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## THE ROLE OF RURAL ROAD TRANSPORT FORUMS IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC UPLIFTMENT WITHIN KWAZULU-NATAL

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### 5.1 Introduction

In "Key Indicators of Poverty in South Africa" the RDP authors draw attention to South Africa having a 'gini-coefficient' of 0,61. This coefficient measures relative inequalities within countries and South Africa's rating makes it the second worst performer in the World. In South Africa the poorest 40% of households (53% of population) consume less than 10% of total consumption while the richest 5.8% of households consume more than 40% of total consumption.

The gini-coefficient as well as consumption patterns highlight the fact that a small percentage of South Africans are well placed to participate in decision making and to benefit from economic growth and opportunity. The vast majority of South Africans, mainly rural people, encounter serious barriers to participation in programmes which could result in their social and economic upliftment. Within KwaZulu-Natal significant barriers to entry and improving productivity are reflected in the very low human development index measurements for rural populations. For some Magisterial Districts the **Human Development Index (HDI)** is one third of our national index.

Numerous studies concerning the historical development of the KwaZulu-Natal region draw attention to the growth of urban industrial capital and the commercial farming sector, being coupled with the significant decline in the well being of rural black populations. Separate tax systems have been applied in the past to urban and rural dwellers, and for example rural black populations paid hut and crown tax irrespective of any means test. Successive governments have been committed to spending public monies with an urban industrial and white farmer bias which has left rural populations both impoverished and relatively isolated from development enabling infrastructure. <sup>(1,2,3)</sup> This in turn resulted in high levels of labour migration, long distance

commuting, the erosion of family life and values, social anomie and violence.

## 5.2 Rural Road Transport Forums

*"The Department of Transport's programme for the construction of rural roads recognises that there are no inclusive representative structures and organisational capacity in rural areas through which it could effectively channel its commitment."*

### 5.2.1 Establishment of RRTF's

**T**he Department of Transport is now committed to a programme of roads for rural development which is designed to end the physical, social and economic isolation of rural populations. **The Department of Transport's programme for the construction of rural roads recognises that there are no inclusive representative structures and organisational capacity in rural areas through which it could effectively channel its commitment.** The Department has therefore begun to establish Rural Road Transport Forums. Such Forums are founded in civil society and are governed by the following terms of reference:

1. The Minister may divide the Province into as many areas which shall exclude the areas administered by local and metropolitan councils as he may deem expedient and establish for each such area a forum to be known as the Rural Road Transport Forum consisting of such number of members as is hereinafter provided for.
2. The duty of every Rural Road Transport Forum shall be to advise the Minister upon matters relating to:
  - a. i) the declaration and closing of District roads and;
  - ii) registration of Local Roads in the area for which it was appointed;
  - b. to identify, prioritise and advise the Minister on needs in respect of Local Roads to serve rural communities which will promote local economic and social development in the short and long term;
  - c. to identify and fund technical and capacity building training programmes;
  - d. to elect a representative to the Provincial Rural Road Transport Forum;
  - e. to prepare and manage budgets, authorise

payments, and receive, administer and allocate funds for the construction and maintenance of Local Roads within their jurisdiction, for which they shall be accountable to their constituents and the Secretary for Transport for financial reporting and operations,

and any such other matters as may be referred to it by the Minister or Secretary for Transport.

### **5.2.2 Functions of District Roads and Local Roads**

3. The provision of District roads and Local Roads will be used to improve access to much needed services and to develop the rural economy by paying attention to:
  - a. job creation through the Local Road building process which combines mechanical and labour intensive methods;
  - b. development multipliers that allow for sustainable economic growth and the creation of new income generating opportunities for local people;
  - c. preference shall be given to emergent contractors for the construction and maintenance of Local Roads.

### **5.2.3 Composition and Functions of RRTF's**

4. The Rural Road Transport Forums shall be founded in rural civil society (a-party political), and shall comprise a maximum of 20 representatives of the following groups and organisations which should be geographically representative of the area, as indicated Table 5.1 overleaf.
5. Rural Road Transport Forums should empower ordinary citizens to take decisions in transport related matters which influence their communities.
6. Each Rural Road Transport Forum shall elect from its members an Executive Committee of not more than

seven members who shall exercise the authority and

perform the duties entrusted to or imposed upon the Rural Road Transport Forum by the Act or any regulations made thereunder.

<b>TABLE 5.1 : COMPOSITION OF RURAL ROAD TRANSPORT FORUMS</b>	
<b>GROUP / ORGANISATION</b>	<b>NO OF REPRESENTATIVES</b>
a. Regional tribal authority	minimum of 1
b. Business sector	minimum of 1
c. Taxi industry	minimum of 1
d. Public transport	minimum of 1
e. Farmers associations	minimum of 2 / max. of 4*
f. Organised labour	minimum of 1 / max. of 2
g. Youth	minimum of 2 / max. of 3
h. Women's groups	minimum of 2 / max. of 3
i. Professional bodies (e.g. teachers, nurses)	minimum of 1
j. Other community based organisations	minimum of 2 / max. of 3

\* of which one member shall be nominated from commercial farmers associations

7. The Regional Engineer of the Department of Transport or his duly authorised representative, shall act as the technical adviser to the Rural Road Transport Forum.

8. Whenever there is in existence in any area in and for which a rural Road Transport Forum has been constituted a Soil Conservation District Committee established in terms of Section 10 of the Soil Conservation Act, 1946 (act No. 45 of 1946), the Minister may appoint a member of such Soil Conservation Committee as an additional member of the executive committee.

9. a. The persons appointed to a Forum in terms of subsection (4) shall hold office for a period of three years and shall be eligible for reappointment at the expiration of any such period.

b. In the event of any vacancy occurring in a Forum otherwise than in consequence of expiration of a members term of office, the Minister shall appoint a person to fill such vacancy for the unexpired portion of the period of office of the member in whose place such person is appointed.

## 5.2.4 RRTF Training Programme

To support the work of Rural Road Transport Forums the Department of Transport is committed to a training programme that will build their capacity to:

1. Establish improved communication with the Regional and Head Offices of the Department of Transport. It is understood that past histories often require a development mediation to promote new rules for effective communication and delivery of services. Unless this is addressed past histories and miscommunication do harden into distrust and recriminations.
2. Hold meetings, keep records and understand budgets and finances.
3. Deal with technical information necessary to take decisions concerning an appropriate mix between labour intensive and mechanical methods. To make planning inputs which maximise their knowledge of local conditions e.g. availability of skills, underemployment, unemployment and seasonal employment.
4. Conduct community / social audits to generate a local database to promote for small business development and growth.
5. Draw up business plans to establish a two, five and ten year programme to manage and address road project needs.
6. Together with the Department of Transport, coordinate their priorities with neighbouring Transport Forums to ensure a coherent road network.

Rural Road Transport Forums then are tasked with prioritising community access roads within their Districts and with managing road related matters. As such it is essential that Forums be representative of all stake

### 5.3 Planning of RRTF's according to Magisterial Districts

holders affected by their decision. In a climate of limited finances they will have to justify their decisions to desperate neighbourhoods on why their needs have not yet been prioritised.

**K**waZulu-Natal has been demarcated into 28 Districts for the purpose of establishing Rural Road Transport Forums. These boundaries reflect current socio-political perceptions. There is a commitment within the Department of Transport to work with Rural Road Transport Forums to reduce the number of Forums / Districts as local perceptions of boundaries change with infra-structural developments. Thus far Rural Road Transport Forums have been or are being established in the Districts shown in Table 5.2.

**TABLE 5.2 : RURAL ROAD TRANSPORT FORUMS IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

1.	Maphumulo
2.	Nkandla
3.	Vulamehlo
4.	Enseleni
5.	Emzumba
6.	Bergville
7.	Madadeni
8.	Nquthu
9.	Hlanganani
10.	Simdlangentsha (Pongola)
11.	Ubombo /Angwavuma
12.	Ndwedwe
13.	Izingolweni
14.	Nongoma
15.	Eshowe
16.	Ongoye
17.	Mahlabathini
18.	Estcourt
19.	Hlabisa
20.	Umbumbulu

In establishing these Forums the Department of Transport recognises the importance of infra-structural development in restructuring opportunity and effectively moves social analysis and community consultation upstream in project recognition and design. The positive spinoffs to this is already evident in the management of Plant Hire contracts for the rapid construction of Local Roads.

Thus quality technical assistance (added value) is being provided to previously neglected populations without unnecessarily increasing bureaucratic ranks and in such a way that community decision making and initiative is not undermined. This allows for planning interventions that include for regional variation and project evaluation criteria that measure return on investment in terms of clear local and central planning priority needs.

A review and summary of progress in the establishment of Rural Road Transport Forum is presented in Table 5.3 overleaf, together with name and address of the Chairman where one has been elected.

## 5.4 Benefits of Roads for Rural Development

..... job creation

..... opening up the potential of previously neglected sub-regions

..... rural road construction can be the largest single capital investment made in rural development

..... time saving benefits enhancing productivity

The most pressing priority of the Government of National Unity is to increase its revenue base to allow it to address the apartheid legacy in a sustainable way. This can only be achieved by enlarging the fiscus through the creation of new jobs (income tax), business enterprises (company tax) and increased consumer buying power (value added tax, VAT). It is clear that the government will support local economic development initiatives that attempt to create jobs innovatively. This strategy takes on added significance against the backdrop of current job losses sustained through the need to make tariff protected industry (import substitution) internationally competitive.

In addressing the serious backlog of need within KwaZulu-Natal the Department of Transport is committed to a process of opening up the potential of previously neglected sub-regions and populations in establishing a coherent road and transport network that benefits all. This process will necessitate "unbundling" the road construction, maintenance and transport industry. Further Rural Road Transport Forums can be used to coordinate other enterprises usually associated with improved road access e.g. garages, filling stations, bicycle sales and repairs, scotch carts etc.

The Department of Transport recognises that the building of road networks and their maintenance usually constitute the largest single capital investment made in rural development. However the absence of a road network usually constrains the delivery of all other services. As such local or access roads have a considerable impact on social, cultural and economic life of resource poor people. Not only do they provide access to markets, services, employment, business development, transport and communication, they improve personal mobility, crisis management, world view and quality of life.

Roads in rural areas contribute significantly to time savings in giving local communities access to the labour, produce

and consumer markets, and social reproductive services (health, welfare, schools, networking). Given the labour intensive condition of rural life such time savings can and do have a profound effect on productivity and well being <sup>(4)</sup>.

..... reduction of social and economic costs

New road developments do diversify the rural economy and increase agricultural production as well as reduce both social and economic costs associated with rural life. In some rural stores even postage stamps are sold at 50% mark-up over their official value. Traders invariably justify such mark-ups as high vehicle operating costs. While road improvements could simply result in larger profit margins appropriate community education through Rural Road Transport Forums will create a greater awareness of local exploitation.

..... creation of viable local manufacturing industries

Properly managed and maintained rural roads can create wealth and reduce unemployment levels by achieving a construction mix between labour intensive and machine methods. Costing of roads should include an analysis of trade offs between importing products (high haulage costs) and producing them locally (higher production costs / lower haulage costs). This might create the possibility of viable local manufacturing industries eg paving blocks, kerb stones, sign posts, quarry products etc. Further should road construction require water preference should be given to costing the development of local water systems into the road rather than hauling water from outside the community. In this way income and skills leakage from rural areas to the urban industrial sector can be addressed. To achieve this it is essential that roads be built to open up and diversify the rural economy to meet the career aspirations of young people.

..... income and skills leakage from rural areas to the urban industrial sector can be addressed

## References

1. Bundy C (1979) *"The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry"* Heinemann, London.
2. Derman P J & Poultney C (1984) *"The Politics of Production and Community Development in Rural South Africa"* Carnegie Conference Paper No 226, Cape Town.
3. Derman P J & Poultney C (1987) *"Agricultural Reconstruction in a Consumer Society. The Mboza Village Project"* Development in Southern Africa Vol 4 No 3.
4. Derman P J & Maasdorp G (1981) *"Time Savings in Road Project Appraisal - Evidence from Swaziland"* Economic Research Unit, University of Natal.



REGION	RURAL ROAD TRANSPORT FORUM (RRTF)	CHAIRMAN	ADDRESS	RRTF REPRESENTATIVES
<b>1. Eshowe</b> KZN Dept of Transport Regional Engineer: Mr Malcolm Barron	Nkandla Enseleni Eshowe / Inkanyezi Ingwavuma / Ubombo Ongoye Hlabisa	Mr B P Dunge Inkosi R N Cebekhulu Rev M T Khuzwayo Mr S M Mngomezulu Mr S S Cele Mr E S Manqele	Mdlelanga School, P O Box 20, NKANDLA 3855 P O Box 354, EMPANGENI 3880 P O Box 3355, MANDINI 4490 P O Box 344, JOZINI 3969 P O Box 936, GINGINDLOVU 3800 P O Box 566, MTUBATUBA 3935	R E P R E S E N T A T I O N  O N  E A C H  R R T F
<b>2. Nongoma</b>  Regional Engineer: Mr Charles Van Wyk	Vryheid Pongola / Simdlangentsha  Nongoma Mahlabathini	Mr M Mahlangu Mr Mandla 'Congo' Mavuso Mr N E Mthethwa Mr J P Mtshali	P O Box 2386, VRYHEID 3100 P O Box 1346, PONGOLA 3170  P O Box 728, NONGOMA 3950 P O Box 851, MAHLABATHINI 3865	
<b>3. Dundee</b>  Regional Engineer: Mr B Taljaard	Nquthu / Dundee Buhlebamakhosi Utrecht Msinga	Mr S T Buthelezi Mr D Ntuli - -	Private Bag X5511, NQUTHU 3135 P O Box 2667, DANNHAUSER 3080 - -	
<b>4. Estcourt</b>  Regional Engineer: Mr Howard Bennett	Ladysmith/Emnambithi Bergville / Okhahlamba Estcourt / Emtshezi	- Mr B C Mabizela Mr B V Mhlanga	- P O Box 490, BERGVILLE 3350 Private Bag X12, LOSKOP 3330	
<b>5. Pietermaritzburg</b>  Regional Engineer:	Greytown Mpumalanga Vulindlela Bulwer / Hlanganani East Griqualand / Kokstad Ixopo	- Not yet elected - Nkosi R V Zondi Mr Winston Napier Mr S N Mkhize	- - - Enkumba C P School, Private Bag 506, BULWER 3244 P O Box 18, SWARTBERG 4710 c/o SAPS, P O Box 9, IXOPO 3276	
<b>6 / 7. Durban</b>  Regional Engineer: Mr Mannie de Souza	Maphumulo Ndwedwe Umbumbulu Vulamehlo / Umzinto Emzambe Izingolweni	Mr C B Ngiba Mr J P Ninela Mr N Maphumulo Mr S A Mkhize Rev M X Dladla Mrs J Sikhosana	P O Box 109, MAPHUMULO 4470 P O Box 387, HILLCREST 3650 P O Box 30, UMBUMBULU 4105 P O Box 10988, UMZINTO 4200 P O Box 2120, PORT SHEPSTONE 4240 P O Box 11, HARDING 4680	
				Regional Tribal Authorities Business Sector Taxi Associations Public Transport Farmers Associations Professional Bodies Youth Women Organised Labour Ordinary Road User Community Based Organisations

TABLE 5.3 : ESTABLISHMENT OF RURAL ROAD TRANSPORT FORUMS IN REGIONS 1 - 7