask us, please feel free to do so - both now and later. I am leaving a leaflet that describes our work, in which you can also find our phone number and email address.</p>
OPENING	
	<p>To begin with, please could you tell me a bit about your organization?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you do? - How do you work?
1. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES	
	<p><i>As I mentioned earlier, we are interested in understanding more about people's access to different forms of public services.</i></p>
1.1	First of all: How do you define the term 'public services'? What does it mean to you?
1.2	<i>Some public services may be easy to get, and some may be hard, or they may not be possible to get at all.</i>

	<p>I'm going to list some public services, and I'd like if you can tell me which you have access to <u>currently within your community, without travelling beyond your village tract.</u></p> <p><i>[Enumerator Instructions: circle accessible services]</i></p> <p>Education (basic and higher) Health care (emergency and outpatient care) Public transportation Water Electricity Sanitation and/or sewage disposal Public toilet Protection against natural disasters Justice / Conflict Resolution/Security Funerals and other ceremonial services Markets Roads Ports/water transportation Street lights</p> <p>Are there any other services?</p>
<p>1.3</p>	<p>From this same list of public services, I'd like to ask you how hard or easy you think it is for people in your community to gain access to them. I'd like you to use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is very easy, and 10 is very hard.</p> <p>For example, if your community can access healthcare only by travelling to the township city, that might mean the service is harder to access.</p>
<p>1.4</p>	<p>Sometimes services may be available, but they may not be of particularly high quality. What is quality public service to you?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When is a service delivered in a good way? - What might be some examples of this?
<p>1.5</p>	<p>What about 'bad' quality services? What is poor quality to you? Would you have examples of this?</p>

1.6	<p>Of the services, you have access to now, what would you say the quality is like of these services on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is extremely good, and 10 is extremely bad?</p> <p><i>Enumerator Instructions: refer to selected services above</i></p>
1.7	<p>Of these public services you have access to now, which do you most often hear people complaining about?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there other public services that they complain about as well? - What do people say? - How much of what they say is true/accurate? - Do you think people have a good understanding of these services in your community?
1.8	<p>If you could choose five public services – including those you don’t currently have or have difficulty accessing – which would you say it is most important to improve?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why? - Do you think some groups of people have different priorities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o If ‘yes’, who and in what ways?
1.9	<p>For each of the five you have selected, could you please explain which problems there are?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why is the current provision of these services not better than it is? - Who do you think is the <i>appropriate</i> person/organization to improve these services? (i.e. responsible for) - Who do you think <i>is best able</i> to improve these services? (i.e. most capable)
<p>2 CURRENT PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES</p>	
	<p>If you think about the five public services you identified before, who (if anyone) is already providing them?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If people are looking for these services, who do you go to?

	<p>Do the providers of these public services provide them on their own, or do they work with other groups/actors, for example NGOs, CSOs or community facilitators?</p> <p>If ‘yes’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In which ways? - Can you give examples of this? <p>If ‘no’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why not, do you think?
	<p>If you think about the public service providers, you just mentioned: How satisfied would you generally say that people are with them?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What makes you think this? - Can you give examples?
	<p>To what extent would you say that people feel free and easy to discuss needs and provide feedback (positive and negative) with these public service providers?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why / Why not? - Can you give examples of things that make people feel more or less free and easy discussing with them?
	<p>What about your own organization? Are you involved in providing these different public services?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How?
<p>3.3 PUBLIC SERVICE PROVISION AND CONFLICT/COHESION</p>	
<p><i>Sometimes public services are something people get upset about. Sometimes different communities for instance feel that they receive less support than other communities.</i></p>	
	<p>What would you say is the general situation in your area: Are people getting into disagreements or even conflicts about services?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way? (Can you give examples?) - Why do you think this happens?
	<p>Have there been particular events or situations that led to misunderstandings or difficulties about public service?</p>

	<p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have there been particular situations that made people angry? - If ‘yes’: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o In what way? (Can you give examples?) o Why do you think this happened?
	<p>Are there particular groups or organizations that tend to make things difficult when it comes to the five public services you identified before?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If ‘yes’: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How so? (Can you give examples?)
<p>3.4</p>	<p>When we talk about different issues in relation to the five public services you mentioned before, would you say that they affect women and men differently?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why? - Can you give examples? <p>What about people of different age or ethnicity?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why? - Can you give examples? <p>People with disabilities?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why? - Can you give examples?
	<p>If you think about the CSOs/CBOs that work in public service provision in this area: To what extent would you say they represent or benefit everyone?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do they provide services to all kinds of people, or do they favor / overlook specific groups? (For example: youth? Women? rural or urban communities?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Who? o Why are some included/excluded?

4. PUBLIC SERVICE PROVISION AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE PUBLIC	
	<p><i>In the following, I would like to understand more about the extent to which ordinary people and CSOs/CBOs are involved in or have influence over the ways in which the different public services are planned and delivered. For instance, through consultations, workshops, and meetings with the public service providers. Or through supporting in delivering the services or giving feedback about them.</i></p>
	<p>If you think about the public services identified earlier, would you say people are involved in the planning and delivery of them?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way? (can you give examples?)
	<p>What happens when citizens that are unhappy with the public services that are provided?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do they do if they are unhappy? - Are there places where they can complain? - Can you give examples of this? - Can everyone complain or just some people? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o If ‘just some people’: who and why can’t others complain?
	<p>4.3 Are there any consultative mechanisms to ensure public/CSO participation in public service delivery decision making process?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way? (can you give examples) - Why?
	<p>What about your own organization?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you ever engage with authorities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Which? o Why (not)? - If ‘yes’: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o What is it like to engage with the authorities? o What are some things that work well? o What are some things that work less well? (Can you give examples?) - Do other organizations engage with authorities in different ways? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Which?

	<p>Do you feel that you are able to affect the authorities in their way of providing public services?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way? (Can you give examples of this?) - Why?
	<p>What about things like the different township committees?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are people and/or organizations able to use these relationships to gain influence in the community? - If ‘yes’: Can you give examples of this?
	<p>Are there particular types of people that the authorities listen to more than others?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who are these people? - Why do the authorities listen to them in particular?
	<p>4.9 Do you think it would be possible to involve people more?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What would this look like?
	<p>4.10 Do you think that organizations like ours could support in any way?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If ‘yes’: In what ways? - If ‘no’: Why not?
	<p>If you think about the five public services you identified earlier, do you think that improving them is something that could make the community come together more?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way? (Can you give examples of this?) - Why?

5. PUBLIC SERVICE PROVISION AND INFORMATION

	<i>In this part of the interview, I would like to ask you some questions about how people get information about public services in this area</i>
5.1	<p>Earlier, we talked about the public services that were most in need of improvement. I would like to understand for each of these public services, what people in this community do to get information about them. If people have a question about [service 1], who do they go to get information about it?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is this different for the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]?
5.2	Are there particular people who know a lot about [service 1] that people ask? For instance, family or friends?
5.3	<p>Are there also other types of people who know a lot about it and that people go to?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who? <p><i>erator Instruction:</i> If necessary to help respondent think of answers: “For example, in another area, someone told me that bus drivers often know a lot and give people information. Is that the same here? Are there other people who know a lot?”</p>
5.4	<p>Are there other people or places that people in this area get information about [service 1] from?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What about the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]?
5.5	<p>In general, would you say it is easy or hard to get information about [service 1]?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why? - If ‘hard’: What are the difficulties? - Is this different for the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]? <p><i>Enumerator Instruction:</i> If the respondent hasn't brought these up: What about [TV? Poster boards? Family? Authorities? Religious leaders? WhatsApp groups? WeChat? VK?]. Is this something people use for getting information about [service 1]?</p>
	<p>What about Facebook?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do people get information about [service 1] from there? - If ‘yes’: Do they get it from friends? Local reporters? Pages? Which pages?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is this different for the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]? In what ways?
	<p>Are there particular people on Facebook who know a lot about [service 1] who people follow?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If ‘yes’: Who? - What about for the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]?
<p>6. TRUST AND EVALUATION OF INFORMATION</p>	
	<p>Would you say that the information that goes around about the different public services is generally accurate?</p>
	<p>Do communities sometimes say things about [service 1] which you think are not true?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you have any examples? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o If ‘yes’: why do you think people spread this rumor/believed this information? - Have you ever encountered information that you did not trust? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o If ‘yes’: How did you decide that it wasn't true? - What about the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]? Do you hear untrue information about this? How do you deal with it?
	<p>Are there sources of information that you think are generally not reliable?</p>
	<p>If you hear some information about [service 1] that you think might not be true, what do you do check if it is accurate?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What about the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]?
	<p>Would you say that the information you can find on Facebook is generally accurate?</p>
<p>7. SHARING OF INFORMATION</p>	
7.1	<p>What about your organization? Do you share information with people about public services?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If ‘yes’: Which ones? How do you do this? Who do you aim to share with?
7.2	<p>To what extent would you say that people in your community generally share information with each other about public services?</p>

7.3/ 4	<p>Would you say there are groups in your community who receive less information about services than others?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If ‘yes’: Who? What about men/women? Older/younger people?
8. RUMOURS ABOUT PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY	
	<p>Are there sometimes stories or information about [service 1] that make people worried?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If ‘yes’: What would they be? Can you give examples? - What about the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]? Are there stories that make people worried?
	<p>For example: Are there sometimes stories about some people receiving benefits and public services that other people don't get? Where do these stories come from? Are they true?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do these stories exist for the other services we discussed? For [2, 3, 4, 5]?
	<p>Are there other negative stories you hear about public services?</p>
	<p>How do people feel about that? Is it something you discuss?</p>

Tool 2: FGD with communities

INTRODUCTION	
No.	Question
	<p>My name is ... I am an enumerator for a project run by Scholar Institute and Search called (in Myanmar) - collaboration for better public service delivery. We are a CSO who does consultations with people in Rakhine to learn about their conditions. We are interested in learning about you and your community and your access to different forms of public services. We do this as part of a program that aims to support civil society in its collaboration with local authorities. We hope the information you provide will benefit your community, and we will provide the results of the findings in workshops, if you would like to join please stay in touch with us.</p> <p>There are no right or wrong answers, and if there are questions you don't wish to answer, then that's fine. If you want to end the interview at some point, then that's also totally fine. We would also like to record the interview. This is only so we can make sure that we don't miss important answers. The recording will not be given to anybody else. In</p>

	<p>general, your identity will not be disclosed to third parties. Would you like to participate? And are you ok if we take a recording? If not, we will take notes.</p> <p>Finally, if you have any questions you would like to ask us, please feel free to do so - both now and later. I am leaving a leaflet that describes our work, in which you can also find our phone number and email address.</p>
<p>OPENING</p>	
	<p>To begin with, please could you tell me a bit about yourselves? What do you do?</p>
<p>ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES (moderator to illustrate)</p>	
	<p><i>As I mentioned earlier, we are interested in understanding more about people's access to different forms of public services right here in your community.</i></p>
	<p>First of all, how do you define public services?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does it mean to you?
	<p><i>Some services may be easy to get, and some may be hard, or they may not be possible to get at all.</i></p> <p>I'm going to list some services, and I'd like it if you can tell me which you have access to <u>currently within your community, without travelling beyond your village tract.</u></p> <p><i>[Enumerator Instructions: circle accessible services]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education (basic and higher) - Health care (emergency and outpatient care) - Public transportation - Water - Electricity - Sanitation and/or sewage disposal - Public toilet - Protection against natural disasters - Justice / Conflict Resolution/Security - Funerals and other ceremonial services - Markets - Roads - Ports/water transportation - Street lights

	<p>Are there any other services?</p>
	<p>From this same list of services, I'd like to ask you how hard or easy you think it is to gain access to them. I'd like you to use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is very easy, and 10 is very hard.</p> <p>For example, if you can access healthcare only by travelling to the township city, that might mean the service is harder to access.</p> <p><u>Enumerator instruction: Note down for each how was/difficult it is to access</u></p>
	<p>Sometimes services may be available, but they may not be of particularly high quality. What is quality service to you?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When is a service delivered in a good way? - What might be some examples of this?
	<p>What about 'bad' quality services? What is poor quality to you? Would you have examples of this?</p>
	<p>Of the services, you have access to now, what would you say the quality is like of these services on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is extremely good, and 10 is extremely bad?</p> <p><u>Enumerator Instructions: refer to selected services above</u></p>
	<p>Of these services you have access to now, which do you most often hear people complaining about?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there other services that they complain about as well? - What do people say? - How much of what they say is true/accurate? - Do you think people have a good understanding of these services in your community?
	<p>If you could choose five services – including those you don't currently have or have difficulty accessing – which would you say it is most important to improve?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why? - Do you think some groups of people have different priorities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o If 'yes', who and in what ways?

	<p>For each of the five you have selected, could you please explain which problems there are?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why is the current provision of these public services not better than it is? - Who do you think is the <i>appropriate</i> person/organization to improve these public services? (i.e. responsible for) - Who do you think <i>is best able</i> to improve these public services? (i.e. most capable)
CURRENT PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES (moderator to illustrate)	
	<p>If you think about the five public services you identified before, who (if anyone) is already providing them?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If people are looking for these public services, who do they go to?
	<p>To what extent would you say that people feel free and easy to discuss needs and provide feedback (positive and negative) with these public service providers?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why / Why not? - Can you give examples of things that make people feel more or less free and easy discussing with them?
	<p>What about CSOs/CBOs? Are there CSOs/CBOs that provide public services in this area?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do they support with regards to any of the five public services you identified earlier?
	<p>Would you say these CSOs/CBOs take care of everyone?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do they care more about some groups than others?

PUBLIC SERVICE PROVISION AND CONFLICT/COHESION	
	<p>Sometimes public services are also something that people get upset about. Sometimes different communities for instance feel that they receive less support than other communities.</p>
	<p>What would you say is the general situation in your area: Do people have misunderstandings about public services?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way? (Can you give examples?) - Why do you think this happens?
	<p>Have there been particular events or situations that led to misunderstandings or difficulties about public service?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have there been particular situations that made people angry? - If 'yes': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o In what way? (Can you give examples?) o Why do you think this happened?
	<p>Are there particular groups or organizations that tend to make things difficult when it comes to the five public services you identified before?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If 'yes': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How so? (Can you give examples?)
	<p>If you think about the five public services you identified earlier, do you think that improving them is something that could make the community come together more?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way? Why? Can you give examples of this?
PUBLIC SERVICE PROVISION AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE PUBLIC (moderator to illustrate)	
	<p><i>In the following, I would like to understand more about the extent to which ordinary people are involved in or have influence over the ways in which the different public services are planned and delivered. For instance, through consultations, workshops, and meetings with the public service providers. Or through supporting in delivering the public services or giving feedback about them.</i></p>

	<p>If you think about the public services identified earlier, would you say people are involved in the planning and delivery of them?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are they able to affect the ways in which authorities provide public services? - In what ways? - Can you give examples of this?
	<p>Has anyone ever come to speak to you about public services here? If yes: How did you feel afterwards?</p>
	<p>What happens when citizens that are unhappy with the public services that are provided?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do they do if they are unhappy? - Are there places where they can complain? - Can you give examples of this? - Can everyone complain or just some people? - If ‘just some people’: who and why can’t others complain?
	<p>What about things like the different township committees? Can you talk to them?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which ones have you been in contact with? - What about other people?
	<p>Are your local leaders responsive to people’s ideas and complaints? Who is most responsive: Religious leaders, elected local leaders, township-level authorities?</p>
	<p>Are there people and/or organizations that become more influential in the community because they have more contact or better relationships with public service providers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you give examples of this?
	<p>Are there particular types of people that the authorities listen to more than others?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who are these people? - Why do the authorities listen to them in particular?
	<p>If you think about the five public services, you identified: What makes it difficult for individuals and communities to influence how they are provided?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the barriers? - Can you give examples of this?

	<p>Do you think it would be possible to involve people more?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What would this look like?
	<p>Do you think that organizations like ours could support in any way?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If ‘yes’: In what ways? - If ‘no’: Why not?
<p>PUBLIC SERVICE PROVISION AND INFORMATION</p>	
	<p><i>In this part of the discussion, I would like to ask you some questions about how people get information about public services in this area</i></p>
	<p>Earlier, we talked about the public services that were most in need of improvement. I would like to understand each of these public services, what people in this community do to get information about them. If you have a question about [public service 1], who do you go to to get information about it?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If you think about the last time you used [public service 1], how did you get information about it? Could you give an example of this? - Is this different for the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]?
	<p>Are there particular people who know a lot about [public service 1] that you ask? For instance, family or friends?</p>
	<p>Are there also other types of people who know a lot about it and that people go to?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who? <p><i>Enumerator Instruction: If necessary to help respondent think of answers: “For example, in another area, someone told me that bus drivers often know a lot and give people information. Is that the same here? Are there other people who know a lot?”</i></p>
	<p>Are there other people or places you get information about [public service 1] from?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What about the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]?

	<p>In general, would you say it is easy or hard to get information about [public service 1]?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why? - If 'hard': What are the difficulties? - Is this different for the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]? <p><i>Enumerator Instruction:</i> If the respondent hasn't brought these up: What about [TV? Poster boards? Family? Authorities? Religious leaders? WhatsApp groups? WeChat? VK?]. Is this something people use for getting information about [public service 1]?</p>
	<p>What about Facebook?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do people get information about [public service 1] from there? - If 'yes': Do they get it from friends? Local reporters? Pages? Which pages? - Is this different for the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]? In what ways?
	<p>Are there particular people on Facebook who know a lot about [public service 1] who people follow?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If 'yes': Who? - What about the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]?
	<p>If the respondent is part of the local WhatsApp/Viber or Facebook group for news: 'Do you know who manages the group/chat? Do you know everyone in the group personally? How did you come to join the group?'</p>
<p>TRUST AND EVALUATION OF INFORMATION</p>	
	<p>Would you say that the information you can find is generally accurate? Can you trust this information?</p>
	<p>Does information sometimes appear about [public service 1] that you think is not true?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you have any examples? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o If 'yes': why do you think people spread this rumor/believed this information? - Have you ever encountered information that you did not trust? - If 'yes': How did you decide that it wasn't true? - What about the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5]? Do you hear untrue information about this? How do you deal with it?

	<p>Are there sources of information that you think are generally not reliable?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Or maybe sources of information where you think you have to check if the information is correct?
	<p>If you hear some information about [public service 1] that you think might not be true, what do you do check if it is accurate?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What about the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5?]? Do you hear untrue information about this? How do you deal with it?
	<p>Would you say that the information you can find on Facebook is generally accurate?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you trust this information?
	<p>Is there information on Facebook about [public service 1] that you think is not true? Why/why not? Do you have any examples of information that you did not trust?</p>
<p>SHARING OF INFORMATION</p>	
	<p>What about yourself - do you also give information to other people about public services?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is it something you talk about? - Which ones? - Can you think of some information you thought was important to pass on to someone else? - Who did you share this information with? - Do you share information about the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5?]?
	<p>To what extent would you say that people in your community generally talk about public services?</p>
	<p>Would you say there are groups in your community who receive less information about public services than others?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who? - What about men/women? - Older/younger people?

RUMOURS ABOUT PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY	
	<p>Are there sometimes stories or information about public service delivery that make people worried?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If 'yes': What would they be? Can you give examples? - What about the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5?]? Are there stories that make people worried?
	<p>For example: Do you sometimes hear stories about some people receiving benefits and public services that other people don't get?</p> <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where do these stories come from? - Are they true? - What about the other services we talked about – [service 2,3,4,5?]? Are there stories about them?
	<p>Are there other negative stories you hear about public services?</p>
	<p>How do people feel about that? Is it something you discuss?</p>