Case studies

1.1   Introduction

These case studies have been collected as part of a project to bring issues of social exclusion in the practical development of infrastructure in low-income countries into the core of project planning and design. They have been used to influence and illustrate the guidelines that have been produced as part of the research.

The case studies are being set out here to provide a resource for engineers and the trainers of engineers. They can either be used as a supplement to the training notes produced under the project or used separately to provide illustrations of the overlap between gender issues and the development of infrastructure.

One of the problems in collating the case studies has been the lack of *engineering* issues. There are many case studies of the importance in considering the needs of men and women in the development of infrastructure, but these have come from gender studies rather than mainstream civil engineering. This leads to the impression that gender issues lie outside of the core of project development and design, forming a specialist area requiring specific expertise. In contrast, many engineering examples do not bring out social issues explicitly, so there is a gap between "gender" knowledge and "engineering" knowledge that these case studies and associated books and booklets aim to bridge.

1.2   The studies

The case studies have been kept short, to make them accessible and useful as part of larger initiatives. They have been edited slightly to bring out the engineering issues, rather than other aspects, such as politics or rights based actions. A comment is provided to expand on some the lessons that can be drawn from the case study.

The studies are grouped according to sectors:

- water resources;
- water supply
- sanitation
- solid waste
- transport
- irrigation
- construction
- management and organization
- emergencies
- hygiene activities

Within each section, the case studies are grouped according to the project cycle (planning, feasibility, design, construction, operation and maintenance, evaluation).

1.3   Other project outputs

■ For a short introduction on infrastructure and its impact on people, see *Building with the Community (WEDC 2002)*

■ For guidelines on how on engineers can include gender issues in their work see *Infrastructure for All (WEDC 2002).*

■ To train engineers and technicians to meet the needs of men and women see *Developing Engineers and Technicians* (WEDC 2002)

■ Website: http://www.lboro.ac.uk/wedc/projects/msgender/index.htm

1.4   Referencing

The case studies have been provided by a wide ranging group of people over several years. Some are personal observations or have been extracted form published or unpublished reports. Attempts have been made to identify the originator of these extracts, but this has not always been possible. If you know the original source of a case study, please contact Brian Reed (details below), in order that credit can be given.

1.5   New Case studies

If you have examples of engineering issues that have a gender or social exclusion aspects, that you think would be useful additions to these case studies, please contact Brian Reed (details below).

1.6 Acknowledgements

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URBAN UPGRADING

Case study 1
Community participation
- time, space and resources

1.1   Background

In a village, Burupati, in Orissa in a rather hasty community action planning session, community meetings were used as platforms to identify priority needs. The vocal and elite amongst the men identified priority needs as building a drain and covering of the open wells. Women were unable to interpret or question whether these were also their priority needs and how these activities would improve or change their lives.

1.2   Action

It was later heard that the drain construction took place and was managed and implemented voluntarily by the women. This was identified by the NGO as a good indicator of community participation.

1.3   Comment

Community participation takes time and skill if all groups in a community are going to be able to take part. In this case study, one group did not have the skills or forum to consider the proposal. They need both the planning session *and* be empowered to take part. This group also ended up having to shoulder the burden of a development they had not been involved in.

Case study 2
Including the excluded

2.1 Background

The identification and targeting of vulnerable groups in the planning stage of a slum environmental improvement project in India aimed to reduce poverty in the urban slums of Cochin. As part of the poverty strategy of in-slum improvements, impacts of the improvements were desegregated for identified vulnerable groups. These groups included:

- single female headed households;
- widows;
- Muslim 'talak' wives;
- households with the head sick or disabled;
- households facing irregular and seasonal employment;
- households with tenure insecurity;
- large families;
- households without access to services;
- ethnic minorities and
- others.

2.2 Action

For groups identified as vulnerable on a gender basis, targeted impacts included reduced time spent in accessing services e.g.: water, both for women and their children, improvements to health leading to less time lost due to sickness in the family, and improved safety through security lighting. The targeted impacts were then translated into a menu of objectives for development activities. The improvements are to be implemented through community partnering (the involvement of community groups in the short and long term development of their areas) while targeting expenditure at the most vulnerable people

Andy Cotton

2.3 Comment

In a poverty reduction project, the actions have to address the needs of the poor. The poor are not a uniform group and there will be many variations in their status. Similarly women vary in their economic, marital, health, geographical, ethic and legal status. There is no blueprint to meet all their needs.

Involvement does not just end with the initial analysis; working with people to meet their needs gives them control over the developments.

Case study 3
The vital role of women in integrated development

3.1 Background

The Baldia town Soakpit Pilot Project was implemented for the upgrading of sanitary conditions in one of the largest squatter settlements in Karachi. A study was undertaken which looked at the poor's community based progressive development system. One of the major outcomes of the study was that the role of women is vital in the achievement of integrated development.

3.2 Action

In a progressive community development process, the community did not see men and women in isolation, although traditions did limit the role of women. In a society such as in Pakistan, the men are equally subjugated. Even within the present situation of political, traditional and economic constraints there was still room for development emerging from within and effecting women in a positive manner. The Home Schoolteachers organisation has become very strong and their contribution in education, health and community development is greatly recognised and respected by the men and women of their community. Once trust and confidence is created the breakthrough in women's role in development takes root and grows.

It is the women of Baldia who are the main agents of change and the focal point of all the community based development activities. The girls were not allowed to come out of their homes initially, but once the community understood the programme and outcome, and trusted the intention of the project all the traditional barriers were lifted to the women's participation in community development. It is essential to have women at all levels of the development projects to break the barriers of tradition. Had the community organiser been a man instead of a woman in the Baldia Soakpit Project, the integration of women in the community development process would not have happened, because of the traditions and outlook of the society. Traditions have strengths and weaknesses - it depends how sensitive one is while making interventions.

Bakhteari, Q.A. (1987) A strategy for the integrated development of squatter settlements: a Karachi case study, PhD, Loughborough University

3.3 Comment

Sensitivity is needed towards traditions and cultures when making project interventions, but culture is a dynamic phenomenon and can develop. This case shows that confidence building and positive leadership contributed to the success of a project.