

## Country Report 7: Kenya

### GRTI Activities in Kenya

Kenya Network for Draught Animal Technology (KENDAT) was funded in Phase II for the reconstruction of the Nkone Bridge. As a follow-up project, KENDAT was further supported in Phase III for the development of a toolkit of mainstreaming gender in infrastructure development and maintenance projects. Under Phase III, Economic and Social Policy Initiatives (ECSPI) of Kenya was also funded to examine the social, economic and institutional environment that provides a motivational basis for women's pro-active intervention in their local transport infrastructure.

### KENDAT's Project on the Nkone Bridge and Road Maintenance

#### *Background to the Nkone Bridge Construction Project*

Nkone is a river in the Eastern Slopes of Mt. Kenya. The river becomes very difficult to cross particularly when it rains. The people of Karia and Kiangua communities are dependent upon the Nkone Bridge and on a rural road linking them to other areas. The bridge had been constructed first in 1945, but badly needed to be replaced since recent efforts by the local residents to repair it had collapsed several times. Crossing the bridge was very dangerous for women and children as they carried loads and went to school. The following presents a description of the conditions faced by the target communities.

#### **Box 7.1: The Problems of Rural Transport: Crossing the Nkone River in Kenya**

Nkone River bridge and the road it serves is a determinant of access and a major contributor to the nature and well-being of the rural livelihoods of the people in Karia and Kiangua communities. The progressive, but economically deprived area is endowed with high, but declining agricultural and other productive potentials. Community members have plenty to say and do about their access needs, cultural and gender roles and the Nkone Bridge in particular. According to them, declining cash crop and other produce outputs (coffee, tea, horticultural, forest and other products) have worsened partly due to deteriorating infrastructure and reduced mobility.

The situation has been exacerbated by the AIDS epidemic and worsened by the practice of drinking by men. Lonely women have been left behind to run all domestic chores, including helping children cross the Nkone on the way to school. At Nkone bridge, lives have been. Cash crops have spoilt in the farms or at buying centers when vehicles fail to show up in falling rains. Few IMTs are available but their use is curtailed by adverse topographical conditions. Men wish for motorbikes which are unaffordable or unserviceable.

The inhabitants of Kari and Kiangua communities can be greatly helped by improved transport and travel services. As long as Nkone bridge and the access road remain impassable, the otherwise highly productive locality is a society under siege. The capacity to assist is lacking and resources are minimal relative to the potential of the community.

(Source: KENDAT (2000) Project Concept Note)

The project was also based upon the realization that the transport burden for women and children is significantly heavier than for men. Consequently, improved transport conditions would benefit them directly and facilitate poverty alleviation as well. The intensity of use of the bridge, particularly for women and children can be seen from this data obtained by KENDAT which was disaggregated by gender, generation and season:

**Table 7.1: Intensity of Traffic on the Nkone Bridge, Kenya**

Kind of Traffic / Persons	Wet Season (April)		Dry Season (July)	
	Market days*	Non-market days*	Market days	Non-market days
Men	137	121	156	110
Women	283	84	258	99
Children	296	232	451	245
Vehicles	8	6	15	17
Oxen carts	1	1	4	1
Bicycles	10	7	35	16
Motorcycles	3	2	20	7

\*Figures represent the average number of people / or means of transport per day.

### ***The Reconstruction of the Nkone Bridge and Maintenance of the Access Road***

In a collaborative effort between the local community, the Government of Kenya, Kenya Network for Draught Animal Technology (KENDAT), Rural Infrastructure Development Organization (RIDO) and the Gender and Rural Transport Initiative (GRTI), the Nkone Bridge was successfully rebuilt. This was the first part of the project. From previous experience, however, the continuous repair and maintenance of the road had to be ensured for a long term solution to the transport problems.

The follow-up phase of the project was designed to contribute towards and to capture the best practice leading to engendered infrastructure management with links to other sectors of the economy. The objectives of the follow-up to the construction of the bridge were to:

1. introduce bridge, footpaths, and footbridges maintenance techniques and initiatives that form the panacea for organized community-managed infrastructure and other development;
2. sensitize the community on gender issues in governance of own development initiatives through leadership, project management, awareness creation and education of themselves and their supporters; and
3. initiate discussions with the community towards sustained, gender-responsive participatory methodologies for holistic development including the role of transport in modern farming techniques and detractors such as poor health including HIV/AIDS.

The constraints and challenges of the project were identified to be as follows:

- The community has limited technical knowledge on roads and bridges construction, repair and maintenance and has to heavily rely on technical support

from the District Engineer. This often delays the implementation of plans because the engineer may not be available. Occasionally the community embarks on certain activities without any professional technical support, but the quality of work is usually poor, sometimes requiring the work to be repeated.

- The legal and policy framework is not supportive of community managed travel and transport infrastructure development. The community does not have the mandate to undertake any kind of repair or maintenance of roads without prior authority from the Roads Engineer or other relevant authority. It is a challenge to convince the community that despite such law and policy, the roads and bridges belong to them and are there to serve them.
- Many community members perceive community infrastructure development projects as having no direct immediate benefit to the individual and thus are reluctant to offer their support for such projects without pay. They fail to realize the long term benefits of such a project

### ***Mainstreaming Gender in a Participatory Local Road Maintenance Project***

After the bridge was constructed, it was recognized that there was need for continuous repair and maintenance of the road, as well as the rehabilitation of the footpaths and footbridges for the local residents to enjoy continued relief from their transport problems. It was also realized that there was need for local participation for the sustained maintenance of the road. The role of women in this effort was considered to be important, so KENDAT obtained additional funding under the GRTI program to develop a toolkit for mainstreaming gender in an infrastructure project. The lessons learnt from this experience in engendered community-based infrastructural development and management would then form the basis for developing a toolkit which could be used to guide similar projects.

Through a participatory meeting with members of the local communities, footpaths and footbridges that needed to be rehabilitated were identified and prioritized based on their relative importance. Gender needs were put into consideration and priority given to the paths and bridges more frequently used by women and children while on their daily chores such as carrying goods to the market or fetching water and firewood. A total of about 7.5 km of footpaths and 4 footbridges were given priority for rehabilitation. The work was carried out by the community using mostly locally available materials and tools. The community would ultimately come up with its own long-term maintenance plan.

### ***Capacity Building by a Participatory Training Workshop for the Local Population***

In December, 2002, a two-day community training workshop was conducted under the coordination of KENDAT with 21 local residents (10 men and 11 women) selected as participants. The training content included six sessions.

- ❑ **Group Dynamics and Community Mobilization:** This session helped participants to understand what a group is and the dynamic nature of groups in the process of implementing community projects.
- ❑ **Labor-based Methods for Roads and Bridges Maintenance:** In this session, the participants were given insights on how they could use their skills, knowledge and abilities to repair and maintain their rural travel and transport infrastructure.
- ❑ **Importance, Problems and Solutions Analysis for Rural Transport and Travel Initiatives:** The importance of rural infrastructure included issues of saving time, having access to facilities and services, safety and opening up new opportunities. The problems of lack of good rural roads and bridges were many and well known. The solutions proffered focused upon community consultation, community organization and participation, resource utilization and training and sensitization.
- ❑ **Gender Issues in Travel and Transport Infrastructure Development and Maintenance:** This session was very important to the goal of having an engendered toolkit. Participants were sensitized to the gender issues concerning rural transport projects. The transport burden handled by women was clearly illustrated and the need to make special provisions to address gender differences was stressed.
- ❑ **Roads Repair and Maintenance in Kenya:** The District Roads Engineer enlightened the participants about the different categories of roads and the required state of each type. He also outlined Government policy and practice on road construction and maintenance. He then explained the types of road repair and maintenance activities.
- ❑ **Community Action Planning:** The participants were then taken through a session of Action Planning that outlined the activities that would be carried out, human and material resources required, timing for each activities and responsibilities they would undertake as a result of the training. It is significant to note that the Action Plan was developed through consultation by the participants.

The sessions were participatory and interactive. The men and women both had definite roles to play in the maintenance plan. Through this process, the project developed a participatory toolkit with community involvement as the key issue. The local people and their knowledge were the basis for the solution to the identified problem of maintaining facilities for their own good. The participatory process was carried out with efforts to decentralize planning and encourage democratic decision-making while taking care to involve marginalized people, particularly women, into planning processes, thereby empowering them to take more control of their resources and their own lives.

#### *Lessons from the Workshop to Facilitate the Participatory Approach*

The lessons learned from the participatory approach to infrastructural development in the GRTI project in Kenya included:

- Facilitators should “hand over the stick” to the local community who become the main teachers, having confidence that they can do it.

- There should be more emphasis on letting the community plan and implement projects so that they are the owners of the project. Expert-to-community role should be minimal.
- The community must be oriented to adapt to new and more powerful roles, shedding images of hand-outs and dependency on outside-led activities.
- Field exercises are not only for information and idea generation, but about building the process of participation, discretion and communications.
- Participatory approaches are not substitutes for, but are rather an integral part of long-terms dialogue and sustained interaction. Participatory development is a learning process that develops and promotes new methods, changing the prevailing attitudes, behaviors, norms, skills and procedures, both within the development agency as well as within the local community.

The KENDAT projects under the GRTI program have pointed out the importance of following up rural infrastructure development projects with maintenance plans to ensure sustainability. The lessons learned from the participatory development of plans to repair and maintain the Nkone Bridge and rural roads present a useful set of guidelines, serving as a 'toolkit' for similar initiatives to promote local transport projects.

### **ECSPI Project: Women in Self-Help Transport Infrastructure Projects: What Prospects for Scaling Up?**

The GRTI supported project by ECSPI in Kenya is a study of three projects in Kenya. In these purposively selected projects, women have been at the forefront of improving their transport infrastructure, using their own local resources; that is, these projects have been conceived and implemented by women groups through the spirit of community self-help. By looking at projects that are truly community-driven, this study expects to capture the key elements and factors that are important to women claiming ownership of interventions to tackle transport problems in general and infrastructure in particular.

The proposed project activities / outputs are:

1. a case study document with identification of key factors that enable women to be proactive on local transport issues, analysis of enabling / catalytic factors for women participation in transport activities and local viewpoints;
2. a one day workshop involving the three groups to share experiences with a report of the proceedings; and
3. a best practice leaflet on enabling factors for and benefits of gender mainstreaming.

The proposed methodology for the study is qualitative and participatory – using FGDs and IDIs with key informants. The sampled sites were purposively selected due to on-going self-help projects. The sites are:

1. Ngecha location in Kiambu District where a women's association has been implementing projects in water, health and lately, in transport infrastructure. Through local resources, the group has implemented the rehabilitation of a 6-km village access road, as well as a number of village paths and trails. Through this particular project, the women in the area seem to have acquired a significant voice at the district level on issues related to transport needs of the community.
2. Kandara location, Muranga District, the site of a local women's network that focuses on agriculture, health and education, but with transport infrastructure improvement as one of its incorporated activities. Horticulture production has now become the main source of household income so women are very concerned about transport for quick evacuation of produce.
3. Mwea Division, Kirinyaha District where black cotton soil has been a problem for maintaining all season access to many villages. Women have been mobilized in affected villages to do spot improvements along critical points.

The Project report is yet to be submitted.

