Community involvement in rural access infrastructure construction and maintenance

- Experiences from the region

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Who is responsible for Rural Transport

• Rural Transport Infrastructure is under the lowest ring of the political –administrative structure in Sri Lanka and in Nepal.
  - Pradesheeya Sabha (PS) in Sri Lanka.
  - District Development Councils and/or Village Development Council (DDC/VDC) in Nepal.

• These types of councils in both countries are typically resource poor, both in terms of finance and skilled/adequate technical staff.

• The Department of Local Government (DLG) under the Commissioner of local Government is the main line authority over the PS in Sri Lanka and Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads (DoLIDAR) in Nepal have the autonomy to decide their own development priorities and financial allocation preferences.
Funds

• A minute portion of the income of the national budget and the decentralized budget allocations of the Members of Parliament and Provincial Council members are allocated for rural road and transport infrastructure construction and maintenance at rural level in Sri Lanka.

• Donors (mainly the SDC) invest a substantial amount of funds in the development of District Roads, Trails, and Trail bridges in Nepal’s mountainous areas.

(Construction of roads in the mountain regions is not ideal due to environment factors. Hence, improving the connectivity of rural villages by linking footpaths to existing national road network to avoid environmental degradation such as landslides.)
Main issues for the development of rural transport pilot projects in both countries by the Practical Action (PA)

Nepal:
• Environmental friendly technical options for mountainous regions in Nepal, particularly to transport agricultural produce and also to address the issues of low funding.

Sri Lanka:
• Fewer allocation of funds allocated for rural road construction and maintenance provided by the government and local authorities, compared to national roads.
Main features of the projects

• a methodology, through pilot projects to get the rural communities involved in the planning, construction and maintenance of rural transport infrastructure along with technical support from PA and local authorities.

• Capacity building of Technical Officers and Community Development Officers from the Local Authorities has been a part of this pilot project to ensure the continuity of technology by supporting the village community.

(Practical Action Sri Lanka, worked closely with the Department of Local Government of the Ministry of Local Government, while Practical Action Nepal worked closely with DoLIDAR.)
Technology

• In Nepal, PA has developed a 100% environment friendly technologies in the Gravity operated Ropeway and a manually operated River Crossing device in places where construction trail bridges is expensive.

• PA Sri Lanka, has introduced a “Community owned” road construction and maintenance system, having studied various systems developed by other organisations, like the ILO labour-based system, combined with a strong social mobilization component.
Community Contributions

Nepal:
• 100% Labour contribution + supply of locally available Materials required for the construction of Gravity Ropeway = to nearly 25% of the capital investment.
• Management, operation and maintenance of the Ropeway. Community has formed a Cooperative Society for the purpose.

Sri Lanka:
• 50% of the cost of labour.
• Locally available material.
• Management of the road maintenance.

(However, the systems needed regular supervision and a monitoring system to scale-up the system and ensure the sustainability.)
Communities Contribute

in Nepal

In Sri Lanka
A model on capacity building local authorities and communities in Sri Lanka

Awareness of local authority heads (Chairmen, Vice Chairmen, Opposition Leader, Secretary, Special commissioner)

Awareness for Technical & Community Development officers (workshops /interaction with communities)

Detailed training for the Technical Officers on the technology (8 – 10 days)

Detailed training for the Community Development Officers on Social Mobilisation (3 days)

Training of the community leaders and communities by the TOs and CDOs

Construction/Rehabilitation of road
METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

Department of Local government of the Provincial Councils headed by Commissioner of LG

Pradeshiya Sabhas (PS) (Local Authority)

Technical Officer (TO)

Community Development Officer (CDO)

Village / Community

Practical Action (PA)

SL Institute of LG
Knowledge sharing

- It is also important to see that all these knowledge shall be collated, stored and then shared in various formats by implementing organisations.

- Having a strong “community of Practice” in the region, with the inclusion of “real” actors who can play a significant role in influencing the respective governments, would be extremely advantageous. IFRTD is committed to its role in coordination, knowledge sharing and consultations with committed in-country rural transport National Forum Groups (NFG) and its global membership of over 3,000 individuals.

- It is also worthwhile mentioning that the system followed in Bangladesh by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), who has regular access to an allocation from the government’s annual budget for rural road maintenance through a prioritization system. Their knowledge in this type of system would be useful to other countries.
**Advocacy**

- Institutionalization of (scaling-up of) similar approaches and improve existing systems to ensure transparency with community participation.
- Influence the governments in the South to take steps to institutionalize and develop the rural transport infrastructure, particularly the maintenance aspect.
- Advocacy programmes to recognize the transport as a major component in sustainable development.
- Rio+20 summit recognised that; “Transport and mobility are central to sustainable development”.
People need transport infrastructure and transport services to access their livelihoods, markets, health services, education and numerous economic, social and civic opportunities.

Proximity to affordable, reliable and environmentally safe transport services is crucial for poverty reduction, economic and social development and meeting other Sustainable Development Goals.

In the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG), transport has been a “Missing link” in the whole process of achieving them.

Both projects mentioned in this presentation, have proven how small transport interventions can successfully address the poverty issue through improved access and connectivity, thus greatly contribute to develop the agricultural economy and social welfare of the communities.
Ensure sustainable transport to achieve the MDGS

- IFRTD in consultation with its global membership and partners has put forward a formulation of a transport-related post-MDG goal and targets to the High Level Panel on Post-Millennium Development Goals.

**Proposed overall Goal:**
- *To reduce poverty and increase access to services and quality of life through improved connectivity and transport*

**Overall global target:**
- *The number of people without connectivity and access to basic services is halved*

**Proposed indicator for rural transport:**
- *Proportion of rural people living more than 30 minutes' walk from affordable, reliable and safe transport services*

**Proposed indicator for urban transport**
- *Proportion of urban people able to use affordable, reliable and safe transport needed to access basic services and livelihood opportunities*
Possible actions to reach the connectivity and transport target

• In rural and urban areas, the target of halving the number of people without ready access could be achieved in four main ways
  
  • *Improving proximity to appropriate transport infrastructure (achieved by building, rehabilitating and maintaining roads or other transport infrastructure)*
  
  • Improving the frequency, capacity and safety of transport services
  
  • Improving the affordability of transport services
  
  • Improving proximity to basic services and economic and social opportunities
The End