

Helpdesk Report: Safe transport for girls

Date: 25th July 2011

Query: Safe transport for girls:

- *examples of secondary or primary school education initiatives on providing safe transport for girls
- * cost factors - i.e. running cost, maintenance, and administrative cost
- * the outcome and impact of such initiatives

Enquirer: DFID

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1. Overview

The importance of safe transport to improve access to education, particularly for girls has been a subject for much research. However, academic literature or general information on concrete examples of safe transport initiatives is very limited. Literature searches yield neither any information on costs or cost-effectiveness, nor any impact evaluations of initiatives. Also the literature does not necessarily focus on 'safety' aspects of transport but on improving access to education.

Information from a mix of sources suggests that the main mode of transport being encouraged to improve girls' access to education is bicycles. There is some suggestion that alternative modes such as buses, ox-carts and 'walking buses' are being tried but the information on this is very thin.

This review does not suggest that safe transport initiatives do not exist. But, as this review is limited by what is available in terms of published literature, it only indicates that research on impact and effectiveness of such initiatives is little.

2. Safe transport initiatives in education – bicycles

1. Integrating Gender Into World Bank Financed Transport Programmes

Case Study: South Africa; Shova Kalula

Sabina Mahapa, World Bank (2003)

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDERTRANSPORT/Resources/SouthAfrica.pdf>

This study focuses on the gender dimensions of the Shova Kalula Bicycle programme in South Africa and looks at how it has been implemented, what its outcomes were and the

lessons learnt. This government-run low-cost bicycle programme reached out to rural and under-developed peri-urban areas to improve girls' access to schools and women's access to work.

2. Bicycles for Education Empowerment Program

World Bicycle Relief

http://www.worldbicyclerelief.org/our_work/education.php

This information from the programme website refers to a bicycle distribution project in Zambia which aims to improve poor children's access to education. However, there is no specific mention of girls' access on this website.

However short media reports suggest that girls' access has been improved:

Bicycle program encourages girls to stay in school

<http://www.theveteranssite.com/clickToGive/vet/article/Bicycle-program-encourages-girls-to-stay-in-school269>

In rural Africa, bicycles help increase access to school and attendance

<http://www.educationforallblog.org/issues/girls-education/in-rural-africa-bicycles-help-increase-access-to-school-and-attendance>

3. Bicycles for Humanity

<http://www.bicycles-for-humanity.org/Projects.php>

This refers to a general bicycle empowerment programme which targets poor people in Namibia (<http://benbikes.org.za/namibia/>) and In Uganda (http://www.karamoja-bicycle-initiative.org/Karamoja_Bicycle_Initiative/Welcome.html). It refers to improving access to education as one of the aims.

A similar project, (perhaps larger) is <http://bikesfortheworld.org/>

4. "Mukhyamantri Balika Cycle Yojna" in Bihar

The International Growth Centre

<http://www.theigc.org/article/cycling-school-increasing-high-school-enrollment-girls-bihar>

This refers to the popular bicycle programme in Bihar, India which was introduced in 2005 to improve girls' access to school particularly in the secondary levels. The IGC has recently embarked on a project which will look at the impact of this programme.

Other articles on the above programme:

Bihar's virtuous cycle, Livemint.com, 2010

<http://www.livemint.com/2010/08/08221239/Bihar8217s-virtuous-cycle.html>

Chief Minister of Bihar's blog

<http://nitishspeaks.blogspot.com/2010/04/mukhyamantri-balika-cycle-yojna.html>

A bicycle built for many, Indian Express, 2008

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/a-bicycle-built-for-many/721798/>

Bicycle Distribution Scheme, Jharkand, Govt. of Jharkand

http://jharkhand.nic.in/schemes/distribution_of_bicycle.pdf

Free Bicycles For Schoolgirls Reduce Family Expenses in India's Impoverished State,

Global Room for Women, 2010

<http://globalroomforwomen.com/global-heart-blog/entry/free-bicycles-for-schoolgirls-reduces-family-expenses-in-indias-impoverished-state.html>

5. Other government-funded bicycle programmes in India

Minister launches bicycle distribution, (Karnataka) Deccan Herald, 2011
<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/170831/minister-launches-bicycle-distribution.html>

Mai Bhago Vidya Scheme will be implemented after the summer vacations (Punjab)
Punjab StarNews, 2011
<http://www.punjabstarnews.com/Chandigarh/Mai-Bhago-Vidya-Scheme-will-be-implemented-after-the-summer-vacations.html>

Tamil Nadu Bicycle Project, IFRTD (1999)
<http://www4.worldbank.org/afr/ssatp/Resources/HTML/Gender-RG/Source%20%20documents/case%20studies/IFRTD%20Case%20Summaries/CSIFR2%20Cycling%20into%20the%20Future%20India%20SUMMARY.pdf>

This paper refers to an academic publication on the Tamil Nadu project which was designed to encourage cycling amongst women. It made no specific reference to encouraging girls' schooling.

6. The path to success: Bicycles help girls in rural Ghana get to school

Girls' Education Promotion Programme (UNICEF), Ghana 2007

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ghana_40559.html

A news item which reports how secondary school girls have benefitted from bicycles.

A related article on ModernGhana.com, 2011

<http://www.modernghana.com/news/331477/1/girls-education-promotion-yields-positive-results.html>

This is a news item on UNICEF's girls' education programme in Ghana which aims to reduce school drop-out. Whilst there is a reference to the bicycle programme and an improvement in enrolment rates, there is no mention of any causal links between the two.

7. Afghan Women Bike Project

<http://www.shahmoama.com/AWBP-EnglishReport.html>

This item talks about how girls and women in Afghanistan have been encouraged to use bicycles, and is claimed to be a success.

3. Safe transport initiatives in education – other types of transport

Girls Education in Iraq

UNICEF, 2007

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A3F345FEB60FD713C12577AD00341F90-Full_report.pdf

This report suggests piloting 'Walking buses' to provide safe travelling for girls to and from school while decreasing the burden on particular families. A Walking Bus is the name given to a line of children walking to school together in the morning, along an approved route. Children are supervised and escorted by at least two trained adults acting as 'driver' and 'conductor'. Pre-registered children join the 'bus' at set places as the 'bus' takes the same route to school every day and picks the children up along the way. The adults can be parents or other family members or volunteers or workers who are trusted by parents.

Asahi India Glass: School bus for the Girl Child

http://www.developednation.org/issue/education/subissue/girlchild_corporate.htm

A small-scale corporate sector social venture to encourage education amongst girls. Some of the girl students who had dropped out of school have enrolled again because of the bus service.

Saudi Arabia Discovers School Busing for Girls

Tristram P, About.com Middle East Issues, 2008

<http://middleeast.about.com/b/2008/07/23/saudi-arabia-discovers-school-busing-for-girls.htm>

“The first motorised school bus rolled down an American road either in 1912 or 1914, picking up boys and girls. School buses have been rolling about Saudi roads for the last few decades. But it's taken Saudi Arabia until this year to discover that school buses could, in fact, also be used to shuttle elementary schoolgirls to and from school. The realisation isn't without its dilemmas and ironies in a country where women aren't allowed to drive and men aren't allowed to drive women they're not closely related to.

Back in February, the Kingdom's Ministry of Education had a pilot project in Medina province, shuttling 19,000 schoolgirls in 303 schools. The ministry liked what it saw. It's buying 4,200 new buses expanding the initiative to four provinces, enough to ferry 367,000 school girls. Until now, parents-or, rather, fathers and other eligible men, since women aren't allowed to drive in the Kingdom-were responsible for driving girls to school. As of 2004, Saudi Arabia had 15,800 schools staffed by some 219,470 female teachers and 14,500 female administrators.”

McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program

http://www.ird.org/who/PDFs/gender%20cape%20statement_Apr09.pdf

There is a reference to how ox-cart drivers in Cambodia are being encouraged through take-home rations to provide transport to girls travelling to and from schools.

Ambassadors' Girls' Scholarship Program, Djibouti

http://cge.aed.org/Projects/SSAfrica/AGSP_Djibouti.cfm

This mentions that parents and local community raised money to rent a bus for girls to attend schools.

4. DFID research programme

Children, Transport and Mobility in Sub-Saharan Africa: Developing a Child-Centred Evidence Base to Improve Policy and Change Thinking Across Africa

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/child.mobility/>

The project focuses on the mobility constraints faced by girl and boy children in accessing health, educational and other facilities in sub-Saharan Africa, the lack of direct information on how these constraints impact on children's current and future livelihood opportunities, and the lack of guidelines on how to tackle them. The aim is to provide an evidence base strong enough to substantially improve policy in the three focus countries - Ghana, Malawi and South Africa - and to change thinking across Africa.

For further information, contact Dr Gina Porter: r.e.porter@durham.ac.uk

Papers from this project:

Transport, (im)mobility and spatial poverty traps: issues for rural women and girl children in sub-Saharan Africa

<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/2679.pdf>

This paper reflects on the experiences of women and girl children resident in rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa with poor physical accessibility to services and markets, because of poor roads and inadequate transport. Three themes are examined in some detail: access to education, access to health services and access to markets. The aspect of education is viewed in respect of the affects on livelihoods.

Youth transport, mobility and security in sub-Saharan Africa: the gendered journey to school

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/child.mobility/Thegenderedjourneytoschool.doc>

This research aims to draw attention to the diversity of gendered travel experiences across geographical locations (paying attention to associated patterns of transport provision), to explore the implications of these findings for access to education, and to suggest areas where policy intervention could be beneficial. Some suggestions for improving safe school access, especially for girls, include:

- expansion of girls' boarding house provision and general boarding provision, especially at primary schools
- more 'walking buses' to reduce dangers of rape and harassment in certain regions
- cycle hire centres based at schools
- various non-transport intervention aimed at reducing girls' time poverty
- sensitisation of teachers and education authorities to transport/distance related lateness.

5. Additional information

Local NGOs involved in bicycle programmes

Ride A Cycle Foundation, India

http://rideacycle.org/?page_id=6

Promotes bicycling and donates bicycles to poor and deserving school children. (Also see – related news item on <http://www.chembakolli.com/blog/>)

Transport Subsidies

Pakistan's Transport Subsidy in the Balochistan Education Support Project (BESP)

World Bank

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1119034601454/1295724-1199723186312/4545862-1226936082762/Hassan_Transport_Subsidy_Balochistan.pptx

A very brief evaluation of the Balochistan Education Support Project.

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This query response was prepared by Shanti Mahendra

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