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Gender Mainstreaming in Rural Transport Projects in Nepal: Transformative Changes at Household and Community Levels

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Cover Photo: *Giri, Host Household Family, Okhaldhunga, December 2016*

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Abstract

This research study examines whether and how gender mainstreaming in selected rural transport projects implemented by the Government of Nepal (GoN) have transformed the lives of rural women and disadvantaged groups¹. It asks:

- What are the most significant changes in the lives of beneficiaries, particularly females?
- Has 'gender mainstreaming' helped contribute to change in female's roles within their households?
- Has 'gender mainstreaming' changed the way decisions are made at community and district levels?

The research was carried out in Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga districts using a mix of qualitative methods. It shows that the most significant changes that women and discriminated groups perceive in their lives derive from the new income-earning opportunities made available, especially through quotas and equal pay on the transport projects. This has enabled some change in consumption patterns (increased meat and vegetable consumption), encouraged a shift from subsistence farming towards cash crops and increased employment in the service sector. There has been a significant increase in some female's ownership of assets (gold, mobile phones, small businesses); their status and confidence has also increased because these income-earning activities take place outside the house. However, men continue to dominate community and district decision-making.

Key words

Gender Mainstreaming, Gender and Social Inclusion, Rural Roads and Bridges, Gendered Transformative Changes, Roles of Women, Qualitative Research Methods

RESEACH FOR COMMUNITY ACCESS PARTNERSHIP (ReCAP)

Safe and sustainable transport for rural communities

ReCAP is a research programme, funded by UK Aid, with the aim of promoting safe and sustainable transport for rural communities in Africa and Asia. ReCAP comprises the Africa Community Access Partnership (AfCAP) and the Asia Community Access Partnership (AsCAP). These partnerships support knowledge sharing between participating countries in order to enhance the uptake of low cost, proven solutions for rural access that maximise the use of local resources. The ReCAP programme is managed by Cardno Emerging Markets (UK) Ltd.

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¹ Disadvantaged groups are people who are socially discriminated and economically poor. Economically poor are those who have food sufficiency for less than six months of the year. They borrow money from local lenders to buy their food, and remain indebted for the rest of their lives. In rural Nepal, almost all of the women are discriminated by gender, while few ethnic and caste groups are socially discriminated in many aspects, for example Dalits are classified as untouchables. The Brahmins, Chhetris, Thakuris (BCT) are classified as elite groups, who have captured the local resources and power since hundreds of years. Therefore, disadvantaged groups are the main target groups for any socio-economic development interventions carried out by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for the Government of Nepal.

Acronyms, units and currencies

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfCAP	Africa Community Access Partnership
AsCAP	Asia Community Access Partnership
DAGs	Disadvantaged Groups
DDC	District Development Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DOLIDAR	Department of Local Development and Agricultural Roads
DPO	District Planning Officer
DRSP	District Roads Support Programme
DTO	District technical Office
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
EF	Employment Fund
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FHH	Focal Household
GBP	Great Britain Pounds (130 NPR is approximately equivalent to GBP 1)
GESI	Gender and Social Inclusion
HH	Household
HHH	Host Household
LDO	Local Development Officer
LGCDP	Local Governance and Community Development Programme
LIDP	Local Infrastructure Development Policy
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
LRIP	Local Roads Improvement Programme
LRUC	Local Roads Users Groups
MLRBP	Motorable Local Roads Bridge Programme
MoFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
NPR	Nepalese Rupees (130 NPR is approximately equivalent to GBP 1)
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RAs	Research Assistants
ReCAP	Research for Community Access Partnership
RTE	Rural Transport Engineer
RMG	Road Maintenance Groups
RTL	Research Team Leader
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
TV	Television
UCs	User Committees
UGs	User Groups
UK	United Kingdom (of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
UKAid	United Kingdom Aid (Department for International Development, UK)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN	United Nations
VDC	Village Development Committee
WB	World Bank
WISE	Women in Science and Engineering
Yrs	Years
ZoI	Zone of Influence

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Executive summary

WISE Nepal was contracted by ReCAP to conduct research on “Gender Mainstreaming in Rural Transport Projects in Nepal: Case Studies of Transformative Roles of Women and Disadvantaged Groups (DAGs) at Household and Community levels”. The research examined whether and how gender mainstreaming activities in selected rural transport projects implemented by the Government of Nepal have transformed the lives of rural women and disadvantaged groups. The research examined the following key questions, utilising specific indicators of empowerment (economic and social):

- What do beneficiaries perceive to be the most significant changes in their lives resulting from these projects?
- Has ‘gender mainstreaming’ in these projects helped contribute to change in women’s roles in the household and, if so, in what ways?
- Has ‘gender mainstreaming’ in these projects changed the way decisions are made at community and district levels?

The research was carried out in Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga districts in Nepal, where rural roads and bridge projects were implemented by the Government of Nepal (GoN). These projects included women and disadvantaged groups in their main activities in the following ways:

- Aimed to ensure their participation in planning, implementation and maintenance;
- Aimed to ensure a conducive working environment (safety, insurance and child care, separate toilets);
- Aimed to ensure targeted employment (60% for disadvantaged groups and 40% women);
- Aimed to ensure equal wages for equal work;
- Aimed to ensure reservations in the User Committees and in decision-making positions (33% for women); and
- Aimed to ensure training of targeted groups related to construction and maintenance.

The field research team comprised six research assistants, three of whom were women engineers trained in conducting ‘immersion’ studies, plus two social researchers with Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) knowledge for Focus Group Discussions and Key Informants Interviews (KII). The researchers, who were mobilised in the field in Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga, used PRA tools such as mobility maps, resource maps and collected personal stories of people they met in the villages. The data collected (though debriefings from the immersions, notes from FGDs and KIIs) were compiled, processed, cleaned, triangulated and analysed using a software tool named NVivo, designed for rich text-based volumes of qualitative data analysis.

The findings from the research indicate that there have been some very positive changes in the lives of women in the villages. The mandatory provisions of the project to include women have encouraged and enabled these women to come out of their houses and start to contribute beyond the household sphere in the community. This has boosted their self-confidence, partly due to being an income-earning member of the household and partly due to outside exposure to other activities (through awareness, participation in meetings, training etc.). When it comes to participation of women, the reservations made for them in the User Committees (UC) are generally accepted without anyone questioning them; however, their meaningful participation, in terms of influencing decisions, has been less apparent. This raises the question as to whether women’s participation is simply seen as fulfilling imposed quotas. Quotas are certainly a first step, but action has to move beyond quotas. More efforts are needed to encourage men’s awareness of women’s right to a more active part in household and community affairs. This will require men to take on responsibilities inside the household sphere (i.e. by sharing women’s work burden so they free up women’s time, thus enabling women to participate in income-earning work outside the house).

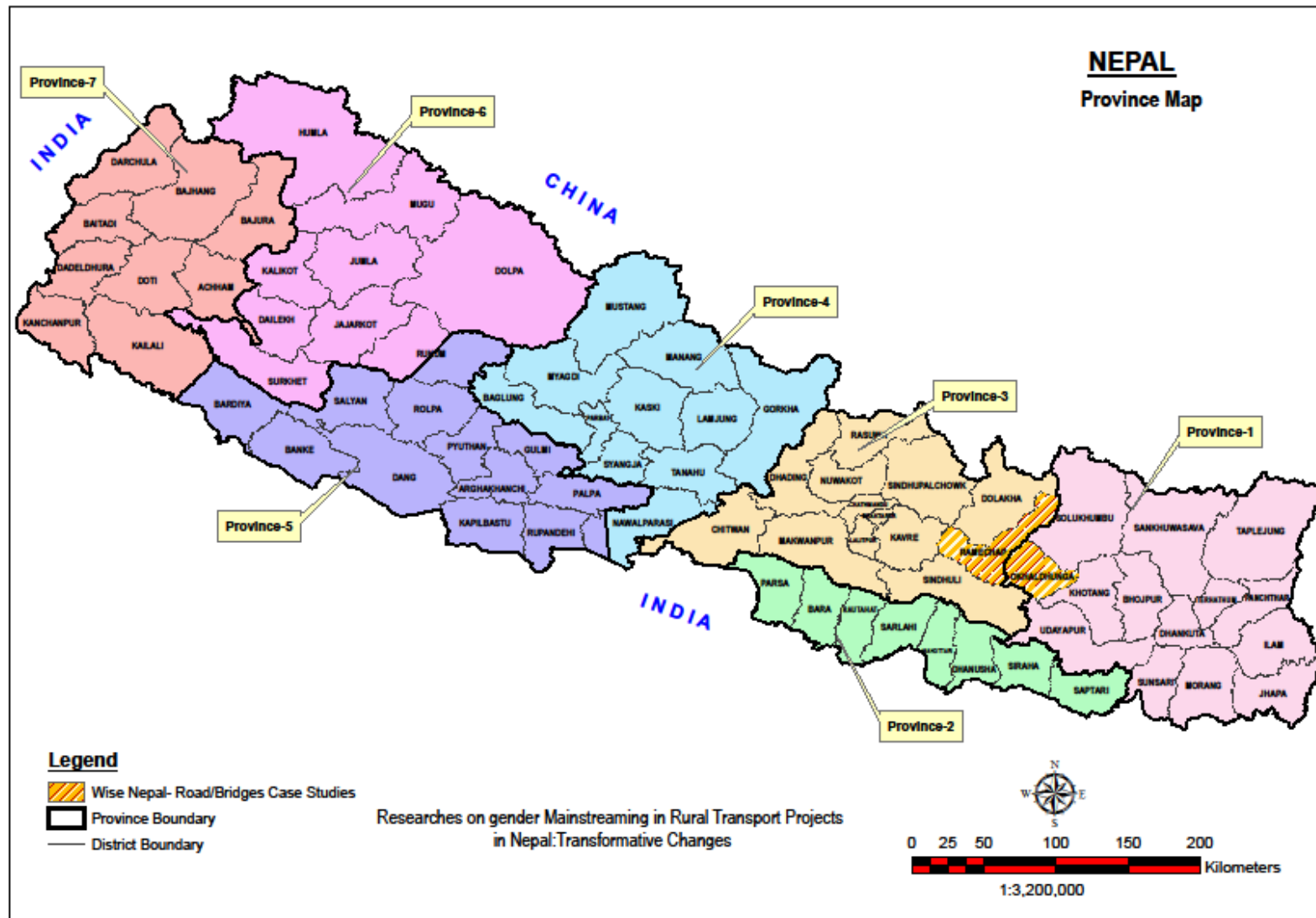
1 Background

The Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads (DoLIDAR) under the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) is the line ministry that is responsible for rural transport and development in Nepal. It has a Local Infrastructure Development Policy (LIDP) which includes due consideration of gender and social inclusion. The Ministry has its own Gender and Social Inclusion Policy, which must be mainstreamed by local bodies - District Development Committees (DDCs), Village Development Committees (VDCs), and Municipalities - in all local infrastructure development projects. Although Nepal is said to be progressive in terms of 'formulating' gender and social inclusion (GESI) policies (mostly based on positive learning experiences from donor-supported projects), the challenge of effectively implementing such policies widely, to bring about gender equality and genuine transformations, remains.

The Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), on behalf of the Government of Switzerland, has been assisting MoFALD and DoLIDAR in the sub-sectors of rural roads, road bridges and trail bridges for many years. SDC assistance with trail bridges has extended over four decades; assistance in the roads sector started in 1999 but in road bridges only in 2011. The programmes on road bridges and trail bridges are country-wide, but the rural roads programme is focused on just four districts, namely Ramechhap, Khotang, Okhaldhunga and Sindhuli. A Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) approach is mainstreamed in the roads and bridge building projects supported by SDC in all of these programmes. It is meant to ensure: a) participation of women and DAGs in rural road and bridge programmes; b) a conducive working environment (safety, insurance and child care) for women; c) women and disadvantaged groups are targeted for employment with equal wages; d) women and disadvantaged groups are proportionally represented in UC in decision-making positions; and e) they are trained in construction related activities.

Project reports and evaluations suggest these interventions have led to significant changes in the lives and livelihoods of DAGs and women living in the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of project roads and bridges in the districts. There have also been changes in the practices of local government in resource allocation in some other programmes in these districts, in favour of DAGs and women, influenced by the SDC-supported projects. This research aimed to explore the contexts and the actual changes brought about by the conscious effort made by these projects in mainstreaming GESI. The research was carried out in two districts (Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga) where projects on rural roads and roads bridges were implemented by DoLIDAR with the technical assistance of SDC.

Figure 1: Map of Nepal showing provinces as per Constitution of Nepal 2015 and case study districts



2 Research Objectives

The main objective of this research has been to assess whether and how gender mainstreaming in the projects has transformed the lives of rural women and disadvantaged groups. The specific objectives were:

- to explore whether the social and economic empowerment activities focused on targeted groups (DAGs and women) have actually benefited these groups in the districts, in meaningful ways,
- to understand the impact of projects' gender and social inclusion tools on the representation of women and DAGs in various development groups (roads and bridge User Groups (UGs),
- to analyse whether and how empowerment of women and DAGs has been facilitated by their participation in UGs,
- to analyse the influence of women and DAG representatives on social relationships and social norms in the community and at household level,
- to understand other factors contributing to social change at community and household levels; and
- to build the capacities of Nepali women engineers, specifically the members of Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Nepal, in social and qualitative research methods.

3 Methodology

A mix of qualitative research methods was used. Both primary data collection and secondary data reviews were included in the research. Primary data were collected using immersion studies, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews with key district stakeholders in the two selected study districts – Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga.

3.1 Immersions

Immersion is a qualitative research approach whereby researchers immerse themselves in a cultural setting to gain a fuller understanding of that world. In this study the immersion involved research assistants residing with local inhabitants in the two study districts for 10 days (five days in each district). Training on immersions was given to the women engineers of WISE Nepal who worked as research assistants (RAs) prior to conducting the fieldwork in the districts.



Maharjan, Passenger jeeps, Okhaldhunga, 2016

The training acquainted these women engineers with various elements required for research in the field: methods of triangulation (to verify the data collected), use of various participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools, powers dynamics, behaviours, attitudes and avoiding biases. They were trained on checking the reality on the ground by using different tools of PRA (for example timelines of a family, mobility map, social map, venn diagrams for studying relationships); in order to triangulate and verify the information they received to be as correct as possible from various sources. They were also provided with orientation regarding the areas of enquiry which were to be conducted through the immersions (see Table 1). Details of the immersion process are presented in Section 3.1.1.

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of Immersions

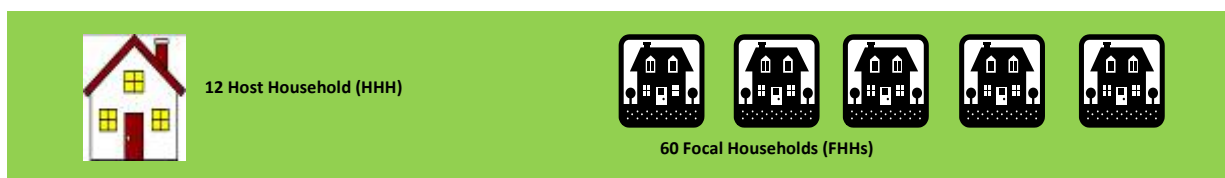


Table 1: Areas of Enquiry for Immersions

Economic and financial activities [gender disaggregated]	Governance and structures [gender disaggregated]	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash income sources • Off-farm activities • Changes in wage rates • Savings, money, assets • Access to and availability of loans, micro-credit • Level of indebtedness • Coping mechanisms in difficult times • Expenditures • Skills, productive use of trained knowledge/skills • Changes in ownership of land and property • Access to labour works (roads, bridge construction or similar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership structures – traditional, government, formal, informal, how they are selected, M/F • Involvement and participation in community activities • Involvement in public consultation (hearings and audits) • Participation of women and DAGs in community activities including UCs • How governance processes have evolved and changed over time • Local politics and structures 	
Intra household decision making [gender disaggregated]	Access to public resources [gender disaggregated]	Quality of Life [gender disaggregated]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How resources are pooled, shared and distributed • How decisions are made or taken • Changes in gender roles with reference to different age groups in the family • Women’s self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of government policies • Extent to which DAGs and women are able to raise their concerns in community meetings • Who decides on resource allocations • Changes in traditional powers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of well-being, poverty • Consumption pattern, items (use and control by different family members) • Aspirations • Existing services available and usage • Access to transport • Mobility patterns (i.e. including walking journeys) • Use of technology (including mobile phones)

3.1.1 Host households and focal households

Three VDCs under the Zone of Influence within the road corridors - Dimipokhari Village Development Committee (VDC) in Ramechhap district and Prapcha and Shreechaur VDCs in Okhaldhunga district were selected during the briefings before the immersions. A total of six RAs - three women engineers accompanied by three male immersion experts were immersed in the field in the selected villages in the two districts. The RAs were given some flexibility in choosing the households, after developing a contextual understanding of the villages they were going to be immersed in. They were required to select the host households (HHs) and focal households (FHHs) in both districts, according to criteria given to them in advance: households with a larger family size (at least five members) and some elderly people or people with a disability living there; at least one or more members had worked with the projects (LRIP or MLRBP) in road or bridge construction-related work for a minimum of one year; at least 40% of the families had at least one member who had migrated outside the area; and the families represent different ethnic/caste groups (Dalits, Janajati, Brahmins and Chhetris). In Nepal, Brahmins, Chhetris and Thakuris are considered to be the higher caste groups. While Magars and Newars are classified as Janajatis (ethnic groups). Dalits are classified as

low caste groups and they are treated as untouchables. Gender and caste based discrimination is highly prevalent in the study districts.



Mainali, Members of Host HH, Okhaldhunga, December 2016

In **Ramechhap district**, settlements in Ramche village in ward four and Manpur village in ward three (both in **Dimipokhari VDC**) were selected for the research. Here the unpaved road is already open for traffic during the dry season and a road bridge also connects the opened road sections.

There are a total of 758 households living along the Zol of this road corridor in the VDC, out of which 211 households are DAGs and 80 households are headed by women [Source: *Local Roads Improvement Programme (LRIP) 2016*]. The RAs chose the two villages by checking on the caste and ethnicity of people in the area, road works, migration and other characteristics of the population: this also provided initial contextual information for the subsequent research. These were selected according to the criteria noted above, but also taking into consideration whether such households were likely to feel burdened by RAs living with them. Each RA also selected (according to the same criteria) and interacted with another five focal households (FHHs) around the vicinity of the settlements they stayed in for five days.



Singh, Members of Host HH, Okhaldhunga, December 2016

In **Okhaldhunga district**, settlements in **Prapcha and Shreechaur VDCs** were selected which were about 1 hour's walk away from each other. Here road tracks were opened for vehicle operation four years ago, and a road bridge was constructed about two years ago to give all-weather connectivity to that road.

There are, in total, 931 households living along the Zol of this road corridor in these two VDCs, out of which 389 households have DAGs and 18 households are headed by women (LRIP, 2016). The RAs examined both **Prapcha and Shreechaur VDCs** with respect to the given criteria and divided themselves into two groups. One group stayed in Phunyal village (Prapcha VDC), while the other group stayed in Dandakharka village (Shreechaur VDC). Each RA selected a household to stay in for five days, according to the criteria noted earlier, and later selected FHHs in the vicinity.

For the most part, the home stays worked well, but there were two incidents where two female RAs experienced difficulties and were forced to move, due to resistance from male household members. In total, there were 363 individual reports collected from the 12 HHH and 60 FHH members and other villagers in the neighbouring villages. The RAs observed the villagers’ day-to-day activities and conversed, worked and walked with the villagers, in order to check the reality of villager accounts of how external interventions affected or transformed their lives. They also used various PRA tools - mobility maps, social maps and timelines - while interacting with the HHHs and FHHs, in order to absorb as much information as possible.

Table 2. Host Household and Focal Household Information

Host household	Size of Family	Age group	Ethnicity	Focus Household	Ethnicity	Size of Family	Female- headed Household (FHH)
12 Families	From 5 to 8 members	Male headed: between 39 -60 Years (Yrs); Female headed: between 35 -50 yrs	Dalit: 3 Janajati: 7 Brahmin: 2	60 Families	Dalit:11 Janajati: 38 Brahmin:9 Chhetri:1	2 members minimum; 7 members maximum (Brahmin families have 7 members)	16 Families Out of 16, 3 are de-facto female- headed (i.e. temporarily absentee husbands); the others are de jure (i.e. Unmarried women, widows and divorced women)

3.2 In-depth Interviews with key informants

In depth interviews with key informants were conducted by two Research Analysts (RAs). The participant lists are attached as Annexes A and B of this report. The key informants were:

- Local political and settlement leaders (including women)
- Local health workers
- Local teachers (including women)
- Local transport operators
- Local market traders (including women)
- Local government officials: Local Development Officers (LDOs), District Planning Officers (DPOs), District Technical Officers (DTOs)

3.3 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

Two FGDs were conducted with the Local Roads User Committee (LRUC) members, including the executive committee members, by two male RAs– one in each district. The RAs also noted the groups’ political dynamics, the power play within the groups between different genders, ethnicities, and between executive and other members, how the decisions were made, and how the discussions were monopolised by certain members within a group etc. The details of FGD participants, including gender and ethnicity, are given in Tables 3 and 4. In Ramchhap, the FGD was conducted with two LRUC members, members of road building groups (road workers) and other villagers at Dandapasale village, Dimipokhari.

Table 3. Participants of the FGD in Ramechhap

User Committee	Number of participants				
	Total	Women	Dalit	Janajati	others
1 Galba-Khanikhola Road User Committee	5	2	0	2	1
2 Ramche-Manpur Road User Committee	10	3	1	4	2
3 Building groups, workers	8	1	0	7	0
Total	23	6	1	13	3

In Okhaldhunga, the FGD was carried out with the LRUC, Local Roads Coordination Committee (LRCC) and Road Building Groups (RBG) members at Keurini village, of Prapcha VDC.

Table 4. Participants of the FGD in Okhaldhunga

Name of Committee	Number of participants				
	Total	Women	Dalit	Janajati	Others
1 Harkapur-Prapcha-Shreechaur-Khijiphalante Road User Committee	13	4	0	2	7
2 Local Road Coordination Committee	3	1	1	0	1
3 Kulkhola Bridge User Committee	2	0	0	1	1
4 Building groups, workers and a mechanic	6	2	1	2	1
Total	24	7	2	5	10

Tables 3 and 4 show that a few participants were Janajati (local ethnic groups composed of Magars and Newars) in Ramechhap, whereas other groups still dominate in Okhaldhunga district. In both districts' FGDs, around 29% of the participants were female: this suggests that they are coming out of their household spheres and have started contributing to community development work, mainly in road building. Previously (a decade ago), females were usually confined to their own houses and household chores. The others in the table include Brahmin, Chhetri, Thakuri (BCT), are categorised as higher castes among Nepalese ethnic groups.

4 Background of Research Areas

4.1 Contextualising transport interventions and people's mobility in study areas

4.1.1 Ramechhap District

Road and Transport Services: The Manthali-Galba-Chauri road is one of the priority roads in Ramechhap district. It is 70 km in length. There has been some vehicular movement on this road corridor (along the 35 km from Manthali to Galba) since 2012, i.e. prior to intervention from LRIP in 2014. This open section has been maintained under LRIP since 2014. The planned section from Galba-Chauri road is 35 km (out of the total 70 km). Of this 35 km, only 17 km of unpaved road is open, from Galba up to Dimipokhari VDC, which is mid-way between Galba-Chauri. The frequency of public transportation from the study village to Galba, to Manthali (the district headquarters) and to Kathmandu has increased due to the improvement of the road. Out of all public transportation in operation on the road, three vehicles (all jeeps, one Sumo and two Boleros) operate every day from the village. Khandadevi Transportation Committee, a committee of transport operators in the VDC, is responsible for regulating routes, fares for vehicle operations, and vehicle insurance.

Table 5. Status of Public Transportation

Vehicle type	Frequency and destination	Duration	Fare one – way (NPR)	Ownership	Alternative means
Sumo (Jeep)	1 per day to Manthali	1-2 hours	500	Local Dalit male	Walking
Bolero (Jeep)	5-7 times per day, Galba-Manthali	1-2 hours	500	Mostly transport syndicates	Walking
Bolero (Jeep)	5 per day, Galba to KTM	3-4 hours	1000	Not known	Alternative route via Khaniyapani
Mini-Bus	1 per day, Galba to KTM	4-5 hours	700	Not known	Alternative route via Khaniyapani

Sumo and Bolero are different makes of jeep. Both are small 4-wheelers with a carrying capacity of around 9 -10 passengers; generally they are overloaded and carry up to 15 passengers. Mini-buses are designed with a carrying capacity of about 25-30 passengers, but they also carry more people and during festival times they are overloaded with some even carried (at high risk of accident) on the roof. Most people prefer to take a Bolero from the village if they have to travel to Kathmandu, otherwise they walk to Galba and take any vehicle from there to reach Manthali. Some families, both men and women, will pay NPR 100 instead of walking, because it normally takes an hour for them to reach Galba from their houses.



Adhikari, Social Map prepared by a villager, Ramechhap, November 2016



Shrestha, Health Assistant in health post, Ramechhap, November 2016

People’s mobility and access to various services: The Dimipokhari VDC office is 1-2 hours walk from the study villages (Ramche and Manpur). Official work related to the VDC office has to be done from Manthali (the district headquarters) as the VDC secretary lives there. The *health post* is near the VDC office (thus also 1-2 hours walk from the study villages). Here health facilities are provided in three different areas: a) preventive (vaccination/immunisation, family planning), b) promotional (safer motherhood, nutrition, life style, hygiene, vitamin A supplements for children less than five years old, iron capsules for post-natal mothers, uterus prolapse); and c) curative (wounds, burns, seasonal diseases like fever, cough, diarrhoea, skin disease, and respiratory illnesses).

Due to the unavailability of refrigeration in the health post, a vaccination service is provided once per month by transporting vaccines in ice boxes brought from Doramba VDC. The health-post claims that it provides services to about 1200-1300 patients annually - in the year 2014-15, records show 1372 people were served, with females in the majority: 75% were women, including 60% girls (i.e. children aged two to 15 years). After the construction of the road and due to vehicle operations on the road, the usage of the health facility has noticeably increased among women. One of the main reasons for women’s travel via road is their need to visit the health care facilities. There is a private

clinic and an Ayurvedic clinic in Galba but, in the private health clinic, simple services for pathological tests are available but not X-ray.

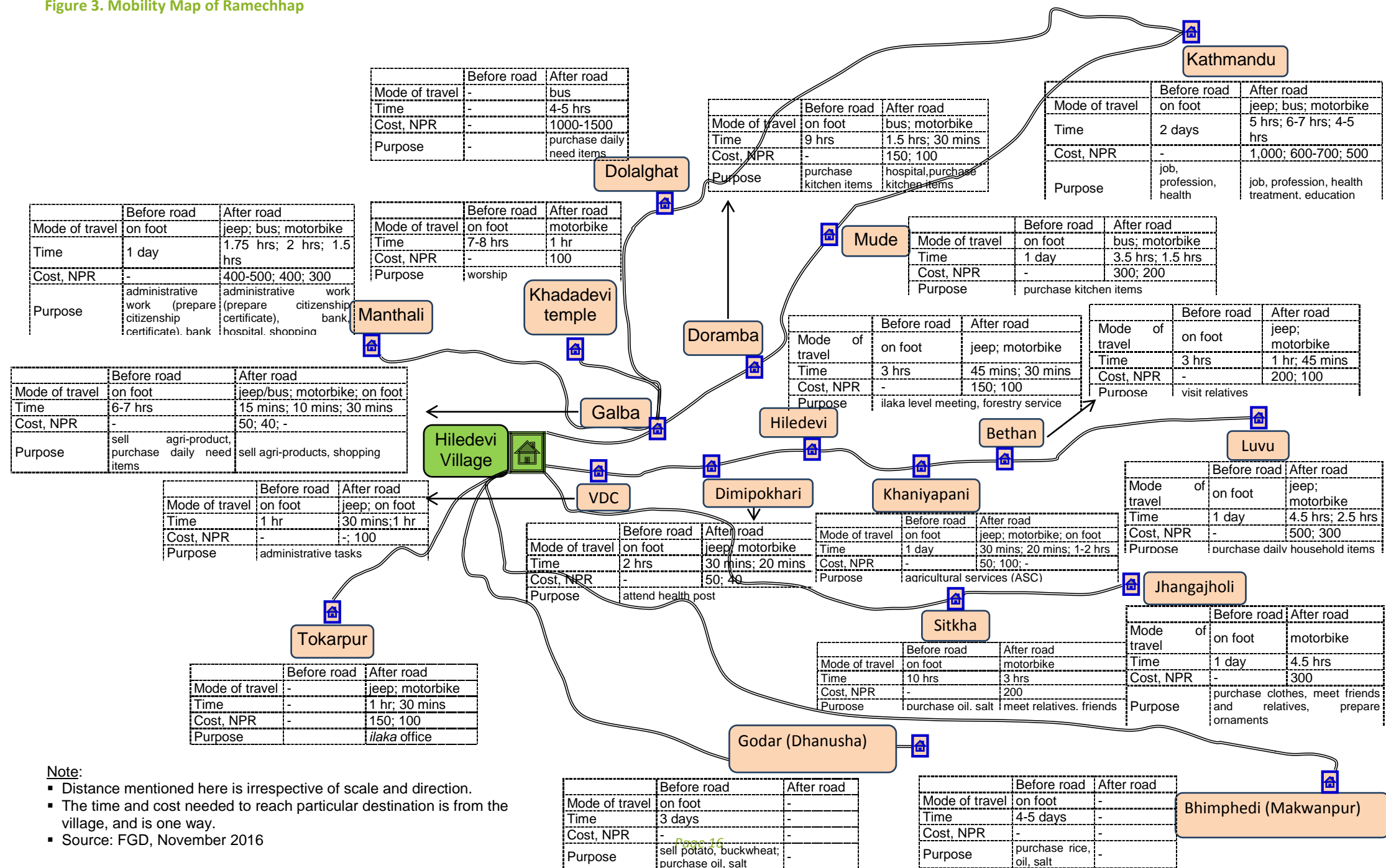
A licenced medical doctor visits the health post twice each month (the 1st and 15th of the month). Most of the patients come with cases of seasonal influenza and cold; injuries (cuts and burns); dental issues; ear, nose and throat infections; uterus and stomach problems. Serious cases are referred to Manthali and Kathmandu. The record shows about 5 patients visit the clinic in a day, of whom, 60% are children of both gender, 40% are adult women (with 50% of adults being above 60 years).

School provision in the VDC consists of one primary school from Early Child Development (ECD) to fifth grade, four secondary schools (with an average student number of 130 per school) and a higher secondary school (with an average of 470 students). In schools, 70% of students are female (because most of the boys from higher class groups go to Manthali or Kathmandu for a better education, leaving many of the girls belonging to the same class in the village). In the higher secondary school located in Manpur village, arts, commerce and education courses are being offered. For most students at all levels of schooling, walking is the only means of travel: the nearest school is about 30 minutes' walk, while the furthest is about one and a half hours walk. Toilet facilities in the schools are poor, due to which most female students are reported absent during their menstrual cycle every month.

Regarding *market access*, there is one big kiosk operating in the village, which sells grocery items and kitchen utensils, and also provides agro-veterinary services. Two small kiosks sell cigarettes, tobacco, oil, stationery, noodles, biscuits and other small items. There is a large market centre nearby in Galba, which also has a furniture workshop, run by a local (male) Dalit. There is also a bi-monthly *haat bazaar* (weekly market) on the 1st and the 15th of each month where locals as well as outsiders trade their commodities. Local farmers (both men and women) usually carry their commodities on their backs on foot while outsiders bring their items on buses, trucks and tractors.

Figure 3 shows the mobility patterns of people from the study villages (Ramche and Manpur) in Dimipokhari VDC, before and after road construction, for Ramechhap district.

Figure 3. Mobility Map of Ramechhap



4.1.2 Okhaldhunga District

Road and transport services: The length of Rampur-Shreechaur-Prapcha road is 36 km in total. The road was opened from Rampur for 12 km to Keurini village, passing through Prapcha and Shreechaur VDCs. This opened section has been subject to maintenance and rehabilitation by LRIP since 2014. Fresh new construction of 24 km is ongoing to replace an unpaved track from Keureni village to Khijiphalate VDC. Motorised transport is only available from Kathmandu to Okhaldhunga (upto Keureni village) and the frequency of public transportation from Okhaldhunga towards Kathmandu and the villages along this route is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Status of public transportation

S.No	Vehicle type	Frequency and destination	Type of road	Duration	Fare one – way (NPR)	Ownership	Alternative
1.	Jeep	1 per day, Prapcha-Rampur	Earth	1 hour	200	Wholesaler in Prapcha, Janajati male	Trail: 2 hours walk
2.	Jeep	1 per day, Keureni-Rampur	Earth	1 hour	200	Not Known	Trail: 2 hours walk
3.	Bus	3 per day, Kathmandu-Prapcha	Earth up to Okhaldhunga and bitumen from Okhaldhunga to Kathmandu	6 to 7 hours	900	Not Known	2 days walk; 1 st Ghurmi, then KTM
4.	Bus	4 per day, Okhaldhunga-Prapcha	Earth	1.5 hour	200	Not Known	Trail: 2 hours walk
5.	Jeep	1 per day Rampur-Prapcha (Deurali)	Earth	1 hour	100	Not Known	Trail: 2 hours walk
6.	Jeep	1 reserve (Rampur - Prapcha)	Earth	1 hour	1000	Not Known	Trail: 2 hours walk
7.	Bus	1 per day, Rampur-Prapcha (Deurali)	Earth	1 hour	50	Not Known	Trail: 2 hours walk
8.	Tourist bus	2 per day, Prapcha-Terai and KTM	Earth up to Okhaldhunga and bitumen from Okhaldhunga to Kathmandu	6 to 7 hours	800-900	Not Known	2 days walk; 1 st Ghurmi, then KTM
9.	Bus	1 per day, Prapcha-Rampur	Earth	1 hour	50	Not Known	Trail: 2 hours walk
10	Bus	1 per day, Prapcha- KTM (Reserve)	Earth up to Okhaldhunga and bitumen from Okhaldhunga to Kathmandu	6 to 7 hours	1000	Not Known	2 days walk; 1 st Ghurmi, then KTM

Note: The jeep is a small 4-wheeler with a carrying capacity of around 9 -10 passengers but generally they are overloaded, carrying up to 15 passengers. Buses in Okhaldhunga are bigger, with carrying capacities ranging from 50 to 70 passengers. Source: Field Study, Okhaldhunga December 2016. The tourist bus is an express bus which does not stop in between many stops, it goes straight to Kathmandu from Okahldhunga without stopping, which is why the fare is higher. This is similar to the reserved bus that goes to Kathmandu daily from Okhaldhunga without stopping in between.

People's mobility and access to various services: VDC offices are present in both VDCs but due to the absence of VDC secretaries in the VDC offices, people have to travel to district headquarters in Okhaldhunga for administrative services.

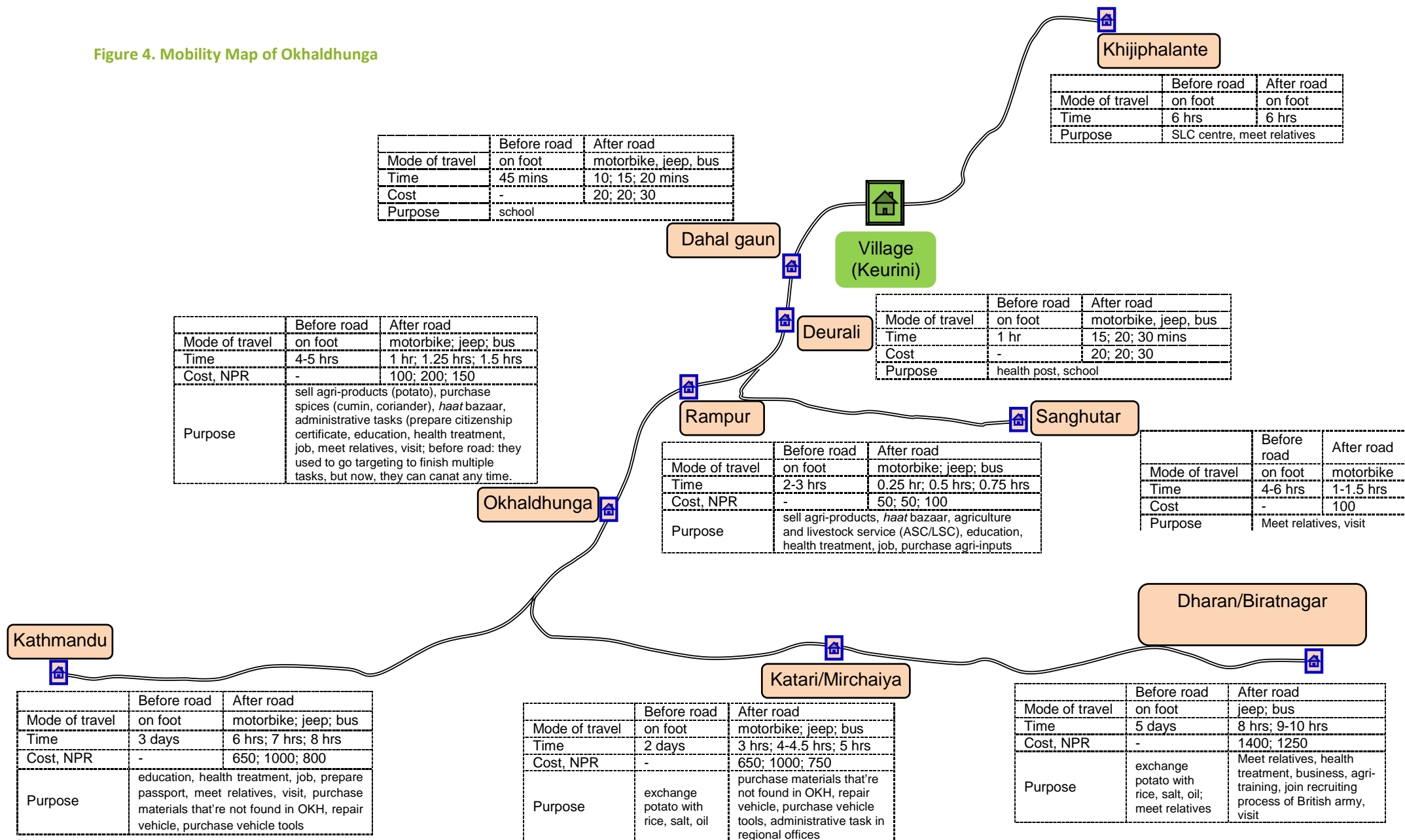
Health posts exist in both Prapcha and Shreechaur VDCs. These are within one hour's walk of the study villages. The health post in Prapcha offers services for out-patients (mainly for respiratory tract infections, urine infections, stomach infections, small injuries related to burn and cuts), family planning, vaccination, community education, a mobile clinic (run in 3 wards once per month) and advisory services for family planning, hygiene, uterus prolapse, nutrition. On average 35 people visit the health post per day and most (65%) of the visitors are women (of all age groups). About 15% of the visitors are children of both genders. Most of the visitors travel on foot for treatment and check-ups. Because they have a refrigeration facility in the health post, the vaccination service has been very effective and they also provide services to Shreechaur and other VDCs. While there was no specific information on the government health post in Shreechaur VDC, there exists a private health clinic in Shreechaur VDC operated by a German organisation, which provides dental services in addition. A mission hospital in Okhaldhunga is the largest hospital in the region, and provides treatment for severe cases from Okhaldhunga.

Studies recorded four primary schools and one higher secondary level school in Prapcha-Shreechaur VDCs. The higher secondary school in Prapcha is considered to be very good, with a total of over 500 students, 60% of which are girls. Most students travel on foot while about two percent of students from Shreechaur VDC and Prapcha travel to school by bus, when they are able to find one operating on their route. Interestingly, student attendance is 100% most of the time but reduces to 90% due to flash floods in Prapcha stream during the monsoons. For higher college-level education, people go to Rampur (a nearby market about one hour's ride by bus).

Regarding *market access*, there are many small kiosks operated by men (mostly) and some women in Prapcha VDC and a small kiosk is operated in Shreechaur VDC. Every Tuesday and Thursday there is a haat bazaar (weekly market) in Shreechaur and Rampur respectively, where people (both men and women) bring in agricultural and other commodities from farms and markets. For agro-veterinary and other services, people usually go to Rampur.

Figure 4 below shows the mobility patterns of people from the study villages in Prapcha and Shreechaur VDCs, before and after road construction, for Okhaldhunga district.

Figure 4. Mobility Map of Okhaldhunga



Note:

- Distance mentioned here is irrespective of scale and direction.
- The cost and time needed to reach particular destination is from the village, and is one way.
- Source: FGD, February 2017

5 Research findings

Narratives from people regarding changes in their livelihood suggest a gradual increase in off-farm livelihood prospects, mostly associated from road improvements and the opportunities for both men and women to work in road construction. Narratives comparing conditions before and after the road development initiative indicate significant changes in cash crop farming and the start-up of local businesses (mainly convenience shops and tea houses).

5.1 Creating jobs and income earning opportunities

Rural employment opportunities leading to higher income-earning potential have attracted men who were previously eager to migrate either to city centres or abroad in search of cash earning opportunities. There are many cases now of men who have returned from overseas locations such as Malaysia, Dubai and Qatar and settled back in their villages, because of the prospect of earning a good livelihood while living in their own village with their family. This was not the case until recently. However, a large number of men in the villages of Ramechhap live in Kathmandu, and occasionally come back to their villages. This is especially the case for boys aged between 15 and 18 years who, having completed eight to tenth standards of secondary or high schooling, usually leave their villages in search of work. The prospect of earning a reasonable livelihood in their own village, however, has attracted some boys who are (mainly) from less affluent families (due to either caste or ethnicity) to stay and work in road construction.

However, roadwork is still not very attractive for many young boys and adults who feel that they can earn more in Kathmandu or abroad. Since roadwork is temporary, many people seek more stable jobs and associated networking opportunities. Thus, many men from Ramechhap have migrated to Kathmandu to work as taxi-drivers. There are other men who obtained training in building houses or carpentry from another Swiss funded project, the Employment Fund (EF); they too prefer to go to Kathmandu or elsewhere to find better earning opportunities, rather than working in road construction where wages are much lower (i.e. normally between NPR 500 to NPR 1000) because the payment is based on volume or amount of work without any discrimination to both men and women. These wage rates for skilled and unskilled work are determined by the district development committee's (DDC) office every year.

"I am proud that I can be a part of community development works. It feels good to bring vehicles near our homes," says, a host household mother, shown in the photo above taken by her flour milling machine. She is a teacher and local road user committee member.



By contrast, women who work in road construction feel that construction work has provided an opportunity for them to gain income outside the home. Apart from this construction work, they don't see any other potential work suitable for women, as they lack the carpentry and masonry skills that some men employ in building houses and toilets. Their daily life, which was formerly confined to unpaid household and agricultural work, has thus been expanded to include work with income earning potential beyond the domestic sphere.

Adhikari, A Female Lead farmer/Teacher/UC member, Ramechhap, November 2016

5.2 The prospect of agricultural transitioning

There have been some changes in farm practices observed in Ramechhap, with people (both men and women) moving more towards cash crop farming of vegetables, spices including large cardamom, and citrus fruits (particularly oranges). One man, trained by Local Initiatives in Biodiversity Research and Development (LI-BIRD), a partner of SDC, is now implementing a Home Garden project and has recently planted 500 elaichi (large cardamom) saplings which cost NPR 15 per sapling. Other families are mainly focused on vegetable farming, mostly off-season vegetables, with some families focusing on citrus orchards. The woman in the picture above, aged between 35-40 years, is an entrepreneur who has a fruit orchard, a vegetable farm and also owns a grinding mill in Ramechhap. Although not on a large scale, the transition in Ramechhap is quite significant, compared to that in Okhaldhunga.

The aspiration of people (both men and women) in Ramechhap towards cash crop farming appears quite positive. People in Okhaldhunga, however, seem reluctant to invest their time, effort and money in vegetable farming for the market as they do not see any potential market in their proximity. Rampur and Galba are the two nearest market centres for villages in Okhaldhunga and Ramechhap, respectively. The walking distance from Okhaldhunga to Rampur is two hours (whereas Galba is only one hour away from Ramechhap). Moreover, Okhaldhunga people suggested that there is no market in Rampur where they could sell their products. In Ramechhap, by contrast, where women had started to plant off-season vegetables and raise pigs, they were certain that their vegetables and pigs could be sold in the local village, Galba, or local *haat bazaar* (weekly market). In the Okhaldhunga villages, although not all families grow vegetables for the market, men and women alike were engaged in vegetable farming (supported through the SDC-funded Home Garden Project, an agricultural and nutrition support project). Among village men, there seemed to be some interest in the market in Okhaldhunga (the main district headquarters), which is one and half hours distant by bus, where there are some '*karmacharis*' (civil servants) who are likely to rely on market-produced food products. Women in Okhaldhunga, however, tend to produce seasonal vegetables only for household consumption. This has improved their dietary intake and had a positive impact on their nutrition and health, however, there is a need for a longer term study to confirm the extent of health impacts due to consumption of home-grown foods.

5.3 Prospects for trading and business

Diversification of local people's livelihoods since the road and bridge interventions includes investment in vehicles that operate from the villages to the municipality, and an increase in the number of teashops, retail stores, poultry farms, and in leasing of land. Except for starting teashops and retail stores, initiatives in other trading and business activities are by men. Through decisions to lease land, invest in vehicles, and open up poultry farms, it seems that many men have embraced the opportunities to diversify their incomes. Although the number of women owning teashops and retail stores has increased following road construction, they have not been able to diversify their occupations to the same extent as men in their villages. This is the case both in Ramechhap and in Okhaldhunga.

5.4 Interventions other than roads and bridges influencing changes

RAs observed that there are some factors beyond the road and bridge project interventions that are also significantly influencing the way of life of women in the villages. Table 13 in Annex C summarises some of the key non-transport factors that are influencing women in their homes and in society. Amongst others, there are Maoists movements (leading to a raised awareness against caste based discrimination and untouchability), mother's groups and female community health volunteers working for their solidarity, ward citizen's forum and different community based committees supported through development programmes which mandated women to be part of the committees as members or as decision-makers.

5.5 Gendered Impacts of rural transport development

Under the broad scope of the three research questions, two major themes were extracted in order to analyse, present and structure the study findings. The two themes are: i) women's role and participation in transport-related construction; and ii) gendered impact at outcome levels. Women's role included road development planning, implementation and management, along with their active or passive engagement in the process and decision-making throughout the course of road and bridge construction. The gendered impact at outcome level explores the aspect of changes in gendered relations within and outside the household, women's access to services, mobility patterns, and empowerment after the gendered interventions through the road and bridges projects.

5.5.1 Women's participation in decision making roles in users committees

Gender mainstreaming policies in road works have encouraged proportional representation of discriminated groups (including women), with at least one-third women in executive committees (i.e. decision-making roles). As per the mandate of the project, women have been represented in LRUCs and Road Builders Groups (RBGs). This gives them significant positions in LRUCs with decision-making responsibilities. LRUCs usually meet and discuss road construction, but often project staff and the District Technical Office (DTO) also join the meeting. Each LRUC has an agreement with the DTO worth NPR 6,500,000 at a time. Once the agreed construction work is complete, the LRUC enters into another construction agreement. Since LRUC has the responsibility of handling the money, employing workers through formation of an RBG, and selecting a coordinator, it is an important body for monitoring and supervision of road construction works. The project staff with DDC and DTO, at the beginning of programme implementation, called for an LRUC formation meeting. Both men and women living within the zone of influence (ZoI) of roads were encouraged to participate and be represented in the meetings. Negotiations among local people to select the candidates for LRUCs were a crucial step in integration of so-called marginalised or disadvantaged groups. Since efforts were made to have representation of people from diverse backgrounds as per the project mandate, they went through a brainstorming session to select the candidates for committee members.

There were some difficult incidents: a man from a different VDC wanted to be a part of the LRUC but was not allowed to take a decision-making role since he did not represent the local village. A Dalit man, who wanted to be a part of the RBG and earn from working on the roads, rather than being on the LRUC, was forced to represent the LRUC as not many Dalits could take this supervisory role. The general rhetoric during the selection meetings emphasised '*Ali bolna janne, bujhne manche auna paryo*', ('those who can speak and understand should come'), but this seems to have demoralised those people who feel, and are made to feel, that they are not capable of understanding or speaking. On the other hand, those who speak up are forced to participate, even though they might not willingly participate in such a committee.

The moral responsibility to represent certain groups of people has become a significant issue for some who hold positions in committees at village level. There was, however, a case where a man was not allowed to represent the LRUC because he is a teacher and may not be able to give enough time, while a woman teacher was included in the group. However, she left the group and handed over her position to her sister as she could not actively participate in the group.

In the case of women's representation, when the name of an unmarried woman was suggested, the villagers initially argued that women who are not married might soon get married and leave the group, so it would be better to select somebody who is more likely to stay in the village. However, there are now examples of unmarried women representing the LRUC. One member of the LRUC, a young girl (aged 21) feels that her participation is only to show women's representation, and says she does not have any role in the committee. "Only the men in the committee talk, I only listen and



sign the attendance form when I am about to leave"! In most cases, it seems women are there in the committee only to fulfil the 33% quota allocated to them. Some women feel that the traditional gender norms still prevail, not allowing women to talk; if they do talk they are not listened to. They are merely expected to take and obey the orders given by male members.

"I don't understand budget, so it's the men running the show, they only call me during budget hearing and signing" said Anita Phunyal, women member of the LRUC in Okhaldhunga, aged around 40.

Adhikari, LRUC member showing book of attendance of road workers, Okhaldhunga December 2016

5.5.2 Role of women in the LRUC



Members of the LRUC are expected to handle cash, select trainees, provide budget audit, settle disputes regarding land compensation and conduct regular site visits. Women have played a significant role in handling cash, going to the municipality to get cash and distributing it among the workers in both districts. Women like men also engage in taking attendance records. A young woman aged 21 who is a representative of the LRUC said that she feels more confident now that she is representing a committee, and is asked to handle a large amount of money. But when it comes to budget audit, women feel that they are simply required to sign. Women also expressed a view that they are only brought to the forefronts when foreigners come to the village (i.e. when external visitors come to see and evaluate); otherwise the men in the LRUCs make all decisions.

Shrestha, Women LRUC members, Okhaldhunga, February 2017

A woman in Okhaldhunga, aged 35, stated that she had protested, saying women should be involved in decision-making too, but no one listened to her. She reasoned that it might also be because she sometimes does not follow what is happening in the meeting and cannot always understand what is being said. When it comes to selecting people to go for training, UC members have noted that it is sometimes difficult to find women who are really interested (i.e. committed to training and work). However, it could have been the case that the training offered by roads and bridge project does not accommodate women's needs and responsibilities (training could have been conducted nearby their

residences, or if in different places – care-takers/husbands are allowed to accompany for taking care of small children etc.), which the RAs could not confirm. In many instances, the UCs just send some woman (to fulfil the quota), who will agree to go for the training but may well not work later on.

Again, women’s roles are limited to being ‘doers’ rather than decision makers. Sometimes, it is merely to fulfil the projects’ criteria and quotas. This is also confirmed by data in Table 9, which shows that a majority of members are still men from higher class groups, who are also in the decision-making roles, while females in the decision-making roles represent only three (25%) out of the total females representing in the UCs. In each UC, there are four positions (chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer) for the decision making. If we look at the total positions in the decision-making, females only represent 18% (three out of sixteen). The projects require at least one woman in each group in a decision-making role. One of the groups in Ramechhap did not have a woman member in the executive committee (in a decision making role).

Table 9. Details of women members in LRUCs

Name of LRUCs that RAs conducted FGDs and interacted with	Total Member	Female	Dalit	Janajati	BCTN
Ramche-Manpur Road User Committee (Dimipokhar 2, 3) – (Ramechhap)	10	3 (1)	1 (1)	4	2
Galba – Khanikhola Road Users committee – (Ramechhap)	5	2	0	2	1
Harkapur-Prapcha-Shreechaur-Khijiphalante Road User Committee (Okhaldhunga)	15	4 (1)	0	3 (2)	8 (1)
Kulkhola Bridge User Committee (Okhaldhunga)	9	3(1)	0	2	7 (3)
Total	39	12 (3)	1 (1)	11 (2)	18 (4)

Note: BCTN = Brahmin, Chhetri, Thakuri, Newar (these are called the elite class in the community; they are the better off economically in the community). The number in parenthesis is the number of members holding a decision-making position in the user committee. The project mandates to have at least a member from a discriminated group to represent in a decision making committee. From the table, it shows that there are still a room for improvement in the representation of discriminated groups in the decision making committees. Source: Focus Group Discussion in Okhaldhunga, December 2016.

5.5.3 Women’s participation in road construction

According to field information, the Road Builders Group (RBG) is formed after the formation of the LRUC and the selection of the coordinator for each RBG. Villagers said that the coordinator of the RBG had come door-to-door asking for people to work in road construction. A total of 15-25 workers were gathered to work on a section of road, which was under the leadership of one coordinator. Similar groups of 30-40 RBGs were formed along the entire stretch of road being constructed and maintained. Through these groups, coordinators ensured participation of at least 35% women in the total of workers. Each RBG is provided with a project book to maintain a record of construction work and workers. In many cases, villagers suggested that it was the role of the coordinator to record worker attendance data on a daily basis, in order to maintain an account of the work and workers. The coordinator had a supervisory role, ensuring that workers not only attend but also do their job properly. The coordinator of each RBG must also participate in the training as he/she has to coach other members of his/her group.

According to men and women workers, the most vital position is that of coordinator. A few men suggested that, as a coordinator, there are times when they just sit and watch but do not work in the field, but they still get paid. However, most coordinators work on construction like other workers. Coordinators also have the power to employ workers outside the village, in cases of unavailability of workers from within the village. Since the role of the coordinator is to gather workers, they have to be more mobile than other people who simply move from their home to the road construction sites.

The coordinator also has to go door-to-door to spread information regarding work opportunities. Additionally, the work of a coordinator has to be continuous and on a daily basis, while other workers' attendance can be flexible.

It was observed from the FGDs and de-briefings from immersions that only male coordinators are in place on the road corridors of Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga. In FGDs and immersions, interaction was thus limited to male coordinators, as not a single female coordinator was mentioned. Although the project encourages women to take up more responsibilities, it is true that the structure of the projects is not conducive to allow women to take on increased responsibilities as they do not adequately recognise women's existing disadvantages, for example, the social restrictions on canvassing for labour door to door, illiteracy and unfamiliarity with record keeping, domestic responsibilities that constrain mobility and the ability to attend trainings etc. It has been reported that women do not wish to take responsibility as coordinator of the building group. It is perceived that walking long distances for women, and conducting door to door canvassing is impossible; which is quite contrary to what most of the rural women already do. They often have to walk many hours when undertaking farm work and travelling to health posts.

5.5.4 Types of work and training

After formation of the group, workers (both men and women) were encouraged to work for at least 90 days. Work under road construction includes tasks that are considered skilled, unskilled and semi-skilled. Unskilled work includes earthworks (soil and hard soil), and rock cutting. Semi-skilled work consists of cross drainage and gabion works; skilled work includes construction of masonry-retaining walls, gabion weaving and pavements (with stone or cobble stone paving). Training was provided for semi-skilled and skilled work. Men and women participated in all training (provided along the road corridors and sometimes in the district headquarters). The majority of women participated in gabion mesh preparing training since it can be done sitting in one place, and thus does not require women to be so mobile. In overall types of construction related training, men's participation has outnumbered women's participation.



Giri, Road workers, Okhaldhunga, December 2016

While there was participation of both men and women in the various training programmes, people considered as better-off in the villages did not participate, as they considered these skills unnecessary for them in the future. On the other hand, disadvantaged people in the locality viewed the skilled-based training as life skills, with likely future income-earning benefit. A Tamang woman trained in preparing wire gabion mesh was earning NPR 1800 to NPR 2000 per day. She had said, early in the project, that skill-based work was not appropriate for women who worked only in agriculture. Now, however, she is keen to participate in other construction work, even after the project ends, as she knows that her skilful labour can provide her with significant income. In the case of unskilled work, especially rock cutting, women would take more days to finish the same work than men, according to both men and women workers. Men mostly do heavy work, but women too break boulders and stones. Both men and women have to spend lengthy periods while breaking hard rock and nobody complains about the equal payment arrangements.

Table 10 shows that more than 50% of trainees were male in both districts. Although women (between 16 to 60 years) from all castes, ethnicities and diverse social status received training, villagers pointed out that those who worked after receiving the training were those from less affluent families. The others who were trained were sent merely to fill the women's quota, because the training would not be conducted unless the required men and women quotas were fulfilled.

Table 10. Details of training and participants

Okhaldhunga District			
Trainings	Men	Women	Total
Dry Stone Masonry	240	12	252
Gabion Weaving	10	-	10
First Aid	86	65	151
Wheelbarrow Maintenance	18	-	18
Maternal Health Awareness	30	63	93
Insurance Awareness	60	73	133
Road Maintenance	97	51	148
Total	541	264	805
Ramechhap District			
First Aid	177	178	355
Project's Awareness	271	224	495
Wheelbarrow Maintenance	7	-	7
Dry Stone Masonry	28	4	32
Gabion Weaving	11	5	16
Total	494	411	905

Source : LRIP 2017

Although women can be seen doing all types of work, the number of women present is relatively low in all types of work. Repeatedly people mentioned that the nature of women's participation was irregular. While some men would work continuously on a stretch of roadwork, the women could not be present on a daily basis. According to the observation and perception of the coordinator and some male workers, sometimes it's simply not convenient for women to leave their home to work. In such cases, construction work can be delayed.

Women explained that they could not always go to work on a daily basis because of household chores which nobody else could handle in their absence. Such work included tending livestock, collecting fodder, and ensuring that their children are fed. While some women suggested timing of the work was the issue, others asserted that it was the increase in their overall workload with roadwork that made them more tired and unable to go to work at the road the next day. To ensure that women go to work and earn some cash, a few husbands (less than 5%) have started helping their wives with their household chores.

Women also noted that their need to take a lunch pack to work, or go back to their home to have lunch, was another constraint on their road work inputs. Unlike most men who get their lunch carried to them by their wives, women can get lunch only if they have other family members at home to bring it to them. If women are living only with elderly relatives and can't find somebody else to bring their lunch, then they avoid working that day.

Irregularity and non-availability of local workers has led coordinators to seek workers outside their VDC and geographic proximity. There are instances where coordinators have arranged for outside workers (mostly men, but also women in one case) to stay near the road construction site in order to finish the necessary work within a certain period of time. The reason for bringing outside labourer is not always clear, and it may or may not have a direct relationship to the frequency of women's

participation. Temporary shelters or camps that were built after the earthquake have been hired for use by outside workers coming from other VDCs. These mixed camps were only shared by men and women where they were family members and close relatives. There have been a few women without accompanying family who came from distant VDCs, but they always went back to their homes at night, rather than living in a temporary camp. Although there are no reported cases of harassment, women felt insecure living in somebody else’s village without any male member of their own family accompanying them. Some also suggested that people perceive that women may run away with other men if they stay in camps together. Due to women’s security and safety concerns, projects also do not encourage camp-based workers.

5.5.5 Equal wages for equal works

Regardless of specific wage rates for different types of work, the projects reportedly pay for work on a volume basis. This allows payment on a piece contract (normally worth NPR 6,500,000). The workers were supposed to be paid according to their daily attendance, with daily work counted as eight hours. This approach was considered as non-discriminatory towards women on wage rates, as they were paid equally with men. Thus, regardless of gender, every men and women, whether working as skilled or unskilled labour, earned an equal amount as per the project mandate.

The working hours in Okhaldhunga were from 9am - 4pm and, in Ramechhap, 10 am- 4pm. The RBG could decide on work times and the degree of flexibility allowed to workers. Not all workers came exactly on time, or left at the stated closing time: ‘*Women come late, they don’t come on time*’ was repeatedly stated by male workers. Even women themselves observed that they cannot manage to get to work early because they have so many household chores, especially in the morning hours. Those with children felt particularly constrained; they need to be at home until their children leave for school. However, women’s punctuality was not considered a major issue by the coordinator or other workers as they are accustomed to the limitations that women face. Men were considered more punctual, although in practice both men and women were irregular regarding timely attendance. Although the project stated eight hours as the daily work time length, loss of a few hours did not affect payment. It was the number of days that carried more weight for payment, so if a worker had only worked for two days (albeit not necessarily a full eight-hour shift on either day), they received wages for those two days. Many women workers were absent for full days, however, due mainly to home responsibilities, and this has reduced their overall income from the road work. The sharing of domestic chores by men and other household members could greatly improve women’s opportunities to benefit from the affirmative actions and reservations for women in the project.

Table 11. Types of work on local roads

Classification of works	Earthworks (soil and hard soil)	Rock cutting (all types of rock)	Masonry - retaining walls	Cross Drainage	Gabion works	Gabion Weaving	Pavements (stone soling and cobble stone paving)
	Unskilled	Unskilled	Skilled and Semi-skilled	Skilled-unskilled	Semi-skilled	Skilled	Skilled
Distribution of work types	28%	27%	4%	3%	19%	1%	18%
Rate in NPR in Okhaldhunga	288/m ³	1361/m ³	1123/m ³	4036/running metre	1784/m ³	376/box	326/m ²
Rate in NPR in Ramechhap	314/m ³	1547/m ³	1215/m ³	4300/running metre	1947/m ³	400/box	349/m ²

Source: LRIP 2017

‘Equal pay for equal work’ was regularly mentioned by all workers, coordinators and other stakeholders. But there were instances where respondents noted the daily wages as NPR 700 to NPR

800 per person for local labour, and NPR 500 per day for outside labourer. One unskilled female labourer said that she earned NPR 10,500 by working for 18 days, which is less than NPR 600 per day. This suggests that the amount of money earned by individuals varied considerably, based on the type of road stretch that they were working on. A stretch of work with much masonry, gabion work and drainage would cost more, due to more skills required, than a stretch of work that required only soil and rock cutting. There is no provision of a daily wage rate for workers as the RBG is assigned a package of work worth NPR 325,000 on average, this must be divided among 15-20 workers and completed within a certain number of days. The amount paid is irrespective of gender but the stretch of work and skill required to complete the stretch may skew the amount of money earned by people with different skills. As such, men earned more.



"I bought a mobile phone with the money I earned by working on the roads and talked to my sister and brother, who are working abroad. I earned about NPR 150,000," says Kumari Nepali, a Dalit woman studying in grade 12 in Dimipokhari high school, Ramechhap. She feels proud that she is able to fulfil her mother's dream of wearing gold earrings. "I learned how to weave gabion boxes and am going to take a skill test certification exam by the National Skill testing Board," adds Kumari. With a skill test certification, she will be guaranteed a minimum wage wherever she works for that particular job.

Giri, Kumari Nepal in Ramechhap, November 2016

In the case of outsiders (people from other VDCs), it was mostly men who lived in the rented camps for months until the work was over. About 10-12 men lived in a camp and bought local vegetables, and cereals. These men observed that some of their wives also wanted to work, but in such cases they would have had to rent a separate camp. Sharing a camp among men was easier and less expensive than sharing it with a female family member. The project has not allowed mixed gender camps in order to avoid incidents of gender-based sexual violence.

5.5.6 Creating a conducive working environment

A conducive working environment is essential for women's participation, and to ensure safety and security of men and women workers.

Child Care Facilities: Since there are very few women with infants who need to be taken care of, the villagers have not considered opening a functional child care centre either in Ramechhap or Okhaldhunga. Indeed, women say they feel more comfortable leaving their baby at home under the care of their mother-in-law or somebody else if they want to work. But often, because no one is available to take care of their children, women with babies are not able to do road work, although they have an aspiration to do so to earn income. Some women also pointed out that if there were a facility, they would have to carry the child a long distance to reach it. Instead, leaving the child under the care of household members was more appropriate.

Separate Toilets: Although separate toilets for men and women were provisioned in the project, in reality temporary pit latrines were used by both men and women. Women workers, asked about this, said they had no issues with the arrangement.

Safety gear: Use of safety gear, provided to all road workers regardless of gender, is monitored by the LRUC. Helmets and gloves are occasionally worn by workers, but it is reported that some have not received goggles yet. Goggles are compulsorily for wear while working on rock-cutting and

chiselling stones. Usually neither men nor women would wear helmets and gloves while digging soft soil, but would wear them when breaking rocks/boulders.

First Aid Training: Nobody was sure who had received first aid training. Some had heard that two to three men from each stretch of road were trained, while one coordinator said that one person per RBG was given the training. Some of the RBGs still haven't received their first aid kits, which are for use in case of minor injuries at the worksites. Nobody recalled any injury or use of first aid kit.



Mainali, Woman at health post, Okhaldhunga, December 2016

Insurance: Insurance covers death and injuries of workers aged 16-60 years. Since the project has discouraged participation of youths below 16 years, elderly people and pregnant women in road construction, there is no provision of insurance for them. However, old men and women, young boys and girls, as well as pregnant women from poor family backgrounds, could be seen working on the construction sites. All workers were aware of the insurance policy, but still preferred to work. Old people feel though that even if something happened to them, it is important to earn, because this money will allow them to live a good life. Some old men asserted that they work harder than some of the youths who just attend the work but are mostly spending time with their friends. Mostly older men argued that the age barrier should not stop them working, and that they should be insured too.

5.5.7 Increased access to income, services and asset-ownership

Three types of women could be identified in the community: those who worked to earn money; those who worked to develop their community and bring economic growth; and a third group who did not work because they had husbands sending them remittances from the cities and abroad or were busy with their household work, family farms and rearing animals. However, in every family, an increase in purchasing power, asset ownership and accumulation was important. Most study households owned a television (TV), Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) player, radio and smart phone. Very few had Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders and stoves for cooking – the majority of families still use firewood for cooking.

Table 12. Ownership of Assets among HHHs (TVs, Mobile phones, LPG gas, Personal Computers)

HHH with ethnicity	Machines	TV/DVD	Mobiles	Livestock (including poultry)	Radio	LPG	Personal Computers
Dalit (3)	3 sewing machines	4	10	44	none	none	1
Janajati (7)	1 solar flour mill 1 solar lighting	2	13	171	5	1	none
Brahmin (2)	none	1	4	21	none	1	none
Total (12 Families)	5	7	27	236	5	2	1

Source: Debriefings after field immersions, December 2016

The ability to attend a private clinic, send children to study in better schools outside their locality, build a house, especially after the earthquake, attend the local *haat bazaar* (weekly market) to buy clothes, utensils and meat for consumption, was valued by both men and women. An increase in meat consumption was considered the most significant change in household consumption patterns, and has come about especially since families have started earning more money. Women spent their

money earned from road construction on purchase of meat, gold (for adornment, status and as a form of savings) and livestock. Some have also invested in buying land and establishing small teashops. While women have thus spent their earnings in household consumption and asset-ownership, men have spent their money in similar ways but also used it for increasing alcohol consumption and gambling.



“Earlier, women sometimes died on their way before they reached hospital when carried on foot for hours for deliveries, but it has become easier now for women to reach nearest health centre on time with the road coming to Mangalbare Bazaar and ambulances coming to take pregnant women,” recalls Keshav Kumari Pokharel, a single mother, Prapcha Shreechaur Road user committee member, Okhaldhunga.

The only private means of transportation in these districts is the motorcycle, and few people own one (only about 13% of the respondent households in Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga districts). Moreover, motorcycles are driven only by men; women are said to lack driving skills, but there are also cultural barriers to women’s mobility; they were traditionally mostly confined to their own homes and farms. Women sometimes travel as passengers, usually carrying goods bought from the market when returning to their villages.

Maharjan, LRUC Member, Okhaldhunga, December 2016

5.5.8 Daily mobility and non-mobility

People’s mobility depends on their day-to-day needs: school-going pupils need to travel to school on a daily basis; working age women must travel to collect fodder and firewood (which is traditionally a woman’s task); decisions to visit hospitals and health posts are based on the severity of illnesses. In Okhaldhunga, most people preferred to go to the mission hospital in cases of severe sickness. Several sick people were reportedly carried by stretcher as far as Keurini or Prapcha from other villages (almost two to three hours’ walk), then by jeep or bus to Okhaldhunga.

Quantitative data on the number and frequency of journeys by men and women were not gathered, so comparisons of gendered mobility cannot be presented in the study. However, based on observation and key informant interviews, both men and women use vehicles to travel to Kathmandu. Women passengers are mostly observed travelling in day-time, to avoid moving in the dark when they would be more vulnerable to harassment and local disapproval. Other occasional mobility needs included visiting VDC office for official work; however, due to unavailability of VDC staff, villagers would rather go to the municipality to get their official work done. Vehicles are also used when visiting banks in the district headquarters.

Both men and women use vehicles to attend meetings in the district headquarters or for going to Kathmandu for training, market and social visits. In a society where most official work is done by men, women LRUC members who were given the responsibility to go to the bank to collect money for distribution to the workers in the village felt a boost in confidence. Those women who travelled to the municipality for official work as a representative of their village similarly found this gave them a sense of pride. Other travel included attending meetings in the villages, and going to haat bazaar. Some men and women went to haat bazaar on a weekly basis, while some visited occasionally. More women than men (usually older women) had never left the village; others said they had not left the village for a long period of time since they didn’t have any reason to travel. Women’s mobility (mainly on foot) was particularly significant in transporting animal dung, and taking cereal to the

mill. Children's daily mobility to school affects women's travel, as the time children take to reach and get home from school affects the way women manage their mornings and afternoon household chores.

As the mother in a host household observed:



“Children leave in the morning after eating and they return home in the afternoon. It takes around two to three hours for small kids to get back home. Sometimes the trail road is not in good condition, so it takes longer. We mothers have to think of the time children get back home as they are usually very hungry after their return. We need to ensure that snack is prepared for them. Daughters usually can cook for themselves, but sons don't. Small children, neither a girl nor a boy, can cook. So, we have to hurry with our works. Sometimes we go to cut grass, get fodder, or go to work on roads. But we ought to return back for them, if there isn't anybody else at home”.

Shrestha, Women at local weekly market, Okhaldhunga, February 2017

Children, mostly girls, will be engaged in household chores before they go to school and once they arrive home from school. Due to the availability of roads, use of commercial porters to carry loads is now insignificant. If people hired porters to carry goods, regardless of the weight or time spent in carrying, the cost of a porter per day was NPR 500 even if it was only for an hour. Usually, household members chose to carry the load themselves, using a *doko* (a bamboo-basket carried at the back, tied by a head strap). During the field study both men and women were observed carrying loads of crops, crop residues, fodder, cereals, construction materials, fertiliser and other goods to and from markets and farms.

5.5.9 Women's role in the household

The changes in women's lives brought about by their new role as income-earning members of the household have also brought psychosocial changes in the mind-sets of both men and women. Women, who previously considered themselves dependent on their male family members for cash to buy clothes, education materials for children, and other basic needs, now feel more self-reliant because they have their own income. Women working on the roads could now not only manage household needs by themselves, but also started acquiring assets such as gold. The ability to buy jewellery, kitchenware and meat for household consumption, they see as improving their well-being. Previously, decisions regarding buying and selling of livestock, cereals or land, were mostly made by men, but now women are included in such decisions. Women can now also contribute their share in the purchase of land and livestock, which gives many women a sense of pride. However, rarely are these assets purely women-owned. Out of 72 cases of HHHs and FHHs, only three women have land in their ownership while one has a joint ownership with husband.

Having an income earning opportunity outside the household realm has made women think about the means through which their household work could be shared by more people. The low value given to women's time as they go about daily household tasks is a disadvantage with which women struggle when they wish to work on the road to earn income of their own. Mostly, when women have to choose between household responsibility and an income-earning opportunity, they must choose household work. Even if women are working outside they house, they will still have to take care of their household chores because these are rarely shared by other household members. A few men (perhaps less than five percent) have, however, started to share some household

responsibilities, mainly cooking to ease the work of women in their household. Thus, although the economic benefits from road work have made women more independent, unequal gender relations within households have resulted in increased time poverty for women, diminishing their overall well-being.

Despite the availability of a significant work opportunity for an extended period, women's attendance was less than that of men. The possibility for women to work every day often could not be utilised optimally due to women's household workloads. Men, by contrast, had little involvement in day-to-day household chores, especially when they had the opportunity to work outside the home. In most families, men were prioritised to work outside, while women were considered more responsible for household work. Redistribution of household chores is a major challenge for most women.

Work burdens have also impacted the physical well-being of women. Prevalence of uterus prolapse and back pains among women (aged 35 and above) was mentioned in both districts; however, a clear association with road work cannot be established, as women were often engaged in multiple tasks including farming, attending to animals, carrying manure and fodder, carrying farm products to market, cooking and taking care of family members. Even so, some women said that increased tiredness after long days of work often led them to avoid working on the road regularly.

In the case of education of children, boys are mostly sent to fee-paying private schools (where teachers are regular, some are taught in the English medium, facilities are better, so the quality of education is perceived to be better), while girls are enrolled in government school (where no fees are required, teachers are not regular, facilities are poorer). This gender discrimination in education is still evident in the villages.

5.5.10 Women's limited 'space' for 'influence'

Initially, a platform to discuss women's participation on construction was not available, although in other areas of socio-economic development, the issues of women and disadvantaged groups issues had been raised. Discussion of issues concerning the role of women and disadvantaged groups during construction of road and bridges being facilitated through LRUC and bridge UG have created a space. However, there was little evidence of any decisions made except for construction of a building to be used as a women's meeting place, and the female community health volunteers trying to raise their wages. The space available to women in User Groups to supervise, monitor and manage the fund has empowered those women who were actively involved.

However, most women representatives were only included to make up numbers. These women have felt marginalised by their male counterparts who constantly questioned women's knowledge and understanding, making women refrain from speaking during the decision-making process because they felt men would not listen to them. Many women say their only role in the User Group was to sign during meetings to indicate attendance. Women were given the tasks of taking attendance, monitoring, managing and disbursing funds, but the space for decision-making was confined to male members. Not a single woman representative of a User Group felt she had influenced significant decisions within or outside it. Women representing women's groups and mother's groups in the User Group said they had active engagement in the planning processes and local governance of their own women's groups, but these same women did not feel any similar satisfaction in the User Groups.

6 Study Conclusions and Recommendations

Some generational change regarding attitudes to gender relations can be identified among people from all castes, ethnicities, and classes. Because of the gender mainstreaming policies and practices brought in by the rural transport projects since last 15 years, many now recognise that women should work outside the household sphere, if they have the capacity to work. Most people, including district officials, LRUC members, and local settlement leaders in the villages of Okhaldhunga and Ramechhap, subscribe to the rhetoric that, with their education and skill, women should have equal opportunities with men. Men from the study households, as well as society at large in the villages, speak of supporting women to come out of their houses and engage in income-generating activities, as well as in community development.

6.1 Women's improved lives but increased work burden



Women's lives have improved through safer, better access to services and income-earning opportunities. However, adequate **recognition of women's unpaid care work burden** has not been established. In a very few rare cases, women were supported by their husbands or other family members in their household chores. There is a need for sharing women's burden at home by men and other household members to free up women's time for working outside to earn income. Therefore, **redistribution** of women's unpaid care-work is necessary, if women are to benefit fully from the opportunities given to them by the state and other authorities. *"I help my mother when I do not have to do my homework for school"*

Mainali, A host-household boy doing HH chore, Ramechhap, 2016

6.2 Women's representation and continued empowerment

Initiatives to include 33% women in the LRUCs and 40% women and 60% disadvantaged groups in the road construction works have brought about transformations in inclusion of previously excluded, discriminated and marginalised groups of people, through forced representation and participation respectively. **Quotas or reservations are widely accepted**. While such reservations have provided an opportunity for people (women and DAGs) who were historically marginalised to have a stake in development plans and programmes, there are many such women and DAGs who now feel overburdened because they are required to take positions in so many different groups. Such positions force them to attend meetings, but their roles in decision-making often remain marginal.

Use of the word '*mahila*' (a respectful form of address to a woman) and not '*aimai*' (which is considered a derogatory term of address to a woman) can now be observed, and is reportedly used more frequently. This type of change, although not brought about by the transport projects, shows some flexibility, progress and potential for further change among villagers regarding how they address and treat women and disadvantaged groups.

Debate and discussions regarding **women's rights, equal opportunities and equal wages** are ongoing among both men and women at large in the districts because of the policy introduced by rural roads building project. They have started accepting and talking about these issues, although



advocacy and lobbying for them is not well-integrated into local programmes. Therefore, **more investments and efforts are required** in order to empower female, in accompanying them with needed training, skill development, orientation, and giving space for them to learn and make progress.

“ When selected for a secretary, I was scared if I wouldn't be able to do my job. I felt shy to talk in the big crowd. Now after receiving leadership and other training provided by road project, I learned how to do my job, how to keep the records and accounts. It's not difficult at all. I now know how the government works and have this opportunity to understand community development works more closely, ” says Sabina Shrestha, Secretary of Ramche – Manpur –Galba Local Roads User's Committee.

Giri, Secretary of UC, Ramechhap, November 2016

6.3 Conducive working environment for women

A conducive working environment is essential for women's participation, and to **ensure safety and security of all workers** including women. Provision of child care facilities at working sites, providing safety gears, **flexible working hours** for women and equal pay for equal works should continue in order to encourage women's participation and for their economic empowerment. However, **women's specific needs and constraints must be identified and addressed** so that women's participation is increased, for example **convenient venues** for women must be selected for training, **'on-the-job training'** and giving due credit to **prior learning** (skill they have learned previously) should be considered.

6.4 Review of worker's insurance policy

Worker's insurance covers death and injuries of workers aged 16-60 years but, in order to discourage participation of youths below 16 years, elderly people and pregnant women, there is no provision of insurance for them in road construction work. However, it was reported that pregnant women, young boys and girls and older people from poor family backgrounds, have been working on the construction sites. Looking at practical issues concerning **local poverty conditions, people's economic right, and for worker's welfare**, it is important to review the policy to cover the insurances for these groups of people as well.

6.5 Building of women engineers' capacity on qualitative research

For the practitioners involved, this study has also positively benefited the young Nepali women engineers, who previously were not familiar with social and qualitative research techniques. As part of the project, they were trained in the immersion methodology and conducted immersions in Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga Villages as RAs. It helped them be more aware of conscious and unconscious gender biases that were practiced by people in the villages. According to them, it has not only helped them reflect the reality of the two villages but this learning was also helpful for their own personal and professional development.

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Annex A: Participants of Focus Group Discussion and Key Informants - Ramechhap District

A.1 Focus group discussions

Galpa-Khanikhola Road User Committee (Dimipokhar 2, 4)

1. Padam Budhathoki Magar (40), Secretary; Manpur, Dimipokhari 2
2. Mina Kumari Thapa Magar (28), Member; Dandapasale, Dimipokhari 3
3. Indramaya Shrestha (50), Member; Bajetole, Dimipokhari 3

Ramche-Manpur Road User Committee (Dimipokhar 2, 3)

1. Birkha Bahadur Damai (Shyam-37), Chairperson; Manpur, Dimipokhari 2
2. Sabina Shrestha (20), Secretary; Ramche, Dimipokhari 4
3. Ranga Bahadur Thapa Magar (30), Treasurer; Dandapasale, Dimipokhari 3
4. Pratima Thapa (22), Member; Bajetole, Dimipokhari 3
5. Sanumaya Yonjan (35), Member; Manpur, Dimipokhari 2
6. Hari Bahadur KC (57), Member; Maire, Dimipokhar 9
7. Ramesh Kumar Yonjan (36), Member; Mandar, Dimipokhari 8

Building Groups, Workers and Mechanic

1. Krishna Bahadur Thapa Magar (48), Coordinator, Building Group; Manpur, Dimipokhari 2
2. Chandra Bahadur Jarkha Magar (43), Coordinator, Building Group; Ramche, Dimipokhari 4
3. Ganesh Bahadur Thapa Magar (46), Worker; Manpur, Dimipokhari ward 3
4. Dilmaya Jarkha Magar (32), Worker; Pahatole, Dimipokhari ward 3
5. Jeet Bahadur Rajan Magar (33), Wheel Barrow Mechanic; Ramche, Dimipokhari ward 4
6. Birkha Bahadur Jarkha Magar (49), Worker; Ramche, Dimipokhari ward 4
7. Dipesh Thapa Magar (18), Worker; Ramche, Dimipokhari ward 4

A.2 Key informants

Teachers

1. Shiva Bahadur Pande (54), Manpur, Dimipokhari 3; Teacher (Nepali)/Ex-Principal, Shree Krishna Barneshwar Higher Secondary School
2. Kamala Moktan (48), Aanpbot, Dimipokhari 7; Teacher, Shree Mandarmela Chaur Secondary School

Health workers

1. Prabal Kumar Yonjan (43), Incharge, Dimipokhari Health Post, Panityanki, Dimipokhari 7
2. Motilal Ghising (18), owner (CMA), Khadadevi Medical Health Clinic, Galpa, Kadadevi 2

Traders

1. Mina Kumari Thapa Magar (28), shop owner, Dandapasale, Dimipokhari 3 (grocery/*kirana pasal*)
2. Karna Bahadur Magar (62), shop owner, Galpa, Dimipokhari 4 (*bhada pasal*)
3. Pudke BK, Aanpbot, furniture owner, Aanpbot, Dimipokhari 7 (Furniture)
4. Amar Thapa Magar (55), shop owner, Galpa, Dimipokhari 4 (grocery/*kirana pasal* and hotel)

Transport operators

1. Dipak Rayamajhi (26), driver and owner (tata sumo: Kathmandu-Tokarpur); home: Rayagaun, Majhuwa 7
2. Chandra B Majhi (37), driver (bus: Kathmandu-Galpa), home: Manthali

Annex B: Participants of Focus Group Discussion and key informants - Okhaldhunga District

B.1 Focus group discussions

Harkapur-Prapcha-Shreechaur-Khijiphalante Road User Committee

1. Dal Bahadur Sunuwar (57), Chairperson; Shreechaur
2. Dipak Kumar Karki (43), Secretary; Prapcha 9
3. Melina Tamang (19), Treasurer; Shreechaur 4
4. Nirmala Nepal (24), Member; Shreechaur 2
5. Anita Phunyal (45), Member; Prapcha 2
6. Keshab Kumari Pokhrel (44); Member, Prapcha 8
7. Tham Prasad Dahal (59), Member; Prapcha 5
8. Bed Bahadur Khatri (48), Member; Harkapur 3
9. Ram Krishna Phunyal (35), Prapcha 2

Local Road Coordination Committee

1. Bishnu Prasad Adhikari (61), Member (representative, Nepali Congress); Prapcha 5
2. Dil Kumari BK (46), Member (CPN-UML); Shreechaur 1

Kulkhola Bridge User Committee

1. Bishnu Prasad Adhikari, Vice-chairperson, Prapcha 5
2. Makar Rai, Member, Harkapur 4

Building Groups, Workers and Mechanic

1. Bhimmaya Khatri (46), Worker; Shreechaur 1
2. Lila BK (33), Worker; Prapcha 7
3. Birendra Tamang (41), Coordinator; Prapcha 5
4. Bhim Bahadur Tamang (54), Coordinator; Harkapur 3

B.2 Key informants

Teachers

1. Ghanashyam Dahal (~50), Teacher (Primary Level), Shree Shivaduti Higher Secondary School, Dahalgaun, Prapcha 5
2. Sushil Wagle (~35), Teacher (Science), Shree Shivaduti Higher Secondary School, Dahalgaun, Prapcha 5
3. Sharmila KC Karki (39), Principal, Shree Panchakanya Primary School, Prapcha 8

Health workers

1. Mitraminu Dhakal (~40), Health Assistant, Prapcha Health Post, Deurali, Prapcha 2

Traders

1. Champa Dahal (38), shop owner, Dahal gaun, Prapcha 4 (hotel+grocery)
2. Man Bahadur Sunuwar (24), Deurali, Prapcha 4 (wholesale)

Transport operator

1. Krishna Sunuwar (31), driver and owner (bus: Okhaldhunga-Keurini); home: Prapcha 8
2. Ganesh Sunuwar (30), driver and owner (bus and jeep: Okhaldhunga-Keurini), home: Prapcha 8

Settlement leader

1. Rajan Khatri (29), Social Worker, Shreechaur 1

Local government officials

1. Bijayamuni Bajracharya, District Engineer, District Technical Office (DTO), Okhaldhunga
2. Krishna Lal Piya, District Engineer, District Technical Office (DTO), Ramechhap

Annex C: Non-Transport Interventions

Table 13. Interventions other than roads/bridges and their influences

S.No	Theme	Timeline	Issues raised
1.	Period of insurgency	1996-2006	Maoists played a significant role in bringing awareness about caste-based discrimination and gender equality. They made Dalits enter the kitchens of non-Dalits, and encouraged Dalits to use local taps used by others in the community. Before this, Dalits were not allowed to touch water which was considered impure once touched by them, even the spring sources were separated for Dalits from those of Brahmins and Chhetris. Women were encouraged to work outside of the home, and even join as cadres to work for larger cause of national development.
2.	Mothers' group	Since 1999	Mothers' groups started around 1999 but some were defunct after a few years due to various reasons, for example a discontinued programme on health by SDC ended in 2010. Those functioning groups collected NPR 25 per month and circulated the money among themselves.
3.	Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF), a world bank funded programme	Since 2008	PAF gives loans for goats, small shops, buffalo rearing. It helped some, while it increased the burden for those who could not repay the loan. It benefitted the members of executive committees – the chair, secretaries (again, mostly clever men), but not many poor people including women.
4	Ward Citizen Forum (WCF) is the platform for women and discriminated groups to participate in local development	Since 2010	Women and people from disadvantaged groups are the members in these fora, women are active in discussing issues happening in the community and beyond. There are also quotas and reservations made for women and those coming from discriminated groups in these committees. Every two years a new committee is formed; they bring their issues to the village forum and district forum and advocate for the budgets for disadvantaged groups and women. These are formed in every ward of a village development committee and thus is the lowest level of grass-roots committee. Because of these committees, the local budgets are allocated and in the favours of women and DAGs, however, there are questions on how they have been spent. Also women and DAGs are more aware of the budgets and other local provisions through their participation in WCFs.
5	School Management Committee (SMC)	Since 2009	The SMC is chosen by nomination – all parents get to vote/nominate 4=four parent representatives in the SMC, out of which two have to be female. It has a total of eight members; the other 4 members are chosen by the representatives and could be local politicians, teachers and others. This has mandated women to come out and make representations outside their homes.
6	Migration	Since 2009	Male migration to Kathmandu and abroad, resulting in an increase in monetary circulation in the villages. Due to migration of men, there was also a change in gender roles in the households. Women are forced to take men's roles, particularly the workload has increased. Although, the day-to-day decisions are made by women, other decisions related to investments are still consulted with men even if they are abroad (via phones).
7	Changes in Assets	Since 2006	Mobile phones have become an affordable means of communication for a majority of people. At least two to three televisions with dish home channel can be observed in each neighbourhood of the village. Most households own a television (TV) and mobile phone; even illiterate people including women of all age groups own mobile phones and communicate through them. Mobile phones have also improved their ways of lives and ways of doing businesses. The children are seen watching movies on laptops and they are also using internet on their mobiles.
8	Parishad meeting (village council meeting)	Since 1999	RAs observed that village council meetings do happen for discussing the village plans and budgets. All local political party leaders are present, no women but some teachers. It was said that usually women go to the Parishad meetings, but RAs did not observe during that particular event of parishad where a woman has participated in the parishad meeting. It was also reported that 50% of the budget that comes to village is regular budget, while the other 50% is targeted for women, children, and people from discriminated caste groups. Some also recalled that it was decided

			<p>during the <i>Parishad (Village council)</i> meeting last year that some VDC budget was to be spent on constructing a building for women to have different meetings and events. This suggests that even though women were able to influence on the Parishad meetings, it was not quite clear whether the building was built and has actually benefited women in the community. People of all age groups (from 18 to 60 and above; ie most villagers) go for the <i>parishad</i> meeting in both districts. Some women in Okhaldhunga were discussing that this year one agenda for the meeting is to increase the local Female Community Health Volunteer's (FCHVs) pay; earlier they used to get 100 NPR per month, later raised to 500 NPR per month but now decreased to 200 NPR per month. The pay was reportedly reduced because men thought FCHVs don't do any work, only walk around in the village, but this year all women have planned to raise this as an agenda and say the FCHV's should get at least 500 NPR per month.</p>
9	DAG and Gender interventions	Since 2006	<p>16 days training was given to the people from some NGOs (not identified) to give awareness to local men and women on Domestic and Gender based Violence (DGV)</p> <p>Some discontents (among Brahmins FHH) with Dalits. They say "all things (development programs, government programs) going to Dalits and Janjati, but they don't get any better." But another FHH man said, "how is the government be able to help everyone – they are giving us seeds, giving money (reliefs) for earthquake (EQ), many people did not receive money and they rebuilt their own homes." The Dalits, however, say this is very good for them, getting seeds from organisations, getting help from organisations.</p> <p>One woman said women have to go to all kinds of meetings nowadays as most organisations say women have to be on their committees- "There are many organisations and all want a certain percentage of women participation, so we have to go to these meetings and this has made us realise we have to speak up. That is the only way we can go ahead now." A FHH man said, "Organisations need women to be on all groups, that's why we are getting left out."</p> <p>A HHH Dalit said, "No caste discrimination in the village, because government in the constitution has abolished untouchability, more rights given to Dalits."</p> <p>Another FHH said, "they allow Dalit inside their homes and Chettri/Magar also eat with them in their homes, which has changed since last two to three years, with more people letting them enter homes, but there are still 20-30 HHs that do not let them enter their homes."</p> <p>Dalit and non-Dalit use the same water tap, but Dalits are still not allowed to touch non-Dalit families utensils. A Dalit HHH mother said, "one year back I was at the tap to fill water, a Magar woman had left her utensil, the utensil had filled with water, but the woman did not come to remove it, so I removed the utensil, then Magar woman came back and shouted at me for touching her water, I then shouted back saying I knew the law and that she (Magar woman) is not allowed to discriminate against me now and that I would report to authorities."</p> <p>Another FHH woman who works at the local community mediation centre, tells about the <i>Mahila Bikas</i> (women development office of GoN) training she attended which also had the Chief District Officer (CDO) and District Superintendent of Police (DSP). She recalls the trainers talked about women's empowerment - "women have to move forward". But she was overwhelmed with the talks and says – "we are already doing all the household works and other works, where are we supposed to go now to move more forward, what more are we supposed to do?"</p>
10	Other interventions in collaboration with Non-Government Organization(NGOs)/International Non-	Over the last 7-8 years	<p>Mediation committee (USAID project) working on community mediation: Training given to three people from none wards (out of three, one has to be a woman) total 27 +3 (trainers) =30 members. No one has come for actual mediation to date.</p> <p>Some women in Ramechhap mentioned that <i>Mahila Bikas</i> also gave seeds recently but very few are growing vegetables because of lack of irrigation</p>

	<p>Government Organization (INGOs)</p>	<p>facilities (Ramechhap is comparatively drier than Okhaldhunga). Women’s groups being facilitated have women’s saving with NPR 50 per month by each woman; they get micro-loans to buy livestock (pigs, goats) on a rotational basis from the revolving fund, which is kept by the treasurer. Before the road works started, women did not necessarily have cash incomes to start saving.</p> <p>Nyayik Sansar, an NGO, works for water and sanitation – helps families make toilets, especially for earthquake affected families, giving one sack of cement, pan and fittings.</p> <p>LIBIRD, an NGO with a Home Garden project, gives seeds. A FHH man who is also doing house building training with the EF has taken elaichi (large cardamom) seedlings - 15 NPR per sapling and has started planting (500 trees) from this year, also growing vegetables. He says he would sell the surplus, but there is no market linkage - that is why he consumes more at home and sells the surplus to neighbours.</p> <p>One person obtained seeds from the Home Garden project; he has kept all the seeds. Now the project has been phased out so no one is giving them any more seeds. One school teacher says he is worried as there is no bartering of seeds as, when a new NGO with agriculture inputs programme comes, all the households get seeds from them, so everyone has the same seeds, so no bartering - this has also caused the local varieties of seeds to die out.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Earthquake reconstruction Since 2015</p>	<p>Sunaulo Hazaar Din (a programme of USAID for women’s on nutrition) gave (for toilets) pans and two sacks of cement. They also gave improved cooking stoves, and had also built 300 litre capacity water tanks for all households that the researchers visited. They gave blankets and chickens to pregnant women.</p> <p>There was a notice from some organisations for training for house construction – requiring 390 hours per 50 days training. The notice said there would be priority for DAGs and women - probably an earthquake fund- in Prapcha too people say they’ve had the notice for house construction training posted.</p> <p>The Red Cross is giving affected households three sacks cement, pan for toilet, pipes. The focus is on toilets for earthquake damaged houses- so almost all houses are building toilets, even if their toilets are not damaged.</p> <p>Helvetas’ EF training is in the beginning stages, people are still putting up posters – there have to be 60 people from a village per VDC, 18 have to be women (so if there are not enough women then the group won’t be formed). There were talks among women about who will go, who won’t - some women said that if they build a house, it won’t be strong enough. There are some villages where reconstruction of a few houses has just begun while, in others, the works has not started.</p> <p>EF is giving training - ten people, 33% have to be women to build houses after the earthquake. They have three days’ classroom training, then 51 days of field training (or build two houses - as trainees). They are overseen for building two houses by trainers/engineers, after that they will build each other’s houses. Labour is shared, construction materials are paid for by people whose house are being built. Some (mostly women) say the classroom training was difficult for them as they are illiterate or only partly literate.</p> <p>One man was given electrical training in Manthali, but doesn’t know who gave him the training. He was informed he had passed the criteria to work as an electrician and called from Manthali to work, but can’t go right now as he is working on building houses with EF. He says he can earn NPR 25000 per month if he works as an electrician, so will leave after he finishes building houses (two houses as required by the EF project) he started in the village.</p>

Source: Based on the debriefings after the field visit by the Research Assistants, December 2016.

Annex D: Proceedings of the Stakeholder Workshop

Date: 20th August 2017

Time: 9:30 a.m. – 13:30 p.m.

Venue: Greenwich Hotel, Bakhundole, Lalitpur

1. Introduction

The study findings were shared with the national stakeholders including the Government of Nepal, representations from the development partners, government implemented the roads and bridges projects, Nepal forum for rural transport and development, engineers and practitioners of rural roads and bridges in Nepal and the gender focal persons from the key institutions. The objective of the workshop was to share the findings of research on Gender mainstreaming in Rural Transport projects in Nepal. The workshop was formally started by the chairperson of NFRTD – Mr. Neeraj Shah, followed with the introduction of participants and introduction of NFRTD and WISE Nepal along with the objectives of workshop.

2. Welcome and Agenda:

The chairperson of NFRTD welcomed the participants and the invitees of the workshop, and shared the agenda of the workshop with participants. The main agenda of the meeting were to introduce NFRTD and WISE Nepal, present research findings and collect feedback on research findings.

3. Introducing NFRTD, WISE Nepal and RECAP

NFRTD and WISE Nepal are working for advocacy as well as for making policies in relation to women role in infrastructure sector. The treasurer of WISE Nepal and also Research Assistant for this research – Ms. Mausam Mainali, introduced WISE Nepal, activities conducted by the organization and a history of the organizational set up with non-profit motive.

The Joint Secretary of Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) and Former Director General of DoLIDAR and Executive Committee Chair of ReCAP/AsCAP – Mr. Ram Krishna Sapkota shared some of the ongoing ReCAP funded projects in Nepal. He introduced RECAP. He added ASCAP is a follow-up of SEACAP (which had phased out), which is being implemented in the member countries - Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar. Recently, the steering committee meeting was held and was chaired by Nepal. The joint steering meeting of AfCAP and AsCAP is going to held in Uganda in coming November.

Mr. Sapkota shared that the Indian central road institute aims to embed research based findings in policy making which has opened new scopes in transport sector. Mr. Sapkota precisely summarised the statistics of rural roads including Local Road Network (LRN) as per 2016. According to him, the LRN data findings shows the dire need to focus on road and transport infrastructure and further research in this sector. Road accessibility in many parts of the country is still poor – above 368 Village Development Committees yet need to be connected by roads, 2610 river crossings are still needed to connect existed District Road Core Network (DRCN) – for which more than 6 trillion Rupees is estimated as required. Despite Nepal has standardised policies on road width, land encroachment, issues on environment sustainability is high – for which he believes the community

participation is required. He added that more technical researches are also needed to overcome traditional limitations on construction including soil stabilization.

4. Presentation on research findings

The General Secretary of NFRTD and the Research Team Leader - Jun Hada presented the findings of research on Gender Mainstreaming in Rural Transport Projects in Nepal. The budget allocated for the study is UKP 44,900 and the majority of the funds were used in field and paying remuneration of the consultants and part-time finance and administration assistant for conducting this research. The objective of the study was to connect with grass-roots realities of implementation of gender mainstreaming policies in the transport sector of the country.



Research on Gender Mainstreaming in Rural Transport Projects in Nepal: Transformative Changes



The research areas were road and roads bridges focused areas of Ramechhap – Manthali Galbachauri road and Okhaldhunga – Rampur - Prapcha road in tow districts. Reality Check Approach (RCA) methodology was embraced to conduct the study, for which six research assistants were hired. The RCA expert trained the women engineers of WISE Nepal initially on Immersion methods prior to conducting actual immersions in Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga districts. The research was conducted with participatory approach, based on day to day interaction in relation to villagers’ social, cultural, religious, economic and other activities. No definite structural questionnaires were used for this. Besides, focus group discussion was conducted facilitated with two research assistant interacting with users committee in terms of mobility pattern, role of women in Users' Committee, using structured questionnaire. The key informants such as transport operators and political leaders were interviewed. The findings were triangulated and verified and only those triangulated and validated information were presented as findings in the report.

The findings presented were annexed to the draft report. Overall findings showed that there had been positive results. Due to mandatory provisions of targeting 40% women, there women were able to benefit from the short term employment and earn incomes. The women spent their earnings primarily on their own discretion unlike in the olden days where women were forced to give their earnings to their husbands. Projects reserved at least 33% positions for women and proportionate representation of discriminated groups in the road and bridge User Committees (UCs). In the sampled UCs, the women members in reality lacked meaningful roles including investment decision making – only 7% of female members were in decision making positions of the UCs. Also, the findings suggest that women are not as benefitted from capacity building as compared to men due

to their own constraints primarily their time poverty, which were not adequately addressed by the projects. This indicates the need to empower women and need to skill development training to be flexible enough to cater the specific needs of women.

Some of the major ways forward based on the study findings were the need to continue the implementation of inclusive policies, generate more evidences of changes and flexibility in the trainings – 390 hours of credit requirement for skill certification can be compensated with recognition of prior learning through their actual works during construction. Finally, the presentation was concluded with the quote – "at this rate, it'll take more than 100 years to get gender economic parity ".

5. Plenary Discussion

- Confronting the final quote, the chairperson of NFRTD suggested that with the endorsement of new Constitution of Nepal in which the social aspects are guided by politics, and women participation is highly focused at all level. By this, he strongly believes that the equity will be achieved much earlier than 100 years.
- The Senior Divisional Engineer of DOLIDAR – Madhav Bhattari applauded the effort of WISE Nepal in conducting the study. He added that Okhaldhunga has been the champion for demonstrating the results of GESI in the transport sector. There was all women UC committee and road building group in the same road corridor and they matured into a functional women's cooperative now. They are contributing in many other community development works including drinking water, agriculture promotion, renewable energy etc..
- The GESI focal person of DOLIDAR, Mr. Bam Bahadur Thapa, commented that the research area being focused to the two particular districts may not represent the whole country, and it did not show many cultural issues and barriers. Comparative analysis of present study with already existed knowledge in this area is required. It was also suggested that to expand the study in different demographic situation as well. In this study, it was realised that women participation existed yet the participation was not meaningful. So, one must think what should be done to improve the meaningful participation of women in this area.
- The Senior Divisional Engineer and RECAP focal person of DoLIDAR, Mr. Mohan Chapagain added that with regard to women's capacity building, proper assessment is required due to stereotypes present in the society which focuses women to be capacitated mainly as beautician or in tailoring.
- The NFRTD Executive Member and the ex-Executive Director of the Roads Board Nepal Mr. Dipak Nath Chalise commended the research findings are positive in terms of women representation in economy, possibly due to working with Users Committee and in the donor funded region. He added that in general, the overall scenario of women representation and women's participation on road construction in government and multi-lateral donors funded projects would even be bleaker because the priority for them is more of meeting the physical targets and there are very less investments in these aspects of social empowerment and monitoring.
- The floor also discussed the scenarios of women inclusion between the UCs operated and contractors operated works. The conclusion was that the status is also bleaker in contractors operated works. The Deputy Team Leader of Motorable Local Roads Bridge Programme (MLRBP), Mr. Shakil Manandhar, complimented this with his own experience working with the contractors and the current provisions of Public Procurement Act and Regulation, which restricts the programme to be flexible enough for meeting these inclusion targets. He also added that there is

persistent resistance from the district technical offices (DTOs) to include the special clause in the contract for contractors for which, the only way to address this is to amend the existing tri-partite agreement to have a condition (not to support those districts, which resist the inclusion clauses) between Local Roads Bridge Program, DoLIDAR and the DTOs. Jun Hada added that nevertheless, MLRBP has been trying to find ways by splitting the contract packages from the main bridge contractor package for labour intensive works like gabion works, bio-engineering, which are given to UCs in order to include more women to benefit from construction works. Also adding a special clause as an incentive to the contractor if he/she fulfils the target of employing more women.

- Tulsi Nepal, former Team Leader of Trail Bridge Support Programme, informed that in 2001, even 31% women participation in the project was hard to achieve, the women participation were achieved forcefully. Likewise, women's roles in public spheres were also limited. He added that the research could have presented some of the roles of women of their private spheres and possibly, also have incorporated gender roles including male perspectives. Mr. Nepal also questioned the government personnel that as an additional clause – is it possible to have any incentive for contractor if not punishment so as to encourage positive work environment at field?
- Mr. Vijay Lal Nyachhyon, Executive Member of NFRTD, added that in most cases, penalty clauses are used for contractors but reward clause is always ignored. He added if the penalty clause can be executed, then why not the incentive clause be introduced. The Joint Secretary of MoFALD gave the positive response in this issue.
- The Planning and Results Monitoring Specialist of Trial Bridge Support Unit - Ansu Tumbahangfe questioned to government staff present in the workshop that no matter from which the result being achieved or drawn, either it be a donor funded or government funded – it ultimately comes to the government for the implementation or carry forward the good practices. In this regard, how the government will use such findings in the implementation. Mr. Madhav Bhattarai responded to this as the implementation of provision of equal wage for equal work and other multiple perspectives envisioned for better women participation are slowly growing.
- Mrs. Mandira Poudyal, retired Joint Secretary of National Planning Commission and Vice Chair of NFRTD commented on research being biased to good findings and suggested issues and negative findings if encountered during the research should also be presented in the study report. This way, the issues are brought into attentions and would be addressed.
- The General Secretary of NFRTD and the team Leader of the Research, informed the limitations of the study being resource and time bound, the two districts as research area but still representing majority of ethnic groups, discriminated groups and women, etc. would need to be understood. She also added that there were negative findings from the immersions, such as **gender based violence** is still prevalent in the villages, conscious biases/discrimination made by families to girl and boy children exists. Two female RAs were forced to change their host households – one in Ramechhap and one in Okhaldhunga simply because of males of those households did not respect the decisions made by female members to allow the RAs staying in their houses. The case in Okahldhunga was even worse, the RA was allowed to stay for the first day by the household mother while on the second day, the husband beat the wife because she allowed the RA to stay without taking permission from the him, so the RA had to move to another host household on the second day. There were examples of boys sent to private schools where one has to pay higher fees, while girls were only sent to public schools (either free or with nominal fees). An incident was recalled by an RA, a focus household member told in the village of

Ramechhap, a brother of a girl, who had inherited a parental property, wants to claim back that property given to her after she ran away with her man.

- The Joint Secretary of MoFALD commented on the evidence based research - presented on the study findings to be crucial and less biased. With regard to the query on - how government will use such findings in the implementation, Mr. Sapkota agreed on the gap that exists between government and donor supported projects in terms of discipline of the GoN staff. In case of project implemented by GoN, limited resources, less control over project implementation due to discipline gap makes difficult to achieve the targets. The institutional set up is significant but to reduce the gap, capacity building is required so that these learning will be internalised at national level. Unfortunately, the stick and carrot system in the Government does not work. He further added – "One fits for all" ideology may not be possible, illustrating further with an example of Strengthening National Rural Transport Project (SNRTP) in which routine maintenance of 5400 plus km by Road Maintenance Groups (RMG) via selection criteria focusing disadvantaged groups and women in nearby road corridor were done and by this 67% workforce of RMG were women. Each had bank account, occupational health and safety knowledge were imparted and this project remained as a model. Such best practice needs to be replicated. DoLIDAR has a guideline and focus to replicate these where applicable.

6. Conclusion:

The research assistants also shared their personal experiences accounts of the field immersions. The workshop was finally concluded by the chairperson of NFRTD by thanking everyone for their active participation. The workshop evaluation forms were distributed to all the participants to fill in and were collected once completed by the participants. The workshop was evaluated as very good by most of the participants. The evaluation results show that most of the participants (41% of them) were satisfied by the workshop and they rated 'B' for the workshop. While 40% of the participants rated the workshop as "A", 15% rated as "C", while 2% rated it as "D", less than 1% rated it as "E".

7. Evaluation Scores:

Question No.	A	B	C	D	E
1	4	9	5		1
2	7	8	4		
3	2	11	5		1
4	10	7	2		
5	3	7	9		
6	10	7	2		
7	12	6	1		
8	9	7	2	1	
9	10	5	2	2	
10	9	9		1	
11	9	10			
Total scores	85	86	32	4	2
% scores	40.66986	41.14833	15.311	1.91388	0.956938

Overall, the workshop was successful in raising awareness among the key practitioners – the gender issues prevailing in general and in the rural transport sector and how gender roles can be transformed with some key targeted interventions in the projects.



Photos from the workshop

Annex E: Workshop Evaluation Form



Workshop:
**Research Findings of Gender Mainstreaming in
Rural Transport Projects in Nepal (WISE Nepal)**
20th August 2017, Lalitpur, Nepal

Please fill in this evaluation form so we can learn from your experience and opinions. The feedback you provide will remain anonymous.

Please evaluate the programme elements, by circling one of the letters A to E.

A= Very much agree; B = somewhat agree; C = neither agree, nor disagree; D = somewhat disagree; E = very much disagree

1. The workshop introduced me to new issues in the area of gender mainstreaming in the transport sector that I was unaware of prior to the workshop. ☺- A - B - C - D - E -☹
2. The workshop increased *my existing understanding* of issues in the area of gender mainstreaming in the transport sector. ☺- A - B - C - D - E -☹
3. The workshop made me think *differently* about gender mainstreaming in the transport sector. ☺- A - B - C - D - E -☹
4. I now have a good understanding of the ReCAP Gender mainstreaming projects in Nepal. ☺- A - B - C - D - E -☹
5. The materials distributed provided me with new thinking on the topic of gender mainstreaming in transport. ☺- A - B - C - D - E -☹
6. The information presenters used during the event were of good quality. ☺- A - B - C - D - E -☹
7. The approach/methods used during the workshop (e.g. presentations, plenary session, feedback sessions) were effective. ☺- A - B - C - D - E -☹

8. The content presented at the workshop was directly relevant to my needs. ☺- A - B - C - D - E -☹

9. There was sufficient time to discuss issues raised by the presenters. ☺- A - B - C - D - E -☹

10. I was able, as a participant, to effectively contribute to the sessions of the workshop. ☺- A - B - C - D - E -☹

11. Overall, I would rate this workshop as useful. ☺- A - B - C - D - E -☹

12. Please list two things that you have learned during this workshop.

a)

b)

13. How could the workshop have been improved?

Thank you for your comments and suggestions!

Annex F: Workshop Participants

1. Jivan Shrestha, Director General of DoLIDAR, Chair of RECAP Steering Committee
2. Ram Chandra Shrestha, Deputy Director General, Local roads sub-sector, DoLIDAR
3. Mohan Chapagain, Senior Divisional Engineer, DOLIDAR
4. Madhav Bhattarai, Section Chief of Local Bridge Section, DOLIDAR
5. Bam Bahadur Thapa, Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI), DOLIDAR
6. Ram Krishna Sapkota, Joint Secretary, MOFALD
7. Neeraj Shah, Chair, NFRTD
8. Raghav Bista, Treasurer, NFRTD
9. Dlpak Nath Chalise, Executive Member NFRTD
10. Govind Mallik, Executive Member, NFRTD
11. Ms. Mandira Poudyal, Executive Member, NFRTD
12. Vijay Lal Nyachyon, Member, NFRTD
13. Jun Hada, General Secretary, NFRTD
14. Arjun Poudel, Member, NFRTD
15. Manohara Khadka, Gender and Social Inclusion Advisor, SDC
16. Ansu Tumbahangfe, Planning and Results Monitoring Specialist, Helvetas Nepal
17. Mausam Mainali, Social Safeguard Officer, TBSU Helvetas Nepal, and Member WISE Nepal
18. Dikshya Maharjan, Bridge Support Engineer, LRBP, and Member WISE Nepal
19. Shakil Manandhar, Deputy Team Leader, LRBSU
20. Prati Giri, Bridge Support Engineer, LRBP and Member WISE Nepal
21. Jyoti Shrestha, Planning and Monitoring Assistant, LRBP
22. Dekesh Maharjan, Finance and Administrative Assistant, WISE Nepal
23. Jeni Rajbamshi, Management Information System Specialist, Decentralized Rural Infrastructure and Livelihood Project – Emergency Earthquake Assistant Project (DRILP-EEAP, DoLIDAR
24. Niroj Gautam, Assistant, LRBP