



# Forum

## News

International Forum for Rural Transport and Development

Gender and Transport

Volume 15, Issue 3, November 2010

# "Why are we *still* talking about women headloading?"

BEN Namibia



Paul Starkey

The different faces of women and transport (l to r): Hilya Ekandjo was trained as a bicycle mechanic by BEN Namibia in 2006. She manages a successful bicycle shop in her village in northern Namibia, and has just opened a second shop in a nearby town; women headload and walk to the weekly market in Samaya, Guinea; a female trader and her daughter travel by motorbike to a weekly market in the Boucle du Mouhoun region, Burkina Faso.

Over 20 years ago in a remote district of Tanzania, the Makete Integrated Rural Transport Project (MIRTP) initiated the notion of gender disaggregating household travel data and in doing so demonstrated the unequal transport burden borne by women and girls. IFRTD, established in the aftermath of MIRTP to ensure the longevity of the 'Makete Approach', maintains a strong commitment to gender issues in transport. We can identify various significant milestones in IFRTD's journey since Makete, including; the pioneering Balancing the Load research project in the late 90's; collaboration with the World Bank's Gender Mainstreaming Project in 2003; and support to Gatnet's virtual consultation on the World Bank transport strategy in 2006.

This year IFRTD collaborated with the Asian Institute of Technology to host an international workshop on gender and transport. This edition of *Forum News* aims to maintain the momentum generated by this event. Alongside a melting pot of the latest research findings, resources and project news, we also bring together the reflections of long time gender and transport champions to ask how, if at all, the agenda has moved forward, where do the gaps remain, and where should we be headed?

## Gender and Transportation: Where are we now and where are we headed?

With regional economic integration, facilitation of trade and the promotion of cross border movement of goods, capital and 'people', there is an increased craving for better (bigger) roads and faster transportation both within countries and across borders. Where are women in this global mobility?

A colleague recently commented to me that transportation experts often ask her why we are *still* talking about women with headloads? Our answer, of course, is that poor women with headloads *continue* to be deprived of transportation services and excluded from large-scale investments to improve cross-border mobility. The disparity between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' in terms of mobility and transportation development is increasing, and the division clearly follows lines of gender alongside ethnicity, class and age.

The recent international workshop on *Gender, Economic Integration, and Cross-border Road Infrastructure Development: Poverty and Mobility in the Context of Asia*, organised by AIT and IFRTD, clearly demonstrated this disparity. On the one hand, there is a large group of women and men who face difficulties accessing water and health services. Their journeys are time consuming, strenuous, expensive and sometimes dangerous, and

Continued on page 2

## In this issue:

1. Why are we still talking about Women Headloading?; Gender and Transportation
2. Gender and Transportation contd; Maternal Health Access in Nepal
3. Health Access in Nepal contd; Older Women and Transport Issues in Sub-Saharan Africa
4. Current Challenges are Future Opportunities; Recognising the Care Economy
5. Low-cost Transport for Women in Labour; Challenges of Addressing Gender in the Transport sector
6. You are a Strong Woman; An Update on World Bank Gender and Transport Activities
7. An Update on World Bank Activities contd; Yambio-Maridi-Farasika Road Project
8. Resources; About Us



Continued from page 1

they do not seem to benefit from the investments made in road development. On the other hand, there are women and men who are able to benefit from road development, especially cross-border road development, which has leveraged opportunities for them to increase their income through trade.

**Mobility is capability**

In order to capture the varied gender issues related to transportation development, it is important to focus on the issue of mobility of both goods and people. As Kronlid (2008) said, "mobility is a capability". That is, we need to see people's ability to be mobile, to make use of mobility to enhance their wellbeing, and to enjoy social acceptance in being mobile. For example, if poor rural women are not able to travel to the market because they do not have access to affordable, reliable and safe transportation, that is a deprivation that will weaken their capability. Allowing women to be able to sell goods and run a viable business in the market, equipping them with the skills and capital needed to run the business, is a strengthening of their capabilities.

Similarly, community approval and support for women's mobility, and women not being stigmatised for being mobile, but on the contrary gaining support for household work by their family and community members, are important factors that will strengthen women's capability. Since mobility is capability, such mobility should also lead to the improvement of women's status and decision-making in the household and community. The concept of mobility as capability will also lead us to explore whether women and men's places and spaces have expanded and whether both women and men feel more comfortable in participating in various levels of activities locally, nationally and regionally.

Importantly this concept encompasses the ability of women and men to *choose not to be mobile*. With drought and flood, increases in land concessions and relocations, which are partly caused by or linked to transportation development (eg. roads opening up areas for logging, relocation to make way for road construction), are poor women and men still able to maintain viable livelihoods in their locations of choice?

**A changing agenda**

When we analyse transportation from a mobility-as-capability approach, it demands an expansion of our research and action agenda in gender and transport. Primarily, we still need research and action to secure the basic mobility of women and men to access basic services such as

education, water and health care. There are studies that demonstrate the links between road connectivity and improvement in the maternal mortality rate. We need *more* research in this area and changes in practice that will ensure that road development actually improves access to services.

Secondly, we need more research and action to value and protect women and men's ability to stay put. Road construction can lead to or can be made in connection to/exchange with various economic concessions such as logging, mining, plantations, energy and industrial development. How can transportation development planning foresee and mitigate the potential negative effect? Awareness of, and security in, land tenure is important here. Women in rural areas are heavily dependent on land and forest. However, their land rights are not always secured (they are dependent on their husbands) or recognised (traditional practices give considerable land rights to women but such rights are not recognised by law) and often ignored (eg. usufruct rights to common property). Loss of land and destruction of livelihood have devastating effects on both women and men in some indigenous communities, but mostly on women due to their reliance on land and forest and their responsibilities for feeding the family.

Thirdly, we need more research and action on how poor rural women and men can benefit from transportation development. From a mobility-as-capability perspective, it is not enough only to move. Movement should achieve the outcome of improved wellbeing. What kind of preparation is needed in local communities before planning for transportation development? What services are required to ensure that local women and men benefit from the opportunity of better mobility? Here it would also be interesting to explore the links between transportation development and communication technology development. For example, how are mobile phones being used to overcome women's limitation in mobility?

So, the discussions on feeder/access roads and other micro-mobility in rural areas remain a critical agenda for gender and transportation. However, there is an increasing demand to expand our reach to understand the wider implication of regional and cross-border level mobility that is changing the environment that women and men live in.

By Dr Kyoko Kusakabe, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)

Contact email: [kyokok@ait.ac.th](mailto:kyokok@ait.ac.th)

Website: [www.genderandtransport.ait.ac.th](http://www.genderandtransport.ait.ac.th)

## Maternal Health Access in Nepal

There are many possible causes for maternal mortality. Latest government data shows that maternal mortality in Nepal is estimated to be 281 deaths per 100,000 live births, although other surveys have given wide variations on this figure. From this angle, Nepal seems to be making good progress towards Millennium Development Goal 5. It remains, however, in stark contrast to a figure of only 7 deaths per 100,000 live births in Switzerland (WHO 2006).

**Barriers to maternal health access**

Prevailing social injustice connected with the right to healthcare is one of the principal barriers. Other factors include problems of mobility and the inaccessibility of essential resources, health services, schools and markets. Nevertheless, substantial improvement has been made to increase access to maternal health. Incentives to mothers for institutional delivery and free maternity services at public hospitals and centres (Ama program) are examples. An easy and efficient transport system during an emergency is absolutely vital to reducing maternal death. The comprehensive transport plan should therefore include appropriate transport planning to reach health facilities in remote rural areas, that will save mothers lives during emergencies.

**Mobility and health research findings**

A case study regarding restricted access faced by mothers in hill and mountainous areas has revealed that the quality of road, mode of

transport and its cost play a significant role in decision-making processes for accessing maternal health services.

Three delays factors (access barriers)	Mobility and Health Case Study 2006/07*(N=33)
Decision making by family due to gender bias and socioeconomic condition	51.51%
Transportation due to distance, quality of road and means of transport	36.24%
Quality of care for lack of emergency obstetric care facility with skilled health professionals	12.12%

\*Maternal mortality in hilly districts of Nepal, B. Shrestha; *Journal of Institute of Medicine*, August, 2009; 31:2

Another case study on the impact of trail bridges revealed that pedestrian trail bridges greatly increased access to health care facilities and to maintain regular attendance at outreach clinics. Earlier, delays of up to 3-4 days were common in accessing the nearest possible health facilities, particularly during the monsoon. It was found that 94% of skilled birth attendants who had assisted during home deliveries used

Continued on page 3



Continued from page 2

trail bridges. Similarly, the coverage and frequency of vaccination campaigns became more regular.

Intermediate means of transport (IMTs), transport devices that come between walking and conventional motor vehicles, are also very useful in places where there are no other transport services available. Cycle ambulances are particularly useful in plain areas of Nepal such as the Terai where local community groups are able to provide 24-hour cycle ambulance services to needy families at a minimum charge. Similarly in Dhading, about 68% of emergency patients used a Tuin (non-motorised ropeway) to reach health facilities. Before the Tuin intervention villagers used to depend on locally made boats to cross the river; a longer and more dangerous route.

### Recommendations

MDG 5 is linked with infrastructure facilities. Socio economic

development, including awareness of issues such as maternal health, basic education, women's development, infrastructure development and health system development with quality obstetric care are important requirements. Hence, the transport sector should place a higher priority on developing comprehensive *rural transport networks* in which transport (road, trail bridge, IMT) and the health sector work together in a coordinated manner. To be able to interpret transport needs more clearly we should consider these interconnected concepts; Mobility, access and health.

By Binjwala Shrestha

Institute of Medicine, Kathmandu, Nepal

Contact email: binjwala\_shrestha@hotmail.com

Mobility and Health Studies: [www.mobilityandhealth.org](http://www.mobilityandhealth.org)

## Older Women and Transport Issues in Sub-Saharan Africa

Knowledge of the links between transport, mobility and poor people's livelihoods and wellbeing in Africa is remarkably sparse. Yet older people form a substantial and key component of African populations, not least in the era of HIV/AIDS. In many countries this has left grandparents supporting and caring for grandchildren in the context of a missing or incapacitated middle generation due to parental deaths and ill health.

In a recent study on child mobility ([www.dur.ac.uk/child.mobility](http://www.dur.ac.uk/child.mobility)), we found approximately 20% of the 1000 child respondents surveyed in each of our three study countries live with people other than their parents. In South Africa, Malawi and Ghana respectively, 14%, 9% and 9% were found to be living with grandparents (usually grandmother alone); the remainder lived with other relatives/foster parents, many of whom are older people. In HIV/AIDS and other contexts, many older carers lack financial support from the child's parents and struggle to provide for children in their care. Mobility, or lack of it, is likely to be implicated in this and many other facets of older people's lives (Schwanen and Paez 2010).

Immobility is strongly linked to issues of poverty, a common characteristic of Africa's older people, especially in societies like Ghana where the government does not provide social security for the elderly, and family support for them is assumed (Apt 1997; van der Geest 1998; Aboderin 2004). Immobility is also linked to problems of growing infirmity, faced by many people as they experience old age. Ill-health and infirmity may introduce very substantial problems for older people, in a walking world where pedestrian transport dominates among all ages (Porter 2002). Reduced pedestrian mobility due to infirmity and the unaffordable cost of motorised transport may help to limit older people's access to work and vital health care, thus reinforcing their poverty; a vicious circle in which mobility restrictions form a key component.

Older women are likely to face particular difficulties for a number of reasons:

- They tend to be among the poorest in society and poorer than their male counterparts of the same age because they have had less opportunity through their lives to access resources and build assets.
- Many elderly women are now carers. In the context of HIV/AIDS, many have to support young orphans in their homes (Clacherty 2008). This introduces additional costs in providing for food, school uniforms etc.
- Given their limited access to resources and the cost of their caring responsibilities, older women are often among those least able to afford transport fares. However, those who have adult children affected by HIV/AIDS, in particular, may require prolonged travels to care for the sick (Ssengonzi 2009).
- Access to a secure livelihood is often particularly difficult for older women in rural areas where income from farming is frequently

insecure. Multiplex livelihoods and off-farm income are widely recognised to provide a route out of rural poverty (Bryceson 1999, 2002; Yaro 2006), but livelihood diversification for women (whether in rural or urban areas) tends to imply trading. This usually requires travel to the nearest market or service location, causing particular difficulties if heavy loads have to be transported on foot (Apt et al. 1995; Grieco et al. 1996; Ipingbemi 2010).

- Older women travellers not only face a shortage of funds to pay transport fares, but may also experience other travel difficulties around specific problems which may be associated with old age among women such as urinary incontinence due to earlier obstetric problems (e.g. obstetric fistula and related conditions).
- In some regions the demands of load carrying on women from childhood and onwards appear to impact severely on health and quality of life as they enter and experience old age (though there appears to be no detailed evidence base to support this hypothesis). The implications of Africa's transport gap and consequent dependence on pedestrian headloading (often designated a female activity) has received remarkably little attention. The particular plight of older women in accessing fuelwood, water and markets needs further investigation (Porter, Blaufuss and Acheampong, in press).

Although older people, especially women carers, appear to be among the poorest and least mobile in society, there is little direct information about their mobility and transport needs in Africa. One study of rural markets in the early 1990s on the Jos Plateau, Nigeria, found older women were generally much more restricted in their general travel for trade than elderly men, and were under-represented in the markets because they could not afford any form of motorised transport. Widespread decline in off-road markets associated with new road construction and associated transport reorganisation meant they were less able to walk to the nearest functioning market and consequently suffered substantial disadvantage (Porter 1993, 1997). However, we can expect considerable diversity of experience amongst older people, not only according to gender, but also with ethnicity, socio-economic status, family composition (dependants etc.), occupational history, infirmity/health, personal mobility status, density of service provision, etc.

We need to know more about how this diversity impacts on transport usage, suppressed journeys, mobility and access to services, and other elements important to well-being. Durham University and HelpAge International, in collaboration with IFRTD and other organisations in Ghana and Tanzania, are currently actively searching for funds to support a major study of these issues.

For more information please contact:

Gina Porter, Durham University, UK

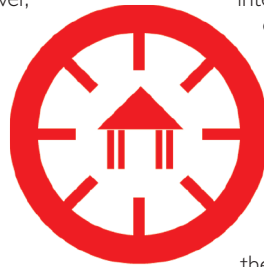
Email: [r.e.porter@durham.ac.uk](mailto:r.e.porter@durham.ac.uk)



## Current Challenges are Future Opportunities

Undoubtedly IFRTD's valuable efforts to put gender and transport issues on the radar of transport sector organisations and professionals constitutes an important contribution. However, much more needs to be done and complacency is not an option. One of the Forum's key values is to strive for gender equality both in the transport and development sector and also within the network. We have both a key responsibility and a unique position to lead, nurture and complement efforts that can ensure that gender considerations in transport development, planning and governance are taken up, and not only by those already interested and committed.

The future steps that the IFRTD Secretariat takes to promote further awareness and action on the gender and transport agenda will consider the importance of building the capacities of IFRTD members to apply and adapt existing gender analytical and monitoring tools to impact directly in their daily practice. IFRTD should make a conscious effort to build and strengthen collaboration with the active



gender and development community to ensure that the key connections transport has with all development sectors are also internalised by all levels of development practitioners. The diverse challenges and responses to gender-related access and mobility issues that exist throughout countries and cultures still require further exploration. The global scope of IFRTD should allow for this comprehensive understanding to take place, promoting cross-learning and concerted strategic action. But increased awareness and enhanced knowledge are not sufficient to generate change. IFRTD will need to ensure that it defines a solid strategy to influence power structures and embedded attitudes still prevalent in the infrastructure sector that ultimately influence strategies, policies and investments. In spite of the known challenges, there are myriad opportunities that could illuminate a winding yet rewarding road.

By Maria Arce Moreira  
IFRTD Executive Director  
Contact email: maria.arce@ifrtd.org

## Recognising the Care Economy

I am now working in Sri Lanka where, for the most part, women's mobility is not as restricted as it is in some other parts of the world. A high density of roads (the highest in South Asia), relatively good transport services provided by both the state and the private sector, and fewer cultural barriers to the mobility of women, suggest that here mobility and access for women and men is not a problem. This, alongside the fact that Sri Lanka is now a middle-income country with signs of reaching MDG 3 on gender equality, gives us a context in which it is easy to forget the challenges that were articulated by researchers in IFRTD's *Balancing the Load* programme in 2002.

Do these challenges still exist for women? What has changed? Has the transport sector moved beyond *Balancing the Load*?

The 'yes it has' answer is evidenced by the fact that even the most hard-nosed transport engineers are now aware that there are gender differences – that women and men have different transport tasks and responsibilities, different access to resources, including transport resources. There is some understanding (albeit to a lesser extent) of the power differences in gender relationships. Good practice examples that encourage greater participation of women in planning, implementation and monitoring of transport projects; that mainstream the inclusion of women in labour gangs and insist on equal wages for equal work as a part of contractor conditionality particularly in the labour-based construction of roads; that enhance women's access to transport services through the provision of loans to purchase transport technologies; or specialised public transport services, point to the fact that the transport sector is much more gender aware than when the first *Balancing the Load* proposal was presented to the Engineering Knowledge and Research programme of the UK Department for International Development!

But there are still many issues to be tackled – and, in many ways, these are the tough ones. The new challenges for mainstreaming gender into the transport sector call for moving beyond the focus on women as targets or sector beneficiaries. Rather to look at the gendered nature of transport sector institutions themselves, in terms of how resources are allocated, what is valued, and how power is mobilised.

The gendered nature of the transport sector manifests itself in different ways. For instance, the transport sector rarely takes the *care economy* into account when designing or planning transport interventions. The *care economy* refers to unpaid housework and taking care of household members, whether they are children, the sick or the elderly. It does not involve any direct economic activity. The market economy is about gainful employment, sellable products, and marketable services. In the transport sector the *care economy* continues to be

undervalued. This is a gender issue because the *care economy* is predominantly female. Men rarely have to combine gainful employment and care responsibilities.

Another example is the *approach to spatial planning*, especially of cities, and the implications for provision of transport services. Cities are typically planned with business and commercial city centres served by wide roads, and living and care giving residential areas, far from the centre, under-resourced with transport infrastructure and services. Accessing the business and commercial area requires a long commute, and combining gainful employment with care giving (as most women do) means multiple trips. This is exacerbated by the lack of reliable and affordable public transport. Mobility requires access to individual means of transport, but individual means of transport, cars and motorcycles, are owned mainly by men.

Road safety has a very high profile within the transport sector; but it comes with a very narrow focus. It focuses on road accidents and on the victims of those accidents. Little attention is paid to care givers and the burdens they need to shoulder as a consequence of road accidents. Also, by focusing on road accidents, the road safety agenda ignores other aspects of safety such as sexual harassment or the fact that many transport accidents can occur off the main road network on sub-standard rural transport infrastructure such as slippery pathways, or dangerous river crossings.

Mega transport infrastructure projects that result in the displacement and resettlement of communities do not always recognise the pressure on carers during displacement, the period of adjustment required and the loss of a support network through resettlement in a different location. The loss of women's livelihoods, considered secondary incomes, are not always given priority in compensation packages. Another issue that is often not considered significant is the loss of common property resources (e.g. water or firewood collection points).

Finally, it is important to pay attention to gender issues among workers in the transport sector: Is there equal access to women and men in transport construction and transport services? Are family rights (e.g. maternity leave) respected? Is sexual harassment and gender stereotyping addressed? Do working hours take into account responsibility for care? And do women and men have equal opportunities to participate in trade unions?

By Priyanthi Fernando  
Centre for Poverty Analysis, Sri Lanka  
Email: priyanthi@cepa.lk



## Low-cost Transport for Women in Labour in Afghanistan

In 2008, *HealthProm* initiated a small project aiming to reduce maternal mortality in one mountainous district of Northern Afghanistan. We were asked to address why only one woman in ten was getting to the health centre to give birth.

We recruited and trained two local couples as 'facilitators', to work with the village community. The female facilitators encouraged women to set up safe motherhood groups in each of 20 villages to consider their health problems and how they could be tackled. Lack of transport for women in labour to reach the health centre was identified as the most urgent problem and village women asked for help with this. Women die as a result of delays in deciding to seek skilled maternity care and delays in reaching that care. The only sustainable solution in this very poor community has to be very low-cost transport capable of negotiating narrow muddy paths and steep gradients strewn with rocks. Most of the tracks which lead from villages to the one rough road are too bumpy for carts.

IFRTD kindly initiated a worldwide e-mail consultation and we received many helpful ideas. It became apparent that, though terrains differ, the problem is encountered worldwide in very poor rural communities. Ultimately, London-based NGOs *Transaid* and *Developing*

*Technologies* kindly offered to work with us to develop a transport solution.

Together we have considered various options. Village women said that they could only use stretchers for transport from villages that are near the clinic. Paths from other villages are, they said, too hilly and muddy, and it would be very hard to carry stretchers on them. The village leaders (men) that were consulted also did not approve of stretchers, especially because of the difficulty of finding even four men willing to carry them (for long distances a large team would be needed). We therefore looked into stretchers to be carried by two men, with a single wheel to give the bearers a break over smoother ground. Unfortunately there are not many smooth places.

*DevTech's* indefatigable engineer volunteer has drawn many designs, and the leading ones have been discussed by village women in Afghanistan. The one now favoured will be constructed of canvas over a bamboo frame and relies on a donkey to take the weight in front. It will have wheels at the rear and will be steered by the operator using handles, with which it can be carried over the rougher stretches. The village women have said that it needs to have a canopy for protection from the rain and cold. IFRTD's *Mobility and Health*



*Villagers carrying a woman with postpartum haemorrhage on a carpet to the clinic*

research has highlighted to us the additional complications that can be caused by poor handling and positioning of women during transportation. *Transaid* will test the prototype in the UK before construction and testing in Afghanistan and evaluation of effectiveness.

**We encourage you to get in touch to share your experience/ideas on similar issues with us.**

By Stewart Britten, email: [stewart.britten@zen.co.uk](mailto:stewart.britten@zen.co.uk) and Olivia Comberti, email: [olivia@comberti.com](mailto:olivia@comberti.com)  
Website: [www.healthprom.org](http://www.healthprom.org)

## The Challenges of Addressing Gender in the Transport Sector

In May 2010, I had the opportunity to participate in a workshop organised by and for gender and transport scholars and practitioners in Asia. My first reaction when I received the invitation to participate was "Will I be able to contribute to the workshop effectively?" Nonetheless, given my interest in gender and transport issues, I accepted the invitation.

It was an interesting workshop with a mix of participants, the majority drawn from academia presenting research-based papers. It was clear from the presentations that although the contexts may be different, the gender and transport concerns in Asia are relatively similar to those in Africa. While it would be too simplistic to argue for universal prescriptions for the two regions, I strongly feel that both Asia and Africa can benefit from talking to one another, sharing lessons and best practices.

While the gender journey began a few decades ago, the progress we have made does not seem to be that remarkable. I listened to some excellent presentations which suggested progress towards promoting gender as an academic field. I was happy to note that some of the conceptual shifts in the thinking about gender and development were reflected in a few of the papers. Most papers, however, showed that there has not been much significant difference in our understanding and treatment of gender in the transport sector:

A few papers seemed to have just appended the word 'women' in some places. Surprisingly, for a gender-focused workshop, some papers were completely silent on gender. One of the participants noted that the varying degree to which gender was incorporated in the papers was a reflection of the challenges of "working with gender". On the one hand, you have gender specialists and, on the other, you have transport experts, each category with its own ways of thinking, knowing and doing but only a few from either grouping with the required understanding of the other sector. The result is a cosmetic treatment of gender in the transport sector.

This could partly explain why most papers reported that although transport projects appear to be improving women's visibility in the sector, this has not been transformative. Many transport projects have proactively promoted women's participation and provided them with a chance to earn an income and access productive assets. Why this has not been matched with improvements in women's bargaining power and participation in family decision making is a question which should be further explored.

At the end of the workshop, one participant asked me why I had commented that some papers had made no reference to women yet there was no particular mention of men either. This question pointed to a need for strengthening the gender knowledge and analytical skills of transport practitioners. One of the achievements of the workshop was to get people such as transport engineers and planners to start thinking about gender. Following the workshop discussions, many felt the need to enrich their papers through a gender analysis.

I would like to conclude by highlighting the questions I raised during the wrap-up panel discussion. Why have we (the transport sector) made limited progress in addressing gender? Why are we still discussing the issues raised by others decades ago? Is it due to a lack of commitment, paying lip service to gender? Is it due to a lack of methodological tools? Is it a lack of understanding or is it a question of capacity? What has the social movement for gender equality and equity put on the transport negotiating table? What are the gender-related priorities that should be considered? How can the women's movement be more pro-active?

By Nite Tanzam (IFRTD Board)  
Department of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University, Uganda  
Contact email: [nite.tanzam@ifrtd.org](mailto:nite.tanzam@ifrtd.org)



## "You are a Strong Woman"

The Bicycling Empowerment Network Namibia (BEN Namibia) recently received an Ashoka Changemaker Award within the theme 'Women, Tools and Technology – Building Opportunities and Economic Power'. Three winners were selected from 268 entries across 67 countries and, in addition to a cash prize of US\$5,000, BEN Namibia was invited to participate in the high profile Clinton Foundation Global Initiative meeting in New York (September 2010).

The Ashoka Changemaker award recognises BEN Namibia's work establishing Bicycle Empowerment Centres (BECs), community-based bicycle workshops with a high level of participation by women. Of the 90 people directly employed through BEN Namibia projects, exactly half are women, with the majority of the 25 BEC projects managed by women.

Training women in bicycle mechanics and business management, and creating a pathway to employment in this field has proven to be empowering in more ways than simply providing bicycles to increase mobility. Placing women in prominent roles in a traditionally male-dominated field has caused some surprises in the communities where the BECs are located, but the response from both men and women in the communities has been overwhelmingly positive. Many women bicycle mechanics report being told "You are a strong woman" by members of their community, and express pride in their work. They also report tangible improvements in their lives: for example, one woman built her own home with income she earned as a bicycle mechanic; another has been able to help her school-age daughters start small enterprises of their own to earn income.

Despite these achievements, the majority of customers buying

*In a country with 51% unemployment, finding work is difficult for anyone. For Lydia Motinga, being both a woman and not having use of her legs means it is almost impossible. Through training and support from BEN Namibia, Lydia and a group of her peers at the Keetmanshoop disability resource centre in southern Namibia have established the Duweltjie bicycle shop and generate their own income.*



BEN Namibia

bicycles through BECs are still men. In 2011 BEN Namibia hopes to introduce finance models to provide more women with access to affordable bicycles. Through a partnership with Bicycles for Humanity, BEN Namibia also hopes to help other local organisations to adapt its BEC project model to new countries, using the same gender-inclusive approach. A pilot project commenced in Zambia in October 2010.

By Clarisse Cunha, BEN Namibia

Email: [clarisse@benbikes.org.za](mailto:clarisse@benbikes.org.za)

Website: [www.benbikes.org.za](http://www.benbikes.org.za)

## A Road to Peace: the Yambio-Maridi-Farasika Road Project, Sudan

Since 2007, UNOPS has taken over the role as UN sector lead for Basic Infrastructure and Settlement Development in Southern Sudan. Currently, the Sudan Operations Centre (SDOC) is running 18 different projects supported by various donors such as USAID, Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), the World Bank, other UN Agencies and the Government of South Sudan.

On 10th April 2007, UNOPS and the Multi Donor Trust Fund, along with the Ministry of Transport and Roads, entered into a Memorandum of Agreement for the rehabilitation and construction of the 170km Yambio-Maridi-Farasika road corridor. The objective is to improve ease of traffic flow between the State Capital and Ibba and Maridi counties of the state. The road is also part of the National Road Network of Southern Sudan, facilitating the return of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), enhancing food security and stimulating economic development of the region. At a macro level, the road project is also expected to contribute towards:

- Creating conditions that foster sustained peace and development.
- Fostering economic growth through increased trade.
- National stability by facilitating the transport of humanitarian aid as well as the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons.
- Increasing the capacity of the southern Sudanese public and private sectors in different facets of road maintenance and management.
- Improving road access, reducing the cost of access to food and food production.

The construction of the Yambio-Farasika road is also taking place within the context of increased regional road infrastructure investments linking the country to the neighbouring states of Uganda and Kenya, and a trunk road system that extends northwards on both the western and eastern sides of the Nile, to eventually link the South with the North.

Although it is too early to assess the impact of this road project, there are visible and tangible benefits of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement to the people of this state. With an improved road, food and other relief aid can be moved by ground transport due to the lower transport costs,

quicker delivery times and increased trucking capacity. Further, the road facilitates the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees, and attracts many development partners in the state.

Other positive impacts include the creation of job opportunities for increased income for both women and men, and improved mobility and access to social services, especially health and schools, which are key to women and young children.

The road construction activities are likely to create negative impacts which could threaten people's livelihoods and the state of the physical and biological environment. To this effect, an Environmental/Social Management Plan (ESMP) is being implemented to address feasible remedial measures and enhance the positive ones.

One of the guiding principles of the ESMP is the open and transparent relationship between the project and the communities by continuous consultation in a culturally appropriate manner. The project provides the affected communities with regular information on operations that might affect them through stakeholders workshops village meetings, pamphlets and community announcements. Women's groups and leaders are specifically targeted. Community safety awareness activities/training are undertaken in locations which are most affected by traffic, especially communities living near and around the project – schools and markets.

There has been a particular focus on HIV/AIDS awareness. The prevalence rate in Yambio is 10% (UNICEF, 2010). This rate is likely to rise with increasing numbers of migrants (including the road project workers) who have moved into the area without their families. Poverty and a lack of resources prompt local women to engage in commercial sex with project workers.

The ability of project affected communities, and women in particular, to defend themselves against the risk of increased infection depends on the success of the HIV/AIDS and STDs education and awareness programme. Besides mitigating the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS, the project has a corporate social responsibility to contribute towards community prevention care and efforts.

Continued on page 7



Continued from page 6

The project is therefore collaborating with existing programmes and, in particular, with the state government of Western Equatoria and NGOs. It is working with the Zereda AIDS Information Centre, which works with communities affected by HIV/AIDS and PLWA. Zereda will create awareness on factual health and behaviour change issues, positive

living and also distribute condoms. This activity will take place in Bangasu, Makpandu, Rimeneze, Bodo and Bazungua.

By Betty Babirye DDUNGU, UNOPS Sudan  
Contact email: BettyD@unops.org

## An Update on World Bank Gender and Transport Activities

The World Bank Transport Sector has been actively engaged in Gender issues for over a decade. The 2008–2012 Business Strategy, 'Safe, Clean, and Affordable... Transport for Development', renewed a strong commitment to mainstream gender. Most recently, the sector's efforts in mainstreaming gender have focused on developing innovative analytical work, capacity building initiatives, integrating gender into projects in the regions, and gender-informed monitoring and evaluation, in part with resources awarded through the Bank-wide Gender Action Plan (GAP).

### Gender country studies

A number of gender-focused studies on access and mobility have been undertaken in preparation for designing and planning interventions to improve transport access and mobility. Studies done in Yemen, Afghanistan and the West Bank have provided critical data relevant for understanding the gender and transport and mobility needs for accessing economic opportunities and key services such as health and education. Findings also demonstrated the importance of identifying priority transport needs and travel patterns by gender and to establish baseline gender data for designing and monitoring the effectiveness of project interventions.

### Knowledge management

The electronic 2007 *Gender and Transport Resource Guide* – a virtual library and summary of key issues and good practices, has been updated to include emerging issues such as climate change and post-conflict settings as well as the expanding literature on gender and transport in areas such as urbanisation and road maintenance (see page 8).

A new report, *TP-28: Mainstreaming Gender in Road Transport: Operational Guidance for World Bank Staff*, provides guidance to transport and gender specialists on how to mainstream gender into road operations, including relevant gender issues in the various operational contexts. It provides examples of the types of project components and related indicators that contribute to mainstreaming gender in Bank operations. **Url:** <http://tinyurl.com/FN15-3-WBguide>

### Integrating gender into operations

Innovative initiatives are paving the way for good project practices in a

growing number of countries. The Liaoning Urban Transport Project in China used participatory consultations with women and men to facilitate a dramatic change in the original urban transport project to include secondary road and pedestrian walkway improvements and traffic management safety measures. Innovative approaches including women in rural road maintenance, developed in Peru, have been adapted to other countries in Latin America and Asia. In 2010, Vietnam launched a pilot providing training to rural ethnic minority women in road engineering and road maintenance, and employing them to maintain 51 kilometers of rural mountain roads.

**Url:** <http://go.worldbank.org/DJCK0N6HB0>

### Gender and transport data

In cooperation with the Research Group of the World Bank, the transport sector reviewed available household surveys in developing countries for insights on transport and gender issues. The research findings are entitled 'What Do Existing Household Surveys Tell Us About Gender and Transportation in Developing Countries?' This research demonstrated that while not a replacement for detailed transport studies, existing household surveys can provide national-level data, link transport use with welfare status, and enable tracking of changes over time and across countries for specific groups. In the long run, better data could be generated by incorporating additional questions on gender and transport into existing surveys, when possible, by systematising survey questions for better comparability, and by investigating existing data sources before launching a new survey.

**Url:** <http://onlinepubs.trb.org/webmedia/trbmedia/women/Babinard.pdf>

### Capacity building

Numerous capacity building activities were conducted in collaboration with the Transport anchor, the regional transport teams, the Gender Department and the Social Development Department to better disseminate existing knowledge while scaling up capacity on gender issues in transport. Clinics and learning events were organised for Bank staff to develop capacity for designing effective strategies for mainstreaming gender in transport operations. A workshop conducted in Hanoi, Vietnam, raised gender awareness and knowledge of the staff of the Ministry of Transport. *Making Transport Work for Women and Men: Tools for Task Teams*, prepared by the Social Development Department, repackaged existing tools for integrating gender into transport planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as resettlement and HIV/AIDS.

**Url:** <http://go.worldbank.org/5UWIT2OUW0>

Specific capacity building studies covered a range of topics including gender and transport in post conflict Liberia, gender in the Ghana Urban Transport Project, and the impact of HIV/AIDS on the wives of migrant laborers. Finally, the World Bank has been actively engaged in showcasing good practice projects in regional multilateral conferences on gender and infrastructure held in Manila, Philippines (November 2008), Lima, Peru (December 2009), and in Tunis (upcoming in 2011).

By Julie Babinard, World Bank  
Contact email: [transport@worldbank.org](mailto:transport@worldbank.org) | [genderequality@worldbank.org](mailto:genderequality@worldbank.org) | [socialdevelopment@worldbank.org](mailto:socialdevelopment@worldbank.org)

World Bank



Female labourers working on the Vietnam Rural Road Maintenance Pilot



# Resources

## Forthcoming Paper

'I think a woman who travels a lot is befriending other men and that's why she travels': Dr R. E. Porter *Mobility constraints for rural women and girl children in sub-Saharan Africa. Gender, place and culture 2011, 1.*

This paper is concerned with the implications of practices, politics and meanings of mobility for women and girl children in rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa. Women and girls commonly face severe mobility constraints which affect their livelihoods and their life chances. The paper reflects on their experiences in rural areas where patriarchal institutions (including the gender division of labour, which places great emphasis on female labour contributions to household production and reproduction), and a patriarchal discourse concerning linkages between women's mobility, vulnerability and sexual appetite, shape everyday social practices and material inequalities.

This compounds the physical constraints imposed by poor accessibility (to services and markets) associated with poor roads and inadequate transport in both direct and more complex ways. The paper draws on field research conducted in diverse socio-cultural and agro-ecological contexts in western and southern Africa (principally southern Ghana, southern Malawi and northern and central Nigeria) to explore the impacts of relative immobility and poor service access on women and girls. Three (interconnected) issues are examined in some detail: access to markets, access to education and access to health services. Possible interventions to initiate positive change are considered.

## Videos

### Ethnic Minority Women Participate in Regular Maintenance of Rural Roads (4.35mins)

A short video by the World Bank that shows how ethnic minority women in Lao Cai province in northern Vietnam engage in rural road routine maintenance – an off-farm job that improves their household income and enhances their livelihood. The video talks to the women about their experience working on the road and project funded by the World Bank Gender Action Plan.

"The road after maintenance activities will be better for villagers going to the market; and more convenient for teachers going to schools" Vong A Phu, Tay ethnic minority. URL: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=W956QP\\_ppsU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W956QP_ppsU)

### Transaid in Ghana: Female Market Trader Project (4.58 mins)

From 2006 to 2008, Transaid worked with a Female Market Traders Cooperative in Accra, Ghana to support the development of their own controlled transport system to get their goods to market. The aim of the project was to improve livelihood opportunities and social conditions for the female market traders by giving them access to safer and more affordable transport. The lack of an efficient transport service that meets the needs of women traders reduces their profits, increases their working hours and exposes them to unnecessary risks.

URL: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAIXISYT-qo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAIXISYT-qo)

### A Walk to Beautiful (52 mins)

An award-winning film documenting the stories of five Ethiopian women who suffered from devastating childbirth injuries and embarked on a journey to reclaim their lost dignity. Rejected by their husbands and ostracized by their communities, these women were left to spend the rest of their lives in loneliness and shame. They made the choice to take the long and arduous journey to the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in search of a cure and a new life.

URL: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=3w-fOmovic](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3w-fOmovic)

"Let me tell you what I think of bicycling. I think it has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world. It gives women a feeling of freedom and self-reliance. I stand and rejoice every time I see a woman ride by on a wheel... the picture of free, untrammelled womanhood."

Susan B. Anthony. Campaigner for women's rights (1820–1906)

## Online Sources

### Gender and Transport Resource Guide

This easy to navigate and recently updated online guide provides a wealth of gender mainstreaming tools and information for those working on policy, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, capacity building and research relating to transport.

It aims to support practitioners by answering the questions 'why?' and 'how to?' and brings together case studies, examples of good practice, training tools and reports, not only from the World Bank, but from a range of other organisations and individuals active in the field of gender and transport. As such, the Gender and Transport Resource Guide should be one of the first ports of call for anyone looking to find

URL: [www4.worldbank.org/afr/ssatp/Resources/HTML/Gender-RG/](http://www4.worldbank.org/afr/ssatp/Resources/HTML/Gender-RG/)

To request the Resource Guide on CD Rom email [transport@worldbank.org](mailto:transport@worldbank.org).

### Outputs from the Gender, Economic Integration and Cross-border Infrastructure Development Workshop (May 2010)

This international event organised by the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) Thailand and the Asia-Pacific Regional Secretariat of IFRTD was supported by the Japan-ASEAN Solidarity Fund, ASEAN Foundation, Asian Development Bank and global Transport Knowledge Partnership (gTKP). It aimed to explore how regional economic integration strengthened by cross-border road networks has a differentiated effect based on gender; ethnicity and class.

The workshop report and a compilation of abstracts are available at [www.genderandtransport.ait.ch](http://www.genderandtransport.ait.ch).

## Online Gender and Transport Community

**Gatnet** is the discussion group of a community of practice that began with a program on *Mainstreaming Gender into the World Bank's Transport Sector*. It is now open to all those who are interested in issues relating to improving mobility and access for poor women and men in developing countries.

Over the years Gatnet members have collaborated on various projects and initiatives, including an online consultation to feed into the World Bank's current transport strategy. Join the GATNET community and share your experience, knowledge questions and challenges in a friendly and supportive environment.

URL: <http://dgroups.org/worldbank/GATNET>

## About Us:

The IFRTD is a global network of individuals and organisations working towards improved access and mobility for the rural poor. It provides a framework for collaboration, information sharing, debate and advocacy that bridges traditional geographic and institutional boundaries.

International Programmes and Communications, Can Mezzanine, 49–51 East Road, Old Street, London, N1 6AH, United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7250 8323  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7250 8322  
Email: [info@ifrtd.org](mailto:info@ifrtd.org)

Guy Augustin Kemtsop (West and Central Africa), Tel: +237 994 48 30 or +237 994 78 30

Email: [guy.kemtsop@ifrtd.org](mailto:guy.kemtsop@ifrtd.org)

Peter Njenga (East and Southern Africa), Tel/fax: +254 2 883323

Email: [peter.njenga@ifrtd.org](mailto:peter.njenga@ifrtd.org)

Ana Bravo (Latin America), Tel/fax: +51 1 222 6863

Email: [ana.bravo@ifrtd.org](mailto:ana.bravo@ifrtd.org)

Ranjith de Silva (Asia), Tel: +94 (0)11 284 2972  
Fax: +94 (0)11 285 6188

Email: [ranjith@ifrtd.org](mailto:ranjith@ifrtd.org)

[www.ifrtd.org](http://www.ifrtd.org)

Edited by Kate Czuczman  
Typeset by My Word!