

GATNET Discussion Summary: Gender Time Poverty and Women Empowerment (June 2005)

Issues behind women's time poverty

Mobility and Access. A lack of mobility and access restrict women on their choices and hence 'face more trade-offs than men'. Mobility and access therefore need to be seen as human rights issues

Assumptions about women's time

According to culture it is only natural for women to do what they are doing i.e. carrying out multiple roles simultaneously (not necessarily sequentially), it is part of being women. The time burden they suffer is regarded as normal hence time poverty is 'seldom factored into the analysis of transport processes'.

Implications.

Due to this misconception, women's right to prioritise their time is not considered in transport planning, in practice this translates into exclusion from the mainstream development. Transport planning "is done for vehicles not for people", this leads to transport initiatives that lack a human face hence fail to empower women to make productive choices for the use of their time.

The engineering orientation of transport planning creates unfriendly, insensitive and unsafe transport infrastructure.

How has gender time poverty been addressed?

In Uganda the following have been done;

- Promotion of technologies that reduce time poverty
- Strengthening the natural asset base of the poor and women
- Rural electrification
- Promotion of agro/rural/community forestry and energy saving stoves

What next to do?

Employ measures that save travel time and the transport burden

Adoption of integrated rural accessibility planning

Promotion of affordable intermediate means of transport

Bring services nearer to people

Challenges

Revisiting the role of culture in defining gender roles

Research that informs practice; employing multidisciplinary research tools!!!