

## **Country Report 14: Uganda**

### **GRTI Activities in Uganda**

In Phase II, a case study was funded by GRTI and carried out by an individual, Harriet Iga. The study focused on determining the use of donkeys by men and women in agricultural activities in Kasese District of Uganda. This was an evaluation of earlier efforts implemented with the Uganda Farmers Association. In Phase III, the Uganda RTTP was funded to disseminate and create gender responsive policies and best gender practices in road works.

### **Case Study on the Use of Donkeys by Rural Women and Men in Uganda**

Kasese District of Uganda is an area with serious transport constraints including the shortage of means of transport with only few pick-ups in the area. The area is hilly and mountainous leading to the shortage of feeder roads, tedious methods of carrying sick people down to the health centres, inaccessibility to main roads, impassable small uphill paths, high transport costs and relegation of carrying of loads to women. This was observed during field visits whereby many women and children were trekking long distances over the hills carrying agricultural produce while men were using bicycles.

The transport conditions also raised health concerns for the rural population, particularly for the women. Women in Kasese District carry loads to their households and the market using their backs with a rope tied around their heads to support the loads. This mode of transportation has led some women to develop narrow pelvic bones leading to still births or maternal deaths. Some women travel for many hours and cover long distances in this manner, especially during post-harvest seasons. Due to the mountainous terrain, sick and pregnant women are mainly transported to clinics and other health centers with basket stretchers (*'ebigala'*) due to the region being mountainous.

This study was designed to carry out an evaluation of the use of donkeys by rural men and women. In the past, several projects by government agencies and NGOs have given out donkeys to the people to help them in their transport problems. In one case, a politician designed a proposal and received funding to introduce donkeys to two districts and 10 donkeys were distributed to each area. The President's office also donated 30 donkeys. Other donkeys were provided by the Bukonjo Animal Traction Association (BATA). The Kasese Women in Development Association also obtained support from UNICEF to secure 35 donkeys, as well as the accompanying equipment and necessary training.

### ***Lessons learned from the Case Study***

The evaluation of the efforts to provide the targeted population with donkeys found that despite the good intentions of the interventions, there are certain lessons that were learned which can guide future such projects:

- ✚ *Danger of politicizing development programmes:* The donkey project was initiated by politicians in the areas, and therefore, each one claimed his / her responsibility for the project. This led to mismanagement of the project which with its eventual hand over to the Agricultural Department in Kasese District. The project would have been a failure if NGOs and CBOs had not intervened. Political interference in the project was pointed out to be a problem by 80% of the respondents. They argued that this factor had limited the success of the project because some people received donkeys due to the recommendation by political leaders and thereby neglected them. Politicians used the project as a political tool with each one claiming responsibility for the project so as to gain votes in elections.
- ✚ *Lack of pre-intervention study:* No feasibility study was carried out before introducing the donkeys. Various dimensions of donkey use were overlooked, yet such factors are important determinants for the success or failure of the project.
- ✚ *Need for training in the use of donkeys:* Training is very crucial for proper handling of donkeys, especially for people in areas hitherto not used to donkey use. The Bakonjo people, who are residents of Kasese District, did not have an animal culture and therefore training was organized for both men and women in using donkeys. Training was particularly needed by women who lack skills in managing donkeys and therefore were not using them to their full capacity since donkeys need to be kept busy or they will refuse to work. Some women were also afraid of donkeys.
- ✚ *Need for supporting equipment:* Donkey carts were not common and only two local artisans could repair them. Most donkey owners preferred to improvise by making their own harnesses, collars and yokes for the donkeys, rather than to buy them or pay for the service.
- ✚ *Poverty Alleviation from improved transport:* It was assumed that one of the derived benefits to be derived from the greater use of donkeys would be poverty alleviation. However, it was found that not all households were enjoying poverty alleviation since some of them did not derive income from the use of donkeys, but only used them to reduce their transport burden for subsistence activities.

### ***Gender and Use of IMTs***

The major use of the donkeys was for transportation and not cultivation due to the hilly terrain. All of the sampled respondents owned donkeys, while 12 had bicycles and only one owned a car. Donkeys were being used daily to transport water fuelwood, agricultural produce and building materials while bicycles were mainly used by male owners for social outings, taking the sick to the health centers and clinics, and taking children to school. Pick-ups were hired once a week by three respondents to transport milk and agricultural produce. It was found that 80% of the male respondents were not willing to use their bicycles for household tasks because they believed donkeys should be

used for such activities. However, it should be noted that donkey use should be complementary to other modes of transport in the household. Head loading is still the primary mode of transport, however, despite ownership of a donkey within a household.

It is mainly men who market produce with the available means of transport. Women are in charge of transporting produce from gardens to households, although in some cases, women and children also engage in transportation of produce to markets. Findings indicated that respondents walk a long distance to the market, which is located six miles away, and spend approximately eight hours traveling to and fro. Transportation of agricultural produce from the garden consumes at least three hours and is carried out daily. Some respondents were staying uphill while their gardens were located downhill.

The least time-consuming task was found to be fetching water for both domestic and irrigation purposes. This took about 15 minutes to and from the water source. Kasese District is endowed with gravity flow water schemes which are scattered all over the district and therefore water is accessible to people.

Regarding decision making on the use of donkeys, it was found that twelve of the sampled women could make sole decisions while eighteen were making joint decisions. This in essence means that even when women have sole ownership of donkeys, men still have decision-making power regarding their use. Decision-making is still a male domain.

### *Causes of loss or death of donkeys*

One of the major problems with the project to increase the use of donkeys as an IMT was the loss or death of donkeys. There were numerous reasons for donkeys being lost:

- Insecurity in the area has led to migration of people from the uphill areas to the lowlands, thereby enabling rebel soldiers to hijack and kill the donkeys, injuring some and slaughtering some for meat. This insecurity has also led people to stay in the camps, thereby neglecting the donkeys when they were not in their homes.
- Sickness combined with lack of drugs or expense of treatment has claimed many donkeys. Due to the high poverty levels in the district, most people cannot afford to purchase drugs for the treatment of donkeys. This is particularly so in the case of women who typically use donkeys for domestic chores and not for income generation as in the case of men. Extension services are available, but farmers must pay for services. Vaccination of one animal is equivalent to US\$2 and sometimes people must contribute fuel (US\$2-3) for transport. Extension services are only concerned with veterinary services and curative animal care and do not have a training component to improve animal health.
- Many donkeys fall off cliffs and get strangled.
- Donkeys have the habit of biting themselves, leading to wounds which may become health problems if left untreated.
- Death of female donkeys sometimes results from reproducing when they are not mature enough.
- Negligence by owners can also lead to the loss or death of donkeys.

- Lack of training in animal care and management has led to improper handling of the donkeys, resulting in loss or serious health problems.
- Theft of donkeys is a problem in the locality.

In a number of cases, donkeys were withdrawn from one recipient and given to another, particularly when the donkeys were not properly managed or used. Donkeys that are not consistently used become difficult to manage and may misbehave due to idleness.

### **Dissemination of Gender Responsive Policies / Best Gender Practices for Transport Sector in Uganda.**

#### ***Official Policy on Gender in Uganda***

The Government of Uganda has formulated the National Gender Policy (NGP) with the central aim to incorporate a gender perspective into planning, resource allocation and implementation of all development programs in the country. The key areas for advancing the position of women in Uganda identified in the NGP are poverty eradication, income generation and economic empowerment as well as improving the legal framework and participation in decision making. The NGP is more fully described below.

#### **Box 14.1: The National Gender Policy (NGP) of Uganda**

The NGP is and has been an integral part of national development policy. The overall goal of the NGP is to mainstream gender concerns in the national development process in order to improve the legal, civic, social, economic and cultural conditions of the people in Uganda, particularly the women. The NGP was approved by the Cabinet in 1997 and has been in operation for the last 6 years. The NGP is a policy document that outlines the legitimacy of gender equality as a fundamental value that should be reflected in Uganda's development choices, poverty reduction strategies and institutional practices. In this way, gender equality is pursued from the center and not from the periphery. The NGP works by:

- Outlining a framework that ensures that women and men have access to society's resources,
- Ensuring that there is equal participation of women and men in influencing what is valued shaping development directions and distributing opportunities.

The major constraints in implementing NGP were categorized in four major areas:

- ✓ Technical constraints in the form of inadequate skill / capacity in all sectors, limited availability of simplified tools for mainstreaming, and lack of ownership / the feeling that the responsibility to address gender concerns lies with MGLSD or GFPs;
- ✓ Financial constraints resulting from the fact that gender equality budget allocations have been very low at all levels;
- ✓ Socio-cultural constraints demonstrated by resistance towards gender equality among decision makers, planners and implementers at all levels; and
- ✓ Institutional constraints evidenced lack of an incentive system / boundary system with rewards for implementing the NGP and the imposition of sanctions for failing to incorporate gender equity in program planning.

### *Application of NGP to the Transport Sector*

In the transport sector, strategies to address the National Gender Policy include creating employment opportunities for women, promoting women's equal access to job opportunities, developing entrepreneurial skills of women, improving working and workplace conditions and involvement of women in road programming and monitoring. The policies, strategies and programs of the Ministry of Works, Housing and Communications (MoWHC) for addressing Gender issues in the transport sector have been incorporated into the White Paper on "Sustainable Maintenance of District, Urban and Community Access Roads (DUCAR)" of March, 2002 and integrated into the 10 year rolling plan for Road Sector Development Program of April, 2002. In the White Paper, an "Action Plan for Promoting Women Participation in Roadworks" was spelt out. The position was stated as: "*Government is to take affirmative action to ensure that women and other marginalized groups participate at all levels of road rehabilitation and maintenance.*" According to page 34 of the Final Draft White Paper on Sustainable Maintenance of District, Urban and Community Access Roads by the MoWHC, Republic of Uganda (March, 2002), the implementation measures to increase women's involvement in road works were stated as:

- a) *Setting a target of at least 30% for the proportion of women in the workforce and of small-scale contractors developed and employed;*
- b) *Effective sensitization programmes to enlighten all the role-players on the benefits of involving women;*
- c) *Introducing flexible working hours to enable women to harmonize their domestic duties with the road works; and*
- d) *Increasing women's access to training opportunities.*

To further demonstrate the commitment of the MoWHC to actualize the implementation of the Gender Policy, a manual on *Gender Guidelines for District Engineers* was released in March, 2002. This manual gave explicit directions on how gender mainstreaming could be accomplished to include women at each level of road construction, rehabilitation and maintenance. The plan also included gender sensitization from the level of contractors and engineers to the level of the local community, ensuring participation of women in decision-making and in work groups as well as the provision of necessary facilities.

### *Specific GRTI Funded Project Activities*

The project entitled, "Dissemination of Gender Responsive Policies and Strategies for Sustainable Maintenance of Rural Roads to the District Local Governments of Uganda", was carried out by the Uganda RTTP. The main project objective was to disseminate gender responsive policies of the ministry's White Paper for sustainable maintenance of district, urban and community access roads. To carry out the project, the following activities were carried out:

1. Circulation of MoWHC's gender policies, strategies and guidelines to local governments,
2. Conduct a gender training workshop for district engineers to sensitize them on issues of involving women in planning and execution of road programmes, and
3. Carry out a two-month study to establish the current strategies and practices in rehabilitation and maintenance of rural roads in seven districts of Uganda.

### ***Report on Workshop for District Engineers***

A one-day workshop was organized in March, 2003, for sensitizing and strengthening the capacity of District Engineers to prepare gender responsive plans and promote gender issues in the implementation of road works in their localities. The specific objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- a) Introduce District Engineers to the National Gender Policy,
- b) Discuss gender policies and strategies in the White Paper for sustainable maintenance of district, urban and community access roads, and
- c) Disseminate the good practices of involving both women and men in implementation of rural roads.

Papers were presented on the different topics after the welcome address that introduced the concept and objectives of the workshop. Of particular note was a presentation on the National Gender Policy (NGP) which was handled by an official of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD). The paper highlighted the background to the NGP and related its relevance to the works sector in Uganda. The paper focused on the general NGP context, delivery mechanisms and major actors in the implementation, expected outcomes, major achievements and constraints in the implementation of the policy.

Other presentations at the workshop included the basic topics for gender sensitization workshops, as well as specific themes regarding transport and engineering:

- The GRTI Program,
- Gender concepts and gender related principles,
- Policy formulation and analysis,
- Mainstreaming gender into policies, programmes and projects,
- Community mobilization and participation in roadworks, and
- Gender and the engineering profession.

During the presentation on gender and the engineering profession, it was reported that in Uganda, out of 550 professionals in different grades of the engineering profession, only 28 (5% of total) are female. There are a number of constraints faced by female engineers, including the following:

- ✚ only a few girls take sciences at school,
- ✚ very few women graduate in engineering courses,
- ✚ some employers categorically state that they prefer men for some jobs,

- ✚ there are no special facilities for women (i.e. sanitation) at engineering places of work,
- ✚ women miss challenging opportunities because some employers feel they cannot post women to such places of work, and
- ✚ subordinates can be hostile, not wanting to take instructions from a women.

### *Results of the Workshop*

Some of the remarks from the participants during the discussion indicate the importance of gender sensitization workshops, but also denote the fact that many participants may not be easily convinced of the significance of gender mainstreaming. Examples of remarks made include:

- ❑ Are District Engineers obliged to implement the NGP?
- ❑ The issue to present to the grassroots is actually poverty and not gender discrimination.
- ❑ Gender is a sensitive issue. One participant gave the example of labour-based contracts in Kabale and Mpigi that led to social upheavals in the families in these areas because of the involvement of women.
- ❑ Pressure groups, interest groups and status quo groups must be fully informed about the NGP. Implementation would be more difficult if not all groups were informed.
- ❑ Do women know what they want and does the public know about gender issues? What should be considered is fairness rather than equality.
- ❑ One participant noted that one district had interesting experience in implementing gender policies and these experiences should be shared with others.
- ❑ It was suggested that a follow-up should be carried out with women contractors.
- ❑ Communities are diverse entities and therefore challenging to mobilize for a common good.

These topics are all valid and important. Considering that the target population was mostly male and engineers, getting down to the basics concepts of gender was found to be necessary, since it is likely that they have not been exposed to gender sensitization before.

Participants then broke into five groups and considered the following issues under each:

- 1 Examine the National Gender Policy:
  - ❑ Does NGP answer the important issues of policy formation?
  - ❑ How can it be categorized as gender blind / specific / transformative?
  - ❑ Identify the key characteristics of NGP.
  - ❑ Identify the shortfalls of the policy and suggest means of addressing the shortfalls.
- 2 Present a role play on presenting a women's road project to Min. of Planning, Finance and Economic development and bring out the relevant gender issues.

- 3 Examine the District, Urban and Community Access Roads (DUCAR) policy:
  - ❑ Does it answer the important issues of policy formation?
  - ❑ How can it be categorized as gender blind / specific / transformative?
  - ❑ Identify the key characteristics.
  - ❑ Identify the shortfalls of policy and suggest means of addressing the shortfalls.
- 4 Present a role play of a donor interacting with a community for funding of a small bridge connecting two villages, bringing out the gender issues.
- 5 Identify the gender roles in:
  - ❑ Implementation of district roads,
  - ❑ Practical and strategic gender needs of men and women, and
  - ❑ Strategies / actions for mainstreaming gender in planning and execution of road works.

## **Conclusion**

Gender sensitization workshops are very important components of GRTI. The sessions must, however, be very practical so that it is easy for the participants to apply gender dimensions. They should not be too theoretical. Use of interactive, participatory methods is very important. The use of role play in this workshop was very good as it gave an opportunity to put the concepts into real life situations.

