

## PROMISING APPROACHES TO

# Engendering Development

### Why this is a Promising Approach

- It illustrates the enhanced development impacts that rural transport projects can achieve when all project beneficiaries—including rural women—are included in the design and participatory implementation of the project.
- It suggests that, by responding directly to the needs of women end-users, rural transport projects can enhance social outcomes and poverty reduction, promote market participation, and increase gender equality.
- It indicates the potential importance for poverty reduction and economic growth of upgrading the transport systems traditionally ignored in rural transport programs that are heavily used by women, for example, pedestrian tracks.

### MAKING RURAL ROADS WORK FOR BOTH WOMEN AND MEN: THE EXAMPLE OF PERU'S RURAL ROADS PROGRAM

Access to transport is often a critical precondition for rural development. This note describes a rural transport project that, by involving rural women in its design and implementation, was able to deepen and broaden the project's development impacts.

Rural transport projects that ignore the transport needs of segments of the target population run the risk of achieving sub-optimal development impacts. Where women's and girls' transport needs and constraints are ignored, for example, girls' school enrolments may remain low, women may be cut off from productive economic activities, and family members may be unable to access health care and other basic services. All too often, project consultations are held only with select individuals, such as village leaders, who do not necessarily understand or choose to report on the needs and constraints of the project's intended end-users. Rural women are among the groups whose transport needs and constraints are most likely to be excluded in such consultations. Yet in most rural communities, women as much as men have transport needs associated with economic activity, schooling, access to health services and other activities important for community development and household well-being.

#### Involving all community members

The joint World Bank/IADB Peru Rural Roads program (RRP) sought to optimize development effectiveness and sustainability by involving all community members—including rural women—in project design and in the committees and micro-enterprises responsible for project implementation. The RRP was conducted in Peru's Andean region, an area with difficult mountainous terrain and a largely indigenous population in which women play key economic roles in agriculture, small scale marketing and animal husbandry. The RRP consisted of two distinct phases—PRR1, which focused pri-

marily on the main road network, and PRR2, which included smaller roads and tracks.

In the planning stage of PRR2, community consultation workshops were organized in villages that would be affected by the project. At these workshops, separate sessions for women and men were convened, to ensure that women were able to freely express their transport needs, constraints and preferences. The constraints on travel faced by women included women's heavy time burdens caused by their "double day"; cultural barriers to women's use of public transport and to long-distance travel; women's limited control over household resources, including lack of money and inability to access privately held modes of transport; and their limited voice in the planning of previous transport interventions, which had resulted in their transport needs being largely ignored. Because of women's important productive and care-giving roles in the project communities, these transport constraints were potentially costly to economic growth.

#### Women appointed to Roads Committees

At the consultation meetings, an NGO facilitated the appointment of villagers as members of Roads Committees, to undertake and contract out maintenance in the local area. Responsible to the community from which they were elected, the Road Committees approved operations, assigned tasks, paid wages and organized contributions of labor. The committees involved traditional community groups, including women's groups, to ensure that the transport needs of all community members were met. PRR2 also incorporated targets for women's participation in the committees, with the goal of at least 20 percent of road committee members being women. With the NGO's guidance, women were appointed to leading roles in many committees and formed the majority of members of some committees.

In direct response to the needs expressed by women, PRR2 supported improvements not only to the roads connecting communities, but also to 3000 km of non-motorized transport (NMT) tracks—tracks that are most often used by women and are commonly ignored by road upgrading programs.

### **Building micro-enterprises**

On completion of the road and track rehabilitation, PRR2 helped the road committees set up several hundred community-based road-maintenance micro-enterprises to maintain local roads and tracks, and also created a ‘Local Development Window’ to help fund other projects carried out by these micro-enterprises. To ensure women’s involvement, the project required that at least 10 percent of micro-enterprise members, and at least 30 percent of direct beneficiaries in Local Development Window projects, be women. The initially proposed criteria for micro-enterprise membership were also adapted to counter some of the constraints faced by women in the project area, for example, by prioritizing female-headed households, reducing the weight given to education level in determining membership, recognizing previous experience in specific tasks needed for road maintenance rather than in actual road building, and classifying women’s management of households as managerial experience.

### **Women’s involvement shows multiple benefits**

Project evaluations of PRR2 suggest that, as a result of women’s involvement in project

design and implementation, their productivity was enhanced, to the benefit of their households and communities as well as the women themselves. For example, women now participate more in markets and fairs, and spend less time obtaining fuel and food supplies than before project implementation, and their participation in local initiatives and political involvement have also increased. An impact survey found that 77% of women felt that the rehabilitated roads and tracks enabled them to travel farther, that 67% felt that the roads and tracks enabled them to travel more safely, and that 43% felt that the roads and tracks enabled them to obtain additional income.

Overall, the project helped to reduce travel times of both women and men by up to one-half, decreased transport costs for both passengers and freight, and increased the availability and quality of transport services. Cheaper and faster transport services in turn enhanced communities’ access to health services, improved the quality of education, facilitated social interactions, and enabled easier access to markets. In addition, the micro-enterprises generated jobs for about 4,700 permanent staff members, plus approximately 32,300 seasonal workers who maintain the roads and tracks. Many of the micro-enterprises have since developed initiatives beyond the transport sector, such as small-scale market trading and other entrepreneurial activities, thereby bringing new services to their communities and opening new employment opportunities. Women’s involvement was clearly key to these project outcomes.

### **Who to contact for further information**

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