

**INTEGRATING GENDER INTO WORLD BANK
FINANCED TRANSPORT PROGRAMS**

CASE STUDY

LESOTHO

**INTEGRATING GENDER INTO THE IRELAND AID
FINANCED RURAL ROADS AND ACCESS PROGRAM**

**PREPARED BY: MAMOEKETSINTHO AND TUMELO TSIKOANE
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main purpose of this study was to understand the processes involved in the relationship between Ireland Aid and the Department of Rural Roads (DRR) of Lesotho with particular focus on the way in which gender is mainstreamed in both policy and implementation of the Rural Access Program. Notwithstanding discernible elements of mismatch between policy and practice, DRR strives to prioritize gender inclusion in implementing the program. Insistence on a quota for inclusion of women during labor recruitment is a shining example of a practice worth replicating. However, like many other development projects, the Rural Access Program has solved some problems and not others and at the same time it has created new problems.

Ireland Aid has been supporting rural access program in Lesotho since 1992. The focus of the initial support was footbridges. In 1994 Ireland Aid extended its support to LCU for construction of rural roads and structures. These three components constitute the Ireland Aid Rural Access Program.

Responsibility for the road network in Lesotho is shared among four national agencies – Roads Branch, DRR, Local Government and Maseru City Council. Since its establishment in 1999, DRR has taken over all the responsibilities that used to fall under CWS and LCU. One of these responsibilities is the construction, maintenance and rehabilitation of gravel roads in the rural areas.

DRR is a recent creation from a merger of Civil Works Section (CWS) of the defunct Ministry of Works and Labour Construction Unit (LCU) in 1999. CWS was responsible for all roads constructed under food-for-work programs, the bulk of support for which came from the World Food Programme. Created in 1977 and like CWS, LCU was a branch of the Ministry of Works and was established with the aim of absorbing male migrant workers who were being retrenched from the South African mining industry. Taking the form of a pilot project when it started, LCU's main responsibility was upgrading and maintenance of about 2,500 km of feeder roads in different parts of the country. Subsequently it grew in strength and experience to the point where, in 1997, it was given responsibility for maintaining the Lesotho Highlands Water Project feeder roads in the Katse Dam area.

Data for this study were collected through a combination of primary and secondary sources. For primary data structured, semi-structured and open-ended questionnaires were used. An interview guide was used for focus group discussions. Ten projects were chosen to cover foothills and mountain districts. For secondary data, policy and project information documents were studied to establish the level of prioritization of gender in rural transport.

Reviewed documents indicate a positive enabling environment for gender mainstreaming in the rural access program. Though still evolving, the Review of Transport Sector Policy document bears testimony to this environment. For its part, Ireland Aid upholds the principle of supporting good practices by the GOL rather than imposing its own policies. Gender, HIV/AIDS and the environment are priority areas for Ireland Aid support and all three have a direct bearing on the transport sector.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CWC	Civil Works Section
DRR	Department of Rural Roads
DTT	Department of Traffic and Transport
DS	District Secretary
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
FIDA	Federation of Women Lawyers
GFP	Gender Focal Points
GOL	Government of Lesotho
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IFRTD	International Forum for Rural Transport and Development
IMT	Intermediate Means of Transport
I-PRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
LCU	Labour Construction Unit
LHWP	Lesotho Highlands Water Project
MEP	Ministry of Economic Planning
MGYS	Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation
MPWT	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
NGO	Non-Government Organization
RA	Research Assistant
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SHD	Sustainable Human Development
TRL	Transport Research Laboratory
WCW	World Conference on Women
WFO	World Food Programme
WLSA	Women and Law in Southern Africa

1. BACKGROUND

The Government of Lesotho (GOL) perceives the country's topography as a cause of problems for providing social services, while some development agencies see it as a challenge to be confronted head-on. A very beautiful country, Lesotho has over 85% of its territory covered by mountains which represent the rural proportion of the entire territorial mass of the country. It is also here that all the projects considered in this study are located.

The road network in Lesotho is young and remarkably simple, particularly compared with Lesotho's only neighbor, South Africa. It is estimated that Lesotho's road network extends over about 7,000 km, most of which are located in the lowlands. The highest concentration of roads per unit of land is in urban areas¹, a contrast reflecting the urban-biased nature of development efforts since independence

Four national agencies – Roads Branch, DRR, Ministry of Local Government and Maseru City Council – are responsible for parts of this network. The Roads Branch is responsible for primary roads (Code A) linking major towns and district centers as well as main border posts. The same is true for secondary roads (Code B) connecting districts and linking local centers to the primary roads. The Ministry of Local Government is responsible for part of the Code B roads and tertiary roads connecting local centers within districts. DRR is responsible for access roads linking one or more villages in the rural areas².

Both government and donor agencies view the lack of access in the country as a major development challenge. One of the consequences of this problem is that “much of the country is cut off in winter”³ due to snow and frozen rivers. In rainy seasons these rivers become full and hamper human mobility. Since 1994 Ireland Aid has been cooperating with GOL through the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (formerly Ministry of Works) to improve access through the construction of gravel roads, structures⁴ and footbridges. At an average of 16 km per year, about 80 km of rural roads have been constructed or rehabilitated.

Under the auspices of the newly created DRR, all construction is intended to be pro-poor in that it uses labor-based methods, providing much needed employment in the countryside. Albeit small-scale, these interventions have been important, especially for women because they are responsible for most household activities including such chores as fetching water and caring for the sick. These interventions are expected to contribute to relieving women of certain culturally defined gender-

¹ National Environmental Secretariat, 1999. *The State of the Environment in Lesotho*, p. xiv

² As this division of labor among different institutions is still evolving, there is no guarantee that the situation will stay unchanged for any of time.

³ Ireland Aid, *Annual Review*, 2000.

⁴ There are three main types of structure: mini bridges, a vented ford, and, slab and beam cross drainage facility type.

based roles and enable them to have spare time that could be gainfully invested in economic activities other than household chores.

2. STUDY OBJECTIVES

This case study, investigating the gendered objectives of the Department of Rural Road's Rural Roads and Access Program, is in partial fulfillment of the "Integrating Gender into World Bank Financed Transport Programs" project, commissioned by the World Bank and being undertaken by a consortium led by IC Net Limited.

The Lesotho case study comprises one of the ten such case studies being undertaken in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Like other case studies it is intended to:

- identify how gender dimensions have been included in the preparation of the Rural Roads and Access Program, in the form of rural roads, structures and footbridges in Lesotho;
- document the experience of implementation;
- identify the gendered outcomes of the program to date;
- identify lessons learned in respect of gender inclusion; and
- where possible, suggest good practices and highlight lessons that can be replicated in other countries.

This investigation seeks to identify the process by which Ireland Aid's rural roads and access program is implemented by DRR and how gender is integrated at the levels of policy, project identification, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Ireland Aid's rural roads and access program began in 1992 with the construction of footbridges, followed by the incorporation of rural road construction in 1994 and the construction of civil works structures incorporated into the program in 1998. Whilst Ireland Aid does not hold itself to a specific gender policy, it does have a set of strategies in which gender issues should be given priority, along with poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. This priority on gender has emerged from both the Beijing Platform for Action and from Ireland Aid's own poverty focus on vulnerable groups that include women, the disabled and elderly.

Chapter 3 of this report describes the methodological process for investigating the relationship between Ireland Aid and DRR and the integration of gender at the "macro", "meso" and "micro" levels of program implementation.

Chapters 4 and 5 review the enabling environment in which gender mainstreaming is practiced in Lesotho and its inclusion in transport sector policy, with institutional analysis. Issues of program design and implementation are reviewed in Chapter 6, followed by an evaluation of gendered actual outcomes and impacts of the surveyed labor based projects within the Ireland Aid funded rural roads and access program. The study concludes in Chapter 7 with details of best practice and lessons learned from the rural roads and access program, along with the mainstreaming of gender in DRR operations. Finally, samples of questionnaires and interview guidelines used to elicit responses from program stakeholders including contractors, laborers, the private sector and users, are in the Appendix.

3. THE METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS

3.1 DATA COLLECTION

To review the effectiveness of civil works projects funded by Ireland Aid and undertaken by DRR, some field research was undertaken to identify the impact of the rural roads and access program on community stakeholders including road users and laborers and in particular to discern any gendered impacts, be they positive or negative. Findings from the field research are discussed in Section 7.2 in which the impacts of projects are grouped into four key poverty dimensions: opportunity, capability, security and empowerment.

The study used various data collection and analysis methods due to its complex nature. Primary and secondary sources and a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques were used. In the process the researchers recognized women as both informants and active participants in the program.

3.2 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Research was undertaken on ten Ireland Aid-supported projects in five locations made up of mountain and foothill districts. Two mountain districts - Mokhotlong and Qacha's Nek - were selected. Three - Berea, Butha-Buthe and Quthing - were chosen to represent the Northern and Southern foothills respectively. Projects in Maseru (rural) represented central foothills.

The projects were selected from a list of Ireland Aid-funded interventions that were both completed and ongoing, to capture a range of historic and current projects for which users and labor could be interviewed. The projects were also intended to cover the range of interventions supported by Ireland Aid, including roads, footbridges and structures. The strategy was to include more than one project in each ecological zone, with projects selected from six out of the total ten districts. Projects that included footbridges were selected on the basis of their accessibility by research assistants, as they are in areas inaccessible by vehicle.

For ongoing projects, field research proved somewhat difficult because the beginning of the study coincided with the end of the fiscal year when there is usually very little activity. Table 1 indicates the geographical areas in which the case study projects are located, the type of intervention employed and the population density for the respective areas.

Table 1: Sampling of project type and location

District	Ecological zone	Number of Projects	Type of Project	Project Location	Project status
Qacha's Nek	Southern mountain	2	Road Structure/ culvert	White-hill- Tebellong Qanya	Completed
Mokhotlong	Northern Mountain	1	Road	Phutha-Malefiloane	Ongoing
Quthing	Southern Foothill	1	Road	Lekete	Completed
Butha-Buthe	Northern Foothill	2	Footbridge	BB/Mabuthile Makhunoane/Motsapi	Ongoing
Berea	Central Foothill	3	Road Structure Footbridge	Lipetu Lipetu Tsekelo-Mphele Ntsirele –Mapoteng	Ongoing
Maseru	Central Foothill	1	Structure/ mini-bridge	Khobeng/Roma	Completed

As Table 1 shows, ten project sites were covered representing all the chosen ecological zones and taking into account all the three types of project assisted by Ireland Aid.

Roads

The Ireland Aid program on rural access roads, which began in 1994, includes construction and upgrading. The maintenance component is a responsibility of DRR. These roads can either be contracted out to small scale local contractors or constructed by the Department using force account (permanent government employees).

Structures

Ireland Aid documents show that the program on structures started in 1999. The structures are constructed on former CWS roads and the focus, as in all other projects, is mountainous arrears where access and mobility are difficult and also where pockets of poverty are more visible. Each structure is estimated to serve 15,000 people and since 1999 seven serving 105,000 people have been completed.

Structures are built in winter when the water level in streams or rivers is low. When it is very cold most laborers are men. There is no written policy that prevents women registering for employment but it has been an established practice that the tasks in these projects are unhealthy for women. The senior engineering officer said that most of the tasks require the laborers to work standing in water and this is dangerous for women especially those who are at the childbearing stage. The few women employed in these projects collect stones.

Footbridges

Ireland Aid's funding of footbridges started in 1992. The footbridges, constructed where there are no roads, are intended to connect remote rural areas to the areas where services are available. Though the communities participated in identifying the footbridge as their transport need, they have no say in the design and size of the bridge. These two elements come as standards determined by experts. Some rural people would have opted for different structures.

Though DRR believes that there are more women than men in the construction of footbridges our findings showed that there were actually more men on site. The reason may be that towards the completion of the projects there is less demand for female labor which is normally concentrated in tasks such as drawing water and collecting stones.

The underlying assumption on the three programs is that they address the problems of isolation and mobility, but it is also believed that they can create employment opportunities for both men and women since they are labor intensive

The Rural Roads and Access program addresses not only issues of mobility and access for the rural poor, but also those of creating employment. Therefore, it was necessary for the investigation to be sensitive to the significance of "macro", "meso" and "micro" levels. At each level an effort was made to address the incorporation of gender issues.

3.3 SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION

The study employed content analysis of secondary data sources. Relevant policy documents were reviewed. Specifically policy documents for the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT), along with the Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation (MGYS) were reviewed. The Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) and the Ireland Aid Annual Review 2000 were used to inform the initial stages of the study. The main focus was to establish the extent to which issues of gender and transport were given priority by these institutions.

From MPWT the review sought to identify the level of gender inclusion in its policy. A related objective was to determine the extent to which DRR factored-in the gender dimension in designing rural transport infrastructure as well as the monitoring of interventions. From MGYS the study examined the extent to which the gender policy prioritizes rural transport and its impact on women in particular. The I-PRSP provided information on the level of gender inclusion and priority in national poverty reduction strategies. This information helped in highlighting the level of political commitment by the government in mainstreaming gender in its development agenda. The project profile and 2000 Annual Review of Ireland Aid have been used to examine the extent to which the donor emphasizes or prioritizes gender inclusion and poverty in the assistance rendered to the DRR.

The documents were used in secondary analysis were:

- Policy documents: Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT)
Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation (MGYS)
- Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP)
- Ireland Aid Annual Review 2000

- World Bank funded review undertaken by Sechaba Consultants (2000): ‘A review of past experience in the employment of women in road construction and maintenance in Lesotho’
- Video of DRR labor recruitment process funded under the same project by the World Bank
- Document on ‘Gender issues in the labor construction unit of the Lesotho Ministry of Works’ (Set’sabi, 1991)
- Gender And Development Policy, Final Draft, Ministry of Gender, Youth Sports.

3.4 PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

Primary data were collected by a combination of structured, semi-structured and open-ended questionnaires. An interview guide was used for focus group discussions. In view of time constraints, the research team deemed it preferable to develop short, multiple yet complementary and target-specific questionnaires rather than one comprehensive questionnaire, a strategy that took cognizance of the itinerant nature of some of the prospective respondents (e.g. small contractors). Five questionnaires were used to collect data (see Appendix B-F), along with some focus group discussions, using a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix G). Clarifying and verifying questions were done telephonically by the research team. A list of stakeholders is included in Appendix A.

Different stakeholders at different administrative levels participate in various ways in transport-related projects, the outcomes of which are experienced differently by various stakeholder groups. There is thus a need to obtain responses from all three levels of administration, i.e. “macro”, “meso” and “micro”. At each level various instruments were used to acquire information on the rural roads and access program.

Five research assistants, selected for their knowledge of the physical terrain and local dialects in the districts under study, were engaged in data collection.. One of these was also engaged for data entry using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

The underlying assumption of the study was that planning and implementing rural road transport in Lesotho may not have taken gender dynamics into account from the outset. It was therefore critical to embrace and adopt techniques that would elicit information that would allow for gender mainstreaming in rural transport facilities. It was also necessary to obtain information on perceptions, attitudes, practices and behavior that affect rural people’s livelihoods. Women were regarded not only as informants but also as active participants in their own right in development and in this ongoing program of rural roads and access.

Macro Level

Data from “macro” level (i.e., national) institutions give an indication of the political and financial commitment from both government and the donor community in prioritizing and engendering poverty reduction strategies. Information from this level was obtained through a desk study. The data helped to establish the extent to which the existing environment is conducive to the implementation of engendered transport interventions. Table 2 presents the macro level agency/institution and the type of policy document analyzed to obtain data.

Table 2: Data collection method – macro level

Institution	Source / Research Instrument
DRR	Project information documents, interviews
MPWT	Policy information documents
MGYS	Policy information documents
MEP	Poverty reduction strategy paper
Ireland Aid	Ireland Aid Annual Review 2000, interviews, project profiles

In addition to secondary data acquired from government offices and Ireland Aid, interviews were undertaken with the Program Advisor at Ireland Aid and both the Chief and Senior Engineer at DRR. These informative interviews elicited information on the process by which donor funds are transferred to the Department of Rural Roads, and the process of project identification, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation by DRR, along with the reporting process back to Ireland Aid for measuring project impact. This process is described in more detail in Section 5.

Meso Level

This is the middle level of government. Information from here indicates the level of decentralization of development initiatives. The interaction between state agencies, the private sector and civil society is fairly visible. The involvement of the latter two in realizing the national goal of mainstreaming gender in the development of Lesotho cannot be overemphasized. Table 3 shows the type of instruments used and respondents.

Table 3: Data collection method – meso level

Respondent	Research Instrument
District Secretary (local govt.)	Questionnaire (Appendix B)
Traffic department/Road Safety Unit	Telephone interviews
Small-scale contractors	Questionnaire (Appendix C)
Lesotho Council of NGO's	Content analysis (SADC Gender Monitor)

The District Secretary (DS), who is the government administration agency at the district level, works closely with chiefs and village committees. All development problems of the district are forwarded to this office. The DS personnel oversee the prioritization of transport projects and the recruitment of laborers on work sites. Local small scale contractors are contracted by DRR to carry out the various projects. The extent to which these contractors adhere to the conditions of gender inclusion is very important. The police come into the picture because, upon completion of construction of a particular road, DRR advises the Traffic Department about its availability for use. Traffic Department is responsible for issuing public transportation licenses.

NGOs have been visible in a number of situations where they acted as the voice of the oppressed. For instance, they intervened on behalf of people who were displaced during construction of the Katse dam. It seemed proper to find out the extent to which they prioritize issues of rural transport and their impact on women in particular

Micro Level

This level is composed of people who are normally referred to as beneficiaries. Inquiry at this level was intended to elicit information on the nature of rural transport problems and the actual impact of the various transport projects on rural men and women. Table 4 captures the type of instruments used on various respondents

Table 4: Data collection method – micro level

Respondent	Research Instrument
Road/footbridge/structure users	Questionnaire (Appendix D)
Road/footbridge/structure workers	Questionnaire (Appendix E)
Business community	Questionnaire (Appendix F)
CBOs (burial society)	Focus group discussion/interview guide (Appendix G)

Due to the breadth of the study across ten projects, it was impractical to undertake intensive focus group discussions with every stakeholder group and hence the administered questionnaires became the most useful tool for acquiring data, given the large sample and time constraints. The research assistants were sometimes confronted with problems of finding respondents to question, particularly in rural areas where households are often farming during the week and at church on Sundays. In addition, for many of the projects it was found that the users were often members of the local burial society and/or a laborer on the project and hence the research assistants had to ensure there was no duplication of responses. Laborers provided information on the operation of the projects, the impact on employment opportunities was identified and working conditions were examined but, most importantly, information on the level of participation of the communities was obtained from the workers. Users of the three projects also provided information on their impacts.

4. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Lesotho adopted Sustainable Human Development (SHD) as the principal theme guiding its development strategies during the Sixth Development Plan. SHD aims at enabling people to:

- lead long and healthy lives
- acquire knowledge; and
- have access to resources needed to accommodate acceptable levels of human needs

Most of the subsequent development policies build on this broad principle. Poverty reduction is central to SHD.

The unfolding of the Sixth Development Plan (1996-1999) was arrested by political riots in 1998 following disagreement on the outcome of national elections, culminating in looting and burning of public and private property. The country has yet to recover fully from the damage to investor confidence caused by these riots. A government report put the estimate for financial resources required for replacing damaged public and private buildings at M 153m (USD 20 million)⁵.

Every cloud has a silver lining. The negative effects of the riots have spawned a positive political will and outlook on the part of main political actors. The majority of political party leadership and stakeholders in development would not wish to see a repeat of 1998. This positive outlook has filtered into the economic sphere.

With a projected real annual growth of 4.4% this fiscal year and 4.8% next fiscal year, economic prospects are optimistic. In the words of the current Minister of Finance and Development Planning this bright prospect results from “a new dawn (that) has arrived.” This new dawn consists of three intertwined elements: participation, dialogue and partnership⁶ at macro, meso and micro levels of government. With this, the foundations of the enabling environment will become stronger.

4.1 GENDER AWARENESS

Lesotho is a signatory to international, regional and national conventions and legal instruments that advocate equality and human rights, which include CEDAW, ICPD, WCW/ Beijing Platform for Action, ACHPR and SADC Declaration on Gender and Development.

Nationally, the creation of Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation in 1998 by GOL signifies the political will to address actively gender disparities. Cabinet in March 2003 adopted the gender and development policy, marking a milestone in prioritizing gender issues. According to the Minister the policy is “a tool geared towards addressing the challenges of gender inequities and

⁵ Current exchange rate: 1 USD = 7.9 Lesotho Maloti

For details of the damage see Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Association of Lesotho Employers and Sechaba Consultants, 1998, *Lesotho 1998: Assessment of Damage to Business and Loss of Employment: A Joint Assessment of 1,045 Businesses of Maseru and District Towns*, Maseru: Sechaba Consultants.

⁶ Partnership between Parliament and the electorate; between Government and Parliament, between Government and all the people of Lesotho, and, between public and private sectors. Timothy T. Thahane, 2003. “Laying the Foundations for Sustainable Development: Budget Speech To Parliament for the 2003/2004 Fiscal Year,” March 10, 2003.

inequalities, poverty, increased spread of HIV/AIDS, retrenchment and unemployment by adopting a rights-based approach to development”⁷. Establishment of the Law Reform Commission, the drafting of the Married Persons Equality Bill and the Vision 2020 - all of these suggest a positive indication of gender awareness and preparedness of government to lean towards implementing gender sensitive policies.

Political commitment has been manifested through the effort to increase the number of women in parliament. Women’s representation in the national assembly and cabinet is 12% and 25% respectively. GOL has committed itself to achieving 30% representation by 2005 and the present adopted electoral model seems to be useful in attaining this.

The Department of Gender has embarked on a process of mainstreaming gender in policies, programs and plans on poverty eradication in line ministries. Furthermore, Gender Focal Points (GFP) in selected ministries and institutions have been created with the aim to “propose appropriate and effective gender mechanisms within their respective institutions and to provide support and direction for taking gender concerns into account in all aspects of planning and programming.”

The gender and development policy document does not explicitly mention measures to incorporate transport issues into gender policy, even under the topic of women’s employment (in construction). Priority program areas include most sectoral priorities and strategies except for transport:

- poverty and economic empowerment
- education and training
- youth
- power, politics and decision making
- health
- gender-based violence
- civil societies organizations
- media
- environment.

The policy document stipulates that the Ministry is responsible for coordination and implementation of the gender and development policy, including monitoring and evaluation systems on gender mainstreaming at all levels of program design, planning and implementation. Yet, in practice, the acceleration of gender equity and equality in the transport sector, while being championed by the MPWT in what is traditionally a very masculine sector, does not even feature in GOL’s gender policy. The next section evaluates the extent to which gender is mainstreamed into transport policy.

Gender for sectors other than transport is increasingly being mainstreamed through awareness campaigns. A case in point is the Department of Rural Water Supply in the Ministry of Natural Resources whose planning process for intervention includes community consultation whereby local stakeholders are involved in planning options for location of rural water supplies and the

⁷ Angelina Mathabiso Lepono, “Foreword,” Gender and development Policy,” Ministry of Gender, Youth and Sports, September 2002.

department advises local “water committees” to include actively include both men and women in decision making.

Another non-transport sector which has been historically dominated by women is education. According to the Report of Gender Audit in the Education Sector of 2003⁸, although women form the biggest group in this sector, there are significant gender disparities at management levels. However, that the Ministry commissioned this audit highlights the intention to address the problem of gender discrimination in the sector

Gender sensitization has never been and cannot conceivably be a monopoly of governments. Civil society, especially women’s organizations, plays an active role in promoting gender awareness campaigns. Prominent women’s organizations networks operating in Lesotho are Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) and Selibeng. Their pressure for revision of discriminatory laws has been significant. Partly as a result of their influence, several policies and procedures have been revised to ensure that erstwhile male-dominated activities and facilities become accessible to women. However, the SADC Gender Monitor (1999) found that the priority areas of concern for Lesotho NGOs do not include transport and in particular rural transport; according to this publication, even the issues of women and children were recently added on the list of priorities⁹.

Lesotho’s Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) explains how it seeks to address gender discrimination through revised policies and procedures to ensure that male-dominated socio-economic activities become accessible to women and cites the example of the road sector where “recommendations have been made on how the work organization and site management can be made more user-friendly for women and on the possibility of sub-contracting women in the sector, with flexible working hours.”

It also highlights that poverty reduction action plans in Lesotho do not, by their nature, significantly reduce poverty because of their shortcomings in using a top-down approach to planning, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It seems that the same is true in the transport sector where feedback from stakeholders of (civil works) projects indicates that community participation in planning and formulation is less than adequate, despite procedures to incorporate community members in needs identification being in place. The transport policy document states that the policy will be implemented by “consulting with community leaders and local government structures on planning, implementation and maintenance for local or specific roads and access development projects.”

Though the Government and civil society seem to be theoretically doing well in terms of gender awareness, it must be emphasized that there is a significant gap between theory and practice. We will have an occasion to comment on the level/magnitude and the implications of this disharmony between theory and practice in the findings section of the current study.

⁸ Abaji, O. The Report of Gender Audit in the Education Sector: Ministry of Education, Lesotho. February 2003

⁹ SADC Gender Monitor, Monitoring Implementation of the Beijing Commitments by SADC Member States. Issue 1 February 1999, SARDC.

5. INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

5.1 DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORT SECTOR POLICY

Roads in good condition are lifelines for the economy of any country. The need for a functioning road network cannot be overemphasized, especially for poor countries where the key economic activities (agriculture, manufacturing, trade and social services) all hinge on road transport.

Like many countries in the developing world, Lesotho did not escape the wrath of ill-conceived road building practices of the 1960s and 70s where *expansion* was given priority over *maintenance* of the existing network. Many of these countries missed out on building a culture of maintenance¹⁰. Where maintenance was considered, it was often capital intensive, in keeping with the development thinking of the time.

The “Road Maintenance Initiative for Africa”, promoted by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with the World Bank and with the support from the United Nations and several bilateral donor agencies, became a wake-up call for many countries, which had become addicted to the capital intensive style of development¹¹. This initiative provides the context for understanding the fledgling transport policy in the country.

For more than 30 years of political independence, Lesotho has operated without a clear road transport policy. Only in the mid-1990s did it come close to the most explicit articulation of policy. The Sixth National Development Plan refers to the overall policy for the “road transport” sub sector as “to have a roads network capable of supporting national economic activities, providing access to (those) communities ... living in isolated rural districts, and linking district towns.” This implies not only “the restoration of the network” but also “to ensure roadworthy conditions everywhere”¹². Three of the six specific objectives of this rudimentary policy are worth pointing out:

- reduction in the incidence of road accidents;
- enabling vehicular access to remote and isolated areas of the populace; and
- employment creation particularly through the utilization of labor-based methods of road construction and maintenance

These elements are particularly important for this study given its gender and pro-poor orientation.

MPWT has just embarked on a process of reviewing the transport sector policy with a view to aligning it to overall government policy on the cross-cutting theme of poverty reduction. At the time of compiling this report the policy document was in draft form. When finished, the policy will seek “to provide an enabling environment for efficient, cost effective and safe transport, within Lesotho

¹⁰ Cf. Hartman, S. 1993. “Potholes in the National Economy”, *Development & Cooperation*, No. 3, 1993. p. 16.

¹¹ In the context of Lesotho this initiative gave rise to the “Road Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project.” See for instance, World Bank, 2000. Road Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project: Mid-term Review.

¹² GOL, 1997 ‘*Sixth National Development Plan, 1996/97 – 1998/99*, Ministry of Economic Planning, Maseru: Government Printer, p.145.

and internationally, (as well as) to facilitate the sustainable development of the economy (sic) social services and of the population in general”¹³.

The GOL’s policy for the road sub-sector is to “ensure that existing roads and access routes are comprehensively and regularly maintained, are rehabilitated when required, and are upgraded and extended in an efficient and justifiable manner, to meet the needs of the economy and the population.” It is here that gender is explicitly expressed with a clause on applying “non-discriminatory policies in recruitment and operations, in all levels of employment in the sub-sector, in respect of gender, race, religion or disability, and actively redressing areas in which imbalances due to previous policies exist.”

Further, the strategy of DRR is to create employment opportunities for both gender groups, and progress towards gender equality at all skills and opportunity levels. As the section on gender prioritization (5.2.4) will testify, DRR is actively putting into operation these strategies; indeed, there are women at all employment levels of DRR, with three out of the four national regions being managed by women, along with women holding positions as technicians, contractors and laborers.

DRR was preceded by the Labor Construction Unit (LCU) which was created in 1977 to absorb retrenched labor amongst Basotho men who had been working in South African mines and the Civil Works Section (CWS), established in 1968 to construct footbridges and rehabilitate earth roads. Traditionally, the LCU, which maintained the country’s airstrips and constructed gravel roads, was technically superior but women’s empowerment and community consultation proved to be very poor. Conversely, CWS was technically inefficient, but had very effective social policies. For instance, CWS began a food for work program whose beneficiaries were 80% women, to provide sustenance to households headed by women whilst their husbands were working in South Africa. Hence, women were practicing labor based works for food many years before the LCU began paying cash to male labor.

DRR was established in 1999 following the merger of LCU and CWS. Food for work was phased out and women were employed as laborers in return for the same cash salary as men (unskilled laborers are currently paid M 34 per day). Senior management in DRR considers the merger to have been hugely successful, in that recruitment policies have been brought in line with assistance from the ILO which helped the merger of professional positions and has assisted in setting “task grades”¹⁴ for Lesotho.

I-PRSP expounds the virtues of rural road construction in reducing poverty reduction, particularly with regard to rural communities being employed in their own areas as laborers and being trained as contractors. Interestingly, the document also highlights how labor based practices have reduced rural-urban migration that would have over-burdened social services in urban areas. IPRSP also sees the creation of DRR as being an important development because of the focus on related infrastructure such as footbridges.

In 2004, MPWT will establish a single roads agency that will consolidate the existing national agencies responsible for the road network (Roads Branch DRR, Ministry of Local Government and Maseru City Council) which currently work in isolation of each other. In providing for the special

¹³ GOL, 2003. Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Review of Transport Sector Policy [Draft], Section 1.3.

¹⁴ The time in which a labor based activity or task can be feasibly achieved by men or women, without them being overworked

needs of rural access, the roads agency intends to make further commitments to labor based work methods and employment creation to alleviate poverty in areas where rural operations are carried out.

Although supplemented by international rail and air services, transport in Lesotho is predominantly road-based. Given that at independence in 1966 the indigenous Basotho were still a predominantly pedestrian society and relied on animal traction for transport of heavy goods, it is a reasonable assumption that this country has “achieved an exceptionally fast growth in its transport sector in the five decades since independence”¹⁵. However, village life is still dominated by pedestrian travel and animal traction. Ferries, skiffs and small boats are used for crossing wide rivers - some are government-owned and others privately operated.

The versatile wheelbarrow has become an integral means of wheeled transportation for the average household in all ecological zones of the country. This instrument has neutralized or transformed erstwhile gendered household stereotypes/tasks such as collection of water, which was regarded as women’s responsibility. Introduction of the wheelbarrow has increasingly led to men accepting the drawing of water as also their responsibility.

5.2 PERSPECTIVES ON RURAL TRANSPORT PROBLEMS

This part of the report outlines the variations in views of different categories of stakeholders on rural transport interventions. The section is structured by stakeholders in the study, representing the different levels of governance relationship at macro, meso and micro levels.

5.2.1 Government

As seen from the policy statement outlined above, the GOL visualizes rural areas in terms of lack of access and mobility. Rural areas are isolated due to the ragged terrain and rivers and hence rural people lack access to markets and services. Rural folk travel long and hazardous distances to reach the nearest service-providing areas. One study found that it took the people of Matebeng in the Qacha’s Nek district, on average, four hours of pedestrian travel or one hour on horseback to reach the nearest growth area¹⁶. Such situations impose considerable limits on travel opportunities, thereby contributing to rural poverty.

Where there are access roads, there is a gross lack of maintenance, which is blamed on fiscal constraints. Little has been done to encourage non-motorized and intermediate technology forms of transport for rural people, while motorized transport is typically infrequent or in poor condition when available. Under these circumstances, it is usually more than likely to find public transport terribly overloaded.

¹⁵ GOL, 2003. Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Review of Transport Sector Policy [Draft], Section 1.3.

¹⁶ Matobo, T. et al, 2000. *Appropriate Technology Needs Assessment for Lesotho*.

5.2.2 Donors

The main donor in this case, Ireland Aid, holds the view that roads are a prerequisite for development. It is expected that Ireland Aid would contribute positively to enabling people from remote areas to access services and facilities.

The Development Credit Agreement with the World Bank in the Privatization and Private Sector Development Project aimed to ensure increased private sector participation in the development process. In practice, this philosophy has meant rolling back the state and the creation of a Privatization Unit represents its loudest expression. It is important to mention this because in the context of this study it makes no practical sense to treat rural road transport operators as a separate category from road users or laborers because they all use the roads and structures regardless of where they are employed and hence are subject to the same transport needs and constraints.

When asked what their transport problems are, most road users in rural areas cited high and unaffordable fares. This response was not surprising, given that the majority of the rural folk are either unemployed or underemployed.

That there appears to have been very little involvement of the private sector, except in the provision of transport services, is hardly surprising. Rather, it should be seen as reflecting the weakness of that sector. The consequence is that a sizable proportion of the work still remains under government control.

5.3 GENDER PRIORITIZATION

The creation of DRR has helped to redirect the focus of government to issues of the rural poor. The Department's effort to train small-scale contractors has not only provided requisite skills but also created employment opportunities. The effort to employ labor-intensive methods implies the creation of employment opportunities, which are lacking in rural areas.

A key principle governing labor engagement, whether on contract or on force account work basis, is the provision to ensure that:

- employment is shared fairly among communities adjacent to the project;
- compliance with gender targets/quotas - small private contractors are expected to ensure that at least 30% of the labor force per rotation are women; and
- adherence to the rotation principle.

The target of 30% for gender quotas was derived by DRR as apt, based on the construction activities that women can feasibly undertake in roads projects, such as excavating to level, ditching, spreading of gravel and routine maintenance. Due to their physical strength, women tend not to undertake quarrying of gravel or the construction of structures, which often requires excavating rock from the river during winter. The 30% target is not written into contracts but is impressed on contractors by DRR during their training. Footbridge construction employs more than the minimum quota of women, often over 50% of labor being women, because of their ability to collect sand, stones and water and the light manual work involved.

The compliance rate, especially with regards the second provision, is higher in works carried out through DRR force account than in those contracted out. The reason is obvious. Being a department of government, DRR must be seen to be in the forefront of implementing its policies. Private contractors' outlook is different. One male contractor interviewed by Sechaba Consultants put it plainly that he "wouldn't like to see more women involved in road construction because they affect productivity, deadlines and task duties"¹⁷.

An increasing problem with contractors is that of over-tasking. DRR expresses labor based activities as "task grades" for which specific tasks can be undertaken by men and women. Increasingly, task grades are being lowered because laborers are taking longer to complete a task due to high morbidity levels from HIV/AIDS and poor diets as a result of poverty.

In a recent internal review, the Ireland Aid's Lesotho office explored ways to mainstream gender into its programs. We were unable to get access to this review as it had just been completed; suffice to say that gender features prominently in the priority areas along with HIV/AIDS and environment in the program policy document.

The World Bank in 2000 commissioned Sechaba Consultants to document the numbers and proportions of women employed at different levels of road maintenance and to evaluate socio-economic impacts on them and the success of these initiatives. The report analyzes the characteristics of employment on LCU roads (prior to the formation of DRR) and notes in particular that the retrenchment of mine workers resulted in more women seeking employment as a coping strategy due to lost remittances. Hence, the LCU began recruiting women on road constructions, maintenance and upgrading in 1986 with advice from IDA.

During focus group discussions undertaken as part of the research, 51% of laborers indicated that women and men do not have equal opportunities, with 43% stating that more men were employed than women. Further, after reviewing the interests of LCU, contractors and women laborers, it became evident that the primary interest of private contractors is to complete the job according to schedule using the most cost effective methods and hence they will employ laborers that will best serve their purpose with maximum profit (Sechaba Consultants, 2000).

This seminal report concluded that recruitment procedures are biased in favor of men; that contractors see women impacting negatively on productivity in road works; and that contractors claim that it is not on the basis of gender that they do not involve more women, but rather because of their productive capacity. Conversely, it found that government agencies have a gender perspective approach which actually favors the involvement of women on road works, although women are not maternally protected, with pregnant women and nursing mothers being marginalized from labor opportunities.

5.4 GENDERED OUTCOMES OF RURAL TRANSPORT PROBLEMS

Lesotho's road transport policy lacks disaggregated data on gender-specific transport problems. However, it is hard to deny that some problems transcend gender, even though ultimately their

¹⁷ Sechaba consultants, 2000. A Review of Past Experience in the Implementation of Women in Road Construction and Maintenance in Lesotho, p.28

effect would be felt more by women than by men. Both men and women still depend on pedestrian transport. Yet, in many instances a woman would be carrying out other duties at the same time as traveling. Such additional duties include carrying a baby on her back to the clinic/health center, head-loading water and firewood and carrying grain to the mill, (typically on the head, or lately, loaded onto a wheelbarrow). It is clear from the accounts of the respondents that men travel for reasons different from those of women.

On the basis of this difference, the extent to which the irregularity of rural public transport affects women and men differently becomes clearer. Women's travel in most cases involves carrying loads on their backs and heads, hence the implication that high fares would prevent women from using the facility brought about by the intervention. At the same time their social roles still demand them to take such trips.

The poor condition of the vehicles operating on these roads contributes to rendering these categories of roads a risk factor. This runs directly in the face of one of the key objectives of the road transport sector policy on reduction of accidents.

The study has highlighted a gender gap in rural transport operations. Most transport operators are men, probably due to women's limited access to capital to purchase motorized transport. In Lesotho's patriarchal society, women's domain of subsistence activities does not allow them time to be involved in transport operations, which demands extensive traveling far from home.

Operators see the major transport problems emanating from poor condition of roads, which are often slippery and impassable when it rains. They also claim that the absence of bridges is a serious problem, stopping operations in rainy seasons.

Vehicle operating costs are very high on roads that are dilapidated and in poor condition, because they cause physical damage to the vehicles, along with higher fuel consumption, thus rendering rural transport services unsustainable in remote areas where service demand is low. Owners incur expenses of repair which they cannot afford as they lack regular customers. Cars are often rendered un-roadworthy and therefore expose passengers to high risks of road accidents.

6. PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 DONOR AND GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVES ON DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

To understand the process by which programs and projects are designed and implemented by the donor (in this instance, Ireland Aid) and Government (DRR), it is described here in some detail to appreciate the nuances of the rural roads infrastructure sub-sector in Lesotho.

6.1.1 Ireland Aid

The Ireland Aid Rural Roads and Access Program runs for three years at a time (comprising the upgrade of 3 roads and construction of 14 footbridges and 10 structures in the current period 2002-4 at a value of M16.5 million). Ireland Aid Lesotho submits a business plan to its Dublin head office with inputs from DRR every three years detailing the number of projects and their characteristics (i.e., number of structures and footbridges, length of roads to be upgraded). The only condition that Ireland Aid places on DRR is that the projects should be in geographically isolated and poverty stricken areas. Ireland Aid has no influence on where the roads/structures are built, nor does it stipulate any requirements for rotational or gendered labor. Ireland Aid is clear that its duty in Lesotho is to support the Government, not to bring in parallel structures that undermine Government decision making and hence the planning and design of projects is undertaken by DRR alone.

Funds are released to the Lesotho office of Ireland Aid annually and then filtered down to DRR monthly, after its submission of a proposal indicating what activities will be undertaken for a given month and the required budget. Ireland Aid funds only the upgrading and construction of roads, structures and footbridges. Maintenance of the network is undertaken by DRR, financed by the national Roads Fund (obtained from fuel levies and vehicle licenses) and the treasury. However, Ireland Aid recognizes the financial difficulties of GOL to maintain adequately the country's road infrastructure and intends to provide greater maintenance support to DRR in the next fiscal year (2004).

Ireland Aid undertakes monitoring and evaluation of projects every three months by site visits to inspect physical progress. The quantity and quality of work achieved is monitored, along with the composition of labor on the road and the working hours. Occasionally, impact on the surrounding communities is assessed. Ireland Aid insists that DRR undertakes close monitoring and that full impact assessment is carried out six months after project completion, as the quality of the work is ultimately its responsibility. Ireland Aid seeks to develop with DRR a standard reporting format incorporating a checklist that including information on community participation at design, baseline information on attendance at schools, health centers and markets, monitoring of female participation and drop out rates and post- construction interviews with local communities¹⁸.

¹⁸ Ireland Aid, 2002.

Other donor agencies in Lesotho with similar rural roads access programs include the EU, World Bank and KfW; DRR creates business plans in the same way as for Ireland Aid. The Program Advisor at Ireland Aid indicated that there is a problem of donor coordination in Lesotho, which needs to be rectified in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning.

6.1.2 Department of Rural Roads

At the planning stage of rural access projects, DRR requests the ten District Secretaries to compile and prioritize requests for funding infrastructure projects in the district. The DSs liaise with communities through local councils comprising male and female village representatives and identifies problems. The problems pertaining to access and mobility are then submitted as a prioritized list to DRR every year.

The DRR conducts its program of works using force account and private contractors, who tender for projects and recruit labor based on guidelines supplied by the Department. Typically, private contractors are more efficient than force account, because they work to strict budgets and deadlines, whilst force account teams are known to be more flexible. Many private contractors are trained by DRR (60 contractors have been trained since 1993) and are required to be gender-sensitive in the recruitment of labor. Lesotho has a very good record for contractor training and its training center has provided international courses (72 South Africans have been trained to date) and is striving to be the champion of labor based works training in Southern Africa. DRR's gender mainstreaming even extends to contractor training, whereby the widows of contractors are trained so that company shareholders (often the wives of contractors) can continue company operations.

The selection criteria for funding of projects are different for roads and structures/ footbridges. For footbridges, detailed surveys are carried out by DRR and those projects in mountainous terrain and in regions most affected by poverty are prioritized for action. Once the projects have been selected, a program of work is drafted and distributed to the relevant DS who is then asked to assist with recruitment of local labor. Labor is rotated monthly so that there is fair and equitable employment of labor from project affected communities.

For the upgrading of rural roads, the same process is conducted, except preliminary surveys of population density and traffic counts are carried out; prioritization process is strictly on:

- population served by the road;
- current traffic volumes;
- location of schools, health centers and markets in the vicinity; and
- district development committee priorities.

DRR then prioritizes roads in each district and seeks donor funding for the top priorities in each district, following which the DS is asked to assist with recruitment. For roads, labor is recruited rotationally every three months because upgrading is more protracted than construction of footbridges and labor is sourced from communities along the corridor being rehabilitated. As donor organizations often have priority geographical areas, DRR requests funding from each separately, depending on their specific agenda.

DS typically writes to the village chiefs and asks them to assemble men and women to be recruited for labor. The laborers are then recruited in the presence of the DS, local MP, Chief, contractor and DRR representative to ensure transparency, using a formulaic procedure based on first come first served. Hence, a proportional number of people are selected from each village represented, of which a minimum of 30% should be women. All labor recruited should be those of poor status and hence most needy, physically fit, devoted to work on labor based projects, obedient and committed.

Once roads are completed, DRR informs DTT which then licenses transport operators in the area. It is hoped that the new consolidated Road Agency will lead to change in the planning process, with the incorporation of communities in planning and implementation, rather than simply in problem identification. The Agency will seek advice from other ministries (including agriculture, education and health) and the transport department to improve motorized and intermediate means of transport, since roads are not enough. Further, DRR is coming to realize the importance of impact surveys and has begun baseline surveys (pre-impact) that will be supplemented by post-completion post-impact surveys.

It is envisaged that force account practices will be phased out by 2005. The Chief Engineer at DRR indicated that, due to contractor behavior (as highlighted in the Sechaba report, 2000), legislation may be required to enforce the 30% gendered recruitment policy.

The Chief and Senior Engineers commented that the I-PRSP has influenced the thinking of DRR's management, particularly in highlighting where communities state that roads are not adequately assisting poverty reduction and in what areas DRR needs to improve to tackle poverty directly. They also emphasized the need to promote an integrated approach to poverty reduction across sectors. They believed that World Bank-funded Sechaba report (2000) it had raised awareness of gender issues in DRR and contributed indirectly to the use of minimum standards in gendered labor recruitment. Yet, the biggest influence on gender mainstreaming in the sub-sector was undoubtedly the merger of LCU and CWS and creation of DRR, which combined the best aspects of the former departments and in particular, saw the transition from food for work to cash payment of women laborers.

Finally, when asked to comment on the success of gender mainstreaming in public works, as opposed to other transport sub-sectors, the Chief Engineer expressed the influence that management has on engendering a department and that education of female engineers has had a major impact on DRR, in which many women hold senior positions. In the transport sector there is less female influence because men have economic muscle, for example, to purchase taxis, which are a high risk investment. While the laws of the country place property ownership rights with men, there is a gradually changing mentality and there are, for example, increasing numbers of female taxi drivers, operators and owners.

6.2 OPERATOR AND USER PERSPECTIVES ON DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

MPWT's sector policy paper and responses of DSs indicate that community participation in identification and implementation of projects is significant. Communities identify the type of transport intervention they need and the location of the project, i.e. if the transport need is to have a footbridge they will suggest where it should be built. Government officials said men and women "have equal opportunities in the decision making for the project in a public gathering." Technical aspects of projects are, however, the sole responsibility of DRR; for instance, the size of the

footbridge is a given regardless of whether the communities would like a broader facility to allow for movement of farm implements. In our interview with her, the Chief Engineer confirmed that footbridges come in a standard form and measurement. However, DRR is contemplating a study tour to Zimbabwe to determine the wisdom of transforming the present design. It is the responsibility of the DS and DRR to prioritize the transport projects as deemed fit by these agencies.

There is a clear indication from users and operators that communities actively participate in identification of projects, which is done at a *pitso*, i.e. a public gathering chaired by the local and which everybody is expected to attend. At these gatherings different rural problems and needs are identified and are prioritized for forwarding to the Members of Parliament who in turn give the proposal to the DS who forwards them to relevant government central agencies (including DRR for interventions that require road works).

The case study has revealed some cases where communities make a contribution of cash to the project cost. This is intended to instill some sense of ownership within communities. As Malmberg Calvo¹⁹ suggests, this type of ownership enhances responsibility, as communities try to maintain the transport facilities in good condition.

Though the communities participate in identifying projects, they have limited participation in setting recruitment and payment criteria. However, recruitment is done transparently at a public gathering. Labor is recruited from villages that will be served by the completed project. Those recruited are engaged rotationally, so that as many people as possible can access the employment opportunities created. Although a prerogative of DRR, the criteria for recruitment are made known to the communities before the work starts.

The conditions of engagement are spelled out in a form of contract between the laborer and DRR. The extent to which the individual laborer as party to the contract, or village communities for that matter, can challenge the criteria is not clear. What we know is that there is no provision for such a possibility in the policy guideline.

Construction and periodic maintenance of rural roads is carried out either directly by the DRR through its field force account or awarded to private small-medium contractors. The awarding of contracts confers on DRR an additional responsibility of overseeing/ supervising private contractors, over and above its own force account. This has necessitated that DRR develop clear guidelines and procedures for all private contractors who win contracts.

When the process of accessing funds (described in Section 6.1) is over and a contract has been signed between the MPWT and the contractor, the sequence of actions is:

- DRR writes to the DS about the road works to be carried out in the district concerned;
- the contractor, together with DS and Senior Regional Engineer (SRE), arranges for the recruitment day (the contractor has written a formal letter to DS requesting his assistance during recruitment);

¹⁹ (cited in Gannon C. et al 2001. Transport: Infrastructure and Services [Draft for Comments] World Bank Publication

- the contractor requests the DS to invite for recruitment day the villagers, Members of Parliament (MPs) or their representatives and chiefs of the villagers around the road and to state the number of workers needed; and
- recruitment is carried out only with the presence of the DS, MPs and DRR representatives, the chief and the contractor.

The DRR's supervisory role becomes evident from the last point. Its task is to ensure that adherence to procedure within the framework of overall government policy.²⁰

These procedures notwithstanding, incidences of unacceptable labor practices on the part of the contractors have been identified, the most common being contractors' failure to pay the workers. There are three categories of problematic contractors: (i) those who always pay laborers late; (ii) those who fail to pay workers due to their poor performance; and (iii) those who do not pay wages purposely or for reasons having little or nothing to do with the contract. We were told by one staff member of DRR of a case where the contractor chose to use the money meant for laborers' wages for making preparations for his wife's funeral. Invariably, failure to pay workers happens after DRR has disbursed monies to the contractors.

These and other problems necessitated the introduction of control mechanisms:

- all contractors must produce a work program for each contract;
- all contractors must show the cash flow for each contract;
- wages must be paid not later than the second week of the working month;
- supervisors including engineers must carry out spot checks during measurement days or during supervision days to find out whether laborers are paid;
- wage rates and the task system must be explained to laborers on recruitment days; and
- on measurement days, the contractor must hand in copies of signed wage sheets for the previous month and checks for contractors must be withheld if there is no proof that they have paid laborers.²¹

We learned from DRR that these control mechanisms have been partially effective and have not completely stamped out unacceptable labor practices by some contractors.

²⁰ Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Department of Rural Roads, Guidelines for the Recruitment of Workers on Contractors Sites.

²¹ Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Department of Rural Roads, Guidelines for the Recruitment of Workers on Contractors Sites, section II

7. GENDER DIFFERENCES IN OUTCOMES

Even though there may be minor differences of perspective between GOL and Ireland Aid, it is fair to say that a common denominator between both institutions is the view that lack of access is a major development challenge. The logic of this shared view is that once projects impact positively on beneficiaries²², although the opposite is commonly true.

Sections 7.1 and 7.2 highlight the expected/estimated outcomes of interventions funded by Ireland Aid's Lesotho Rural Access Program of rural footbridges, rural roads rehabilitation, and civil works. The section paints the picture as seen through the prism of both the donor and government. This is followed by a portrayal of the reality of outcomes as seen/ perceived and lived by the beneficiaries. Throughout the chapter the gender dimensions of the outcomes of these interventions are brought center stage by disaggregating the particular situations by men and women. The last section of the chapter highlights the ways in which some of the interventions studied are perceived to have contributed to improving or impairing the key poverty/ gender dimensions – opportunity, capability, security and empowerment.

7.1 DONOR'S DESCRIPTION OF EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The objectives of Ireland Aid support to the transport sector are to:

- create employment opportunities for men and women;
- improve access to schools, health centers and markets in remote areas;
- promote development of the private sector in implementation of the program;
- enhance the capacity of DRR to plan and monitor activities by transferring construction activities to small contractors; and
- mainstream environmental, gender, HIV issues in rural access projects through enhanced reporting and monitoring by the DRR.

Achievement of these objectives would mean reduction of both the physical and spatial isolation currently characterizing lives of the rural poor. The program also strives to create a user-friendly small scale infrastructure for rural women.

In streamlining support to the DRR, Ireland Aid aims to enhance its capacity to implement its strategic plan, which includes upgrading a further 1,500 km of rural roads to all-weather gravel standard (to date DRR has upgraded 1,700 km of roads to all-weather standard). Since the rural roads and access program began, Ireland Aid has funded 66 footbridges, 14 cross drainage structures and over 100 km of roads using labor based methods and a review of Ireland Aid support

²² The word 'beneficiary' needs to be used with caution in this regard. Even though it is intended to refer primarily to the communities at the local village level, it is also true that contractors regard themselves as beneficiaries since they are neither part of Ireland Aid nor Government agency (DRR in this case). By the same token there is need to underscore the difficulty in attempting to treat users, operators, business community as discreet entities in the villages where these interventions have been implemented.[See section 3.4.3 above].

to the rural access sector in 2001 concluded that “the program was well conceived and is being efficiently executed by the Department of Rural Roads”²³.

7.2 GOVERNMENT DESCRIPTION OF EXPECTED OUTCOMES

A glance at the main GOL policy documents on road transport creates a firm impression of a modernization/growth approach to roads. Thus, by striving to develop a functioning national road network, the objectives of the Government are to:

- open up the rural areas to integrate them into national and international economies;
- enhance access and mobility for poor men and women;
- reduce unemployment in the face of the increasing retrenchment of Basotho men working in South African mines;
- improve travel conditions for men and women; and
- impart skills to local communities and empower them to use local resources²⁴.

Government officials’ familiarity with these objectives became obvious in the relevant questionnaire²⁵. Answering a question on major transport problems in the district of Quthing, the concerned DS was quick to implore the essence of the objectives set out above. “The community used traditional modes of transport of transport of donkeys and horses but the area was inaccessible during rainy seasons [and] public transport was not available,” she answered. Her counterpart in the Berea district articulated it even more precisely: “Access to social services like shops, medical facilities, schools, churches ...”.

The next section maps some of these responses against the four key poverty/gender dimensions. It suffices at this point to observe that the problem of lack of rural access is central to the thinking of both Government and the donor.

7.3 PROGRAM IMPACTS AS EXPERIENCED BY MEN AND WOMEN

Even though each of the six sets of questionnaire, interview guides and focus group discussions were administered/ held separately (for reasons explained in Section 3.4.3), for analytical purposes we decided to group responses from a certain cluster of questions into two categories. The first relates to outcomes that contribute positively to improving all of the key poverty/gender dimensions. The category relates to the negative side of the story or unintended consequences. The cluster of questions that generated responses portraying positive outcomes revolved around:

- how communities lives have changed;²⁶
- how communities use these facilities;²⁷

²³ Ireland Aid, 2002

²⁴ See for instance, Kingdom of Lesotho, 1997. *Sixth National Development Plan*, Ministry of Economic Planning; GOL, 2001. Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

²⁵ See Appendix B.

²⁶ No. 14, Appendix C, No.7 Appendix D, Nos. 11 and 12, Appendix G.

- what major transport problems have been solved²⁸.

Prominent responses to the question on how communities' lives have changed included: ability to cross rivers easily and more often; transporting goods using such intermediate technologies as are available in the village (e.g. wheelbarrows); can now earn wages and be able to feed their families; they can now transport the sick and the dead easily; can now access facilities such as clinics easily; can pay membership fee to associations; no longer have to carry to carry goods on the head.

Figure 1: How the project changed lives of women

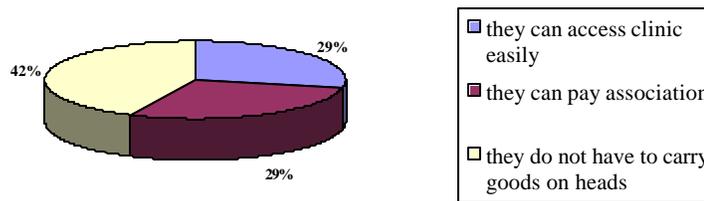
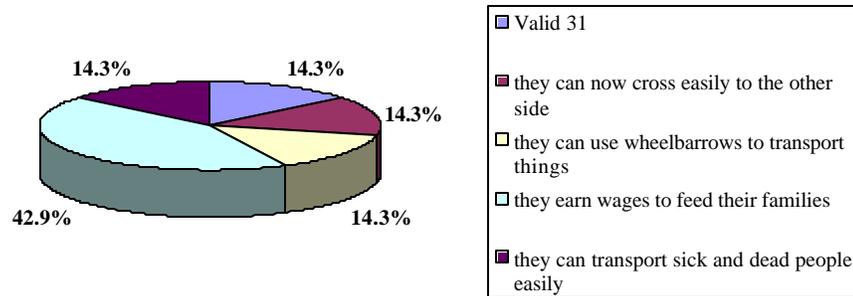


Figure 2: How the project changed lives of men

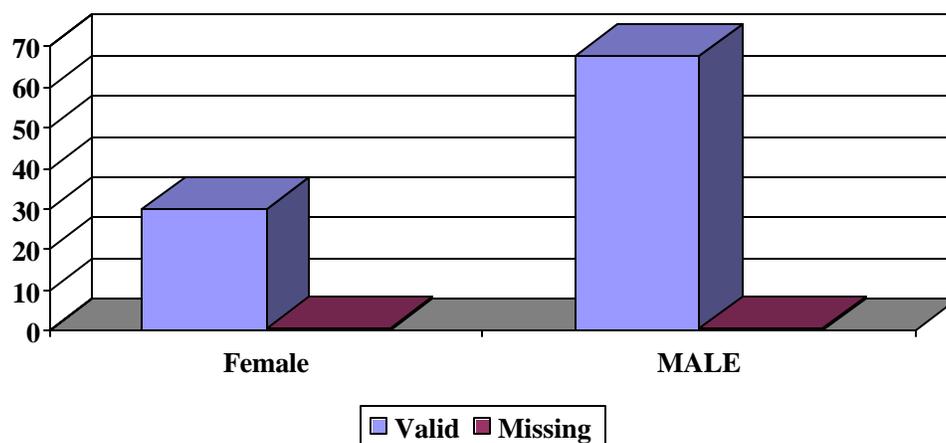


In addition to these responses directly from local beneficiaries, that people were able to participate, even if only in project identification, is significant. This bodes well in the context of a fragile democracy. It is for civil society organizations to build on this foundation. Figure 3 shows the level of participation across the interventions between men and women.

²⁷ Nos. 8, 9, 10; Appendix D.

²⁸ No.16, Appendix B.s

Figure 3: Community participation in project identification



However, these positive outcomes were accompanied, as is the case with most development initiatives, by unintended negative impacts. Negative consequences were reported by the respondents when asked to describe problems that have emerged following implementation of the project²⁹. The variables mentioned were:

- high unaffordable traveling costs;
- incidences of increased crime;
- loss of lives due to working conditions;
- loss of customers to big business in towns; and
- incidences of accidents due to vehicles that are not roadworthy.

Each of these claims is significant in its own right. For reasons of space, however, we comment on just a few, beginning with the problem of high unaffordable fares. It is clear from the responses that the presence of a road does not mean affordability of fares for the rural poor. On the other hand, the problem of high fares for rural public transport is unavoidable according to the Traffic Commissioner in Lesotho because fares are derived from a formulaic principle that does not factor in the socio-economic conditions of the population served. In terms of this principle, it is not a coincidence for fares on gravel roads to exceed those set for tarmac roads by a factor in the region of five³⁰. For comments on the last selected claim see the text box.

²⁹ Questions No 12, Appendix D; No. 13, Appendix F; No.9, Appendix G

³⁰ Telephone interview with the Traffic Commissioner, Friday, June 13, 2003.

Claims of Loss of Lives: Lekete – Moyeni Road

A point of concern that emerged during data collection in this area was a claim that lives had been lost due to what local people termed “*mine khorhla*” (mining that causes fatal respiratory complications). Whilst it is difficult to completely dismiss claims such as this, it is possible that such deaths may as well be related to the high prevalence of poverty and diseases such as HIV/AIDS. The fact that officially the working day begins at 7.00 a.m, and that most of the construction takes place in winter, could easily worsen the already frail health status of many laborers.

Table 5 summarizes these gendered outcomes as influenced or brought by implementation of the rural access program.

Table 5: Poverty Dimensions by Gendered Outcomes

Opportunities	
Women	Men
Earn income from new enterprises	Earn wages
Regular traveling	Regular traveling
Access to markets	Ownership of cars
	Access to markets
Capability	
Women	Men
Access to clinics	Transport goods using non-motorized means of transport
Regular travels	Transport the sick easily
Access to churches and schools	Transport the corpses to and from mortuaries
Security	
Women	Men
Do not carry heavy loads of goods on head anymore	Safe crossing over rivers (footbridge and mini-bridges

Opportunities

Construction of roads, footbridges and structures has not only contributed to the government objective of linking rural areas to centers of services, it has also created employment highly needed

in areas where abject poverty is the order of the day. Regardless of their temporary nature, opportunities to earn incomes that came with these interventions are worthwhile for poor communities. As Table 6 clearly shows, the projects have changed people's lives. Moreover, it is now possible for men and women to venture into small scale enterprises.

Capabilities

As the summary in Table 6 points out, largely as a result of the roads and footbridges, rural people can now transport the sick to health centers and corpses to mortuaries easily. With these facilities, some respondents claimed [see Figure1] that women no longer have to carry heavy loads and that they have saved energy and time which is critical for women who have to perform multiple chores.

Security

Traveling in rural areas during rainy seasons is made unsafe by flooding rivers. The projects have created regular and safe traveling and have eased movement of goods as women no longer carry heavy loads on their heads. This in turn contributes to good health for women. Some women, however, expressed their inability to use footbridges due to fear of their heights. As a result some community members are still exposed to risk of drowning.

Empowerment

One obvious element of empowering the rural poor men and women in the road access program is their participation in identifying their transport needs, which enhances the senses of commitment and ownership. Although they are not afforded the chance to participate at some project levels of administration, at least a sense of recognition prevails. It is also true that because of limited participation the rural poor have come to use some designs of footbridges, for example, that they may not have chosen if they had been given a choice.

Skills gained during construction have enabled some communities to construct mini roads to individual homes. Women indicated that the projects have enabled them to network with other villages through various associations. They also feel empowered as their community groups such as for funerals and groceries are now viable. This is the case as they can easily carry their goods from towns to villages.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The terms of reference required that the conclusion reflect:

- how and why externalities have influenced the integration of women into the policy, program or project;
- institutional factors affecting the differential impacts of the policy, program or project;
- contextual factors affecting the differential impacts of the policy, program or project;
- replicability of the policy, program or project in other countries, especially the factors determining it; and
- possible methods of disseminating the report within the concerned country and elsewhere.

It is clear that development interventions can solve some problems but not others. At the same time they can also create new problems.

8.1 PROGRAM EXTERNALITIES

- *International and regional instruments emphasizing the inclusion of women in development projects.* This led to institutional awareness of gender, and the ratification of these instruments forced commitment from government.
- *The agreements between GOL and the donor community required women's inclusion.* This is significant given Lesotho's dependence on development assistance.
- *Loss of remittances from South African mines profoundly affected the dependent economy, thereby exacerbating unemployment.* Evolution of LCU from humble beginnings of a pilot project is closely connected to this problem.
- *The World Bank funded study "A Review of Past Experience in the Employment of Women in Road Construction and Maintenance in Lesotho (2000), influenced DRR to have more focus on gender sensitivity.*
- *Donor-driven development initiatives including the PRSP process.* In this era of privatization the implementation of the program provides a good example of private partnership. No wonder one of the objectives of Ireland Aid is "to promote the development of the private sector in the implementation of the rural access program."

8.2 INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

- DRR conditionality for small-scale contractors to meet the recruitment quota of women, although the actual proportion is lower.
- DRR training of small contractors of both men and women.
- Contractors are required to write gender disaggregated reports that reflect the number of the laborers in each project.
- Lack of gender disaggregated tasks prevents women from registering for employment as some tasks are regarded as heavier than others.

- DRR concentrates more on compliance to the employment criterion at the expense of working conditions at work sites.
- The rigid working hours impact negatively on women who still have to perform their domestic roles that meet practical needs.
- The sectoral approach on rural transport misses the nature of rural development problems.
- Lack of maintenance impacts negatively on the life span of the projects.

8.3 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

- The high HIV/AIDS incidence adds to the burden on women who are socially expected to perform the community role of looking after the sick.
- Certain socially prescribed gender roles limit women's participation in employment opportunities.
- Public gatherings (*pitso*) are always dominated by men. Women's attendance in these may not necessarily empower them to voice their transport priorities or problems.
- Male youths' traditional role of looking after animals prevents them from being employed.
- Safety nets within communities allow women to earn equal wages with men, even though some duties/tasks at work site can be performed by males only.
- Rural people need more than gravel roads. Women emphasized more focus on meeting their practical, rather than strategic, needs.
- NGO's lack of interest in transport issues, particularly at the village level.

8.4 GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

- Rotational intake of laborers.
- Transparent and participatory recruitment procedure.
- All villages within the influence of the project area have equal opportunity for employment.
- Requirement that a set quota of employment be reserved for women.
- Continuum/posterity principle as practiced by DRR: wives of the contractors are trained so that when the husband dies the wife can keep the company going.
- Training of local small scale contractors. The training has attracted contractors within the SADC region, in particular South Africa, this can render a comparative advantage to Lesotho whose economy is very weak
- Imparting of supervisory skills to the local community. This empowerment of local communities can be extended to other development interventions.

8.5 DISSEMINATION

Copies of reports will be distributed to some of the major stakeholders such as DRR and Ireland Aid.

We envisaged holding a national dissemination workshop, funds permitting.

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