

# id21 insights

communicating international development research

## Transport, the missing link?

A catalyst for achieving the MDGs

**W**hat do poor rural farmers do when the rainy season cuts off their access to markets? What do women in labour do when the nearest health clinic is 30 kilometres away and transport is virtually non-existent? How can girls attend school if the journey isn't safe? How do women provide for their families when the transport burden of domestic chores takes up potential income generating time?

Halving extreme hunger and poverty, reducing maternal mortality, achieving universal primary education, and empowering women are just four of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with important access and transport implications. This issue of *id21 insights* shows how critical access and mobility issues are for achieving the MDGs by 2015.



Fatima Adam Abakar from the Kafaut area, North Darfur in Western Sudan is a farmer and water vendor and is married with seven children. She owns one donkey which she uses for farming and selling water.

Credit: Annie Bungeroth (Courtesy of Practical Action)

Transport is hardly mentioned in the MDGs either as a cause of or as a potential solution to poverty. Yet transport infrastructure and services have a strong influence on:

- timely and affordable delivery of basic services: health, education, water and sanitation
- facilitation of economic growth through international, regional and national trade
- empowerment of vulnerable groups such as women, by reducing time spent on domestic tasks
- links with the market economy and the outside world: transport connects communities to markets and information, puts isolated people in touch with services and representatives, sustains important social networks and enables freedom of movement.

In this issue of *id21 insights*, each article builds a picture of transport's catalytic role in creating greater access to employment opportunities, educational and health facilities, agricultural development, social inclusion and networking.

### Making connections

Three quarters of the world's chronically hungry people live in rural areas. Enabling poor farmers to grow more food is an effective way to reduce hunger and poverty. Investing in transport infrastructure and services will:

- lower input prices
- increase agricultural production
- reduce agricultural traders' monopoly by improving access to markets

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Food security is also determined by purchasing power and therefore by the level and location of employment opportunities. Investment in rural transport would improve access to employment opportunities and create employment. In this issue of *id21 insights*, **Emilio Salomón** shows that using microenterprises for rural road maintenance leads to higher incomes and purchasing power and to the development of non-farm enterprises.

Delivering and accessing basic services will also reduce poverty reduction. **Gina Porter's** article demonstrates how getting to school in rural areas costs time, energy and money – preventing children, particularly girls, and staff from attending.

Three MDGs focus on gender issues: promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, reducing child mortality, and improving maternal health. **Priyanthi Fernando** shows that there are few incentives for women to use available transport, despite the fact that they often have to walk long distances carrying heavy loads. Fernando highlights the fact that 'available' does not always translate into 'appropriate' or 'accessible' transport.

Health services aiming to reduce maternal and child mortality and the spread of HIV/AIDS, would benefit from the safe, timely and appropriate transport of patients, health personnel and medicines. **Taye Berhanu's** work in Ethiopia on the safe transportation of expectant mothers and a new research programme on Mobility and Health aims to

- ▶ give more visibility to these issues.

Better transport can have negative side effects, however, for example exacerbating the spread of HIV/AIDS, as **Mac Mashiri's** article shows. Transport can also open up rural areas to adverse environmental impacts such as illegal logging – with negative effects on the local economy and social capital. **Luz Marina Monsalve Friedman** describes local efforts in Choco, Colombia to stop destructive road building.

Transport planners have yet to fully consider environmental issues from a rural perspective, despite the impact that urban transport development has had on rural environments. Sustainable, environment-friendly transport solutions do exist for rural areas however, particularly where waterways and non-motorised methods of transport are available.

### A new agenda for transport?

Transport and infrastructure are important issues on the development agenda but some bilateral donors are either opting out of transport spending or moving their transport expertise to other sectors, reflecting a shift to support for the MDGs. A large proportion of World Bank and International Monetary Fund lending is for infrastructure, particularly in middle income countries where there is less risk and more likelihood of long term maintenance. The

regional banks also have a major interest in infrastructure although the focus is shifting from rural transport to urban priorities and intra-city and port linkages.

**Donors need to realise that transport is integral to achieving the MDGs, and appropriate types of transport, for example by river or using animals or bicycles can be as important as building roads**

A wealth of knowledge is generated by international, regional and national initiatives that could help push forward a new agenda that tackles the relationship between rural accessibility and poverty. In India, for example the Prime Ministers Rural Roads Programme is setting nationwide targets for connecting rural and urban areas and is strengthening its focus on community participation to ensure sustainability.

Yet promoting transport services and integrating social development issues within transport planning remain a challenge. Donors need to realise that transport is integral to achieving the MDGs, and in rural areas in particular, appropriate types of transport, for example by river or using animals or bicycles can be as important as building roads.

While national and local governments are instrumental in providing investment, various non-governmental organisations

such as the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development are pushing forward a new agenda for rural transport.

**Peter Njenga** and **Kate Czuczman** discuss the need for policy choices that promote stakeholder involvement, sustainable funding mechanisms, and a development context in which rural transport is recognised as a central issue.

Transport ministers and donors need to:

- integrate gender perspectives into development policy, planning and implementation
- compile accurate and informative transport performance and impact indicators
- prioritise the sustainable construction and maintenance of rural roads
- evaluate the success or otherwise of local transport interventions
- concentrate on helping rural areas to develop transport systems that don't harm the environment as has happened in cities ■

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## Creating jobs

**In rural areas where non-farm employment opportunities are rare, road maintenance can provide much needed work.**

Andean countries have adopted a policy of employing community microenterprises to carry out routine maintenance on national, secondary and rural roads.

Between 2004 and 2005 the International Labour Organization sub-regional office for the Andean countries, in collaboration with PROVIAS Departmental in Peru and Unidad de Caminos Vecinales in Ecuador, assessed the benefits and impacts of the microenterprises.

The objectives of the research were to:

- evaluate the impact of microenterprises on creating employment
- evaluate the impact of microenterprise workers' salaries on household and community economies
- identify lessons that could help other organisations create sustainable microenterprises
- find out if microenterprises in Peru have the capacity to maintain secondary roads
- find out if microenterprises, which operate as collectives, could be applicable in areas of Ecuador with no tradition of collective working.

Originally financed by the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, microenterprises are now paid for out of

national, regional and municipal budgets. Microenterprise workers recruit new members, identified through a selection process that includes skills tests. The socio-economic situation of potential members' families is also considered, with preference given to the poorest families and to female-headed households. The enterprises have low capital requirements and can employ up to 15 workers.

For rural roads, one job is generated for every 2.5 kilometres that needs maintaining, compared to one job per 3.5 to 5.5 kilometres on national roads. The evaluation also showed that with fixed monthly incomes microenterprise workers and their families clearly benefit:

- Communities with microenterprises earn higher average incomes than surrounding communities and have raised their purchasing power.
- They can plan their expenses and generate savings for investments.
- About 40 percent of workers surveyed used their added income to buy, refurbish or expand their homes, buy land or establish collective or private businesses.
- Minimum health requirements and working conditions are covered.

However, some communities have expressed jealousy or indifference towards microenterprises due to the lack of real opportunities they offer others to participate in the economic benefits they provide. This problem is emphasised where poverty levels are high. Microenterprises need to co-operate with their local

communities through communal, sporting and/or civic activities.

Transport and economic planners need to be aware that:

- Road maintenance microenterprises are an effective way of maintaining roads, creating employment and reducing poverty.
- The extra cash improves purchasing power, generates savings and investments and builds capacity for local enterprise development.
- Contracting microenterprises to maintain secondary roads (with high traffic volumes) will require them to reinforce routine maintenance with machinery and more complicated technology.
- How a microenterprise is organised does not influence its technical performance – whether collective or private, it can perform satisfactorily ■

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#### See also

International Labour Organization – Employment Intensive Investment Programme  
www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/eiip/index.htm

Resultados de la Evaluación del Modelo Piloto de Promoción de Microempresas de Mantenimiento Vial y Propuesta de Aplicación en el Ambito Nacional, Lima, Peru, Juan Contreras Sepúlveda, 2003

Evaluación del Modelo de Promoción de Microempresas de Mantenimiento Vial en el Perú: Provias Rural y Provias Nacional, Lima, Peru, Juan Contreras Sepúlveda, 2004  
www.oitandina.org.pe/



# Getting to school

## Achieving universal primary education

**P**hysical mobility and transport barriers that prevent rural children from attending primary school can be substantial but are often complex and hidden. The situation is particularly severe in sub-Saharan Africa where, with few exceptions, more than half the children in any age group fail to attend school regularly.

Research by the University of Durham with children, teachers and parents in Gomaa and Assin districts in southern Ghana identifies transport availability and costs as a significant barrier to rural children's regular school attendance.

Children may have to walk up to six kilometres to go to school, after they have done household chores and other types of work (often involving transporting goods). At one off-road village, boys and girls from about the age of ten regularly carry heavy loads of firewood to the district headquarters to sell before they go to school – a total journey of around ten kilometres.

Bad roads and inadequate or expensive transport commonly prevent children living in more remote areas from attending school regularly. Other transport and mobility-related factors influencing school attendance include:

- Age, gender, birth order, physical disability and family socio-economic status may affect which children are able to travel long distances to school, particularly if travel is unaccompanied and involves unreliable public transport.
- Local agricultural conditions and associated economic production patterns affect the daily chores that a child is expected to perform, such as herding cattle and collecting water and firewood.
- The distances between the locations of these activities and the transport available affect how much extra time a child has.
- Inadequate and/or costly transport for moving farm produce and other goods may cause families to use their children, especially girls, as porters, which delays or prevents their attendance.

## Gatnet Gender and Transport Community

Join this mail discussion group if you are interested in improving access and mobility for poor women and men in developing countries

[www.dgroups.org/groups/worldbank/gatnet](http://www.dgroups.org/groups/worldbank/gatnet)



A boy on his way to school in Debresellasie, a village in Areza sub-zone, Debub Zone, Eritrea. Children have to walk up very steep hills for a few hours to reach the village school.  
Credit: Ezra Simon, 2002

Members of an all-female road construction crew move piles of gravel in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In January 2004, the World Bank approved a \$309.2 million project to restore Ethiopia's roads to enhance trade and transport. This money is part of a larger \$2.75 billion fund and a 10-year effort now underway to renew Ethiopia's network of roads.

Credit: Ian Oliver, 2004  
(Courtesy of Photoshare)



**Boys and girls from about the age of ten regularly carry heavy loads of firewood to the district headquarters to sell before they go to school – a total journey of around ten kilometres.**

- Where public transport is costly and/or irregular, boys may be able to use bicycles to reach distant schools; the time girls spend on domestic tasks (and sometimes cultural conventions) tend to restrict their opportunities to cycle.
- Teachers are often reluctant to take up positions in more remote village schools because poor transport options will isolate them from regular interaction with colleagues and other people of similar social status. Such villages may be without adequate teachers for long periods; teachers posted to these locations may take regular unofficial absences.

Children and teachers face many difficulties getting to school in rural parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Insufficient evidence exists however, concerning the extent and nature of impacts on school enrolment and attendance.

A new study is starting to develop this work on children and mobility in sub-Saharan Africa. Where linkages are found, imaginative context-specific solutions will be needed. These might include:

- promoting wider availability of bicycles (as the recent Shova Kalula National Bicycle Programme has done in South Africa by providing subsidised bicycles), bicycle repair courses for girls and boys in school, girls-only buses, or distance learning.
- research that directly involves children

(both in and out of school) to establish both the issues and potential solutions

- using public sector transport to achieve educational goals, including running mobile libraries with information and communication technologies, travel allowances for teachers, organising school transport and so on ■

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### See also

Improving policy on children's mobility and access through development of a participatory child-centred field methodology/toolkit, Project Pages  
[www.dur.ac.uk/child.mobility/](http://www.dur.ac.uk/child.mobility/)

Children, Transport and Traffic in Southern Ghana, International workshop on children and traffic, Copenhagen, Denmark, by Gina Porter and Kathrin Blaufuss, 2-3 May, 2002

'Living in a Walking World: Rural Mobility and Social Equity Issues in Sub-Saharan Africa' World Development 30 (2) pages 285-300, by Gina Porter, 2002

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## Balancing the load

### Gender and mobility

**Women, particularly in poor rural areas, often spend more time and effort on transport, have less access to public services and less control over resources. Women also have fewer opportunities than men to use different types of transport such as wheelbarrows, animal traction or motorcycles.**

Improving women's and girls' mobility and reducing their 'time poverty' would help achieve the third MDG: promoting gender equality and empowering women.

'Time poverty' means that women tend to work much longer hours than men and have to make more trade-offs between their activities. This restricts their economic choices and they cannot easily transfer their labour to the market economy. Women also have unequal access to agricultural support services and inputs, market information and credit (particularly credit based on peer collateral that relies on frequent meetings).

World Bank research found that in Morocco new roads make travel to school safer, encouraging parents to send their daughters to school and increasing female primary school enrolments to 68 percent

from a pre-project rate of 28 percent. In rural Pakistan, communities with similar levels of school availability have different primary net enrolment rates for girls, which depend on the availability of all-weather roads.

Investing in water, sustainable energy and transport infrastructure that cuts the time women spend on household tasks can drastically reduce their time poverty and remove constraints on their empowerment. Appropriate interventions include:

- local paths and tracks that lead to water or wood sources
- transport services that meet women's special health needs
- affordable transport for women such as bicycles or providing them with credit services to access existing technologies
- transport services that support women's economic activities, such as increasing the load carrying space on public transport.

#### Poor gender relations and low purchasing power still restrict women's access to transport

Gender issues, however, are rarely prioritised in transport investments. In China the national gender machinery, responsible for ensuring implementation of gender equality strategies, includes 24 ministries and 5 civil society organisations but not the Ministry of Transport. Since the World

Bank first highlighted women's unequal transport burden ten years ago, its more recent research in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Tanzania and Zambia shows that a combination of poor gender relations and low purchasing power still restricts women's access to transport. Women's mobility is also restricted by their lack of 'power to choose' – including what transport mode to use or where they can go.

Addressing gender equity and women's empowerment does not just depend on investing in roads. It also depends on:

- the commitment of governments and transport agencies to mainstream gender into their planning processes
- how far government and transport agencies are able or willing to address women's time poverty, their lack of access to affordable transport technologies and ultimately the gender relations that reinforce these barriers to female mobility ■

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#### See also

Integrating Gender into World Bank Financed Transport Programs, IC NET, 2004

[www.dgroups.org/groups/worldbank/gatnet/docs/TAG1\\_final.pdf](http://www.dgroups.org/groups/worldbank/gatnet/docs/TAG1_final.pdf)

Balancing the Load: Women, Gender and Transport, Zed Books: London, edited by Priyanthi Fernando and Gina Porter, 2003

## Transport for pregnant women in Ethiopia

**Africa has the highest maternal mortality ratio, with 830 deaths per 100,000 live births, according to the World Health Organization.**

Antenatal services and care after giving birth, assistance from a skilled attendant and access to emergency obstetric services would reduce these figures.

Yet in rural areas where patients often travel long distances to reach referral health services without appropriate and affordable transport services, such essential care is difficult to achieve.

The Ethiopian National Forum Group (ENFG) has researched how to transport critically ill and high risk patients safely. In rural Ethiopia, where 85 percent of the population live, patients find it difficult to reach clinics or referral hospitals. The research shows that there are two main problems:

- The critical shortage of any means of transport in rural areas forces patients to walk long distances, resulting in a deterioration of their condition by the time they reach the health centre.
- Where traditional means of transport are used, the way patients are positioned for travel can cause complications. Common traditional transport includes: locally made wooden stretchers carried by four people, on the backs of animals or other people, or transport by horse or donkey cart, truck or any available car.

Such methods are problematic:

- Keeping patients in a safe and neutral position is often difficult.

- The delay in getting patients medical treatment can lead to additional health complications.
- Patients with severe and multiple injuries, such as cervical spine and spinal cord injuries, risk secondary organ damage.

The most vulnerable – those lacking adequate transport and suffering from poor health – are pregnant women and fistula patients. It is more challenging for medical personnel to perform life-saving activities and may result in patients dying from a secondary transport-related injury.

Two main policy recommendations arise from the research for local planners, decision-makers and government officials:

- Hardware – Physical access to health services would improve with integrated planning by health, transport and other government ministries. Better transport technologies, both motorised and non-motorised, such as bicycle ambulances for short distances, or taxi ambulances for medium and longer distances would help enormously.
- Software – In the short term, training materials to illustrate correct positioning of patients using traditional means of transport would help. These could be based on existing 'training of trainers' models used by health-related non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations and local health centres.

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**A pregnant woman in Zambia rides in the back of a pick-up truck for an emergency visit to a clinic. Obstetric fistula is a problem for pregnant women and develops when the blood supply to the vagina and bladder or rectum is cut off during labour. A hole forms through which urine/faeces pass uncontrollably. Women with fistulas are often rejected by their husbands and their communities and forced to live an isolated existence.** Credit: CCP, 2001 (Courtesy of Photoshare)

#### See also

Transport and Health in Ethiopia: the Impact of Traditional IMTs on Critical Patients, Presentation to the Transnet Workshop on Mobility and Health, by Taye Berhanu, November 2004

[www.trans-web.ch/transnet/transnet8/](http://www.trans-web.ch/transnet/transnet8/)

Toolkit on Gender Transport and Maternal Mortality, by Margaret Grieco and Jeff Turner, 2005  
[www.people.cornell.edu/pages/mg294/maternalmortality.html](http://www.people.cornell.edu/pages/mg294/maternalmortality.html)

The Impact of Transport Provision on Direct and Proximate Determinants of Access to Health Services, Swiss Tropical Institute, by Kate Molesworth, 2005  
[www.ifrtd.org/new/issues/Molesworth2005.doc](http://www.ifrtd.org/new/issues/Molesworth2005.doc)



# Halting the march of HIV/AIDS in Africa

**A**cross eastern and southern Africa, the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS on individuals, households, communities and society as a whole, is devastating. No sector has been left untouched, including health, education, agriculture, transport, small and big business, trade and civil society. What can the rural transport sector do to help lessen the impact of the disease?

A study by the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development in Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe reveals very little integration of HIV/AIDS issues within national transport programmes. Transport costs are a major obstacle to seeking or supplying healthcare treatment. Immunisation and disease control programmes are problematic because the safe and timely delivery of medicines is often disrupted. Poor access prevents patients from seeking healthcare and from returning for further treatment.

**The spread of HIV is intensified as people become more mobile. On average, HIV prevalence among long-distance truck drivers is considerably higher than among the general population**

Yet, improving rural access can be risky: the spread of HIV is intensified as people become more mobile. Transport hubs, road corridors and locations of infrastructure construction and maintenance all act as catalysts for the rapid transmission of HIV and other infectious diseases.

Evidence shows that, on average, HIV prevalence among long-distance

truck drivers is considerably higher than among other transport workers and the general population. In Tanzania, truck stops attract commercial sex workers, as well as petty traders, bar maids and so on from surrounding areas. The primary transport sector response has been to focus on prevention by targeting transport and commercial sex workers, without acknowledging that people near transport activity areas also need safeguarding.

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research in South Africa recently completed a pre-implementation study for the South African government on integrated rural mobility and access (IRMA) in three districts. People with HIV/AIDS need regular contact with healthcare professionals and the availability and affordability of rural transport services is crucial in lessening impact. IRMA seeks to:

- improve patients' attendance at clinics
- improve flexibility as to where healthcare professionals are posted
- introduce transport technologies that reduce the burden of domestic activities so that women particularly, can take up paid employment or have more time to care for members of their

household living with HIV/AIDS

- provide rural clinics with motorcycles to improve their access to better-equipped hospitals or, for instance, to transport blood samples or deliver medical supplies.

The study highlights the important role transport plays in reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS. The transport sector needs to educate and counsel its personnel and be more involved in reaching communities along transport corridors. For rural transport to become more effective in the battle against HIV/AIDS there is a need:

- to identify the most vulnerable and people living with HIV/AIDS
- for community based organisations and households to engage in action research to identify the most appropriate solutions
- to institutionalise a multi-sectoral partnership approach, with the transport sector playing a central role, anchored in the realities of people living with HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable groups
- for more work to strengthen coping mechanisms and strategies that will ensure the sustainability of rural livelihoods long after external inputs have ended ■

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## See also

Community Responses to HIV/AIDS along transit corridors and areas of transport operations in Eastern and Southern Africa, IFRTD/CSIR, Final Report, April 2004

[www.ifrtd.org/new/reg\\_wrk/reg\\_hiv.php](http://www.ifrtd.org/new/reg_wrk/reg_hiv.php)

## A global network for rural transport

**Conventional approaches to MDG 8 – a global partnership for development – tend to focus on trade, aid and private sector issues. The International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD) is developing another type of partnership, a global network of individuals and organisations to improve access and mobility for poor people in rural areas.**

IFRTD provides a network for collaboration, information sharing, debate and advocacy that overcomes traditional geographic, hierarchic, and sectoral boundaries. In 30 countries autonomous national networks are affiliated to IFRTD which is facilitated by a small decentralised secretariat in Kenya, Peru, Sri Lanka and the UK.

The network is involved in a range of programmes that directly impact the health and poverty eradication MDGs. Below are two examples.

### Mobility and Health

The IFRTD, in collaboration with international and Swiss transport and health organisations, is carrying out a two-year research

programme on the links between mobility and health. The objectives are to:

- increase understanding of the impacts of mobility constraints on the health and well-being of poor people in different developing countries
- develop tools to enable transport professionals to include holistic health impact assessments and mitigation measures in planning, designing and implementing transport interventions
- develop an advocacy programme to sensitise the health sector about the relationship between mobility and health.

### Poverty Watch

Poverty Watch is helping civil society organisations across Latin America, Asia and Africa to monitor and influence the design of national transport policies and investments. Through building analytical and monitoring skills and increasing awareness of the links between transport and poverty, Poverty Watch has built up a network of rural communities, NGOs, academia and local and central government. They debate the issues and identify key priorities for a transport and poverty agenda in their countries.

IFRTD members use research findings on transport and its contribution to poverty reduction to lobby national policy processes and contribute to poverty reduction debates.

### Community Parliaments

In Kenya Poverty Watch works with Community Parliaments – multi-stakeholder civil society

forums – to influence local transport decisions. Workshops or 'Poverty Watch Days' are an opportunity for communities to develop an understanding of critical transport issues, in turn leading to the adoption of appropriate interventions and the establishment of new partnerships, particularly with the private sector.

Poverty Watch has drafted a Transport and Poverty Monitoring Framework which will form the basis for future debate. This shows that in order to deliver on poverty reduction objectives, a transport sector needs to:

- integrate transport policy with the wider aims of poverty reduction and national development, for example with health, agriculture, education and trade initiatives
- ensure that there are mechanisms to translate transport policy into sound implementation strategies, using participatory processes in planning and infrastructure and service delivery.

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## See also

Poverty Watch Case Studies

[www.ifrtd.org/new/proj/pov\\_watch.php](http://www.ifrtd.org/new/proj/pov_watch.php)

Community Parliaments

[www.kendat.org](http://www.kendat.org)

Mobility and Health

[www.mobilityandhealth.org](http://www.mobilityandhealth.org)

# Conflicting agendas in Colombia

**In Colombia's tropical jungle, indigenous and African descendant communities live isolated from the rest of the country. Large-scale transport development, responsible for greenhouse gas emissions and widespread deforestation, has a poor environmental record in one of only two humid tropical jungles left in the world.**

Big cities and globalisation are increasingly demanding the extraction of wood, medicinal plants, raw materials for pharmaceutical products, petroleum, natural gas and minerals from rural areas of Colombia and other Latin American countries. Without adequate government representation, local people are unable to oppose major road developments and the extraction of resources from traditional lands.

## Chocó, Colombia

Chocó is one of the poorest areas in Colombia. It is located between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans but the local inhabitants remain isolated and landlocked by their poor socio-economic status and lack of suitable transport networks. Although rich in minerals and biodiversity, Chocó has one of the highest indexes of Unsatisfied Basic Needs in Colombia – 81.5 percent against a national average of 37.6 percent.

Constructing a highway through Chocó has been on the agenda since 1967. It is part of a national project – Port of Tribugá, which will open up markets with Asian countries and forge links across the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Only one section has been built so far; it is already in need of repair and its construction has resulted in irreparable damage, including deforestation and biodiversity loss. At present 60 percent of the area is pending construction, which, if carried out, will define its future.

## Local protests halt new highway

The road development has been interrupted by local protest against the project's poor environmental management and by communities who prioritise territorial autonomy and defending their culture and identity, over national and international trade.

In this rural context, rivers and the ocean could provide means of transport that benefit indigenous and African descendant people. In a region with navigable rivers:

- There is huge potential for a transport system that uses environmentally sustainable technologies such as ropeways, chalupas (small-scale boats) and long-tail boats to link up with non-motorised land transport, like bicycles and animals.
- Different kinds of transport and a clear policy of sustainable development would prevent exploitation of genetic and wood resources and stop irreversible changes to the ecosystem.

## The need for local debate

Transport in rural areas is a political issue with different interests represented. National and local development perspectives should be debated, including those of local inhabitants. Recently civil society members agreed to collaborate with the National Department for Planning to prepare an overall national policy for rural transport. For change to take place at the local level:

- Similar spaces should be created for communities to talk with ministries involved in the project, including the Ministries of Environment, Transport and the Interior. Debate should deal with innovative projects that respect ethnic groups' territorial autonomy and cultural identity.
- The debate should provide for learning from other successful experiences from other developing country communities in similar positions.
- In the absence of dialogue or where this is not enough, communities should be willing to mobilise and protest to gain the attention of government authorities.

A balance can only be achieved by preserving rural areas and securing a good quality of life for their inhabitants, who provide the goods and services that make urban life possible ■

## Useful web links

International Forum for Rural Transport and Development  
**www.ifrtd.org**

Global Transport Knowledge Partnership  
**www.gtkp.com**

Global Road Safety Partnership  
**www.grsproadsafety.org**

Waterways and Livelihoods Community  
**www.ruralwaterways.org**

World Bank Transport Sector  
**www.worldbank.org/transport**

World Bank Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Policy Program  
**www.worldbank.org/afr/ssatp**

Transaid  
**www.transaid.org**

Animal Traction Network for East and Southern Africa  
**www.atnesa.org**

IT Transport Consultants  
**www.ittransport.co.uk**

Institute for Transportation and Development Policy  
**www.itdp.org**

Transweb Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation  
**www.trans-web.ch**

SUSTRAN Asia network  
**www.geocities.com/sustrannet**

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## See also

Estudio de Impacto Ambiental y Consulta Previa de la Conexión Terrestre Ánimas Nuquí, Universidad Tecnológica del Chocó, Luz Marina Monsalve Friedman et al, December 2005

Declaración de Importancia Estratégica de la Construcción del Proyecto las Ánimas - Nuquí, Documento COMPES 3389, Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social República de Colombia, Departamento Nacional de Planeación Bogotá DC, 24 October 2005



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