



# Forum

News

*International Forum for Rural Transport and Development*

**Community Participation in Transport Management**

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## Passive Recipients to Active Participants

In areas where the transport needs of poor and marginalised people are overlooked by national transport policies, a shift from communities as passive recipients to active participants could provide the catalyst for sustainable transport solutions. Community participation in the planning, implementation, maintenance and evaluation of transport interventions can ensure a response appropriate to local mobility needs that will utilise local knowledge, generate solutions applicable to local resources, improve the transparency and acceptability of transport investments, contribute to capacity building (knowledge, skills and advocacy) and reduce dependency.

In April 2005 IFRTD in collaboration with Soluciones Prácticas ITDG hosted an international workshop to highlight the potential benefits and inherent challenges of ensuring community participation in rural transport interventions. One of the key issues raised was the dearth of good practice case studies that are available to encourage replication and learning. The workshop proved that many useful experiences exist within the transport sector that are yet to be shared and this issue of Forum News addresses the gap by sharing just a few of those examples.

One of the main challenges, identified by the workshop participants, is to understand how communities can effectively influence policy makers. For example the field trip to Huanico (see pg 3) revealed a community that did not fully understand the national decision making process for prioritising investment in rural roads. Their limited lobbying activities targeted the national rural roads board while the decision making power actually lies with the Mayor of the Municipality.

Experiences shared at the workshop revealed various initiatives supporting communities to participate in the planning and implementation of transport interventions that affect them. Some are detailed here; Community Parliaments in Kenya (pg 2), Transport Committees in Bangladesh (Pg 3) and a planned micro enterprise in Peru (pg 3). External support and inputs are helping these communities to enter into the transport debate with knowledge, technical skills and the ability to articulate their needs as a cohesive group. However we also highlight a case study from Nicaragua (pg 2) which has recognised that building the capacity of the community only addresses one half of a dialogue and has taken steps to complete the circle. The DANIDA PAST programme has focused on not only organising the community to articulate their needs but also on organising decision makers to listen.

If you have experiences of community participation in transport interventions that you are able to share with the IFRTD network please send these to the IFRTD Secretariat. The case studies from this workshop and any others that we receive will be made available in the issues section of the IFRTD website [www.ifrtd.org](http://www.ifrtd.org).



*Community Meeting, Huanico, Northern Highlands, Peru*

### International Workshop, Cajamarca, Peru, April 4-7 2005

The International Workshop on Community Participation in Transport Management was a bi-lingual event hosted by IFRTD and Soluciones Prácticas ITDG and funded by the European Commission (EC). This was the culmination of the first phase of Practical Action ITDG's 3 year international transport programme co-funded by the EC, and an opportunity for Practical Action ITDG and other organisations working on similar programmes, to share their experiences, isolate lessons learned and recommend strategies for promoting good practice.

The workshop attracted participants from 14 countries across Latin America, Asia and Africa, representing the breadth of the transport sector from NGOs to government transport programmes. Select presentations and extensive group work enabled participants to debate issues and share experience of good practice, with field trips to the communities of Cumbe Mayo and Huanico providing the focal case studies.

The full workshop report is available at [www.ifrtd.org](http://www.ifrtd.org).

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## Promoting Dialogue between Community and the State

In 1999 the DANIDA funded Transport Sector Support Programme (PAST) was established in Las Segovias, Nicaragua. Its goal was the improved living conditions, access and mobility of inhabitants in the region's most isolated areas. Its strategy was to implement a system of improving rural roads using labour intensive techniques that would also ensure the long term support of the local authorities.

Initially the programme focused on the implementation of the physical works to a high standard, in tandem with skills and organisational training for the local community. Then once the works were completed and a solid foundation of skills and organisation in place at local level, the programme moved on to a second phase; organising beneficiaries to take responsibility for the routine maintenance of the infrastructure and persuading municipalities to budget for periodic maintenance works. With this second stage realised the programme is now in its final stage; decentralisation – the hand over of all responsibility to the communities and municipalities. With experience, skills and infrastructure in place it is expected that they can now find efficient solutions to their own problems concerning transport management, access and mobility.

To achieve this decentralisation and to ensure that the voice of the community will continue to be heard, PAST has concentrated on promoting a system of direct dialogue between local authorities and community based organisations. This system has grown in strength to the extent that today communities are able to make direct applications for project support to their local authority, and then manage the work themselves through community based Project Committees (PCs).

The PAST system is based upon a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder organisation involved in the management of any intervention; from conception through implementation to maintenance:

**PAST** funds, organises and initially leads the activity; investing in training and organisation for the communities, and contributing technical assistance.

The **Community** as the local partner contributes; labour (paid and voluntary), resources (gravel bags and land for roads), and commits finance and labour for long term maintenance. The community also contributes social capital by organising itself internally (including conflict resolution), electing representatives for the PC, deciding the membership of working parties (male and female), proposing technical overseers for building works (male and female), and taking care of the tools and project budget.

The **Local Authorities** listen to the needs of the community and facilitate and support the management of interventions. They provide technical, financial and human resources to support communities in the planning and implementation of projects and the sourcing of partners. They also contribute financially towards periodic maintenance works. Local Authorities put the applications they receive before their own Mayoral organisation the Rural Transport Council (RTC) for approval. They liaise directly with the communities through the PCs.

The **RTC** comprises 27 Mayors representing the local councils within the region. The RTC's job is to plan investments in transport infrastructure in the region. It is run by an executive board of 3 members democratically elected for a 4-year period, representatives of central government institutions and, it is anticipated, other institutions and NGOs.

The Las Segovias experience has demonstrated that communities can be willing to organise themselves and participate in the improvement and maintenance of their transport infrastructure where there is a system in place through which they are listened to. Through their combined efforts to meet their respective responsibilities, the Municipality and the Community have come to believe that appropriate transport interventions are an achievable reality, in the context of good organisation, efficient management, and commitment to an open and transparent dialogue.

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## Community Parliaments

The Rural Transport Services (RTS) project for Kenya is an action research initiative to facilitate the delivery of transport services for improved rural livelihoods, particularly with respect to improving farm practices and promoting marketing for food security. The emphasis of the project has been to establish problem solving partnerships that will enable communities to take on new challenges, build local knowledge on products, markets and technologies, develop practical solutions and ultimately build common strategies.

One of the key achievements of this project has been the establishment of Community Parliaments (CPs). CPs are legal civil society organisations composed of various common interest groups such as horticulture farmers, single mothers, Boda Boda (bicycle taxi) operators, donkey operators, and/or church groups. Common interest groups in each project locality elect representatives to the CPs, with at least 10 groups represented in each. They then meet regularly to plan, organise, implement, monitor and evaluate development interventions. In the four project localities where CPs have been established, communities have been able to partner with government, NGOs and the private sector to undertake community approved projects.

The Community Parliaments provide a framework for consensus through which communities can pursue various activities and an entry point through which external agents can provide beneficial services or support. For example, micro finance schemes have been established through which members of the community have borrowed money to invest in rural transport and agricultural production businesses. Additionally scheduled training, exposure visits and field demonstrations have enhanced local capacity for crop production and marketing.

Workshops funded by external organisations such as IFRTD's Poverty Watch programme, have created fora through which communities are able to develop an understanding of critical transport issues. This has in turn led to the adoption of appropriate interventions, for example bicycle taxis as a means of income generation and faster transport for

farmers. These workshops or *Poverty Watch Days* have also enabled new partnerships to be formed, particularly with the private sector.

The greatest challenge to establishing the Community Parliaments has been the predisposition of communities to prioritise short term individual gain over ideas and innovations that will generate long term sustainable growth and collective benefits. This perspective has been exacerbated by power struggles and conflicts of interest within the CPs.

A realistic understanding of the timeframes involved has been another lesson learned. Capacity building through face to face training, exposure visits and field demonstrations is effective but the uptake of new technologies still takes time and should be viewed as a long term venture.

Overall the RTS project has demonstrated that communities need cohesion to enable them to initiate pro-active partnerships with the government, NGOs and the private sector. It is the strength of these different partnerships that provide the ingredients needed to push communities forward. This kind of organisation may rely heavily on external support in the initial stages but a cohesive community can take charge as the innovation is seen to bear fruit at local level.

The RTS project, now in its 4th year, is implemented by a coalition of partners composed of the Kenya Network for Dissemination of Agricultural Technologies (KENDAT), the IFRTD, the International Labour Organisation – Advisory Support Information Services and Training (ILO-ASIST), and Practical Action.

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For more information about the Poverty Watch Programme please go to:

Web: [www.ifrtd.org/new/proj/pov\\_watch.php](http://www.ifrtd.org/new/proj/pov_watch.php)

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## Integrating Water Transport

The transient char (sand bar) areas of Bangladesh are vulnerable strips of land unconnected by road or rail to each other or the mainland. The waterways in these areas are natural thoroughfares with the potential to provide a cheap transport network. However char dwellers find their access to markets, services and resources constrained by infrequent and irregular boat transport services, the failure of boat engines due to poor maintenance and untrained mechanics, unregulated vessels that are unsafe particularly in rough weather; high fares, lack of credit and a monopoly by ghat (landing stage) owners who prevent the free movement of boats.

Practical Action Bangladesh has implemented a 2-3 year transport project entitled 'Improved Water Transport in the Char Areas of Faridpur' with financial support from the EC. The main objective of the project is to develop and promote inland water transport as an integral means of attaining community self sufficiency and development in the Char areas, improving the livelihoods of poor women, men, and children. Specific objectives include; identifying appropriate transport interventions, building capacity among the char communities, and influencing local authorities and other stakeholders.

### Practical Action Community Transport Programme

This edition of Forum News is funded by Practical Action ITDG's EC co-funded transport programme. The programme brought together various mobility programmes in countries across three regions with the common aim of building the capacity of communities to identify and address their own transport problems.

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The project set up Transport Committees (TCs); community based organisations to provide a focus for capacity building within the char communities. Each TC consists of representatives of the ten locations in the Faridpur project area, and reflects the breadth of different stakeholder groups within the local population including; Union Council Chairmen, opinion leaders, religious leaders, rural mechanics, boat owners and transport users. Each TC includes at least two female members.

Since the TCs were formed they have provided a bi-monthly forum in which local people can voice their opinions, needs and demands to the relevant authorities and service providers. The development and impact of the TCs correlates to the breadth of stakeholder representation they have been able to secure. For example are local government line departments or transport service providers present? Where this level of representation has been achieved the fora provide a platform for negotiation between the community (users) the private sector (boat owners/operators, ghat leaseholders) and the authorities. For example the community have been able to discuss and articulate the challenge presented by the monopoly of the ghat leaseholders and lobby the authorities for improved management of the ghats.

As these TCs are in the process of building their capacity it will be some time before they produce tangible results. Sustained participation will depend upon strong interest and the will to engage and collaborate with all stakeholders. Early implications are positive; effective links have been established for influencing policy and legislation, local boat makers have been involved to improve their skills, and local entrepreneurs have expressed enthusiasm and interest in the manufacture and maintenance of country engine boats through which the project has been successful in making improvements to quality, safety and comfort.

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## Rehabilitating the Milk Road – Huanico, Peru

Many of Peru's rural roads and trails do not appear on official maps let alone in the maintenance plans and inventories of central or regional government. The 22 km access road to Huanico, a small Andean town in the Northern Highlands, is one of these politically invisible roads.

Huanico has minimal basic services; a primary and secondary school, a health post staffed by a nurse, a domestic supply of untreated water; one telephone, and a radio in sporadic service. Farming is the main activity and the sale of milk the main source of income. However Huanico is also a key market hub attracting merchants and producers from different parts of the country every Friday to trade in agricultural products. These traders in turn take goods bought in Huanico to markets in other provinces.

The main Cruce Cumulca access road built 40 years ago has not been maintained and it now takes a 4x4 van two hours to cover just 22km. In the past a community organisation existed to carry out maintenance work but this tradition of communal collaboration has declined in recent years. Repairs are sometimes made by members of the milk committee but only when the road has become impassable.

The local community have identified the poor state of the road as one of the key constraints to their development. Currently the only transport service available to them is the milk truck once a day, for which they pay high fares to ride on top of the 'porongos' (Milk Pails). The journey to Cajamarca, the nearest city, takes 14 hours by milk truck compared to a 4 hour trip in a 4x4 vehicle. Many regular passengers report back problems from using the truck. It is felt that an improved road would encourage more traffic on the road which would benefit the marketing of local goods and ultimately enable a viable bus service.

However local people also identify their lack of internal organisation and technical and political knowledge as constraints. Although Huanico has many community groups; the Church, the Alderman's office, the Parents Association, the Mothers Club, and the Peasant Patrol, the political power within the town lies with just two groups; the delegated Municipality of Haunico and the Milk Suppliers Committee. It is evident that the struggle for power between these groups has created a division amongst the population. In addition despite the completion of a feasibility study for the resurfacing of the road it is still not accounted for by the national inventory of roads for rehabilitation. The local community feel they lack the political voice to challenge PROVIAS Rural (the national rural road programme) to prioritise their road.



*The Huanico Milk Truck departs a collection point*

Soluciones Prácticas ITDG have proposed a Model Rural Road Management Project to establish a more sustainable road maintenance plan. This will involve improving community organisational skills and seeking mechanisms to develop the motivation and management skills of beneficiaries alongside local public and private institutions. The project places a priority on solving the conflicts between the two dominant groups and encouraging them to develop an improved working environment.

In the proposed management model consideration has also been given to the incorporation of a micro enterprise to enable Huanico to generate its own development based upon the direct participation of local users who will receive financial compensation for services rendered.

At the Cajamarca Workshop participants were able to ask representatives of PROVIAS how roads are prioritised for the national inventory. PROVIAS outlined a decision making process in which PROVIAS hold prioritisation workshops with the Mayors of provinces and districts and then execute plans based on the Mayors' recommendations. It is therefore necessary for the people of Huanico to lobby their provincial government to prioritise the road rather than PROVIAS Rural. It is important for communities to understand the underlying decision making process at local, regional and national government level before lobbying for changes in policy.

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## News and Events

### Farewell and Welcome

In March IFRTD's first Executive Secretary, Priyanthi Fernando, took up a new position as the Executive Director of the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Priyanthi's legacy is a mature network that is widely respected as "amongst the most effective and efficient networks to have emerged from the development field in the 1990s" (*External Evaluation of the IFRTD, IISD 2004*). Her colleagues in the Secretariat wish her well in her new post and look forward to her continued collaboration as an active member of the network.

It now gives us great pleasure to welcome Marinke van Riet as the new Executive Secretary of the IFRTD Secretariat. Marinke joined the IFRTD in May after more than 6 years as the Program Manager for Africa for the New York based NGO 'Trickle Up'. There she was responsible for managing a network of more than 60 NGOs and community based organisations across Africa. One of Marinke's first challenges will be to initiate the development of IFRTD's new 5 year strategy.

You can contact Marinke via the IFRTD's UK office (see About Us box) or via email: [marinke.vanriet@ifrtd.org](mailto:marinke.vanriet@ifrtd.org)

**For all the latest news from the IFRTD network remember to check the IFRTD homepage at [www.ifrtd.org](http://www.ifrtd.org)**

### Transport Indicators – A Consultation Workshop

In April 2005 the Lanka Forum on Rural Transport and Development (LFRTD) hosted a consultation workshop on Transport Sector Performance Indicators. This workshop, funded by the World Bank, brought together participants from Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Nepal, and included representatives from the ILO, World Bank, SUSTRAN ASIA, ADB, SIDA and the Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities. The host country, Sri Lanka, was represented by the Ministry of Transport, Department of National Planning, Ports Authority, National Transport Commission, Centre for Poverty Analysis, Practical Action South Asia and the LFRTD.

The workshop is part of an initiative of the Transport and Urban division (TUDTR) of the World Bank to develop a comprehensive draft set of 'transport performance and impact indicators'.

As part of the ongoing consultations for this initiative the workshop aimed to raise awareness among key stakeholders and invite contributions to the process to ensure that it accounts for national priorities and long term sustainability. The workshop enabled stakeholders drawn from a variety of countries, institutions and transport disciplines to consult on their main sources of transport sector data and the capacity and constraints they currently encounter in collecting, analysing, storing and using high quality data.

Workshop outputs included raising awareness of the initiative, a country responsive matrix to fill the gaps in transport sector data, a country specific action plan for implementation of comprehensive transport data collection and feedback to strengthen the purpose, form and sustainability of the initiative.

The workshop, sponsored by the World Bank, was hosted by the Lanka Forum on Rural Transport Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport, Sri Lanka and the IFRTD. Facilitating this dialogue enables the IFRTD to bring the perspectives of developing country transport sector professionals to the drawing board and provide the World Bank's TUDTR with a 'reality check'. We hope this will contribute to synergies between expectations of countries and the Bank, and to the formation of long-term, sustainable partnerships.

For more information about the Transport Indicators initiative please visit: [http://www.ifrtd.org/new/proj/transp\\_ind.php](http://www.ifrtd.org/new/proj/transp_ind.php) or email: [peter.njenga@ifrtd.org](mailto:peter.njenga@ifrtd.org)

For more information about the LFRTD, an affiliated national network of the IFRTD please visit <http://www.ifrtd.org/new/Infgs/srila01.php> or email: [ifrtd@eol.lk](mailto:ifrtd@eol.lk)

### GATNET Hosts a Virtual Forum

In June IFRTD and GATNET hosted a virtual discussion on gender and transport issues for the development sector. The discussion was designed to share lessons learned, exchange new ideas and information, and to feed into the Round Table on Gender and Transport hosted by the TRB Committee on Women's Issues in Transportation on 11th July in Boston, USA.

The virtual discussion took place over 4 weeks with a new discussion theme each week. Volunteers from the GATNET community moderated the forum and posted weekly online summaries. The themes were:

- The role of transport in the Millennium Development Goals
- How ICT and technologies play a catalytic role in supporting the integration of gender into transport projects in developing nations
- Examining policy gaps – how to bridge the gap between transport policy and gender policy and translating policy into practice
- Gendered time poverty – the role of transportation in women's economic empowerment.

The GATNET gender and transport email community grew from a research programme to examine how gender has been mainstreamed into the World Bank's transport sector. The network communicates via an email discussion list hosted on [www.dgroups.org](http://www.dgroups.org). The email list is open to anyone with an interest in issues relating to improving mobility and access for poor women and men in developing countries.

To read the full summaries of the Virtual Forum and the Round Table and/or to subscribe to the GATNET email discussion list go to [http://www.ifrtd.gn.apc.org/new/gender\\_gat/index2.htm](http://www.ifrtd.gn.apc.org/new/gender_gat/index2.htm)

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### About Us:

The IFRTD is a global network of individuals and organisations working towards improved access and mobility for the rural poor. It provides a framework for collaboration, information sharing, debate and advocacy that bridges traditional geographic and institutional boundaries.

Membership of the IFRTD is free. All members receive Forum News and any other publications that are made available to the network. In over 20 countries autonomous networks that subscribe to the vision of the international network have become affiliated to the IFRTD as National Forum Groups (NFGs).

The IFRTD is facilitated by a small, decentralised Secretariat based in the UK, Kenya, Peru, Senegal and Sri Lanka.

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