

Dear colleagues,

This is the electronic news bulletin of the "mobility" section within the Social Development Division of SDC. We are sending this message to people who we believe are involved in transport related subjects and initiatives. If you do not wish to receive twice yearly mailing in the future, please scroll down to the end of this page and follow the instructions for unsubscribing.

This medium lives through interaction. You are invited to send us your suggestions, requests and information flashes to <mailto:transweb@skat.ch>. The editors are grateful for any contributions received!

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News:

TransNet workshop on "Gender equity and poverty reduction through improved mobility & access", 29.06.03, SDC Bern

The objective of the workshop, organized within the framework of TransNet, was to gain a common understanding of rural transport and mobility and their relevance in the various social development processes related to promoting gender equity, reducing poverty and empowering poor people. The event started with a general input about the state of the art in mobility & access with respect to gender and poverty, followed by three thematic inputs (case studies) from Nepal, India and Madagascar. Working groups then analyzed critical issues more thoroughly and the participants looked at how these issues could be or have

been addressed in their own different spheres of activity. The workshop gathered 17 participants, including several who are working in a wider rural development context.

The workshop report and the papers presented are accessible online at http://www.skat.ch/ti/netw/download/TransNet_6.htm
For more information about TransNet, see <http://www.skat.ch/ti/netw/netw.htm>

"The TransWeb survey is online"

TransWeb is a directory of web sites within the transport & mobility sector. This Internet site helps development practitioners to obtain meaningful and relevant information quickly from the multitude of resources on the WWW. It provides access to a rationalized selection of knowledge sources that have been screened for quality, relevance and repetition. TransWeb root categories include "publications", "current issues", "events", "training", and "institutions". Through the flat menu structure, a short series of logical steps guides the user to hyperlinks, which then lead straight to the information required – often deep inside large, third-party websites. Sector professionals conduct the site moderation - all links are carefully screened before they are posted, their functionality is periodically checked and outdated information is regularly removed.

Given the rapidly changing character of information accessible through the Internet - as well as the evolving needs of its users - continual updating and further development of TransWeb is required. In order to assess the needs and preferences of users, an online survey was set-up in October. The survey will remain online until November 15th. To access the questionnaire, please visit <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=43154297836>.

To consult the results of the online survey, please visit <http://www.surveymonkey.com/Report.asp?U=29783660085>. A concept paper discussing the evolution of TransWeb is available at http://www.skat.ch/ti/netw/download/Concept_TransWeb.pdf. The TransWeb site is accessible at <http://www.skat.ch/transweb>

A new SDC backstopping mandate in "Mobility"

SDC has been involved in rural transport projects and programs since 1964. It has mainly supported road and bridge construction in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Construction technology has always been geared towards the use of local capabilities and materials, the involvement of the private sector and the protection of the environment. The participation of local governments and beneficiaries in planning, execution and maintenance has always been crucial. Until 2002, SDC maintained a thematic section called "Transport & Infrastructure" which could draw upon the vast Swiss expertise in the sector, including the experience made available through Skat Consulting.

In 2002, the thematic section changed its name to "Mobility", reflecting the wish to deal with "transport" in a much broader way. Following this shift in focus, a concept for addressing wider mobility issues within SDC is called for, and the definition of capacities required to transform such a concept into action is also needed. As a first step, the Social Development Division (SoDev) of SDC entrusted Skat Consulting with a new backstopping mandate in mobility for the second half of 2003. Apart from supporting SDC in defining and deciding on its future engagement in the field of mobility, the new backstopping mandate also strives to maintain the products and services delivered through the 1999-2001 mandates.

For further information, see <http://www.skat.ch/ti/netw/download/BSM2003.pdf> or contact Thomas Zeller (<mailto:Thomas.Zeller@deza.admin.ch>) or Roger Schmid (<mailto:roger.schmid@skat.ch>).

Dieter Schelling becomes infrastructure/road sector leader at WB resident mission Dar es Salaam

Dieter Schelling has been posted to the World Bank's resident mission in Dar es Salaam, where he becomes the new sector leader of the infrastructure/road sector. A Swiss national, Mr Schelling was a lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam in the late 70ties, employed by SDC. In the late 80s and early 90s, he worked as Team Leader in the Helvetas-implemented KURRP. After having advised the SDC country coordination office in Tanzania on road sector issues in relation with KURRP and its successor project, and having been instrumental in the planning of the Integrated Roads Project (IRP), Mr Schelling moved to Washington as a

regular Bank staff member. Since then, he has been very much involved in the Road Maintenance / Management Initiative (RMI) and was promoting corresponding road sector reforms around the globe.

Current issues & trends:

State of the art in the transport sector (from "Mobility & access: an overview" by Priyanthi Fernando, IFRTD, 2003)

In the past, "transport" programmes were synonymous with large-scale infrastructure development and with the promotion of motorised means of transport. It was accepted that transport stimulated economic growth, trade and the development of new investment, and was a pre-requisite for development. An efficient transport system contributed towards a lowering of transaction costs, allowed economies of scale, widened opportunities, expanded trade, integrated markets, strengthened competition and eventually increased wealth and well-being. However, it has become increasingly obvious that the benefits of such wealth creation have not been distributed equally. Poverty has increased, and the world is a much more unequal place than it was 40 years ago. This has led to an increased emphasis on equity and poverty reduction and to a much broader and deeper understanding of poverty - now seen as a multidimensional phenomenon.

Historically, transport investments had few readily identifiable benefits in terms of poverty alleviation and transport policy did not demonstrate the ability to take into account the complexity of approaches needed to reduce poverty. Yet investments in transport remain a significantly large proportion of the operations of major multilaterals. Better transport is an essential element of poverty reduction – but for it to be recognised as such, a change of focus is needed. The access and mobility needs of poor people must be specifically addressed and partnerships with other development sectors must be embraced. It is in this context that the international development discourse has shifted from debates about transport systems to discussions on mobility and access.

The challenge of going beyond traditional preoccupations with efficient transport systems - and focusing on the role that transport plays in meeting the needs of poor people - ought to encourage transport professionals to shift their emphasis from major road networks and motorised transport (used only by a minority of people in developing countries) towards aspects of 'local transport' as used by the majority. This shift in emphasis implies a greater focus on local infrastructure, footpaths, footbridges, rural roads, and means of transport such as animals, carts and bicycles - in addition to motorized transport. The concepts will also enable the wider development community to consider why transport infrastructure (access provision) and services (facilitating mobility) are essential if poor people are to strengthen their asset base and increase their access to economic, social, political and cultural resources.

Contact the author at <mailto:priyanthi.fernando@ifrtd.org>

For further reading, see http://www.skate.ch/ti/netw/download/documents/State_of_the_art_1.pdf

Other web-based resources are at http://www.skate.ch/ti/netw/transweb/tw_issues.html

Project milestones:

How can a bridge programme foster decentralisation processes and promote good governance?
(Suspension Bridge Programme of SDC/Helvetas Bhutan)

For the vast majority of people in the rural areas of Bhutan, walking is the only means of personal travel and goods transportation. As such, footpaths, mule tracks and pedestrian bridges are a prerequisite for improving mobility and access. Although Bhutan has a long tradition of bridge building, advanced technologies become necessary when wider rivers have to be crossed.

In 1985 the Swiss involvement through SDC/Helvetas in the Suspension Bridge Programme (SBP) started and since then more than 300 bridges have been constructed through financial and technical assistance. In 2002, the Royal Government of Bhutan introduced a new decentralisation act (Chathrim 2002). This act delegates financial and operational responsibilities to the Geog level (smallest administrative division of the districts). Although Bhutan has a tradition of community participation in development activities, Chathrim 2002 gives Geogs more democratic legitimacy, political powers and financial and operational responsibilities. The new system provides both opportunities and challenges to the communities for the implementation of

the Bridge Programme, particularly where maintenance is concerned - since this key factor has been neglected in the past.

Against the backdrop of delegating decision-making power (together with the management and administration of funds) to the lowest administrative level possible, the SBP offers an excellent mechanism for strengthening local institutional structures and promoting good governance through targeted capacity building measures. However, at the decentralised level, the necessary institutions and infrastructures need still to be built up – and this represents a major challenge for the programme and its partners. In response to this challenge, donors and implementing agencies should pool their resources and efforts behind a common framework and approach. In particular, efforts should be geared towards strengthening local capacities and reinforcing a comprehensive and multi-sector approach - through an area-based planning process at the Geog level. SDC/Helvetas would be well positioned to take a leading role in such a process.

Observations from a backstopping mission by Jürg Christen, Skat Consulting, Sept. 2003
(mailto:juerg.christen@skat.ch)

The SBP on the Helvetas Bhutan web site: <http://www.helvetas.org.bt/sbp.htm>

A community managed approach to rural transport development
("Programme Routes Rurales Gaya" of SDC Niger)

Since 1997, the "Programme Routes Rurales Gaya (RRG)" supports opening up remote areas, maintaining rural roads and community managed development in Gaya district, South Niger. Implemented directly by SDC, the RRG forms part of a package of interventions that the agency runs in Gaya, all of which are aimed at the social and economic development of the region through local capacity building. The RRG is currently in its 2nd phase (Jan. 02 – Dec. 03), drawing on a 4.15 million CHF financial contribution from SDC. The specific objectives are: (1) opening up remote areas through technical and financial support to community initiatives; (2) strengthening the maintenance system of the road network; (3) training partner organisations in technical and managerial issues.

In preparation for a 3rd phase, SDC mandated Daniel Gubler (P&M Geneva) and Moussa Mossi (Promo-Transport Niamey) to perform an external review of RRG. The positive outcomes are a sign that local development structures have been strengthened in project management through previous SDC programming in the region. By working with these local structures, the RRG obtained positive results in community managed project development – communities themselves identify the road segments to be considered within the RRG and then participate in construction and maintenance through contributions in cash and kind. The financial aspects of community participation are facilitated by the CFERA (Caisse de financement de l'entretien routier de l'arrondissement) - a pilot structure established by the district administration with the help of the RRG.

Compared with other rural roads programmes in Niger, the RRG distinguishes itself by (a) the existence of a master plan; (b) decision taking at the community level; (c) problem solving for maintenance issues at the entire district level; (d) promoting local private enterprise in maintenance work through a "Brigade de rechargement" integrated in the RRG. Implementing the RRG through a project unit that is directly accountable to the coordination office allows great operational flexibility and direct contact between the programme and the communities. However, the administrative institutions that are supposed to contribute towards sustaining the positive impacts of RRG are at the risk of being bypassed. Nevertheless, the RRG stands as a successful implementation of the national transport and poverty reduction strategies and will constitute an important contribution to the decentralisation process - the major challenge of Niger in the coming years.

By Peter Bieler and Ibrahim Ba (SDC Niger). For further information, contact <mailto:ibrahim.ba@sdc.net>
The RRG is on the SDC Niger web site at <http://www.ddc-niger.ch/dorr.html>

Recommended reading:

"Toolkit for promoting sustainability of rural transport infrastructure" (SDC/IFRTD, 2003)

The toolkit's aim is to strengthen the sustainability of rehabilitation and maintenance systems serving rural mobility - by enabling decision-makers and rural development practitioners to make local level investments that match local capacities. At the forefront of the approach is an awareness of the socio-political factors underpinning any community driven initiative. Participation is highlighted as key to the appropriation of the project by local stakeholders and vital in the mobilisation of local resources. Maintenance is addressed as an

integral component of any infrastructure intervention and as a product of empowerment and development processes rather than just a technical or financial issue.

Through a series of steps, questions and useful suggestions, the toolkit guides the user through an analysis of their particular situation, examining strengths and weaknesses, defining realistic objectives, and asking relevant questions to choose the best possible options. The Toolkit is presented as an interactive CD-Rom (English, French and Spanish).

For more information, see <http://www.ifrtd.gn.apc.org/proj/infratoolkit.htm>

To obtain a CD-Rom free of charge, contact the IFRTD Secretariat at <mailto:toolkit@ifrtd.org>

"Balancing the load - women, gender and transport" (Priyanthi Fernando & Gina Porter, 2002)

This book draws together local level research from 15 countries across Asia and Africa, to help understand how gender affects men's and women's access to transport, and what steps can be taken at community provider and policy levels to improve the situation. It presents fascinating information about different forms of rural transport in diverse settings; the social roles transport plays; the uneven, gender-influenced access to it; and the impacts that poverty, culture and gender-insensitive provision can have on women's lives in relation to transport. The various proposals (by contributors and those who discussed their findings in a series of workshops) for tackling what can only be described as women's mobility poverty are of great practical importance.

For more information, see <http://www.ifrtd.gn.apc.org/resource/btlbook.htm>

Free copies are available to organisations and individuals in the developing world at the IFRTD Secretariat <mailto:publications@ifrtd.org>. Individuals and organisations in Europe, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand should contact Zed books at <mailto:sales@zedbooks.demon.co.uk>

"Local transport solutions for rural development" (Paul Starkey, 2002)

Despite investment in roads, inadequate transport and accessibility constrain rural development. In sub-Saharan Africa, most village transport still involves people - mainly women - walking and head loading. A wide range of intermediate means of transport (IMTs) exist between walking/carrying and large motorised transport. These IMTs increase transport capacity and reduce drudgery at relatively low cost, solving local transport problems. Local transport solutions include wheelbarrows, handcarts, bicycles, tricycles, animal-powered transport, motorcycles and power tiller trailers. In this outstanding publication, the importance of local transport solutions to rural development is explored with the help of many photos.

The document is online at http://www.animaltraction.com/1_eng_intro.htm (in English) or at http://www.animaltraction.com/1_fr_intro.htm (in French)

Upcoming events:

CONFERENCE: ARC 2003, "Improved rural accessibility for poverty reduction", Tanzania Roads Association, Dar es Salaam, 20-22 November 2003, http://www.transport-links.org/transport_links/events/eventdetails.asp?id=43

COLLOQUE: SITRASS 7, "Mobilité et systèmes de transport en Afrique sub-saharienne - les défis de la pauvreté", Dakar, 22-24 March 2004, <http://www.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/let/sitrass/sitrass.htm#Echanges>

CONFERENCE: Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled People - TRANSED 2004, "Universal transportation and road designs: strategies for success", Hamamatsu - Japan, 23-26 May 2004, <http://transed.jp>

Link tips:

"Knowledge Demand Assessment for the Transport and Rural Infrastructure Services Partnership" (WB, DFID)

The World Bank / DFID "Transport and Rural Infrastructure Services Learning and Sharing Project (TRISP)" aims to strengthen the demand for, and improve access to relevant knowledge for stakeholders working in transport and rural utilities in developing countries.

<http://www.transport-links.org/trsp-kda/index.htm>

"Rural waterways & livelihoods - improving rural access and mobility through the development of rural water transport" (DFID, IFRTD)

The Waterways and Livelihoods Programme was initiated in 2002 by an IFRTD research project, funded by DFID's Knowledge and Research Programme. The research project aimed to raise the profile of rural water transport, to contribute to new knowledge about the impact of rural water transport upon poor people's mobility and access needs, and to highlight its potential benefits for the environment.

<http://www.ruralwaterways.org>

"Sustrans SA - sustainable transport information for South Africa" (CSIR)

SusTrans SA (South Africa) is an information and capacity building service of CSIR's Transportek Division. SusTrans SA is dedicated to the promotion of sustainable mobility with a focus on rural and urban public transport and on non-motorised transport.

<http://www.sustranssa.co.za/>

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<http://www.skat.ch/transweb>

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