ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: INFRASTRUCTURE[1]

Gender division of labour

Often it is assumed that women will automatically benefit from new infrastructure, without acknowledging that it has a significant social impact. Both men and women tend to be considered mainly as beneficiaries of infrastructure projects, rather than as active participants, or as specific groups whose daily and seasonal tasks can be substantially affected. For example, a transport project will usually impact on women as transportors of products for household use and as small traders. Improved transport facilities may also impact on women and men by promoting or encouraging changes to agricultural production, such as a shift to cash crop production. If infrastructure is not designed in view of the range of needs of its different users, the impact on women and their workload can be immense. For example, in irrigation projects, competing household uses for water for cropping, livestock and cooking/washing should be addressed as well as arrangements for collecting and carrying water. The design and location of water systems may fulfil multiple purposes if these different uses are taken into account (Hunt 1997: 71).

Access and control of resources and benefits

Access to information and employment opportunities in an infrastructure project can be limited for women. Women are employed as construction labourers in a number of regions and both women and men may need to migrate to construction sites. Construction camps are frequently poorly serviced and unsafe for children, and construction sites may give little attention to occupational health and safety. As potential beneficiaries of infrastructure projects, constraints affecting women can include: lack of credit and other collateral, such as money for a fare or a bicycle; the location of a facility such as a water pump; and the gender composition of project management groups, such as water user groups or community-based advisory committees. New infrastructure may adversely affect the existing access of women to land for agricultural production, housing, fuel and wood collection among other things. Transport studies undertaken by other donors have shown that women tend to use cheaper forms of public transport. Males and females of all ages use roads as pedestrians. Renters and street vendors tend to be most seriously disadvantaged by transport construction, since they generally receive no compensation from land expropriation or disruption to business sites, and have little access to credit to assist with relocation.

Factors and trends

Professional representation of women in technical, supervisory and managerial positions in construction and infrastructure development tends to be limited. This can often be attributed to social and cultural attitudes towards women's participation in technical and engineering fields. There is also a tendency for women to experience discrimination regarding education and training in technical areas due to gender stereotyping. Employment in field work may depend on whether

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facilities are socially acceptable for women and address their needs (e.g. separate dormitories for field workers). Large-scale infrastructure projects can result in environmental degradation, the effects of which tend to fall most heavily on poor women and children.

Implementing a gender and development policy

Key aspects of a development policy, as it relates to infrastructure can be:	
Goal:	• to promote equal opportunities for women and men as participants and beneficiaries of development
Objectives:	• to improve women's access to education and health care • to improve women's access to economic resources • to promote women's participation and leadership in decision making at all levels • to assist efforts to eliminate discrimination against women

Guiding questions for the preparation and identification of activities and policies

- *These questions are to be used as a guide only. It is not expected that every question will be relevant to all activities or all economic reports.*
- *The questions are designed to assist activity managers with their assessment and appraisal of infrastructure development activities.*
- *The questions are also designed to assist aid officers to incorporate gender perspectives into infrastructure activity preparation and design.*

Key areas of concern	Guiding questions
Project objectives and target group	• Does the project design acknowledge that women and men may have different needs and priorities in their uses of infrastructure? • Have both women's and men's needs been considered when designing the infrastructure?
The gender division of labour	• Has sex disaggregated data been collected on women's and men's activities related to the infrastructure? • Has consideration been given to the tasks which are currently undertaken by women and men that could be affected? *(such as transport of food and other goods to the market, fuel and water collection)* • Has consideration been given to providing support services to women to encourage participation? *(e.g. child care, health care, a school close-by)* • Will new infrastructure/technology mean longer working hours for women? *(e.g. will electrification mean extended working hours for women?)*
Access and control of resources	• Are there opportunities for women to be employed and trained in the construction and operation of the infrastructure? • Has on-the-job training been considered for women to develop their technical skills? • Will women have access to transport to and from the project site?
Access and control of the benefits and project impacts	• Will infrastructure construction restrict women's or men's access to resources needed to carry out their tasks? *(e.g. hydro projects may flood areas and decrease access to fuel wood and agricultural land)* • Will location, price and other resources necessary for using the infrastructure restrict poor women's or men's access? • Who will have access and control over transport-related resources? *(e.g. vehicles, bicycles, carts)* • Will infrastructure which saves time in completing daily tasks limit women's opportunities for social contact? *(e.g. time saved in using a water pump instead of walking to a river, may mean no opportunity for social interaction)* • Will the location of transport-related infrastructure affect women's marketing of goods and other income-generating activities? • Will new infrastructure result in unemployment for women who may be currently providing the services? *(e.g. women operating the ferries which are to be replaced by a bridge, hand-milling replaced by machine milling)* • Is there a risk that the introduction of new techniques and new production may displace women from their current positions? • What remedial measures can be taken for groups who will be disadvantaged as a result of infrastructure construction? • Will construction force resettlement of families and male and/or female migration? • If so, will adequate compensation, financial or training support be equally available to women and men?
Social, cultural, religious, economic, environmental and demographic factors and trends	• Is it socially acceptable for women to use the infrastructure? *(e.g. location of water sources)* • Will the form of transport be socially acceptable for women? *(e.g. riding a bicycle or travelling alone)* • Have other constraints inhibiting equal participation and benefits been identified?

Participation and consultation strategies	• Have strategies been identified to address any constraints to equal participation and benefits? • Will women and men be both *participants* and *beneficiaries* of the project? • Will there be any consultation with local women's organisations, women's networks or other NGOs? • Will women and men have equal access to project planning and decision making? • Will any separate activities be needed for women to ensure that they participate, and that they are not disadvantaged by the project? • Are project communication channels equally accessible to both women and men?
Women's social status and role as decision makers	• Will women and women's groups be consulted and involved in decision making about the location or type of infrastructure to be provided? • What opportunities are there for the project to support women as managers of infrastructure and other development resources, either formally or informally? • What practical needs and strategic interests of women are addressed in the project?
Counterpart agency capacity	• Does the government or counterpart agency have a national policy or other statement promoting women's economic and resource interests? • Has a sex disaggregated employment profile of the counterpart agency been undertaken? • Has an affirmative action plan been developed to support and resource female staff? • How does the project plan to increase counterpart capacity for gender-sensitive environmental planning and implementation?
Project monitoring	• Have targets been set for men's and women's participation and benefits? • Have gender-sensitive indicators been identified? • Will all data collected be disaggregated by sex? • Will there be on-going consultation with community groups, including women's groups, directly or indirectly affected by the project?
Project resources	• Are project resources adequate to ensure that both men and women participate in and benefit from the project? • Is gender expertise available throughout the project?