



District Roads Support Programme (DRSP), Nepal Phase 4

Duration of Support:	17.07.2010 – 15.07.2013
Current Budget	CHF 13'990'000
Implementing Agency	Frisa-Itenco
Partners	Ministry of Local Development (MoLD), Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads (DoLIDAR), District Development Committee (DDC), Asian Development Bank (ADB), and Department for International Development (DFID)
Office Location	Kathmandu, Nepal
Project Working Area	Ramechhap, Sindhuli, Okhaldhunga and Khotang

Summary

Poverty is widespread in Nepal and particularly severe in the rural areas. A strong correlation is observed between poverty incidence and road access: remote, inaccessible areas are generally much poorer than areas served by roads. The provision of road access is one of the most effective ways to improve the livelihood of poor people in remote areas.

DRSP aims to improve the living conditions of the local people by facilitating better access and improving mobility. This will be achieved by constructing, rehabilitating and maintaining rural roads in a labour-based, environmentally friendly and participatory (LEP) way, in four participating districts, the focus of the Programme will be on the most disadvantaged groups (DAGs) within society.

Background

With the aim to improve the living conditions of the local people by facilitating easier access and improving mobility, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) initiated the first phase of DRSP in 1999. Subsequently second phase of DRSP, started in July 2002, and concluded in July 2006. The third phase started in July 2006 and concluded in July 2010. DRSP has had good successes in the first three phases. Physical and Financial progresses have met and exceeded targets. It has provided all weather access through building and rehabilitating 500 kms of district roads since the inception of the programme, whilst the community development programmes have also demonstrated sustained improvements in the capacities of local communities. In total, over the past 10 years, there has been a three-fold increase in incomes of households living along the road corridors that DRSP built. Overall, the degree of food sufficiency in the areas served by the project roads was estimated to have doubled.

Goal and Expected Outcomes

The major **goal** of DRSP aims at contributing to **'improved livelihoods of the discriminated and poor within the rural population'** in the programme area. There are two expected outcomes of DRSP:

- § The remote rural population benefit from motorable access to resources and opportunities; and
- § Institutional structure and capacities at all level are improved to ensure good governance and acceptable level of workers welfare.

The major target beneficiaries of DRSP are DAGs in the remote rural areas. When the districts authorities choose a road corridor, the social team facilitates the selection of local committees, user groups and construction groups with set of criteria for involvement of disadvantaged people including women at the maximum within such committees and groups.

Achievements

A positive overall impact on the local economy through the injection of earnings from road construction, which has also been positively skewed to the benefit of the poor and other DAGs. Some of the major achievements are as follows:

- § A three-fold increase in household income over the past 10 years.
- § There was little change in the production of cereal crops in the area of influence of the roads, although there was a substantial increase in the production of cash crops – especially potato and vegetables – for export. Overall the degree of food sufficiency in the areas served by the project roads was estimated to have doubled, in terms of the number of months for which households produced sufficient food for their needs
- § There was an approximate 20 percent increase observed in the proportion of children in education – from 60+% to 80+% – with the proportion of girls in school increasing at a faster rate than boys.
- § The frequency of trips to local markets and main market centres has increased significantly, by a factor of between 2 and 5 times, with a typical frequency now of 1 or 2 times a month, compared with intervals of between 1 and 3 months previously
- § People in the four eastern districts living within 30 minutes of an all-weather road has



- § doubled (from 100,000 to 200,000) as a result of the DRSP intervention
- § There is 29% increase in percentage of population served by 4 hrs of walking distance to nearest all weather road, totaling more than 75 % of population in the programme districts having access to all weather roads within 4 hours of walk.
- § More than 2 million person days of work was generated through road construction and rehabilitation works, out of which 73% of the works went to members of DAG families while 37% of the entire workforce was women.
- § The number of shops along the road corridors increased significantly, with the record of annual increment of services and utilities opening up at an average rate of over 28%.
- § On average, at least 2 vehicles are operating in all roads, due to which freight costs has reduced by at least 15% in the road corridors.
- § A total of 131 savings and credit groups were formed with savings of at least Rs. 25,000 in a group with 17% of such groups being matured and converted into cooperatives
- § **500 kms** of roads are made to all-weather standard with **115 kms** roads were maintained periodically with their Annual Road Maintenance Plans institutionalized in the districts,

Following a long history of SWISS engagement in the sector, SDC has inducted many good practices across the rural road projects in Nepal. Widely accepted LEP approach which was drawn from SWISS experience has been adopted nationally within other road sector projects Decentralised Rural Infrastructure and Livelihoods Project (DRILP) and Rural Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Project (RRRSDP), Until recently, unheard issues of workers' welfare for their benefit are being translated into policy that includes insurance, work safety, equal wage for equal work and facilities that help women to participate equally. District Transport Master Plans (DTMP) that DRSP pioneered is being used widely. Gender equity policy for rural transport infrastructure is shortly expected to be endorsed by GoN. These distinctive qualities helped SDC to upscale its activities many-folds through collaboration with other donors, particularly in ADB funded DRILP and ADB, OPEC, DFID funded RRRSDP.

Approaches

- § DRSP implements the technical side of the Programme in line with the DoLIDAR's LEP approach. Priority for work is always given to the User Groups. For limited tasks requiring specific skilled works, local contractors are used. Roads are prioritised on the basis of District Transport Master Plans.
- § DRSP process ensures that DAGs are given priority in the selection of workers on the road and 2/3rds of all the people employed are from DAGs including 40% women.
- § In order to transform the short-term monetary benefits of working on the road into long-term sustainable improvements in livelihoods, a special community development element is built in whereby, the unskilled labourers from DAGs shall be trained to upgrade their skills and trades in construction works such as gabion weaving, stone masonry building etc.
- § DRSP maintains a strong focus on workers welfare to ensure that several basic minimum requirements like adequate insurance against accidents, timely payments for workers, child-care facilities for labourers and equal wage for equal work are met.
- § Experiences from these initiatives shall be fed into a national strategy for the implementation of Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) for local roads.
- § Local road maintenance has to take a higher profile during this Phase. In order that a maintenance culture is instilled in the participating districts, DRSP shall help DDCs to conduct routine maintenance in all of its important (high traffic) district roads.

Information and Publications: Available upon request

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Abbreviations

ADB:	Asian Development Bank
DAGs:	disadvantaged groups
DDC:	District Development Committee
DFID:	Department for International Development



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
Swiss Cooperation Office Nepal
स्वीस सरकार विकास सहयोग एसडिसि
स्वीस सहयोग कार्यालय नेपाल

DoLIDAR : Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads
DRILP: Decentralised Rural Infrastructure and Livelihoods Project
DRSP: District Roads Support Programme
DTMP: District Transport Master Plan
LEP: Labour-based, environmentally friendly and participatory
MoLD: Ministry of Local Development
RRRSDP: Rural Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Project
SDC: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SWAp: Sector Wide Approach