



Forum

News

International Forum for Rural Transport and Development

The State of Rural Transport and Development

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Where Are We Now?

It is fifteen years since the publication Roads are not Enough articulated an emerging vision of rural transport planning. This shifted the emphasis from an exclusive focus on roads to an integrated approach that includes low cost means of transport and the optimal location of services to suit local needs. This extended edition of Forum News traces the evolution of rural transport theory, policy and practice and asks where are we now?

This year for the first time we find ourselves in a world where more people live in urban areas than rural areas, and our cities are increasingly regarded as the engine for growth and development. Our development agenda is guided by the Millennium Development Goals that make no explicit reference to transport. What does this mean for the rural transport sector?

In these articles IFRTD members reflect upon the progress we have made, the gaps that remain and how rural transport issues can remain relevant in the face of changing donor priorities? What emerges is the challenge of an institutional environment that is increasingly tailored to macro-interventions, the need to bridge the gap between rhetoric and practice, and new themes that demand a cross-sectoral approach. Does the rural transport sector need to re-position itself to be heard?



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A pregnant woman rides in the back of a pick up truck for an emergency visit to a clinic in Zambia. A cross-sectoral approach to rural transport and health could help to reduce maternal mortality rates.

A Retrospective

The emergence of rural transport as a transport sub-sector with its own particular set of issues that require specific policies, institutions and planning tools has only occurred in the last fifteen to twenty years. Its evolution can be traced to a small pilot project in South East Tanzania known as the Makete Integrated Rural Transport Project (MIRTP). MIRTP was implemented in Tanzania from 1985 to 1996 in Makete District, Tanzania. The project applied an innovative action-research approach that eventually led to a unified framework for understanding the various constraints to access and mobility in rural areas of developing countries, and their links to poverty. MIRTP came into being at a time when building comparatively high standard rural access/feeder roads was seen as the most effective way of resolving rural transport problems.

When Intermediate Technology Transport (ITT) consultants were approached by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) for assistance in solving the road problems in Makete, they proposed to carry out a situational assessment study using a methodology that would look at the transport demand from the perspective of household users upwards, rather than from the transport system downwards. This

and other subsequent studies began to confirm an incipient perspective that roads by themselves were not having the expected impacts on social and economic development in rural areas. Reasons for this included the inability of fledging economies in developing countries to maintain expanded rural infrastructure and the lack of direct links between the livelihoods of rural people and the existence of motorable roads.

Through its widely disseminated reports and publications and the advocacy work of a core network of people involved in MIRTP, the lessons and principles that emerged from this project have continued to underpin other rural travel and transport (RTT) initiatives in Tanzania, Sub-Saharan Africa, and other developing countries in Asia and Latin America. The pioneering and innovative concepts that emerged from Makete include:

- **The household as a basis for understanding rural transport needs:** The use of the household as an important unit of analysis was a key innovation. It underscored the transport dimension of domestic chores such as collection of water, firewood, and the movement of agricultural produce to and from the fields.
- **Gender and transport:** By using the household as the basis to analyse transport needs, MIRTP initiated the notion of gender disaggregated household travel data. A gendered approach to rural transport is now spearheaded by

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networks such as IFRTD and GATNET and organisations such as the World Bank.

- **Recognition of village level transport infrastructure:** Lower-level transport infrastructure, i.e. tracks and paths, were identified as an important part of the transport network.
- **Integrated Rural Transport Planning:** MIRTTP brought the perspective of transport as an integrated system consisting of vehicles and infrastructure. Recognition was given to low-cost means of transport, or Intermediate Means of Transport (IMTs).
- **Integrated Rural Access Planning (IRAP):** IRAP was a refinement of the Integrated Rural Transport Planning concept that was developed through MIRTTP. It was a response to the need for a simple tool for planning interventions for improving access to services and facilities in rural areas.

Innovations that came from MIRTTP continued to be replicated through a number of different channels, including:

- **Village Travel and Transport Programme in Tanzania (VTTP):** Based on MIRTTP experiences VTTP was designed as a seven district pilot programme in 1994. Currently, VTTP is being rolled out as a national programme in Tanzania.
- **Other pilot projects in Africa:** Pilot projects designed along the MIRTTP model include the Pilot Integrated Rural Transport Project in Malawi (PIRTP, 1991–97), the Rural Accessibility and Mobility Pilot Activity (RAMPA, in Malawi 2004–05) and the Rural Access Project (1995 – 2002 in Zimbabwe).
- **The Rural Travel and Transport Policy (RTTP):** Programme pioneered rural transport and policy reforms in many Sub-Saharan African countries in the late 90's and early 2000. RTTP policy messages carried strong echoes from MIRTTP and many of the key drivers were linked to the networks that emerged from Makete.
- **The International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD),** conceived in the early 90s as a global framework to advance new knowledge on rural transport and to help promote policy advocacy. The idea of forming IFRTD was established by the so called "Epsom Group" that met at the Epsom Hotel in Geneva. Organisations represented at this meeting include; Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Programme (SSATP), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Intermediate Technology Development

Group (ITDG), the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) and Intermediate Technology Transport (ITT).

Even as rural transport evolves as a sub-sector, we find ourselves facing new challenges in the development of effective rural transport systems. To highlight just a few:

The mismatch between the analysis of rural transport problems and the implementation of solutions: While the general principles of holistic approaches to rural transport are well argued in research papers and policy statements, their translation into programmes and projects remains problematic. Part of the problem lies in a lack of adequate institutional and technical capacity at the local level where rural transport solutions are implemented. Additionally, there is a lack of well structured cross-sectoral approaches that can deliver on the various components of rural transport that do not fall in the traditional transport domain.

Lack of comprehensive knowledge on the state of rural transport: Though many countries in Africa and other developing countries have adopted rural transport as an important transport policy concern, implementation strategies are hampered by the lack of detailed understanding of rural travel and transport problems. The paucity of reliable data to define priority problems and solutions is the weak link between policy intention and the actual delivery of solutions. This strengthens the case for rural transport professionals to lobby for inclusion of household travel information as part of regular national surveys.

Access infrastructure vis a vis transport means and services: Emphasis on the improvement of access infrastructure is not usually matched by the development of appropriate rural transport services in order to improve mobility and optimise the benefits of investments.

The significance of the transport time burden on women is not fully appreciated: While there is a general appreciation that the time and effort burden borne by women has serious implications on social and economic development, good practices of gender integration in the design and implementation of rural transport programmes and projects are still very few.

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Funded by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC). Executed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Makete District Council with support from IT Transport.

What Role for Public – Private Partnerships in Rural Transport?

In most sectors in development, public-private partnerships (PPPs) play a big role in service provision and delivery. PPPs can be defined as mutually benefiting collaborations between public bodies, such as local authorities or central government, and private companies. While usually private companies are contracted by governments for road construction and maintenance (a form of PPP) PPPs can also assist in other areas of (rural) transport such as assessing transport systems and logistics. This is the case in the unique PPP between the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) and TNT, a global company providing businesses and consumers worldwide with an extensive range of services for their mail and express delivery needs.

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian organisation and on an annual basis feeds on average 90 million people around the world. WFP is an outstanding logistics entity. However, as a voluntarily funded organisation WFP has fewer opportunities to invest in

training and IT than commercial organisations. TNT has been constantly investing in these areas.

As part of its internal and external corporate social responsibility programme, TNT has committed its knowledge, skills and resources to helping WFP. From 2003–2006 TNT invested €25 million in the form of knowledge transfer and projects to; help make WFP more efficient and effective; provide hands-on support in emergencies; and to develop awareness and fundraising initiatives. TNT's work contributes directly to cost savings for WFP, helping them to feed more people globally.

Two projects relating to rural transport and the role PPPs can play are particularly worth highlighting here. A rural transport optimisation project in Liberia and a logistics and infrastructure review in Siaya District in Kenya. In Liberia, TNT specialists helped WFP to analyse their transport and distribution systems and identified locations for key distribution points, helping WFP to

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Are Bilateral Donors Abandoning the Transport Sector?

The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness calls for donor rationalisation, meaning that not all donors need to be present in every sector in a country. This is a healthy approach, provided of course that not all donors leave a particular sector, expecting the others to take over. Donor rationalisation requires close coordination, with each donor ideally adopting the sector in which it has a comparative advantage. Such coordination talks have occurred in some countries but not necessarily successfully. A donor agency may have some favourites it wishes to support for less than altruistic reasons, or it may find that it does not have any comparative advantage in, say, the transport sector, so it starts to withdraw. In the end with so few transport activities the critical mass is lost and so it withdraws from the sector altogether. This has already happened, and it may happen again.

The Paris Declaration also calls for long-term predictable budget support rather than project or even sector support. If this corresponds to poor prioritisation of transport and rural access in Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) then direct or indirect donor support to the sector becomes unlikely.

Thinking Big?

The formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was a lengthy and difficult exercise that resulted in many compromises. Although it has been shown that transport is a critical component in practically any development effort, it does not appear explicitly among the MDGs. Why this happened is now academic, perhaps due to insufficient cross-disciplinary dialogue. The consequence is that transport rarely appears as a key priority in PRS, and even when it does, there is a tendency to prioritise the primary road network before rural transport. Bilateral donors have seemingly downgraded their own capacity for transport interventions, and relegated rural transport to a minor add-on to rural development programmes, which may also be losing support.

The shift away from project and sector support does not mean that sector specialists become dispensable. Good budget support requires sector champions and guardians, in practice however, bilaterals tend to reduce the numbers of sector specialists. This has happened in Finland, Denmark, Norway and the United Kingdom, who all used to have sector teams for various issues including transport. What will happen in Sweden we do not yet know, but the gradual withdrawal from sector programmes tells a story. In recent years General Budget Support has occupied a steadily increasing portion of the Swedish bilateral assistance while the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has been striving to reduce the number of active sectors. Moreover, the Swedish government has announced that Swedish bilateral aid will be concentrated to fewer countries.

A possible outcome in the long term is a more or less total withdrawal from transport and rural access by Sweden and other

bilaterals, leaving the sector in the hands of the big multilaterals who for obvious reasons, prefer to think big. NGO's and international networks, such as IFRTD, have always relied heavily on bilateral donors with their shorter lead times and general preparedness to deal with relatively small interventions. When donors withdraw from active handling, perhaps instead transferring resources to trust funds in the development banks, and soon also the EU, the mat may be pulled from under the feet of former beneficiaries. The result may be a disastrous erosion of international knowledge capital in several disciplines, not least rural transport and development. Even worse, a weaker voice from the grassroots as a consequence of lost support from international and national NGOs and networks.

The Way Forward

This paradigm shift necessitates innovative thinking among champions of rural transport and development in donor organisations, and in developing countries. Re-establishing a critical mass of specialists through international networking is already happening but could be strengthened. Forming alliances across disciplines is another way to make transport visible. The link between rural economic development and rural access and transport is well known, it is now time to add the perspective of national and international trade. The capillaries of the transport network represent an unproportional part of the total transport costs for import and export commodities. Thus, trade facilitation also requires reliable rural transport at lower cost.

As big multilateral financiers continue to finance large road development schemes, there is a growing awareness that rural development does not necessarily occur only because a big road is upgraded. Increasingly, roads are conceptualised as part of a development corridor or an area with a network of rural roads and ancillary activities, and this could start to make a difference.

Ultimately, transport specialists cannot continue in isolation but must cooperate with national and international specialists from a whole spectrum of disciplines. Traditionally, one of the strengths of the bilaterals was their ability to establish dialogue based on mutual respect and a thorough knowledge of a country. Can and will the big institutions fill the gap they leave as they reduce their presence?

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Resources:

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness:
www.worldbank.org/harmonization/Paris/FINALPARISDECLARATION.pdf

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increase the flow of aid and reduce costs. By mapping Global Positioning System (GPS) codes this optimisation proved possible. It focused on optimising routes taken for distribution of foods, delivery schedule and use of WFP vehicles. The immediate outcomes of this project have been cost savings and efficiency gains (reduced lead time, workload and tools for monitoring and planning).

In Siaya District, Western Kenya a logistics and infrastructure review has assessed the current available logistics capacity and evaluated the existing infrastructure to identify current and potential bottlenecks that hinder the transport of goods from rural areas to markets. As a leader in this assessment TNT looked at the impact of infrastructure on rural transport to support business development. The assessment was a direct result of a meeting with the Business

Alliance Against Chronic Hunger held in Nairobi and was carried out in light of a need to promote the district's self-sufficiency and sustainability. Over a one-month survey period TNT visited and mapped the (rural) roads and identified the critical areas and bottlenecks. In addition, rail and lake transport were also assessed with two objectives: for companies to decide which transport to use and for governments to assess the priority areas in which to invest.

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From Talking to Walking

Enhancing accountability in rural road interventions

Recently there has been increased recognition of the rights of communities, including vulnerable groups, to participate in all processes of transport and infrastructure development, from design, through implementation, to the monitoring of performance and impact. Community participation, a key principle of a rights-based approach to development, is seen as critical in ensuring that programmes are sustainable, accountable and transparent. As more donors move towards rights-based approaches the integration of cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth and health (including HIV/AIDS) has become paramount. These days most project frameworks will adopt an all-inclusive approach and use the correct jargon, however the challenge of actually implementing this approach on the ground remains. How do we move from talking to walking? This article draws upon the experiences of the Roads 2000 programme in Nyanza Province, Kenya, as it addresses these challenges and applies practical solutions.

The Roads 2000 strategy in Nyanza, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and implemented by IT Transport (ITT) UK in partnership with the Kenyan Ministry of Roads and Public Works and other local partners, has established district level working groups and community road committees (CRCs) in eleven districts. The working groups aim to support district engineers to incorporate cross-cutting issues into programme activities. Each group includes a number of key district personnel, such as agricultural and public health officers, alongside the district engineer. The use of existing district staff and structures is a sustainable means of supporting the Engineer to ensure the integration of cross-cutting issues.

Following a rights-based approach Roads 2000 in Nyanza helps to establish CRCs in communities alongside the roads to be improved. For longevity existing social development committee structures have provided the basis for the formation of the CRCs. Their main objective is to encourage community participation and local ownership, both of which have been neglected in the past to the detriment of sustainable road improvements.

CRCs are also a means of promoting accountability and transparency in the delivery of public infrastructure and the sustainability of programme benefits. The roles and responsibilities of the committees are intended to encourage more customer-focused road management by:

- Encouraging community input into the design of the road e.g. the location of drainage structures and safe crossing points, as well as minor adjustments to the alignment to protect important trees and other local features.
- Addressing poverty reduction objectives by identifying marginalised and vulnerable persons to work as labourers, clerks and support staff.
- Monitoring and providing feedback on work progress, particularly in terms of cross-cutting issues, workers rights and local impacts.

Overall the transport sector (including some more conservative donors) has displayed a limited capacity to value and integrate rights-based principles. One stumbling block is engineers at local and central level, who often consider it a burden to their already heavy workload and not necessarily relevant to the job of building roads. There is therefore a need to build the capacity of engineers and contractors through the integration of cross-cutting issues in both university engineering curricular and in (post-university) training courses. The key is to transfer knowledge that is relevant, applicable and useable in the field, remembering that it is counter-productive to 'know everything about everything'.

Within Nyanza Roads 2000 this issue is being addressed through discussion with the Kisii Training Centre (KTC), which specialises in training contractors and engineers in labour-based approaches. Currently, cross-cutting issues are addressed as separate topics, so one idea has been to introduce cross-cutting issues through class-based work combined with field visits, enabling theoretical knowledge to be



Women and men work side by side in road construction, Nyanza, Kenya.

applied directly to their work with CRCs. Exercises will focus on the duties and rights of communities and contractors in relation to cross-cutting and other issues, with discussion focused on practical solutions.

Another challenge is the way in which contracts are designed and progress is reported and evaluated. Transport sector performance is generally measured according to the number of kilometres built and maintained, often the key indicator in donor programmes. Correspondingly, the performance targets in the contracts of district engineers tend to relate only to the engineers improvement and maintenance plan. If we are serious about poverty reduction and rights-based approaches as an integral component of road sector programmes, then we must measure performance in relation to these goals. This could be through integration into the job descriptions and performance contracts of engineers and contractors and within the monitoring and evaluation framework.

Roads 2000 in Nyanza has attempted to move in this direction with district engineers expected to report on gender disaggregated employment figures. However, this needs to extend to evaluation of impact, for example what impact does employment creation have on the local community? How effectively are women and youth engaging in programme activities? What is the impact of the HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns (integral to Nyanza Roads 2000's contract) in terms of mitigating the spread of the disease?

In an increasingly decentralised environment, Ministries need to work more closely together at the district level to enable a mix of expertise that will support the implementation of integrated programmes. For example, it should be made a part of the performance contract for district staff to ensure that health issues are adequately addressed in roads and other sector programmes. Similarly, roads and transport ministries should be assessed on how effectively they work with other ministries to improve accessibility to services. Focusing on numbers of kilometres improved and maintained is simply not enough and will not help the transport sector to move from theory to practice, from talking to walking.

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Emerging Debates

We asked IFRTD members across the globe to tell us what the emerging issues in rural transport are and how the transport sector should address them. Snapshots of their responses are provided below. The full articles are available on the IFRTD website, by email or as hard copies, follow the links provided or contact the IFRTD Secretariat (see page 8).

Facing up to the Energy Goal

Given the current global energy situation, our goal has become to decrease fossil fuel consumption and increase bio-fuel use. Meanwhile the changes we aspire to, such as improved transport systems, place an ever increasing demand on energy supply.

Those of us interested in rural transport want to know if it will be possible to improve the supply of fuel for the poor, rural populations of the world? One of many factors that have limited motorised rural transport (including water craft) is the high cost and limited supply of fossil fuel. Contributory factors include among others; the need to transport fuel over long and difficult roads to remote areas, spillage and loss when transferring fuel from one tanker to another; the low volumes required, the use of unsuitable containers, informal and uncertain sales, and the dangers of polluting land, water and air.

Indications are that with simple, low-cost technology, bio-fuels can be processed directly where the crops are grown or very close by. They can therefore be produced without the need for large industrial complexes, giving rural communities new, promising opportunities to develop fuels and to do so in ways which are environmentally friendly and, perhaps, increasingly within their control.

To read this article in full visit:

http://www.ifrtd.org/new/issues/energy_fn.php

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Rural Road Safety – the missing link

Rural transport safety is the missing link in the international safety agenda. Rural roads and tracks are a scene of devastation for poor rural families, and socially vulnerable groups in particular. Safety concerns such as organised crime, fatal accidents, harassment, lack of insurance, risks in using unsafe infrastructure (paths, bridges, roads) and unsafe transport services (boats, IMTs, motorised vehicles) exacerbate already limited access to social services and economic opportunities.

The challenge for the transport sector in addressing transport safety in the rural context is to find the balance between improving safety for rural people while still ensuring their access to critical lifelines and market opportunities. For example the enforcement of strict safety regulations may increase isolation. A study on rural transport services (Starkey et al 2006) demonstrated that 70–80% of bicycles in Zambia did not have brakes. Enforcing the installation of brakes through stricter regulations, could mean that poor people become even more isolated as they are no longer able to use their bicycles and face fines or, worse, bribes.

To read this article in full visit: http://www.ifrtd.org/new/issues/safety_fn.php

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Disability and Isolation

In rural areas of developing countries disabilities bring social, economic and physical isolation.

Most developing country planners have not recognised persons with disabilities, particularly rural dwellers, as transport stakeholders in their own right with specific transport needs and concerns. This is compounded by unreliable information on the nature and prevalence of disability in rural areas.

Deliberately and pro-actively the transport sector should seek to acknowledge the importance of people with disabilities as transport stakeholders, and therefore a basis for budget allocation in transport interventions. Studies and policy analysis are needed to enable effective planning and to generate sustainable solutions such as low cost adaptations to improve transport infrastructure, sensitivity training to improve service levels, and to open up employment opportunities within the transport sector to people with disabilities.

To read this article in full visit:

www.ifrtd.org/new/issues/disability_fn.php

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National Security and Rural Transport

What is the relationship between transport as an instrument for social development and conflicts that affect national security? If we analyse internal threats to national security such as poverty, drug trafficking, migration, environmental degradation, natural disaster, corruption and terrorism, the common denominator is poor access to services.

In the regions of Ayacucho, Hunauco, and San Martín Amazonas in Peru, where the poverty index is over 60% and low-volume roads make up approx 75% of the regional road network, the roads received very little attention between 2006 and 2007. In these regions poverty has increased 4%, drug trafficking by 8%, environmental degradation by 13%, and 'Shining Path' has increased activity, propaganda and armed incursions. Meanwhile the police force has withdrawn 30% of its checkpoints due to lack of accessibility.

Local communities are afraid and want to migrate from the area as they are forced to take sides. The drug-traffickers have managed to get the upper-hand over the authorities who therefore cut back development plans so as not to interfere with the traffickers activities. Local leaders are manipulated through corruption, local communities are kept in check by hired assassins, and the spiral of poverty and violence increases as access becomes more difficult day by day. Good road, air and waterway networks that facilitate access to education, technology and health, are the arteries through which human development and hence conflict reduction will flow.

To read this article in full visit:

www.ifrtd.org/new/issues/security_fn.php

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Roads are still not Enough?

In the fifteen years since *Roads are not Enough* was written, major global developments have changed all our lives, and will increasingly influence the provision of better access and mobility for the rural poor in developing countries. For example I finished my contribution to the book several years before I made my phone call or sent my first email, and climate change has only recently taken centre-stage as a major global political issue.

There have also been major changes in the development field since its publication. For example the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by the UN, crucial movements have been made

towards better governance in developing countries, and China has emerged as a major international investor in Asia and Africa. This is not just private sector investment, China is lending money to developing Asian countries for highway projects on far less rigorous social terms than the development banks. Looking forward to the next fifteen years there will surely be further major developments that we cannot predict, and it is in this context that I reflect upon the current and future relevance of *Roads are not Enough*.

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The essential thesis of the book, which will be well-known to IFRTD members but bears repeating, is that there should be a 'needs-led' approach to reducing the transport burden which "imposes so heavily on the time and energy of the rural poor". An approach focused on improving mobility and access, accessibility as it was then called, rather than simply extending and upgrading motorable rural roads.

Re-visiting these words it is reassuring to find that the emphasis on the rural poor began on the first page, and that the approach proposed has since moved ever closer to the mainstream of development thinking. The publication of a single book cannot alone claim credit for this change in thinking. It was one event in a process over many years, in which an increasing body of like-minded people, in different organisations, argued, and progressively demonstrated, the case for the new approach. IFRTD played a catalytic role in this.

There is no doubt in my mind that the essential thesis of the book remains correct, and should continue to provide the framework for rural transport (more correctly 'access') planning. Nor do I doubt the continuing need, despite the impact that has already been achieved, for advocacy to articulate and promote the concept.

The adoption of the MDGs resulted in the transport sector (traditionally a major consumer of donor investment resources) having to justify its existence and role within the framework of the over-arching goal of poverty reduction, particularly rural poverty. The need for rigorous analysis to demonstrate that improved access impacts on reduced poverty is accepted, but this should not be at the expense of applying informed common sense to the logical assessment of future priorities. *Roads are not Enough* emphasises:

- The importance of improving access and mobility in order to provide clean water, better health care and education, and to reduce the transport burden on poor rural women. All key factors in achieving the MDGs.
- That poverty is multi-dimensional, but increased incomes are crucial to improving the livelihoods of the poor. Income-generation involves the trading of goods, labour and services. How can poor rural people participate unless they can move themselves and their products efficiently and reliably?
- In the future many countries will need to focus on addressing pockets of deep and intractable poverty in rural areas. These pockets are among the more disadvantaged groups in societies, in the most remote and inaccessible locations, that typically also have limited

natural resources to exploit. The isolation of these communities is the root cause of their poverty, and it is hard to see how this can be overcome without improving access and mobility

With the benefit of hindsight, *Roads are not Enough* does have shortcomings. It never argued that roads were not important, but does contain an element of bias against them that was necessary at the time to present a strong case. It paid scant attention to the importance of inland rural water transport, an issue that IFRTD has since been proactive in promoting. However, the biggest gap in the book is the lack of consideration of institutional issues. We have learnt much in the intervening period about the importance of participation, governance, accountability and transparency. The increasing focus on partnerships between central and local government, civil society and beneficiaries will continue to be important.

Roads are not Enough remains relevant to the future. The movement of population, particularly young adults, to urban centres will continue, but unless access and mobility is improved, poor rural people will be left behind by development. We need to expand our thinking further to include:

- **Greater attention to the role of ICTs.** The extension of mobile phone, satellite TV and Internet systems to cover all rural areas will reduce isolation and give poor people better access to knowledge and information, and to education and health services. It may also reduce their need to travel.
- **Critical examination of the implications of global warming.** How will it affect the access needs of rural people, how it will impact on rural transport infrastructure, how can we reduce emissions from rural vehicles and what will be the effect of significantly higher fuel prices on the lives of the rural poor?

Perhaps the time has come to change IFRTD's name to the International Forum for Rural Access, Communication and Development? Welcome to the age of IFRACD!

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Resources:

Roads are not Enough is available to purchase at: www.developmentbookshop.com

Practical Ways to Mainstream Gender

The gender agenda in rural transport is more than a decade old. *Roads are not Enough* first highlighted the differential transport burden of women and men, followed by pioneering studies in East Africa by Christina Malmberg Calvo (Malmberg Calvo 1994). Then in the late 1990s, an IFRTD networked research programme on women's issues in transport in Africa and Asia, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and supported by the World Bank and other donors, resulted in the publication of *Balancing the Load* (Fernando and Porter, 2000).

Further initiatives followed, in Africa the World Bank established the Gender and Rural Transport Initiative (GRTI) of the Sub Saharan Africa Travel and Transport Programme (SSATP), and the UN Economic Commission for Africa commissioned some of the *Balancing the Load* researchers to carry out a more detailed study of gender and transport in several African countries. A similar response was not forthcoming in Asia, however, a few years later the World Bank organised a ten country study on *Integrating Gender into World Bank Financed Transport Programs*, which included case studies from Asia, Africa and Latin America. The study was conducted by gender specialists using a gender analytical framework. Unfortunately only a few of the lessons from these studies were incorporated into the Bank's practice. One of the most important outcomes from this programme was the birth of *Gatnet*, a dynamic, virtual community of practice, which remains probably the only single forum for interaction between gender specialists and the transport sector.

As donors, bilaterals in particular, began to move away from infrastructure, the gender and transport discourse seemed to fall off the rural transport agenda. In the DFID supported global Transport Knowledge Partnership (gTKP), gender is not considered a core issue.

Among the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) there are 'gender watchdogs' but gender is not usually included as a safeguard and as such can be legitimately overlooked. The World Bank has not built on its early work and has struggled to keep gender on the transport agenda. Its gender and transport thematic group has been subsumed under the broader Transport for Social Responsibility (TSR) Thematic Group, with gender considered alongside other issues of inclusion such as age and disability. However, the TSR thematic group has made an effort to find proxy indicators for a country's readiness to mainstream gender, and in collaboration with the SSATP, produced a CD resource on Gender in Transport.

In 1993 when *Roads are not Enough* first raised the issue of gender differences the transport sector's knowledge of the subject was close to zero. Now 'gender' is referred to as a 'cross-cutting' concern across the sector; but even where the external institutional context is conducive to gender mainstreaming, many rural transport professionals continue to be either unable or unwilling to translate the ideas behind the concept into meaningful practice. Programmes and projects that address gender in the project-design are rarely implemented as intended and there are considerable gaps between policy, programme, project-design, and field level outcomes.



Fatima Adam Abakar owns one donkey which she uses for farming and water collection, Sudan.

Photo courtesy of Practical Action

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The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) has made considerable effort to mainstream gender. Lessons from best practice indicate that gender mainstreaming requires going beyond just taking into account the difference between women's and men's transport needs and priorities. It requires using this understanding to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the transport sector; but more precisely during identification, design, logical framework analysis, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. DANIDA supports the inclusion of a strong gender specialist in all project preparation teams, and emphasises the impact of engendered programme and component documents. In implementation, positive outcomes are likely if:

- There are gender sensitive guidelines and procedures for; implementation, development, testing, advocating incorporation in the national framework, monitoring adherence and progress.
- Projects use participatory methodologies that promote the equal involvement of women and men.
- Specific gender clauses and conditions are included in tender documents and the contracts of international, national and local consultants and contractors.
- Gender balance is promoted in the work force.

Successful gender mainstreaming also requires continuous awareness creation and capacity building, and strong gender monitoring and evaluation systems. Resources for gender equality are a pre-requisite but gender budgeting is an important tool that is often not used because it is considered either 'not necessary' or 'too complicated'.

The rural transport sector needs to push itself out of the rut it finds itself in with regard to gender and work towards replicating some of DANIDA's good practices. This would require some political will. It would mean working harder on building partnerships with the gender community, where issues of mobility and access are equally alien, and moving gender from a mere box ticking exercise to an issue against which transport professionals are held accountable, and for which they can muster resources.

For more information please contact:

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Resources:

Gatnet – Gender, Equity and Transport Community. Subscribe to the email discussion group at www.dgroups.org/groups/worldbank/gatnet

World Bank Gender and Transport Resource Guide.

www4.worldbank.org/afr/issatp/Resources/HTML/Gender-RG/index.html

Planning Roads for Rural Communities: The World Bank Approach

Investment in transport infrastructure and improved transport services are crucial for meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Low volume rural roads continue to be an important component of the World Bank's transport development programme. The Bank currently spends about one billion US\$ per year on rural transport interventions. About 90% of this expenditure goes on rural road investment with the balance going to institutional support, studies, training and interventions related to Intermediate Means of Transport (IMTs). Although there is an expressed desire by the World Bank to engage more in other interventions, this is not easy to achieve, in part because the Bank's clients favour road investment.

The forthcoming transport policy document 'Safe, clean, affordable... Transport for Development' which sets out the World Bank's transport sector's priorities for the period 2007–2015, indicates key changes in how the World Bank intends to engage with its clients in low and middle income countries with respect to its transport lending programme. The main messages regarding the planning of rural roads include:

Use of the Rural Access Index (RAI) helps to demonstrate the importance of rural roads. The RAI was recently adopted as one of the indicators of the Results Measurement System of the 14th round of International Development Association (IDA-14) for the 81 countries that receive IDA concessionary assistance from the World Bank. The Index measures the percentage of the rural population that lives within two kilometres (typically equivalent to a walk of 20–25 minutes) of an all-season road. It is estimated that in Bank's client countries some 44% of the rural population do not have direct access to an all-season road. In Sub-Saharan Africa the figure is estimated to be 64%.

Wide ranging evidence demonstrates the importance of rural road investment for rural development. For example recent work carried out by Shenggen Fan (International Food Policy Research Institute) in China, India and Vietnam has shown the dramatic impacts of rural road investment at the regional level.

Other research has shown how basic access is critical to the delivery of all social services. For example Levy (World Bank) identified the effects of rural roads on girls' school enrollment in Morocco.

Effective rural road planning demands a wider range of considerations than former perspectives based on engineering and transport user-cost savings. There is now an increased importance attached to measures that will help to achieve the MDGs. Beside economic objectives these emphasise social considerations relating to health, education and women's well being. In part, better road planning can be achieved through more effective public participation, including the active involvement of women, to help

identify the routes that are most wanted by the community and the engineering designs and choices that can maximise work opportunities for the local population. We cannot leave road selection and designs to engineers and planners alone!

Integration, with transport services, other rural infrastructure (jetties, footpaths, trails, main roads) and other sectors, is key to success. There needs to be an awareness of the type and availability of transport services, and if necessary these should also be provided. The Bank has been involved in a number of IMT initiatives and is now exploring how to ensure public transport services in rural areas. Evidence from Latin America points to important synergies with other infrastructure services such as water, electricity and telecoms, in the provision of better access. Rural industry depends upon all of these services to work successfully. Planning methods such as Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP) have been a successful tool for rural transport planning and the supply and location of other transport intensive services (e.g. water, woodlots, education, health centres) at the district level.

We need to adopt flexible road design standards. Conditions vary so much around the world that what is best in one location will not be appropriate elsewhere. A simple track with a few structures over water crossings will be appropriate in parts of Africa where traffic volumes are a handful of vehicles per week. But a paved road is more appropriate in Vietnam where a rural road can take 900 motorcycles per day. In many countries the 'window for gravel' appears to be declining as gravel gets scarcer. We can do more with spot improvements on existing earth roads for the lowest traffic roads, while low cost sealed roads (such as the Otta Seal) can be very successful and appropriate for high traffic routes.

New solutions need to be found to address the maintenance problem. Road funds have shown the way that additional funding (principally for the main road network) can be found using new approaches. Community involvement and ownership can help but we need to ensure that central and local governments, as well as communities, understand the need for regular predictable funding for the rural road network.

For more information please contact:

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Email: jhine@worldbank.org

Resources:

World Bank Rural Transport Website
www.worldbank.org/ruraltransport



News and Events

Networking in DRC

Emerging from a long period of armed conflict the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) now faces the challenge of reconstruction. The country's framework for development centres around five vital sectors; infrastructure, water, energy, health and education, and the IFRTD affiliated National Forum Group of DRC is playing a pro-active role to ensure that transport places high on this agenda.

The National Forum Group (NFG) is encouraging reflection on previous experiences in the transport sector to ensure that new resources invested in transport services and infrastructure are used rationally and efficiently. To do this the NFG is re-energising its local network, sharing information and stimulating discussion using a variety of communication channels.

A series of twice weekly radio programmes are being broadcast on both national and rural (community) channels. The first recordings, outlining the work of the NFG and promoting a general discussion on mobility and access in rural areas, have already been broadcast throughout the country. Recently the NFG has organised two national workshops to highlight road maintenance and the use of appropriate modes of water transport. Network members have also made an important contribution to the preparation of DRC's Strategic Document on Growth and Poverty Reduction by identifying poverty indicators appropriate to rural transport issues. The network also continues to publish and disseminate a hard copy newsletter, facilitate an email discussion group, and develop its website.

Visit: <http://groupeforumnational.ifrance.com>

Join the email discussion group: GFN_RDCC@yahoo.com

For more information please contact:

Idesbald Chinamula

Email: idechina@yahoo.fr

International Symposium on Mobility and Health

27 – 31 October 2007, Beijing, China

The Mobility and Health international networked research programme will culminate in October with a two day synthesis and strategy workshop followed by an international panel and advocacy session. This series of interlinked events will be hosted by the annual Global Forum for Health which will be held this year in Beijing, China.

The synthesis and strategy workshop will bring together the 25 researchers and core project team to share and collaboratively synthesise their research findings, develop overall research messages and begin to develop an advocacy strategy that will translate their research into change.

The International Panel, part of the Global Forum for Health programme, is an opportunity to share the research with a wider audience and to stimulate cross-sectoral dialogue and collaboration between health and transport professionals from Africa, Asia and Latin America. The consecutive Advocacy Workshop will engage all participants in a strategy to leverage change both locally and internationally.

The International Panel and Advocacy Workshop are open events. To participate please contact:

Marinke van Riet, IFRTD Secretariat

Email: marinke.vanriet@ifrtd.org

Visit: www.globalforumhealth.org and www.mobilityandhealth.org

New French Email Group

IFRTD Transport Rural is a new email discussion group that has been established for French speaking IFRTD members. The email group is moderated by the IFRTD Secretariat in West and Central Africa and aims to provide a dynamic platform for debate and knowledge sharing. It has already hosted a four week virtual forum on rural transport services, the summaries of which can be found on the IFRTD website.

Participation in the IFRTD Transport Rural email group is free and open to anyone with an interest in rural transport and development

issues. To subscribe please go to:

www.dgroups.org/groups/IFRTDtransportrural

If you have any queries please contact:

Guy Kemtsop, IFRTD Regional Coordinator, West and Central Africa

Email: guy.kemtsop@ifrtd.org

Contribute to Forum News

The IFRTD Secretariat invites submissions for the next edition of Forum News. The theme is rural transport, governance and accountability.

For more information please contact:

Kate Czuczman, Editor and Communications Coordinator

Email: kate.czuczman@ifrtd.org (See 'About Us' box for postal details).

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.

Membership of the IFRTD is free. All members receive Forum News and any other publications that are made available to the network. In over 20 countries autonomous networks that subscribe to the vision of the international network have become affiliated to the IFRTD as National Forum Groups (NFGs).

The IFRTD is facilitated by a small, decentralised Secretariat based in the UK, Cameroon, Kenya, Peru, and Sri Lanka.

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gTKP's work is, in part, channeled through its web portal which currently has 3 key focus areas: Rural Transport; Governance in Transport; Environment, Health and Road Safety.

By registering on the website, users can access transport information, join discussion groups, submit their own documents and contact experts in their field. For more information visit www.gtkp.com.