

### **III Conclusions and Recommendations from the GRTI Program**

#### ***General Conclusions on Gender and Rural Transport in Sub Saharan Africa***

The activities of GRTI over the three-year period involved 16 African countries in a variety of interventions generally grouped into workshops, gender studies and pilot projects. Many of the background assumptions that informed the GRTI concept have been supported through the findings of studies, the contributions at workshops and the experiences from pilot projects. The following are conclusions that have been substantiated through the activities of GRTI.

- Gender division of responsibilities is clearly delineated in all rural localities in Africa that were involved in GRTI.
- In nearly all localities, women and female children bear most of the transport burden in rural areas.
- A large proportion of the transport-related activities of females are carried out in and around their rural communities.
- Walking and head-loading are the predominant means of transportation used by rural women to carry out most of their activities.
- In numerous instances, cultural or religious norms have restricted rural women's access to improved means of transportation, including various types of IMTs.
- Due to their transport constraints, much of rural women's time is spent in accomplishing routine tasks, leaving them little time for income-generating activities or for leisure.
- A strong relationship exists between transport constraints and inability to break out of the poverty cycle. This is particularly acute for women who have fewer opportunities and less access to means of transport.
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- There is limited gender-disaggregated data in areas like transport.
- Gender studies provide useful data that should be used to develop gender-sensitive projects. The studies should be seen as a means to an end, not an end in itself.

- There is scope for enhancing rural women’s transport conditions and alleviating their burden through enlightened introduction of socially acceptable IMTs and by group action of women to secure their own IMTs.
- Women have been shown to be effective managers of transport or other infrastructural facilities when given the opportunity and an enabling environment.
- The number and variety of stakeholders in facilitating improved, gender-relevant transport strategies is large and diverse.
- Gender sensitization is needed from policy makers to the grassroots level to create awareness for improving transport conditions for rural women.
- Successful interventions have been implemented and valuable lessons learned from GRTI pilot projects, but these initiatives should be replicated.
- National policy in general and concerning transport in particular has been largely gender neutral. GRTI has succeeded in bring gender to the forefront in defining national transport policy.

### ***Lessons Learned from GRTI***

There are a number of lessons that have been learned from GRTI and the numerous activities that were carried out. These lessons are itemized in the following paragraphs. From these lessons, several gaps that need to be filled as well as Good Practices are derived and discussed in the following sections.

#### ***Advantages of Flexibility in Project Design and Implementation***

One of the characteristics of the design of the GRTI program has been the individualized mode of project development and implementation. With locality-specific socio-cultural and agro-ecological conditions of project sites and variations in the degree of gender sensitization, this flexibility has been a major strength of the GRTI program. Since gender and rural transport is an area in which there is limited experience, relevant project concepts and workable designs are still in the experimental stage. It has also been acknowledged that a design that is successful in one locality might not necessarily be successful in another.

Flexibility was also demonstrated in cases where changing conditions required project modifications to ensure success. These alterations in the original project design were accommodated by the GRTI. Examples of this flexibility are described as one of the identified Good Practices.

### *Building Projects upon Accurate and Relevant Data*

Experience from the pilot projects demonstrated the significance of accurate and relevant data on the project area before embarking upon project design and implementation. In cases that studies were conducted before developing the project concept, the basis for project design was established with a better understanding of the felt needs of the local population and their transport constraints. This is founded on the realization that transport solutions must be based upon the felt needs of the local population to have the desired impact on rural welfare. The findings also provided information on the locality-specific socio-cultural, political, economic and environmental conditions. The specific situation affecting rural women in each locality also formed the gender-specific recommendations for transport strategies.

### *General Lack of Gender-Disaggregated Data*

Related to the previous lesson is the importance of gender-disaggregated data. GRTI sponsored several studies on gender and rural transport. A common observation in many of the studies, however, was that while gender specific findings were reported, the methodology did not support gender analysis and the data were, in most cases, gathered at the household level. This does not allow for analysis of the intra-household gender relationships in terms of what males and females in the household do and what access or control they have over resources, including means of transport. The presumed gender relationships resulted in statements being made by reports of studies that the data collected do not actually report.

### *Importance of Participatory Approach for Sustainable Transport Development Projects*

It is commonly accepted that the participatory approach to development is not only the most equitable strategy, but it is also the best way to ensure that the activities and benefits will continue beyond the life of the project. The pilot projects of GRTI confirmed the view that for sustainable transport interventions, the involvement of the local population is of crucial importance. There are several methods to achieve a participatory approach. However, special efforts need to be made to ensure the effective involvement of women who may otherwise be excluded by cultural restrictions to social participation. The use of women's groups to mobilize and include rural women in program planning and implementation is a commonly used and usually effective means of achieving a gender-relevant participatory approach.

### *Need for Monitoring & Evaluation*

In any intervention, the need for monitoring and evaluation is crucial. In several GRTI projects, this need was demonstrated as pilot projects were implemented and efforts were made to determine the impact of the project. A few projects contained specific components that focused upon developing M&E indicators. Some gender sensitive M&E indicators have been developed, taking into account the specific gender issues that are of significance at different stages of the project. Efforts were made to establish M&E

systems to monitor the progress being made toward project goals, use of resources and local involvement as well as to evaluate the short and long term impact of project activities. M&E should not be under emphasized given the importance of ensuring that project objectives are achieved and that target groups, particularly females, receive the intended benefits of interventions.

### *Gender Sensitization Workshops*

A number of gender sensitization workshops in several countries were conducted as GRTI projects. In general, the content was similar, focusing upon the definition and significance of gender and how gender should be integrated into development projects including transport projects. The feedback from participants was good in most cases and the recommendations generated by the workshops were very useful. It is important, however, to go beyond the output of the workshop and use the results as an input into planning and implementation of relevant interventions. As with the findings of studies, proceedings from workshops should not be seen as an end in themselves, but also as a means to an end. While one of the objectives is to encourage gender sensitization of various types of target groups, the ultimate objective of sensitization is the resulting action that follows.

One of the lessons learned from the GRTI workshops was that the range of potential stakeholders that require gender sensitization is wide, including policy makers and project practitioners as well as people at the grassroots level. Examples of workshops held at different levels were represented in the various GRTI activities. Care must be given to ensure that the training materials used for different types of stakeholders are suited to their particular needs and level of understanding.

### *Information Dissemination Needed*

There have been many lessons learned and useful examples of interventions that can be replicated as a result of the GRTI program. The information obtained, however, must be disseminated to encourage the spread of more activities that can integrate gender into non traditional areas such as transport. The gains of GRTI, therefore, can spill over to other areas that need to be engendered.

The dissemination of information concerning GRTI needs to be carried out both internally (create awareness of transport initiatives or for public mobilization) and externally. That is, internal dissemination will create awareness of project activities in localities that they are taking place to ensure public mobilization and participation. External dissemination of information is important to encourage replication of pilot projects or to plan other interventions on the basis of lessons learned in other projects or localities. Publications concerning the activities and achievements of GRTI should be widely distributed.

### ***Gaps that Need to be Filled***

While there have been successful interventions resulting from GRTI, there have also been areas that need to be strengthened for improving the gender and rural transport situation in the region. The following are the gaps that have been identified as a result of the GRTI experience:

- ✚ Need for training in research methods to ensure gender-disaggregated results with more emphasis upon qualitative / participatory research methods;
- ✚ Develop project-specific, gender relevant M&E indicators;
- ✚ Additional pilot projects to test more types of IMTs;
- ✚ Greater emphasis paid to bringing services, water / firewood sources closer to homesteads to reduce time and energy; and
- ✚ Improve transport-related facilities – roads, trucks, bridges, vehicles and support services including credit and repairs.

### ***Identified Good Practices***

From the experiences gained from that various GRTI projects, a number of Good Practices have been identified that can favorably affect future initiatives. The following sections describe some of these Good Practices.

#### ***Carrying out Pre-intervention Studies***

It has been highlighted that a few of the GRTI projects carried out a study that led to the formation of a strategy for a pilot project. This was particularly the case in Cameroon where the study led to three suggested projects, one of which was later implemented. Due to the information obtained from the preliminary study, the project was based on an understanding of the needs, perceptions and conditions affecting the local population.

In the GRTI project in Uganda the previous efforts to introduce the use of donkeys was evaluated. A major conclusion was that no feasibility study had been carried out before the donkeys were introduced in the locality. The evaluation concluded that various dimensions of donkey use that are significant for the impact of the project were overlooked. This reinforces the observation that a Good Practice is to carry out a preliminary study before introducing an intervention, particularly for project concepts that are somewhat innovative.

#### ***Recognizing Locality-Specific Differences***

One of the strengths of several gender and rural transport studies carried out under GRTI sponsorship was the sampling of several study areas. In Burkina Faso, data was gathered

from 50 villages located in five different provinces. The study carried out in Cameroon collected information from three different ecological zones, while in Ethiopia, four *kebeles* were sampled from each of the four selected *woredas*. Similarly, the study in Nigeria looked at social and environmental differences with a sampled community from each of the six geo-political zones of the country. In Tanzania, comparison could be made on findings from several of the districts participating in the VTTP, due to the cross-section of localities sampled.

In each of these examples, the selection of several localities to be included in the study facilitates the recognition of variations between these areas in terms of socio-cultural characteristics, environmental conditions including agro-ecological differences, livelihood patterns, demographic characteristics and level of infrastructural development. This is very significant so that generalizations are not made that may result in project designs that may be unsuitable in some localities. It is also important that the challenges of development and improving transportation systems in particular is not over simplified by assuming that the problems faced in one area are the same as those in other places.

#### *Developing Sustainable, Participatory Local Initiatives for Transport Projects*

The participatory approach to development interventions is generally accepted as one that is more likely to result in sustainable initiatives. However, it is very important to identify the appropriate groups, including the gender considerations, for any project. Local participation should be part of the project right from the planning stage. Capacity building is also necessary for the local groups to carry out their roles effectively and to assume ownership of the project. In addition, sustainability depends upon economic viability. A project that is losing money cannot be locally sustained even if it is providing an important service to the community.

In the case of the GRTI project in Guinea, the objective of acquiring a boat to be owned and operated by a local group of men and women was based on the realization that exiting transport in the mangrove area was problematic due to the difficult terrain and lack of reliable local transportation. Due to the high illiteracy rate and lack of technical and managerial skills, capacity building was provided. The gender mixing of group membership ensured that the needs of males and females were both met. The group receives sufficient income not only to meet repayment, operating and maintenance costs, but also gives economic benefit for members who enjoy free transport services.

Local management and capacity building were similarly the core elements of the pilot project in Cote d'Ivoire that promoted the use of motorized tricycles. To create awareness of the service and encourage local participation, meetings were held in five selected villages. Five local project management and implementation units were then set up with existing CBOs that were responsible for the use of the IMT. Prices were set to operate the tricycles and to mobilize funds to buy additional ones. Training was provided for the drivers and local mechanics. Community members also received training in management skills and in feeder road maintenance.

The initial GRTI activities in Kenya were concerned with the reconstruction of the Nkone Bridge to provide access to rural communities otherwise cut off from other areas. With the completion of the bridge, however, it was recognized that the continuous repair and maintenance of the roads had to be ensured so that the transport problem would not resurface. Through a participatory training workshop for the local population, rural dwellers, including men and women, were encouraged and given skills for the local maintenance of their roads, foot bridges and tracks. The transport needs and constraints of both males and females were taken into consideration and women and men were involved in the planning process. Due to this strategy, the long-term maintenance of the infrastructural development project could be better ensured.

### *Locally Produced and Maintained IMTs*

To reduce cost and facilitate the process of replicating rural transport projects, IMTs should be locally produced and locally maintained. This constitutes another Good Practice found in several GRTI projects. The study from Ghana reported that bicycle trailers, push carts, some types of wheel barrows and donkey carts are locally produced. The result is that there is generally an adequate supply of these IMTs as well as sufficient spare parts for their repair. It was also noted that the locally designed components and spare parts are often more accessible, cheaper and more durable. The study in Malawi reported on a locally produced cart that was designed to alleviate the burden of head and shoulder loading and provide an alternative to over loading of bicycles. To make the cart even more accessible, its production was carried out in a second location that was closer to the users. The GRTI supported pilot project in Guinea also followed this Good Practices. It involved the local construction of a boat made from local materials with the skills of local artisans.

An additional advantage of local production is that modifications in design can be made to suit local preferences or changing conditions. In the case of the pilot project in Cote d'Ivoire, for example, the original design of the motorized tricycle had to be modified so that the back cabin could be covered to protect passengers and goods.

### *Gender Disaggregation of Research Findings*

Many gender studies have suffered from two major difficulties:

- a. studies sometimes consider only women, rather than looking at the relationship between males and females, and
- b. studies that do attempt to make gender statements often base their conclusions on data that do not have separate findings on males and females, but rather collect data on the household level.

Having gender disaggregated research findings is a Good Practices that results in valid information for making gender-relevant statements. The GRTI-supported project in South Africa considered the level of gender sensitivity and the process of data collection in a number of rural transport studies in Africa. This analysis was limited to surveys and considered whether the survey instruments reflected the transport needs of rural

communities as differentiated by gender. From the assessment, it was found that the level of gender sensitivity varied significantly and that in most of the studies reviewed, there was a preference for household questionnaires which would disguise intro-household gender differences.

The study on gender and rural transport in Nigeria is an example of research that yielded gender disaggregated data. Males and females were individually interviewed and FGDs were conducted with male and female groups separately. The findings from each gender group could then be compared. The results found clear gender differences in priority needs, transport-related tasks and constraints as well as perceptions concerning types of transport. Such findings can provide a better understanding of the situations of males and females and help to target development projects to gender groups that are most in need of their benefits.

#### *Workshops to Promote Gender Sensitive Transport Projects*

Several GRTI projects were in the form of workshops with objectives that included gender sensitization for a variety of stakeholders in the transport sector from high ranking policy makers to program planners and project implementer to the local population. Each workshop incorporated a slightly different approach with different target groups, but the basic goal was to inform participants about the gender dimensions of human activities and the realization that interventions, including development in the transport sector are very rarely gender neutral. The workshops further enlightened participants not only about the need to involve both males and females in development projects, but also potential modalities for integrating women in such initiatives. This is considered a Good Practice as the level of gender awareness is generally low in most sectors outside the traditionally gender conscious areas such as health and education.

The gender sensitization workshops in Madagascar and Malawi focused upon enlightenment of policy makers. In Malawi, the workshop was organized for Principal Secretaries in government with some participants from other organizations. The workshop conducted in Madagascar had a wider cross-section of participants. While representatives of administration were in attendance, nearly half of the participants were students and professors. The workshops held in Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya concentrated on sensitizing people at the grassroots level who would participate in other project activities, specifically management of IMTs and road rehabilitation respectively.

In Tanzania, workshops were held with gender sensitization activities that involved a wider cross section of stakeholders. A national level workshop was directed to officials from relevant ministries, district level officer and the private sector. Other workshops were also conducted at the district level involving development workers and representatives of the local communities. In Zimbabwe, a similar strategy was followed as workshops were held with policy makers and others were held in two communities. In the latter case, the workshops were conducted in the local language. This is a Best Practice since it was based on the realization that gender sensitization is needed from the highest policy-making level to the grassroots to ensure that appropriate policies will be

formulated and that these policies will be effectively carried out. Having separate workshops for policy makers and rural dwellers is appropriate so that the information can be presented in a manner that is easily assimilated by each target group.

### *Non-Transport Solutions to Transport Problems*

One of the background assumptions that led to the development of the GRTI was the recognition that much of the transport burden for women was due to the long distances they had to travel to fetch water, collect firewood, visit markets, clinics or grinding mills and carry out other responsibilities. To alleviate their burden, it is considered a Good Practice to provide facilities, woodlots and other services near the communities. In this way, transport constraints can be minimized with ‘non-transport’ interventions. None of the GRTI projects specifically provided such facilities or services, since this was outside the mandate and the budget. Nevertheless, from some of the studies, this assertion was supported. From the GRTI study in Burkina Faso, for example, it was found that significant time was saved for females in carrying out tasks where water sources or other social services were nearby. Children were also more likely to be able to attend schools or visit clinics when educational and health facilities were closer. Similar findings were obtained with the study in Zimbabwe. The study recommended that the communities identified the need to combine transport-related solutions with non-transport interventions to reduce the difficulties faced by women and female children in carrying out their duties.

### *Short-term and Long-term Project Objectives, Activities and Evaluation*

It is common to design development projects with a number of goals and corresponding activities. A Good Practice is identified in providing a delineation between the short-term and the long-term goals and activities, such as specified by the plan of action outlined in the GRTI project from Nigeria. Activities such as provision of appropriate IMTs, identification of existing local groups, determination of on-going programs and institution-strengthening can be carried out within a relatively short period of time, such as within three to five years. Some activities are likely to take a longer time to carry out, however, such as establishing woodlots and providing other facilities in many villages, rehabilitating eroded roads and putting environmentally appropriate measures in place to prevent further flooding and erosion, developing and testing improved IMTs and evaluating the long-term impact of interventions. In line with effective evaluation of the impact of interventions, the GRTI project in Zambia recommended that evaluation indicators should be developed to include both short-term and long-term assessment. To look at only the short term effect will prejudice the judgment as to overall impact and the degree of sustainability of the project.

### *The Way Forward*

The final word concerning the GRTI program now rests with examining where to go from here. A pertinent question to ask is “Has GRTI achieved its objectives?” It is apparent that RTTP national programs have attempted to incorporate gender issues into

RTT policies and strategies and that existing methods and approaches have become more gender responsive in those countries that participated in GRTI. Many of the projects have been very innovative and presented interesting results that can be replicated elsewhere. At the same time, however, this has been just the experimental stage of an important process of ensuring that transport projects become gender-sensitive, like other sectors that are incorporating gender relevant issues in development efforts. Moving toward the GRTI objectives is a process to which progress has been made, but much still remains to be done, given the socio-cultural and environmental diversity in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### *Engendering Transport Policies: Mainstreaming Gender in Transport Projects*

A number of GRTI projects have made significant impact on mainstreaming gender in transport projects. In some cases, innovative strategies have been embarked upon to ensure that women are involved in projects to manage the use of IMTs or to maintain roads or footpaths. To really get at the root of mainstreaming gender, however, requires a transport policy that is gender sensitive rather than the current gender neutral nature of most national policies. In this regard, the experiences of Uganda and Malawi with their national gender policies are relevant. With a national framework that encourages equal opportunities for males and females as well as full participation of both gender groups in social and economic activities, the application of gender-sensitive concepts to sectoral programs can be more easily facilitated. To ensure transport policies and programs are engendered is more problematic when it is isolated from the other sectors of the national interests.

As projects are developed, specific targets for gender involvement should be set with corresponding indicators to measure the level of goal attainment. For example, a specified proportion of females should be among the members of a group to manage transport facilities or half of the beneficiaries of IMTs should be females. With such targets in place, it will be easier to ensure that opportunities are equally distributed. When the processes of monitoring and evaluation are carried out, these targets will facilitate the gender analysis of the impact upon both males and females.

### *Go beyond micro-projects to infrastructural development.*

The GRTI has taken a large and innovative step forward in advancing transport projects to respond to the needs of all rural dwellers, male and female. For too long, women have been marginalized in such projects. In this regard, GRTI has brought gender issues into the transport sector and sensitized many of the relevant stakeholders to the need to alleviate transport burdens of rural women. At the same time, however, GRTI has been limited in scope to micro-projects such as conducting one study or holding a workshop or introducing an IMT to a limited locality. These are important gains, but the story must not end here. It is necessary to now put into action the Good Practices on a larger scale. In particular, the provision of IMTs and infrastructural facilities or services closer to communities are important avenues to be pursued. Gender awareness should be expanded while more attention needs to be paid to participatory approaches to transport

strategies. GRTI has not been and should not be an end in itself, but should rather be seen as the first step in the process of achieving gender equality in the transport sector.

*Must not end here*