

BACKGROUND AND MAJOR CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES TO ACHIEVE BETTER RESULTS IN POVERTY REDUCTION THROUGH ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES:

- Infrastructure projects are not gender-neutral. Women and men often have different infrastructure needs. Too often, the positive outcomes experienced by women have been unintended and unplanned.
- Well-designed, appropriately located and affordably priced infrastructure can be a powerful tool in the pursuit of gender equality and the elimination of poverty for both women and men. Better roads and transport services, for example, increase girls school participation rate and reduce maternal mortality.

EMERGING CONSENSUS FOR THE PROPOSED INFRAPOOR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- While designing infrastructure projects, there is a need to generate selective sex-disaggregated data, assess the specific infrastructure needs of women, and undertake gender impact analysis as part of target group analysis.
- The maximum gender and poverty reduction impact can be achieved by linking infrastructure projects with income earning opportunities both directly (e.g. involving women in road maintenance, providing for food stalls at railway stations, identifying women to collect tariff fees) as well as indirectly (e.g. microfinance components for establishing small business)
- It is important to make stronger linkages between cross-sectoral issues, the MDGs and the synergies between infrastructure and women's social and economic development (e.g. impact of water on women's health; impact of roads on girls education; impact of public lighting on women's safety; and, the impact of household energy on women's health and economic wellbeing).
- A gender responsive infrastructure approach will also result in the inclusion of additional infrastructure components such as transport services, household energy, and public lighting for improving security, etc. This will impact on project design and investment priorities..
- In many societies, tariff increases – particularly in water – do affect women and men in a household differently. For example, women may be responsible for financing water (sometimes also energy) costs from their own income. In such cases, increased infrastructure pricing may discriminate against women and affect nutrition and other expenditures for women and children.

KEY ISSUES REQUIRING FURTHER DISCUSSIONS

- What works better in infrastructure projects – a gender mainstreaming approach or a specific focus on women?
- What further information and data on the gender impact of infrastructure projects is needed?
- How can economic infrastructure projects address issues of discrimination against women?
- How can economic infrastructure contribute to women's empowerment?

KEY GENDER ISSUES IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

General

- Lack of access to clean and affordable energy is a core dimension of poverty which will hinder the achievement of the MDGs, especially for poor women.
- Women may have different or additional energy needs to men, often related to household energy (cooking and heating) and public lighting.
- Hence there is a need to draw more attention to the links between gender, energy, environment and poverty. This will result in changing project design and investment priorities.

Service delivery to the poor

- *Identify poor women's energy priorities accurately.* For example, the real value of electricity for poor women may lie in areas such as lighting, especially in public places where it increases their safety and in mechanical applications such as milling.
- *Address the design elements of technologies by involving women.* For example, poorly designed cooking facilities should not continue to result in unnecessary ill health for women and children. Involving women and girls in the technological choice of infrastructure is crucial. This also points at developing a stronger link to education and vocational training projects, so that women can maintain small-scale household related energy infrastructure
- *Expand energy choices for women.* Whilst some attention has been given to women's domestic (i.e. cooking) needs – at least in smaller energy projects - there has not been sufficient analysis of women's practical and strategic needs beyond the household, particularly through microfinance for energy using production equipment (e.g. small food processing, beer brewing, pottery). This should also include a more responsive approach to addressing the impacts of biomass collection and use on poor women's lives.

Decentralisation and private sector participation

- Village-level initiatives focussed on renewable energy can provide women with both new energy services and employment. The private sector is often more creative than the public sector in employing women for example as decentralized fee collectors or in maintenance.
- More decentralized planning (for example in the context of social investment funds) may help the women articulating to express their interests and priority needs, for example in public lighting or electricity provision to small business beyond the household level. Local governments can encourage women to play an active, income-generating role in energy supply and production by becoming energy agents and entrepreneurs.

Governance

- *Increase women's influence in decision-making in the household and the community.* Women and men have different energy needs and different ideas about sustainable livelihoods. However, women's lesser decision making in the household and community means their influence over energy use and technologies is limited.
- There is a need to develop tools for better (gender and poverty) impact assessment particularly for grid based electricity programs.
- Involving women in tariff decisions and collection will not only generate income for women but also increase financial sustainability of projects, thereby strengthening sector reforms.

KEY GENDER ISSUES IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR

General

- *Ensure that project design and implementation recognise* that women and men have varying transport needs and constraints and are affected differently by transport interventions
- *Design gender-responsive transportation projects and programmes* which free up women's time and facilitate women's participation in income-generation, educational opportunities and decision-making.
- *Develop transport policies which are more responsive to the needs of women* by understanding their needs, identifying how to address those needs, analysing the costs and benefits of the approaches and establishing an appropriate policy framework.

Service delivery to the poor

- There is a consensus that transport programs should include attention to HIV/AIDs and issues relating to the trafficking of women and children. Hence projects may include components such as HIV/AIDs social marketing campaigns, distribution of condoms to road workers, special inspection facilities at border stations etc.
- Women's transport needs are more related to nearby travel. Studies in Africa have found that women account for 65 percent of all transport activities in the rural household, including fuel and water collection and headloading agricultural produce. Women tend to use cheaper forms of public transport; and more often use non-motorized transport. Public transport services (e.g. railways, buses, urban transport facilities) would need to take into account women's need for storage facilities and space for market goods, for their children and for others in their care.
- Providing more security, appropriate facility design, and improved travel schedules will encourage women to use transport facilities more. Women taking produce to market may, for example, prefer using night ferries over day buses. In some areas, women would be prepared to travel longer distance if sanitation facilities in the transport industry were better (e.g. sufficient toilets in trains). Women are particularly concerned about trafficking and security issues along the road and will require better public lighting at railway or bus stations.
- *Consider options* such as better route planning, the provision of special buses or increased off-peak services on less-travelled routes to respond to women's transport needs. *Design user-friendly buses or vehicles* to meet women's needs by considering the height of entry steps and the installation of a hand-rail.
- To be more gender responsive, there is a need to provide intermediate means of transportation (bicycles, carts, hand-pulled carts) directly to women, for example through linking to microfinance schemes.

Decentralisation and private sector participation

- Labour based routine road maintenance can be a useful means of enhancing some poor women's income by providing increased employment opportunities.
- Ensure that user costs do not fall disproportionately on women.
- *Open up opportunities for women's employment* in road construction and maintenance by, for example, recruiting and training women; hiring more women in supervisory positions; where necessary, organising women-only road-gangs; and, by providing health and childcare facilities near worksites.

Theme: Gender Mainstreaming in Economic Infrastructure

- *Provide opportunities for women to become commercial drivers or operators.*

Governance

- *Involve women* in the planning and implementation of projects that affect them. This is particularly important for the process of selecting the alignment of local road rehabilitation projects. Women should also participate in governance mechanisms such as road fund boards. Donors may also wish to strengthen technical assistance to partner country land transport agencies in order to improve the institutional capacity to effectively address the needs and priorities of women and girls
- *Explore innovative ways of overcoming gender-based barriers* such as cultural restrictions which can constrain women's use of roads, or mobility, where women may be restricted from travelling long distances by cultural or social norms or restricted in their use of public transport, riding bicycles, or obtaining instruction licences for vehicles. This will require closer cooperation of the transport sector with other Government and civil society agencies.

KEY GENDER ISSUES IN THE WATER AND IRRIGATION SECTOR

General

- Women are often the primary users of water in domestic consumption, subsistence agriculture, health and sanitation. Women in many cases also take the primary role in educating children, in child and family health including sanitation and in caring for the sick. Understanding gender roles in, for example, collection, transport, storing and managing water for domestic and productive use will be the key for well planned water interventions.
- In irrigation, there is a need to specifically address women's limited control over water (and land) resources. Also women are often not target groups of specific training activities by donors.
- There is a need, particularly in rural water schemes to plan projects on the basis of gender disaggregated target group analysis. This would include consulting with women's groups and identifying gender-specific initiatives, seeking the support of national women's machineries and using national gender strategies to support gender equality strategies at all levels – particularly in policy dialogue on water.

Service delivery to the poor

- *It is difficult to address gender issues in urban network based drinking water projects. Broader gender impact analysis would be required.*
- *Use water and irrigation projects and programmes to expand opportunities for poor women.* Participation in management, decision-making and enterprise opportunities can have positive effects on gender equality and empowerment that go beyond immediate needs.

Decentralisation and private sector participation

- Decentralized water user groups in rural areas often strengthen gender empowerment, thereby enhancing good sanitation impact, securing routine operation and maintenance, and improving sustainability and cost recovery.
- *Take measures to ensure that the cost implications of privatisation do not impact negatively on women.* This requires an understanding of who controls household budgets and what gets prioritised when money is scarce.
- *Use participatory processes* for those who may be marginalised during privatisation exercises. Privatisation can reduce the ability of citizens to participate in management and decision-making.
- *Take account of women's informal land and property rights when ownership of common land or water sources becomes formalised.* Women, particularly poor women, often use more "common property" resources such as rivers and lakes than men or better off women.

Governance

- *Use* gender budgets and gender audits to analyse budgetary allocations to establish who is benefiting from services such as water.
- Gender disaggregated data and gender-specific indicators need to be included in each project to ensure accurate impact assessments and the linkages to other MDG goals.