

APPENDIX G

RURAL ACCESS PROGRAMME IN NEPAL

Source: Green, M. and Sitaula, D. (2002). Social and economic justification for rural transport in Nepal: the design of the rural access programme (RAP). Presented at the PIARC International Seminar, Madagascar, 14-15 May 2002

The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) conceived the Rural Access Programme (RAP) in Nepal in 1999. One of the objectives of the programme was to identify the major social and economic issues emerging from an improvement of road and trail networks, and foot bridges in rural areas that could go towards enabling people to improve their economic condition and physical welfare.

The strategic direction of RAP was designed around a set of “*transport plus*” outcomes and activities in six selected districts in Nepal. The majority of people in these remote areas are poor by any classification and the access problems they face include non-physical barriers of social disadvantage and exclusion. The programme design therefore developed a series of additional measures, called Enhancing and Protecting Interventions (EPIs), designed to allow poor people to take advantage of new social and economic opportunities created by better physical access.

At the district level, RAP is designed to improve significantly access to valued goods and services for some 750,000 people and have indirect impacts on a further 400,000, a total of 1.2 million people.

The main outputs of the RAP design are:

- To help create within the rural transport sector a *policy environment that is supportive of effective rural access*
- To establish channels of information *to promote lesson learning*
- To enable *local institutions to plan, and then build, manage and maintain transport infrastructure* in response to local needs
- To enable the *poor and disadvantaged to benefit both socially and economically* from opportunities arising from improved access in RAP areas.
- To provide *knowledge and information* in RAP areas on sustainable enterprise opportunities

The main physical impacts are:

- a *feeder road* (89 km) linking Bhojpur district to the main road network
- some *500 km of district roads* in five districts, built using local labour and designed to bring 70% of the population within half a day's walk of a road
- *upgrading of trails and footbridges* linking into these roads and beyond

RAP is seen as a pilot programme for introducing innovations and incorporates a developmental approach that uses grass roots planning to harness local will and promote local self-governance. To promote lesson learning for other programmes, RAP has a monitoring and evaluation component in its implementation phase, which will evaluate the impact of using labour-based construction practices that are environmentally sound, and do not hurt the interests of the poor. It will also monitor progress at the district level towards sector targets derived from the National Development Plan and translated into access indicators as shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Access Indicators and Targets

Sector	Access Indicator January (2001)	Target 2004	Implementation Programme
Health	Average travel time to health post is 2.5 hours	90% of all households within 1.5 hours of health post	Improve trails/ HMGN to construct healthposts according to standard
Rural Roads	33% of population less than half day walk to roadhead	75% Of district population within half day walk of roadhead	Construct district roads
Markets	Average travel time to Hat Bazaar 2.8 hours	80% of all households to be within 1.5 hours of Hat Bazaar	Relocate markets to new roadhead
Education	Average walking time to primary schools is 50 minutes	No pupils to have more that 1hour journey to school	Improve trails / HMGN to build new schools

Impact Review Recommendations for RAP Design

The figures below draw together the recommendations of the Impact Review for the design of RAP in terms of enhancing and protecting interventions that will maximise the social and economic benefits for the poor, and that, where possible, will minimise adverse effects of new physical access.

Figure 2 : Social Development Recommendations For RAP Design**Social Impacts**

- Emphasise the relation between roads and rural access at all levels
- Liaise with providers of services to co-ordinate activities and allocate resources in response to changed demand
- Promote the importance of education – support removal of obstacles to access for poor households in labour gangs
- Carry out study into end-user perceptions of quality of service and support initiatives to improve quality

Institutional & Rural Access Impacts

- Interact with a range of stakeholders at a local level through village user groups involvement in DTMP preparation and beyond
- Encourage bottom-up planning and transparent systems accountability.

Social Mobility

- Support interaction between user groups in different RAP locations, especially for women and excluded groups
- Support inter VDC exchanges

Impacts on the Excluded and Vulnerable

- Ensure that data disaggregated for the M&E studies
- Raise awareness of the importance of recognising excluded groups as having distinct needs (especially disabled / chronically sick)
- Identify obstacles to service access for excluded groups and support sustainable interventions to increase level of inclusion
- Carry out study into excluded groups (eg dalits) to incorporate learning into RAP design

Gender Impacts

- Promote gender awareness throughout the project
- Ensure collection of gender disaggregated data
- Identify strategy to ensure women get access to employment through RAP
- Ensure employment of women and men with appropriate equitable pay and conditions
- Identify specific groups of women who may lose employment opportunities due to road construction (eg women short haul porters, petty traders along trails etc)

Figure 3 : Economic Recommendations For RAP Design**Agriculture**

- Identify locally specific opportunities for on-farm potential
- Promote representation of small subsistence farmers in user groups
- Provide training / support programmes tailored to meet their specific constraints (low-risk, low resources)
- Identify obstacles which prevent anticipated benefits actually taking place
- Carry out a review of the role of rural roads in stimulating agricultural economic growth

Trade Markets and Prices

- Identify local potential for increased cash crop production
- Provide information concerning markets (through private sector, HMGN and NGO services)
- Support the establishment of co-operatives to build solidarity and reduce individual risk in terms of producing and marketing goods

Labour During Construction

- Provide longer-term employment over a period of years
- Identify optimal targeting that self-selects target poorest households but does not disrupt social cohesion
- Ensure that target households are aware of the 'guarantee' of work to help them plan their livelihood strategies
- Support community level response to labour opportunities with capacity building for user groups
- Encourage transfer of skills to non-road activities

Income Generation & Employment

- Identify non-farm employment opportunities and support
- Identify craft opportunities linked to road construction and support (e.g. hand-tools production)
- Ensure that road alignments do not simply favour the richest communities
- Protect excluded groups from speculative land purchasing.
- Ensure that women made aware of compensation payments to their husbands

Portering

- Use local porters for RAP construction portering needs
- Identify strategy to train porters for alternative employment
- Carry out study (secondary data and action research) to identify response of porters to road construction
- Develop a RAP strategy for short and long-haul porters.

Growth Centres

- Encourage community based monitoring of impact of growth in emerging centres
- Respond as appropriate with awareness raising
- Develop a strategy to deal with issues of STDs and HIV AIDS linked to road provision

Mobility & Migration

- Carry out RAP study into impact of migration
- Provide information on seasonal work with RAP to allow households to plan migration

Four basic factors, described as the 'functional environment' or 'basic conditions' were identified as being directly related to promoting sustainable outcomes in the RAP and include:

- **Finance**, whereby the districts are net receivers of central government transfers and subject to specific rules and regulations regarding procedures and uses to which they can be put.
- **Skills** will also have an impact on local outcomes. Districts which have the capacity to carry out planning and have good administrative skills will be able to assess needs, develop plans and allocate resources more effectively and efficiently. Those with better technical skills available to them will be able to achieve higher quality outcomes through the consistent use of good techniques.
- Without **motivation** sufficient funds and adequate skills will not succeed in achieving RAP outcomes. There must also be a commitment on the part of both government and citizens to achieving good outcomes. Government staff, for instance, will continue to be subject to the same incentive structures of low pay, lack of promotion, poor working conditions which external inputs of programme funds and training will do little to change.
- **Ownership** can play a key role in improving motivation. Local leaders can develop methods to reward staff who achieve good outcomes. It is not within the capacity of the design consultant to "motivate" staff

members within government or civil society, but it can advise local leaders regarding the development of appropriate incentive packages in support of the programme

While such factors will be directly related to promoting sustainable achievement of RAP outcomes, ultimately the “success” in promoting these factors will be embedded in the **institutional** “rules” that govern behaviour among and between civil servants and civil society. These factors include:

- Good **information** flows among civil servants and between them and civil society is a key condition for promoting systemic change. Both civil servants and local citizens often lack timely, accurate information regarding both the real costs of poor outcomes, as well as the opportunities for improving existing methods without dramatic increases in financial resources.
- Predictable **enforcement** of rules is a vital condition for effective implementation of RAP. There are powerful incentives for both civil servants and citizens to do less than required by the RAP design. This means that individuals who are charged with building and maintaining specific sections of roads should be held accountable by both their superiors and by local citizens for poor quality performance and rent seeking behaviour.
- Positive **incentives** for civil servants and citizens to engage in RAP implies that there are immediate, positive rewards for those who plan and undertake RAP implementation

Figure 4: The Virtuous Circle

The Virtuous Circle—Conditions and Institutional Factors That Promote Programme Outcomes			
Conditions	Institutional Factors		
	Information	Enforcement	Incentives
Finance	High quality information will give planners and implementers choices regarding how to spend funds wisely	Funds are used appropriately and efficiently for programme purposes	Appropriate incentive ensure that funds are used for programme, and not diverted to other purposes
Skills	Improved skills will enable stakeholders to interpret and use information effectively	New planning/technical skills can be used effectively, as rules are enforced	Individuals have incentives to use new skills
Motivation	Motivated stakeholders will use information to change practices	Results of motivated individuals’ work will be recognised, as rules are enforced predictably	Appropriate incentives will ensure that motivated individuals are rewarded appropriately
Ownership	High levels of ownership will enable local leaders to use new information more effectively	High level of local ownership will promote better enforcement of rules, and this will discourage “defections”	Incentives will promote high levels of local ownership, as “owners” are rewarded for high quality outcomes

These two sets of factors can be placed in a matrix to show how the functional environment reinforces the basic institutional rules for successful project outcomes, what we have called the “Virtuous Circle”. The premise is that the basic conditions for improved rural access are much more likely to operate in an institutional environment in which the “rules” encourage stakeholders to focus their energies on positive actions that will result in sustainable impacts of improved access on poverty.