

Session 5.1: Practical Exercise - Role-Play on Rural Transport Planning

The Scenario:

The district (lowest local government unit) is making its transport plan. The district planner has called a village assembly comprising all stakeholders of one village in the district. The goal of the meeting is to carry out a rural participatory appraisal of the transport demands and discuss options for improving transport services, IMTs and village infrastructure.

The following persons participate at the meeting:

1. Chairman: District Planner
2. Honourable Guest: Member of Parliament representing the District
3. World Bank Representative
4. Transport Service Operator
5. Extension Worker
6. Local Shop Keeper
7. Female Trader
8. Male Commercial Farmer
9. Young Rural Male
10. Old Rural Male
11. Female Single Household Farmer

Description of the Region

The region in which the village is located is fairly flat. Two rainy seasons allow the villagers to harvest twice per year. Soils have moderate fertility and allow the production of millet, maize, bananas and tubers.

About 25-30 inhabitants per km² are living in the area. The village has 200 households with an average 5 persons per household. There is a high male out-migration due to lack of alternative income sources and low agricultural productivity. Farmers are primarily producing for their subsistence and only a smaller share of the crops is marketed. There are practically no other sources for cash income.

The village has no public facilities. Only a small shop is selling basic products like soap and kerosene. The distance to water sources are 20 min walk (one way) in the rainy season and 40 minutes in the dry season. Firewood has to be transported for 80 minutes. The average walking distance to the fields is 1 hour. A primary school is located in the next village, accessed by the footpath which leads to the market town. Children have to walk 90 minutes to get to this school.

The market town can only be reached along a dilapidated gravel road which is 3-4 hours walk away. Two other villages are situated along the feeder road. The road is in a bad state of repair. The market town has the following facilities: District market, health station, church, agricultural extension services, transport services to the regional capital.

1. District Planner

The district planner is chairing the meeting. His goal is to develop a district transport plan. For this purpose he called in the meeting to assess the transport demands of the villagers in a rural participatory appraisal. He is not very happy about this procedure, but has to use it because it is in fashion. Anyway, he is confident he can convince the villagers.

One of his most ambitious plans is to provide a rural transport service which will connect the village to the market town. He states this very openly at the beginning of the meeting by explaining the advantages of a transport service.

He has the information that the MP will find some funds to subsidise the service. He has no finances for sustaining the proposed transport service. He would like the villagers to do this in self-help through a village operated scheme. He makes this proposal to the villagers and asks for their responses.

2. Member of Parliament

The Member of Parliament is the elected representative for the district. The next elections will be in one year. He wants to raise his profile in the village and has received news that the World Bank has a grant available for some trial improvements in rural transport. This might cover a subsidy for a village bus that will be funded for five years, or it could be used to establish an intermediate means of transport (IMT) initiative or upgrading local infrastructure.

The MP has a personal interest because he owns a mango plantation on the proposed route of the bus service and is therefore keen to run a freight service as well as a passenger service to the market town. Of course he will not openly reveal his personal interests during the meeting. He is very hard to persuade to raise the funds for anything else other than the transport service (for instance health outreach or a village school).

3. World Bank Representative

A representative of the World Bank has a grant available for some trial improvements in rural transport. The grant is for USD 200,000 and there are a number of options that he proposes to the stakeholders for spending the grant, which comprise:

1. Establishing an Intermediate Means of Transport (IMT) initiative involving USD 50,000 for importing bicycles, carts and trailers and providing loans for people to purchase the IMTs, and USD 50,000 for providing a district repair centre that will provide skills to manufacture spare parts and undertake repairs and servicing.
2. Providing a daily rural transport bus service between the villages located along the feeder road and the market town for five years, comprising a bus and funds to train and finance drivers for the service.
3. Alternatively, the World Bank would like to fund a village travel and transport programme that will upgrade small-scale footpaths, pedestrian bridges and tracks. The programme is likely to cost USD 250,000, but there will be provision for the local community to provide labour for the upgrades.

There will not be sufficient funds to support all these options, so the community need to be consulted about the most preferred initiative to spend the grant and whether they would be prepared to raise additional funds themselves or provide labour for setting up the initiatives.

4. Transport Service Operator

There is a transport service operator in the market town who has heard about the proposed plans from the District Planner, who is his brother. He operates several matatus and would like to expand his service to surrounding villages in order to make more money, but is concerned about the level of demand for such a service. He is worried that his vehicles would be standing idle waiting for passengers at either end of the route, and also about the increased running costs of his vehicles because of the damage the road would cause them, combined with the high fuel costs.

He would only be prepared to run such a service while his income is subsidised, after which time his fares would increase considerably. If there was sufficient demand he would also consider transporting produce from the farms to market as well.

5. Extension Worker

The extension worker is living in the village and knows a lot about the demands of the people. He thinks that most of the people of his village want to get access to

- The market
- Agricultural extension services
- Health services
- Educational facilities

He is in favour of a low-cost transport service to the market town, where these services are available. He knows that the transport service will only be of value to the village if the road is upgraded and maintained to an all weather standard. He will emphasise this matter at the meeting.

Because he knows that the villagers, especially the young people, need cash, he is in favour of a village operated service.

He knows about the transport problems of farmers in marketing their produce. He is in favour of a credit scheme, which enables the farmers to purchase Ox-carts. He has no idea how to organise this and raise funds.

He knows as well that the Member of Parliament is pushing for a bus service, because of his personal interest: The MP wants to run a freight service as well as a passenger service to the market town, so that he can sell his cash crops at a good price. Of course the MP will not openly share his personal interests during the meeting. The extension worker might use the information during the discussion, to show the real motivation of the MP.

6. Local Shop Keeper (male)

The shopkeeper is doing some subsistence agriculture and runs a small shop, which sells produce for the daily needs, like soap, toothpaste, medicine, batteries etc. He owns a bicycle, but only uses it to transport a small amount of produce to the shop. A bus service would enable him to transport more goods and expand his business, but ideally he would have his own transport to move his goods back and forth and expand his business to the other villages along the feeder road.

Therefore, he supports a transport service to the market town, which would reduce the time and cost of transporting his goods, but he would prefer to purchase a cart and trailer and favours getting a loan to purchase an IMT. He believes that a district repair centre would increase the income of the villagers, and would generate a higher demand for his produce sold.

He knows that the District Planner has a personal interest in servicing the village. The brother of the District Planner is a transport service operator from the market town who wishes to expand his bus operations to surrounding villages. The shopkeeper might unveil this information in a given moment during the discussion.

7. Female trader

This dynamic woman makes a living from buying agricultural produce from the farmers and selling them at the market town. She carries 20 kg per walking trip, which is 3-4 hours long. She is in favour of a transport service to the market. She hopes that there will be more bus services on market days and that she can transport the produce by Pick-up to the market. This way she will be able to sell more products per trip and hopes to increase her income. However, she is afraid that other traders might come into the village and make her redundant.

If she had an Intermediate Means of Transport (IMT), she would be in favour of improving the gravel road so that IMTs can be used. She would like to purchase an all purpose IMT which she could use to fetch water and firewood as well. Although, she does not have the financial means to purchase a bicycle with trailer. She is also concerned that the neighbours would look at her curiously when they see her riding the bike. Maybe they would not sell their products to her anymore. Another option would be an ox-cart, but men do not like women working with oxen.

8. Male commercial farmer

This dynamic farmer is producing 2 tons of crops annually. Half of these crops are consumed by his family and half of them are sold in the district market. He is reluctant to sell his produce to traders, who pay him much less than he receives at the district market.

Transport of crops from the field to the market is a severe constraint:

- From the field: $2 \text{ ton} \times 4 \text{ km} = 8 \text{ tkm} \Rightarrow 100 \text{ trips with } 20 \text{ kg headload}$
- To the market: $1 \text{ ton} \times 12 \text{ km} = 12 \text{ tkm} \Rightarrow 50 \text{ trips with } 20 \text{ kg headload}$

This calculation makes it obvious that the farmer is not able to expand his production without improved transport. A transport service to the market would reduce the transport burden and enable him to evacuate crops from the fields.

He would like to purchase an ox-cart, which enables him to produce and market much more. Unfortunately the ox-cart costs him 5 times his annual marketing revenues. He could easily repay a debt by the increased income, but he has no access to credit because he has no collateral.

9. *Young rural male*

This man is 18 years old, has finished his primary school and does not know what to do. He does not own any land and he is reluctant to work on the fields of his parents, where he receives no money. He is desperately in need of cash because he intends to marry in two years. He would warmly welcome a job with a transport operator, which gives him at least some temporary employment and income but he doesn't know how to drive.

He would also like to have a beautiful motorbike to show off in front of his mates and his fiancée, which he could then use as a taxi to make more money. A credit scheme for IMT would be very welcome, even if he does not know how to repay the debt.

10. Old rural male

This man has been living in the village for 60 years and lives on subsistence farming and occasional transfers from his children in the town. He still remembers when the road was first built and how easy it was to access the town and its services. He is not keen to improve the road or have a bus service because:

- All the young men are leaving the village for jobs
- Buses from the town drive very dangerously and cause fatal accidents
- There are more and more motorbikes entering the village which are adding to the road safety issue
- The girls are getting spoilt by invading strangers and
- Diseases are spreading

11. Female Single Household Farmer

This woman manages to feed herself and her three children by subsistence farming. Since her husband died, she has to manage the household tasks by herself. She carries enormous amounts of water and firewood, which leaves her little time to work in the fields. She produces almost no surplus that can be sold. Any improvement of her transport tasks would give her more time for income generating activities or household chores. She does not think she will ever be able to afford a handcart, an animal cart or a bicycle.

She wishes to improve the life of her children by sending them to school, by providing them with the proper immunisation and transporting them to hospital if they are sick. However, even if there were a transport service to the district town, she would not have the means to pay for it.

Labels for Participants

District Planner

Member of Parliament

World Bank

**Transport Service
Operator**

Extension Worker

Shop Keeper

Female Trader

**Male Commercial
Farmer**

Young Rural Male

Old Rural Male

**Female Single
Household Farmer**