Women and Roads

Green roads for climate resilience and water management

- Tailor Made Training
- Dhulikhel, Nepal
- Presenter Letty Fajardo Vera
Gender mainstreaming in rural roads, roads bridge and trail bridge programs
The benefits:

- Women’s mobility increased for seeking health services, social visits, markets
- Consumption pattern changed due to affordability and availability – meat, rice and vegetable
- Women’s incomes increased through short-term employment in road and bridge building works

Impact of roads on access to services non-farm employment etc.
Increase:

• During road construction, targeting and encouragement of women to undertake construction work, along with equal pay for equal work, have increased her self-confidence and empowerment, women having control over their earnings.
• Women involvement in road construction improved family well-being.
• The cash incentives had significantly outweighed the greater time and effort required.
• There is wide recognition that road building is an opportunity for disadvantaged families to earn income.

• Families associated with Road Construction Groups have received a range of complementary skills to help them improve their livelihoods and income generation.
• These included savings and credit groups and micro projects such as vegetable gardening and livestock rearing. Many adults, particularly women, have learned to read and write through adult literacy programmes.
• A wider awareness has been created among households of their rights and privileges. This has been promoted through opportunities to participate in and lead local committees (LRUC, LRCC, DRCC) where women and representatives of disadvantaged groups have been given key roles.
Women’s spendings

- Most earnings are spent on:
  - Household expenses
  - Health
  - Education of the children
- Access for business
  (tea/ convenience shops)
Changing mobility patterns after road construction

Source: Household Survey 2013
Woman movility

• Travelling outside their villages was occasional and for specific purposes. When they did travel, the reduction in travel time on transport services (1-3 hours saved when travelling to the district headquarters) was significant and had enhanced their mobility.
• The provision of transport services that allow return trips to be made securely the same day is an important gender issue.
• When transport time-savings combined with appropriate transport services timetables permit day-return journeys, women can become more productive and explore opportunities outside their villages to market produce, to access shops and to visit health facilities.
The Road Construction and Maintenance Program

• Women contribute labour and earn wages (un-skilled or semi-skilled workers)

• Men generally take the lead, particularly in construction as this is still considered a man’s job

• Women quotas are fulfilled in numbers in user committees (33%)

• Participation in planning, implementation and maintenance

• Conducive working environment (safety, insurance and childcare, separate toilets)

What is the experience from your side?
Women, Roads and Transport

- What is the situation in Nepal?
Women priorities

- Improved access to transport
- Upgrading of feeder road and footpaths (to address risks of accidents and increase motorised transport)
- Lower and regulated transport fares

Men priorities

- Improve design of roads and bridges and maintenance of road drainage
- Upgrading to asphalt
- Make road wider
- Regulate transport fares
What are the challenges for women?

- High transport fares
- Accident
- Dust
- First mile is a challenge
- Land loss without compensation
- Bad road conditions
- Road is too narrow
- Poor design and maintenance
- Hazardous road section
- Flooding and water-borne diseases

Question for discussion:

How do rural roads and transport affect the risk of harassment of women?
Group discussion

• The Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy for infrastructure projects of 2013 (by DOLIDAR) was intended to be mainstreamed by the District Development Committees (DDCs)
  • Are you aware of this policy – is it still used?
  • Is it in use by municipalities?
  • How is it implemented (if at all)?
  • What are the main areas for improvement and for making it more effective?
Internship programme: empowering women engineers

Since 2007, DRSP has been offering one-year internships to engineers to gain first-hand experience of implementing labour-based rural road programmes. Targeted towards women and minority groups, the programme has enabled 31 engineers (28 women) to develop their skills. Interns have been trained to undertake survey and design work and to supervise construction work. They have worked with district staff and road construction groups and learned the practicalities of labour-based operations.

According to DRSP records, 70% of the interns continue to work with DRSP or DRILP for a year, after which the majority have gone on to higher studies abroad. For most, the practical technical experiences they gained from their time with DRSP have formed an invaluable foundation to further their career development.

How this initiative is being carried out at present?
Conclusions:

- Conscious efforts to tackle adverse gender norms,
- Addressing women’s unpaid and care works,
- Better understanding on redistribution of women’s workload,
- Systematically engage women in road development planning,
- Continued social empowerment,
- Promotion of role models,
- More investments on women’s skills training,
- Earning opportunities (during construction) for women are limited due to lack of skills trainings.
- There is a strong correlation between poverty incidence and road access: remote, inaccessible areas are generally much poorer than areas served by roads. The provision of road access is one of the most effective ways to improve the livelihood of poor people in remote areas.
Thank you

Resource: RESEARCH FOR COMMUNITY ACCESS PARTNERSHIP (RECAP)
https://www.research4cap.org/index.php
https://metameta.nl