Country Report 2: Cameroon

GRTI Activities in Cameroon

Cameroon was one of only two countries that carried out activities in all three phases of GRTI. During the first phase, a gender awareness workshop was conducted. The original proposal for GRTI funding from Cameroon in the first phase was to carry out a gender and rural transport study in Cameroon. However, on the advice of the TA, it was seen that there was a need to have an awareness workshop first, since it was apparent that the understanding of gender by most stakeholders was still at a low level. The methodology of the proposed study on gender and rural transport was also found to be weak. The workshop could also serve as an avenue for improving the quality of the proposal for the study. Therefore, the decision was made to conduct the study in the second phase and hold the workshop and seminar during the first phase. This was found to be a more effective mode of implementing the country activities. Gender sensitization was considered to be a necessary first step so that the study and pilot project would be appropriately set up. Indeed, a major output of the workshop was the improvement of the ToRs for the proposed study on gender and rural transport.

Gender Awareness Workshop and Strategy Implementation

Background to the Workshop

The gender sensitization workshop was held on May 25-26, 2000 in Yaounde. The background assumptions that informed the workshop were that in Cameroon, women who represent 40% of the working population are still marginalized and policies generally do not take gender issues into account. One exception is the National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) that is attempting to incorporate gender disparities in its projects to eradicate poverty. An additional background characteristics is that there is a low level of literacy generally and limited access to micro financing in Cameroon.

The objectives of workshop were:

1. Highlight the constraints and opportunities that exist in integrating gender into rural transport as a means of poverty reduction;
2. Sensitize transport authorities and decentralized communities on the importance of gender in defining transport policies and programs;
3. Improve the awareness of political leaders as well as of project designers and implementers as regards the concerns of men and women in Cameroon; and
4. Identify strategies to respond to the transport needs of men ad women in the rural areas.

About 40 participants were drawn from a cross section of stakeholders, including administrators, development agencies, NGOs, and civil society, including a significant percentage of women.

Workshop Presentations

The three papers presented at the workshop drew together the major themes of gender and rural transport by first considering each theme and then discussing how gender can be integrated into more effective rural transport programmes. The three papers are briefly described in the following sections.

1. Integrating the gender approach into development policies and programs: Implications, stakes and challenges. This paper was a general introduction to gender concepts and gender analysis as a methodological approach. It also dealt with the contribution of gender analysis to development policies and programs, recognizing that it can result in greater sustainability, equality and effectiveness. The major challenge was seen as bringing about a change in the mentalities of policy makers and program implementers concerning gender and their methods while also integrating a participatory approach, fully involving both males and females.

2. Rural transport as a factor for improving the visibility of women and disadvantaged groups in development planning. Making women and disadvantaged groups visible in the planning of rural transport strategies implies that the policy makers and service providers have relevant data on living conditions of these groups and their potential to contribute to national development. The paper emphasized the need to adopt a methodology that enables the maximum potential to collect information on the living conditions, activities, constraints, resources, priorities and potential of these groups in the population.

3. Current strategies in rural transport: This presentation described the goals and strategies of the RTTP and noted the need to develop a rural transport strategy. This would help to improve planning and financing in the transport sector for rural areas, develop appropriate technologies, and develop IMTs.

Suggestions from the Working Groups

After the papers were presented, three working groups were formed for the purpose of identifying guidelines for the effective consideration of gender issues in the rural transport sector. These groups were focused upon policy, planning and implementation. The following are the recommendations from each of the groups.

A. Recommendations on Policy:

- The State should speed up the development of guidelines on decentralization within a context of consultation with all the stakeholders and players.
- The communes should develop education and awareness programmes for the local populations and organize seminars on gender.
- All stakeholders should develop the research-participatory action approach for rural population in every project
- The government should ensure that the populations benefit effectively from allocated funds.

- Development policies should take into account the specific regional characteristics when developing programmes for the rural areas.
- Communication strategies were proposed for sensitizing and training members of local communities, development committees and traditional authorities as well as to carry out participatory consultations.

B. Recommendations on Planning:

- The State should provide for the drafting of regulations adapted to operations of IMTs and for development of rural transport infrastructures.
- All stakeholders at every level should be involved in the process of integrating the gender perspective into the RTTP.
- Stakeholders on the ground should sensitize, education, train and inform the rural communities on the use and maintenance of rural transport infrastructures.
- The State should foster the rehabilitation of means of transport adapted to the physical environment and to the needs of all members of the population - men and women, young and old.
- Such means of transport should be promoted.
- The State and donors should increase financial resources, make them available to decentralized local committees and provide training for them.

C. Recommendations on Implementation:

- Economic players must invest in rural transport.
- The State should give special attention to making rural areas more accessible.
- The State, transporters' union and users should collaborate to put in place cost-cutting mechanisms for providing transport in the rural areas.
- Policies should integrate the safety component into rural transport programmes.
- Project planners should carry out studies to suitable IMTs adapted to the needs of disadvantaged social groups.
- Communication strategies were proposed. Electronic mass media, particularly radio and television using national languages should be made available in rural areas. Information and communication campaigns should be organized in the vicinity by NGOs, local communities, religious groups, and others.

There were also a number of general recommendations that emerged from the workshop. First of all, it was recommended and emphasized that there is a need to sensitize the population at all levels on the gender approach so that the project is not hampered by cultural and religious diversity. Policies should integrate the gender component in the elaboration, planning and implementation of programs. The participatory approach was also advocated to generate and organize ideas from all the participants, prioritize activities, analyze issues to bring out constraints for the integration of gender into rural transport and to enrich the terms of reference any gender study.

The workshop had two major impacts:

- increased awareness and understanding with regard to gender issues in general and the transport sector in particular; and

- improved ToRs for the study related to the gender aspects in rural transport.

Study on Gender and Rural Transport

In Phase II of the GRTI, the study on transport needs of men and women in relation to their activities, resources, constraints and development priorities in Cameroon was carried out. The objectives of the study were to identify:

- problems faced by the beneficiaries, particularly women who use rural transport,
- the opportunities and constraints for investors in rural transport,
- the IMTs that are adapted to meet the real needs of the beneficiaries, and
- the feasibility of proposed pilot projects.

The study made use of both quantitative and a variety of qualitative methods including IDIs, FGDs, social mapping, Venn diagram, needs ranking and seasonal calendars. This provided data on the variations by individuals, but also gave collective responses as to conditions facing the local population and their transport-related problems.

Areas of Study:

One of the major strengths of the study was the comparison of the three major ecological areas of the country – the plateau, forest areas and the savanna. This was important not only for providing an analysis of the ecological challenges of transport conditions, but also for considering the effect of socio-cultural differences. From this comparative analysis, it was found that there were differences in the degree of relative isolation and the level of infrastructural development between localities. At the same time, the types of IMTs used varied by locality. In the forest area, bicycles and pushcarts are used as means of transport for nearly everyone. In the savanna, men use bicycles, but since this is a Muslim area, women are not allowed to ride them. The following paragraphs present a brief description of each sampled area.

The Northern Province is predominantly a savanna ecological zone. Woody savanna and a steppe dominate the vegetation due to the hot, dry climate characterized by low rainfall during about three months of the year. The main activities are agricultural production, livestock rearing and fishing. These activities rely mostly upon family labour. The two main crops are rice and onions. Fishing is made possible by the presence of three large rivers that cross the province as well as the Lagdo Dam. The inhabitants include the Fali people who are mostly Muslim. They are descendents of the Foulbe or Peul conquerors who arrived in the region in the 19th century. Generally the level of infrastructural development is low.

The Northwestern Province or plateau zone has a land area of 17,409 sq.km which is 3.7% of the total area of Cameroon. The province is in a mountainous area and access is difficult because of the steep mountains. The natural surroundings of this province, therefore, are a limiting factor for opening it up. The population size is 1,725,000 inhabitants with a population density that varies between 100 and 200 residents per sq.km.

The main activities in the locality are farming, fishing and livestock rearing. Farming is mainly subsistence despite the fact that the soil is very fertile because of its volcanic nature. However, the lack of infrastructure and means of transport is a severe limitation. Fishing potential exists because of many natural lakes and water courses. The road network is very poor, particularly during the rainy season when the roads become impassable. Other rural infrastructures are similarly poor.

The Province du Centre covers an area of 70,000 sq.km or 14% of the total land area of Cameroon. The province stretches out over the western section of the southern plateau of the country. Most of the surface area is covered by equatorial forest. As in the other two areas of study, the main activities are crop farming, livestock rearing and fishing. The total population is 2,285,025 with a density of 33 persons per sq.km. The province is populated by the Bantu people. In terms of infrastructural development, the province seems to be better served by facilities. It has the widest road network in the country, as well as a rail network. Although rural facilities are unequally distributed, nevertheless, the province appears to have advantages over the other areas of study perhaps due to the greater ease of accessibility.

Selected Findings from the Study:

The findings are presented by the three study areas because of the differences in the results for each locality and the specific pilot project recommended for each ecological area. The findings are presented in two sections – first a comparative analysis of the three areas, and secondly selected findings from each locality.

Comparison of factors affecting transport: A major aspect of the study was focused on the factors affecting transport. The findings concerning the environmental, economic, socio-cultural and institutional factors affecting transport are presented in Table 2.1. The table compares the three areas of study on these factors.

Table 2.1: Comparative Summary of Factors impacting upon Transport in the Northern and Northwestern Provinces and Province du Centre of Cameroon

	Northern Province (Savanna)		***Northwestern Province(Plateau)***		***Province du Centre (Forest)***	
Key Factors	**Key Constraints**	**Key Advantages**	**Key Constaints**	**Key Advantages**	**Key Constraints**	**Key Advantag**
Environmental Factors: • Climate • Soil • Relief	• Unpredictable climate • Hot sahelian climate • Long dry seasons • Rainfall, water shortage • Floods • Soil erosion, • Deforestation	• Existence of a quarry and large rocks • Flat landscape surrounded by mountains	• Hilly area – uneven & few tracks • Plains • Altitude 1000m • Crater lakes • Bush fires • Destruction of pasture • Erosion • Deforestation • Uneven, rocky landscape on the hills	• Extended network of tracks • Trucos with wide surface • Three rural dirt roads • Two seasons • Tourest site • Pasture available • Forest species for firewood • Abundant water resources • Environmental potencial for growing Arabica coffee	• Forest area with few, uneven tracks • Bush fires • Erosion • Deforestation • Hilly terrain	• Wide trac • Two seas • Forest sp for firewood • Abundan water resources • Environm potencial for production Arabica coffee • Protected (Solala Project)
Economic Factors: • Income • Agricultural production and livestock rearing	• Low & irregular income • Women receive low income • No local market • Low agricultural production & vulnerable to climate that is unpredictable	• Women engage in income generating activities & get independent income • Close adhereance to cultural practices • Pasture areas & wide lands for planning • Presence of agric. Extensión officers in region	• Rural population is mainly engaged in farming • Women mainly grow staple crops • Women earn less than men	• Grazing potencial • Participation by women in popularization activities • Presence of extensión officers in the area • Existente of a local market at village level	• Individualism • Rudimentary work tools	• Pastoral potencial • Women's participation extemsion meet • Presence extensión work area • Rural dw are mainly farm • Women mainly cul

	• Very limited agric. extensión for women • Conflict over farming land					food crops • Women's revenue comparitively to that of men • Agric production is average
<u>Socio-cultural Factors:</u> • Division of labour • Social Factors	• Women have tight schedules • Very young children work with mothers • Women carry loads when traveling • Women travel mostly on foot • Women engage in agricultural & daily market activities as well as work in the fields • Level of education is very low; mostly males are educated • Women are not able to speak in public • Women do not buy means of transport • Lack of schools (Central Banaye) or	• Prohibitions on the use of IMTs are disappearing • Increasing religious diversity in villages	• Women's schedules very tight • Women & children perform domestic tasks • Women travel mainly on foot • Incrreased participation by women in community activities • Women using the bicycles more as an IMT • Low level of education among population • Lack of electricity • Poor general health	• Tradicional cultural values permit the use of IMTs by women • Spirit of community development • High density • Water articulation system exists	• Women have very heavy schedule • Women & children take on household tasks • Women travel mainly on foot • High participation in community activities • Women no longer use bicycles as IMTs • Low level of education of the people • No electricity • Precarious state of health	• Cultural tradicional v that encourage development IMTs for wome • Spirit community development • High den

	dilapidated conditions (Ram). • Lack of electricity • Lack of drinking waters					
<u>Institutional Factors:</u> • Institutions • Road maintenance	• Disorganised public transport service • Transporters do not implement safety measures • Abuse of law and order maintenance when handling transporters, outside of the official controls • Women are not organize • Administrative red tape • Road infrastructure is poorly maintained • Bridge has collapsed • Lack of financial resources for maintaining road infrastructure	• Existence of WFP Project that encourages education for girls • Local population is ready to take responsibility for local development • MINTRANSPORT awareness of rural transport & gender sigues • Two bicycle repair services in village • Market for spare parts for bicycles, scooters & cars in village • Local journeyman working with scarp metal in Pitoa • Availability of draught animals: horses, donkeys • Good preparation by the rural community	• Lack of collaboration btw tradicional institutions & development organisations • Poor state of road infrastructure • Noresources for maintenance purposes	• Several development structures • Bicycles repairers are available • Existing market for spare parts and bicycles	• Lack of collaboration between tradicional and government institutions • Poor condition of road infrastructure • Lack of resources for maintenance	

Socio-cultural considerations: Generally, men in the Northern Province do not support the idea of women traveling. In fact, 48.7% were hostile towards the idea of women traveling. Islam has had an effect on the practices of the Fali. Moslem women do not usually go out. They go to hospital with their spouses. Women only go out on market days and when going to work in the fields or to visit families. At a first glace, they seem to have little need for transport. The issue of mobility of women in this part of Cameroon, however, needs to be analyzed with the realization that there is some diversity. While Islam predominates, the region has animists and Christians in addition to Moslems. The farming populations are somewhat more liberal in the social restriction on women. Given the fact that women's lives, and information are becoming more liberalized, there is greater enthusiasm for transport. In the medium term, action will need to focus not only upon present needs, but also on a change of attitudes that favors new opportunities for women.

Means of transport – In the savanna zone, bicycles are the most common form of transpor and they are all owned by men. Other means of transport identified in the study area were scooters, donkeys, horses, carts, and rickshaws. Women stated that all travel necessitated by their activities was done on foot and using headloading. The road network in the zone was found to be very poor. The bridge has collapsed, while loose stones and broken concrete supports and potholes are evidence that the rural road network has been neglected. Passengers and owners of scooters or bicycles often have to get off the vehicles in order to cross the impassable sections of the roads.

In the Plateau zone, the most commonly used IMTs among men and women are bicycles and rickshaws. The use of bicycles by females in the zone is described in the following case study.

Box 2.1: Women's Use of Bicycles in the Northwestern Province

Women who have a regular access to bicycles in the Plateau zone are economically independent. Women using bicycles hold a privileged position in society and are perceived by their husbands and the community at large as being more autonomous and independent. Some cases of divorce were cited during the discussions as having been caused by the woman becoming financially independent and wealthier than the husband. *With the economic crisis, traditional values are changing and are increasingly favourable towards women using bicycles*. Most of the older women (over 45) use bicycles when traveling. Young girls use them more for transporting goods. Many women know how to ride a bicycle. Whatever their age, if the ground is even, women believe that bicycles make life easier for them. Despite their lack of decision-making power generally, women enjoy considerable economic independence and can even buy a rickshaw or bicycle for herself.

Women seen riding bicycles were carrying goods on the rear carriage, the cross bar or the handlebars. The carriages are made by iron mongers in Bamunka and they are wider and stronger than those made in factories. The loads carried by bicycle vary between 50 & 70 kg. Bicycles used in AWING and Bamunka are equipped with a crossbar. The height of the bicycle frame is over 55 cm. It is difficult for an average-sized woman to maintain

her balance if she is riding on a bumpy path. Women's mode of dressing also makes it difficult for them to climb onto a man's bike. The frame of these bicycles is not suitable for the average size of women and they are therefore unable to ride securely.

The following table presents findings from the forest zone on the means of transport available related to the topography of the area and type of road network available. It is clear that topography is a significant determinant of the means of transport most likely possible and the probable type of roads.

Table 2.2: Means of Transport Available in the Study Area in Province du Centre

Topography	Type of Road Network	Means of Transport
Hilly	• Few tracks with uneven surfaces • Wide tracks	• Walking • Wheelbarrow or pushcart
Little undulation and flat	• Narrow tracks with uneven surfaces • Tracks of a wide or average width • Very wide tracks and dirt roads	• Bicycles with carrier • Bicycles with pushcart • Motorbike, motorbike with trailer, four-wheeled vehicles, lorry.

Safety concerns**:** From the findings in the Northern Province, one of the identified problems with the means of transport is the issue of safety. The average number of passengers allowed into the pick-ups is often over 13 people. The pick-ups have seating for the driver and 2 passengers in front, but others crowd into the back along with the goods. Overloading is common, creating considerable risks of accidents. All the respondents considered this practice unacceptable. It is also very uncomfortable. Similarly in the Plateau zone, respondents noted that the vehicles that they are able to secure carry both goods and people. They are uncomfortable and are prone to road accidents.

Irregular transportation service: In most localities, cars come most often between the months of November and April, that is during the dry season. From the Plateau zone, the respondents estimated that vehicles come to their rural community about seven times a week. Not having access to a vehicle during the rainy season is a major disadvantage to the women. In the case of the sampled area in the Northern Province, the collapse of the main bridge has meant that the cars come less often because they have to cross the riverbed. The movement of cars and IMTs depends mainly upon the conditions of the roads. Women suffer the most because they do not have any other means of transport. Their products for sale rot or are eaten in the home.

Needs Assessment for transport: In each of the three sampled provinces, the respondents identified and prioritized ten transport-related development problems. It should be noted

that some of these problems relate to the use of forms of transport, others relate to the need for better transport, while still others refer to the consequences of the present poor state of transportation. The following table presents the identified problems from the findings in each locality in the order of reported priority.

Table 2.3: Comparison of Reported Transport-related Problems in the Three Selected Provinces

Northern Province (Savanna Zone)	Northwestern Province (Plateau Zone)	Province du Centre (Forest Zone)
1. poor state of the road, 2. distance of grinding mills, 3. low participation by women in decision-making & community-based activities, 4. insufficient drinking water sources, 5. IMTs are very expensive, 6. lack of knowledge on how to use IMTs, 7. limited use of means of transport by women, 8. poor agricultural productivity, 9. low level of education, 10. poor health.	1. poor state of the road 2. no electricity 3. low participation of women in decision-making 4. limited use of means of transport by women 5. unstable health of the population 6. low agropastoral production 7. IMTs are expensive 8. lack of knowledge on use of IMTs 9. limited use of means of transport by women (this was mentioned twice) 10. limited source of drinking water	1. poor state of the roads 2. lack of electricity 3. limited participation of women in decision-making 4. little use of means of transport by women 5. non-functioning health centres 6. low agropastoral production 7. IMTs are very expensive 8. lack of knowledge in use of IMTs 9. absence of schools 10. lack of information.

It should be observed that the poor state of roads is rated as the highest priority transport-related problem. In the Plateau zone, respondents stated that improving upon the paths and tracks serving the villages should make it possible to develop the use of bicycles and broaden their utility. During discussions with the women, they stated that they were ready to be involved in projects aimed at rehabilitating their road network.

Development of project concepts

On the basis of the findings of the study, three transport projects were proposed, one for each of the study areas. The following sections describe the proposed projects.

1. *Community transport system with horse-drawn carts*: In the Northern Province, a project was chosen that focused upon setting up a community transport system with improved carts that are horse drawn. These improved carts are made out of wood and

have metal armature. Seating space for 24 is provided as well as a platform for luggage. The carts are driven by a coachman.

The project is viewed as having the following advantages:

- takes into account the needs of women, disadvantaged households and children;
- increases school attendance and the presence of girls at school;
- earns income for the community that takes responsibility for maintaining and improving the service;
- encourages social interaction and improves gender relations;
- takes into account changes in mentalities and makes women more valuable;
- helps save time;
- increases the number of goods transported by women; and
- improves the income of the peasant farmers.

2. Community Transport System with better roads and use of "Delivery Tricycles: From the Plateau Zone: Northwestern Province, the proposed project was focused on the improvement of the rural tracks. It was considered that the poor state of the infrastructure and the topography of the land are the main obstacles to the use of bicycles. It is much more difficult to use a bicycle on uneven ground than it is on flat ground. The state of the paths and tracks determines the load that a bicycle can carry. Women push their bicycles when the state of the tracks and paths gets bad, and in particular, when they are crossing a bridge or a dangerous point of access. These factors influence the way in which women perceive the usefulness of the bicycle for carrying out various activities. Improving upon the paths and tracks serving the villages should make it possible to develop the use of improved bicycles and broaden their utility. During discussions with them, the women stated that they were ready to be involved in projects aimed at rehabilitating their road network. The ultimate goal of the project was to implement a rural transport system with the introduction of 'delivery tricycles'.

The perceived benefits of the project were:

- the flat relief is appropriate for the IMTs in use;
- a larger quantity of farming produce will be marketed, particularly by the women and girls;
- household and women's income will increase, leading to improved living conditions; and
- investment opportunities will be created for local businessmen and employment for local artisans.

3. Repair of Critical Sections of the NGALLA Tracks and Popularizing the Improved Motorbike Taxi*:* From the forest area in the Central Province, another project concept was proposed. Taking into account the hilly nature of the area, motorized IMTs are essential for towing carts. At the local level, use of the motorbike is widespread and empowerment of the people with regard to this form of transport is appropriate. The project concept, therefore, was to improve upon the rural tracks and encourage the use of an improved motorbike taxi with a trailer.

The project was considered to have the following advantages:

- increasing women's capacity and that of poor households to transport goods;
- generating income so as to maintain the motorbikes and pay the drivers;
- creating employment;
- improving gender relations'
- reducing waiting time for transport and increasing frequency of travel; and
- increasing amount of goods transported, thereby improving sales.

Pilot Project: Setting up a Community transport system using carts drawn by horses in Banaye - Ram

On the basis of the study conducted in Phase II and the project concepts proposed, a pilot project intervention was supported by GRTI. The implementation of the community transport by improved cart with animal traction project was entrusted to the GENDER LENSES NGO by the RTT Committee responsible for Rural Areas Programmes Coordination in the Ministry of Transport. This section presents a brief summary of activities carried out by the project team for six months in Banaye and surrounding areas of Saboungari and Ram.

Background to the Project

'Community Transport by Improved Cart Project' is a pilot project developed in response to research based on gender and rural transport in three rural ecological zones of Cameroon: forest plateau and savannah zones. This project is located in the savanna zone and, in particular, Banaye, Saboungari and Ram areas.

These areas are populated by about 4000 people who have been neglected in terms of transport, with very limited access to social services and markets. The poor and women specifically are the most affected when it comes to travel and the movement of produce. Women mostly rely on walking and have no decision-making power in transport matters including the use of IMTs. This situation is related to economic factors and worsened by cultural factors. The latter prevails more in the allocation of work according to gender and decision-making in households and in the community.

Modes of transport are mainly motorbikes and bicycles. The collapse of the Mayo-Kebir bridge which joined the villages to Pitea town has led to the total lack of vehicles particularly during the rainy season and to transporters charging exorbitant fares for the few available vehicles.

The project was designed to set up a transport network with IMTs using carts that are fitted and drawn by horses and donkeys. The project design aims to provide transport through the popular use of horse-drawn carts. This will make it possible to transport large quantities of goods as well as people.

It was planned that the 'standard' carts would belong to and be managed by a group of women in the locality, while the 'fitted' ones would be managed by a community level

committee. They would then serve villages in the area from Pitea to Saboungari. The management system to supervise the network was to be entirely communal and to involve everyone. It was assumed that the commitment of the beneficiaries would be effective since the project would have been identified and started by the local residents themselves.

Objectives of the Project

The main objective of the project was to reduce transport problems for the people of Banaire and surrounding areas. Specifically it aimed to:

- Reduce losses after harvest,
- Build the capacity and self development capability through transport,
- Raise the earnings of underprivileged groups and those of women in particular, and
- Improve the involvement of women in community leadership.

Implementation Strategy for the Pilot Project

Local Participation: The approach used throughout the project has been a participative one. The antecedent of the project was an awareness campaign / workshop of decision-makers which led to recommendations on the undertaking of a study on gender and transport in three rural ecological areas. That study, in turn, led to the current undertaking of this pilot project carried out in the savannah regions. The foundation of GRTI activities in Cameroon, therefore, was based on local involvement.

The activities of this pilot project have been carried out in a gender-sensitive manner taking into account the developmental needs and constraints of all categories of the local population as well as encouraging the participation of different parties drawn from the locality. The involvement of the stakeholders and of all the players prevailed throughout the process, from the decision and choice of IMTs for the community to the implementation of the project. Specific training exercises were an important part of the project to strengthen the community structure, cohesion and the leadership capabilities of the groups. During the training, the tasks for participants were mainly based on their strengths and the use of aids that they are familiar with.

Selection of the IMTs: Two types of carts, the standard cart and the fitted cart harnessed to donkeys or horses were selected as the IMTs for use in the project. The selection was made through consultation with the local inhabitants concerning their transport needs. Local contractors / fabricators were consulted to determine the best, yet most economically viable means of securing the IMTs.

The standard cart is made of a metal frame and can be fully dismantled to facilitate its movement. The top of the cart is covered with tarpaulin to protect occupants from harsh weather. A shaft allows the cart to be harnessed to a donkey or a horse and to lead the direction of the cart. An inflatable wheel system ensures a relatively smooth ride. The

cart carries up to 500 kg. The cost of the cart is about 170.000 FCFA, while donkeys cost about 20.000 FCFA each. The standard cart has proven to be useful for many of the activities generally carried out by women including carrying water, fetching fire wood and transporting harvested products to the homestead or market and taking agricultural inputs to the fields.

The refurbished fitted cart is made of wood with a metal framework. The metal chassis is fitted with a shaft and a manual braking system. It accommodates 18 seats as well as a platform set aside for luggage. The passengers are sheltered from the rain and sun by an adjustable tarpaulin attached to the sides of the cart. A landing step helps passengers to enter and to disembark. The carts are driven by coachmen and drawn by a pair of horses. The driver's space is separated from the passengers to allow freedom of movement. These carts can safely reach a speed of 40 km/h. They are used to carry commuters between villages right up to the outskirts of the local town of Pitoa. The price including spare parts for the cart is about FCFA 1.100.000. The pair of horses cost about FCFA 150.000. This cost was covered by contributions from the community.

Setting up Local Management Groups for Sustainability of the Project: The sustainability of the project depends upon the capability of the local population to maintain the transport system after the NGO would have completed their activities. To ensure the local capacity to manage the scheme, a number of steps were taken, including the formation of the Village Development Committee (VDC) responsible for managing the use of the fitted cart, and the women's group that would be in charge of the standard cart. In addition, training was provided to assist members to perform their functions effectively.

The whole community was invited to participate in the process of setting up the VDC. After a session on explaining the objectives of the transport project, a committee of 32 members was selected. The VDC represented the districts, women, men, the youth and religious and secular institutions that are present in the village. Eligibility to the committee board was under the condition that the candidates for the posts of president and secretary must be able to read and write, and that they should know the local administrators and be able to discuss with them. Women almost became ineligible for participation due to these requirements. A corrective measure was however taken by appointing the newly elected women's executive board into the VDC and their strategic positioning into the framework of the VDC board. The other members of the board were elected through secret ballot.

Specifically with regard to forming the structure and organization of the women's group that would manage the use of the standard cart, the team held a working session with 46 women. The objective of the session was to help the women of Banaye to organize themselves into a group. During the discussions, it was found that women's groups did not exist in the village and the women did not have the experience of group work despite the fact that they appreciated its importance and the advantages for individual or collective success. The women also recognized the necessity to be organised as a group to be able to manage the standard cart project. They also decided to put in place an elected executive board made up of a president, secretary a treasurer, an auditor, a cashier

and two advisors that would be tasked with coordinating the activities of the group. Secret vote was used as the mode of election.

An indirect benefit of the project was the creation of a youth group in the village that was inspired by the formation of the women's group. The youth from the community also managed to select their board and hence benefited from the participative management training.

Training for Project Effectiveness: Several types of training were identified as crucial for the effective operation of the transport system. These included a two-day training for the members of the VDC and the women's executive as management teams. Among the 42 people attending were 17 women as well as men and youths representing all the wards of the village.

The objectives of the training program were to:

- Equip members of the executive board with skills in participative management;
- Help those present to understand the roles and the responsibilities of those involved in the participative management;
- Put at the disposal of the board some practical information in an effort to help them legalize the created structures; and
- Instruct them on managing the operation of the carts.

For every aspect that was discussed, there were explanations and simulations. With high levels of illiteracy in Banaye, the training was interpreted into the *Fali* and *Foufouldé* languages. Visualization was achieved through images on cardboard in different colors which was very important. In this way, everyone was able to benefit from the training.

Concerning the management of the carts, the training sessions also took into consideration the ways in which the purposes and use of the carts could be maximally achieved. Taking into account the project objective which is the improvement of the situation of women with regards to transportation in their daily and domestic duties, particular emphasis was put on the itinerary of the goods carts. Social and resources maps were used to set the schedules. For the passenger carts, other itineraries were developed to meet the transport needs of the people particularly those that do not have any other means of transport. These differences were taken into account while developing the management schemes. Finally, particular emphasis was put on the advantages of transparent management.

Training in maintenance and cart driving was also provided. Young villagers were chosen to go to the manufacturers' workshops to learn how to build and dismantle the carts, as well as change a few of the spare parts. Women and young girls were mostly trained in changing and repairing tires. The task of training the drivers was given to a young man from the community. The women were not interested in being cart drivers at least at the present time.

Major benefits resulting from the project

Specifically, the following advantages have been recorded. The Banaye Women's Group has already put three goods carts in circulation since mid – January, 2003. During the cotton season, the women rented out the carts to cotton producing men after their domestic work. The cart transported 3, 4 or even 5 bales of 100kg each, making as much as 500kg per trip. The villagers confirmed that such loads are usually carried by 10 men or 20 women. The women retrieved all their dues after payment from the cotton growers.

The gathering of firewood has already started. This year it will be transported by the carts. The service will be free of charge for those households that have contributed in the group, but for those households that can afford to contribute to the group but refuse to there will be a charge for the service. Distribution of water to households is also envisaged, and the women hope to buy plastic containers with which to carry water.

Other identified benefits have been observed:

- The carts are fitted;
- They have been found to be suitable for transport in and out of the village;
- Women needs have been prioritised;
- Women have been organized into a functioning group;
- There is a fund for the villages to resolve transport problems;
- The project has resulted in time-saving for women and activities requiring transportation are less strenuous;
- Trips to health centres by women and children are easier and more frequent;
- Women and the poor can now move more loads, particularly their produce; and
- Travel and transport is now more possible and much easier for women and the poor.

There is no doubt that the project has resulted in reducing the transport constraints of the rural men and women in the locality and presents a good case study for replication in other areas.