

# **The World Bank, Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC- plan), and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**

## **Gender and Infrastructure Workshop**

*The Role of Infrastructure on Women's Economic Empowerment*

**The Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV),  
Japan,  
May 29, 2008  
9:00a.m. - 12:00p.m.**

**Venue: InterContinental Yokohama The Grand, Room Pearl**

The objectives of this workshop are:

- To bring gender and infrastructure issues to the fore of the development agenda, in the broader context of the TICAD Conference and start building up a consensus in the development community on how to address these issues;
- To share experience and knowledge on policies, programs, projects, and tools which have given significant results and can inspire others to pursue policies, and undertake programs and projects which could help scale-up solutions in the context of their own countries; and
- To assess the unfinished agenda and identify potential areas of cooperation for mainstreaming gender in the development of infrastructure in Africa.

The provision of infrastructure is a core priority of African governments in order to increase the productivity and value-added of the economic sectors, to facilitate access to social services, and to improve the welfare of populations. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the demand for urban infrastructure is very high given the 4-6% annual growth rate of urban areas, while infrastructure to serve rural areas is still very limited. Gender equity is increasingly recognized as an important aspect of infrastructure policies and programs.

### **Gender Differences with Respect to Infrastructure**

Five major differences between men and women with respect to infrastructure must be considered: (1) differences of needs for the type and location of physical infrastructure; (2) differences in priorities for infrastructure services; (3) unequal opportunities to participate in decision making on the choice of infrastructure services, both within the households and within the communities; (4) unequal opportunities to participate in the implementation of the infrastructure programs and the delivery of services; and (5) significant disparities in access to infrastructure services.

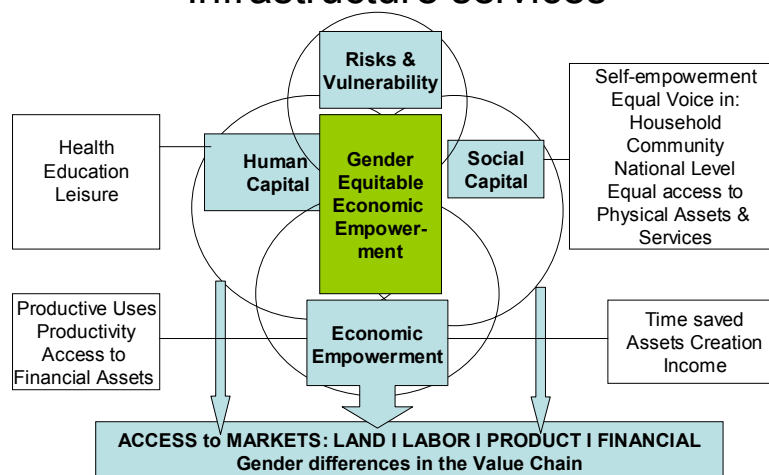
Infrastructure covers a wide range of physical infrastructure and derived infrastructure services:

- Potable water and sanitation
- Energy
- Transport
- Information and communication technologies (ICTs)
- Other types: markets, irrigation for agriculture, schools for education, hospitals and clinics for health services, administrative buildings and police stations for administration and security services.

Each type of infrastructure has a range of users, of technical parameters for construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance, significant regional and country variations, as well as different economic, political, institutional, and socio-cultural contexts which must be taken into account when integrating gender issues in infrastructure.

A framework to consider gender and infrastructure is depicted on the graph below. Infrastructure plays a significant *economic* role but also a critical role in the *human capital* development of urban and rural populations and a fundamental *social* role as a factor of change in the economic and social fabric of communities. Infrastructure and infrastructure services impact populations in many ways. Understanding those impacts on men and women but also the gender disparities in *risks and vulnerabilities* should guide the work on infrastructure. Time saving and the disparity in time poverty between women and men is the single most important economic factor that justifies integrating gender equity into infrastructure policies, programs, and projects. Benefits from infrastructure and derived services are numerous. They may differ depending on the infrastructure service, and they may also impact women and men differently (Graph 1).

**Graph 1: The Four Dimensions for Infrastructure services**



## **Focus of the Workshop**

The workshop will be focused on infrastructure and gender equitable economic and social empowerment. Three thematic panels are proposed:

### **Panel 1: Infrastructure and Entrepreneurship**

Given the range of works involved, the development of infrastructure and related services create major employment opportunities. While opportunities in the labor market are more extensive for men, innovative policies enable an increasing number of poor women to also penetrate the infrastructure labor market. Infrastructure development and maintenance lend themselves well to the participation of small and medium-size enterprises, both in the rural and in urban areas. Recent efforts to integrate women in the development of such businesses have given very positive results. In most countries, one of the challenges for women to create infrastructure micro-enterprises is their higher rate of illiteracy than men's and their more-limited access to credit to start up. Women's associations are a successful alternative to individual enterprises.

### **Panel 2: Infrastructure and Social Empowerment**

This panel will illustrate how different infrastructure services contribute to individual and community empowerment. Schools equipped with lighting and power are more effective when they incorporate also ICT infrastructure. ICTs also provide information and access to product markets, credit, and other services that permit communities and households to integrate into the local, regional, national, and world economies. Women and men rarely have equal voice in the planning and decision making on infrastructure, at household and policy making levels. Infrastructure programs designed to provide equal opportunities for women to be part of the decision-making process have proven to generate higher and more sustainable returns to communities.

**Panel 3: Infrastructure and Gender Risks and Vulnerabilities.** Infrastructure services enhance the security of households and communities in many ways, from limiting losses of agricultural products to speeding emergency assistance in case of natural disasters and improving women's and girls' security when sanitation facilities are provided close to households or streets are well lit. Various infrastructure services also generate new types of risks and vulnerabilities with gender-differentiated effects. Amongst the risks and vulnerabilities, the workshop will raise the issues of gender, agriculture and rural infrastructure in the context of the current food crisis; the issue of HIV/AIDS in transport and mobility, and the challenge to integrate both men and women in climate change mitigation efforts and build on women's leadership potential.

**Table. How infrastructure services affect men and women**

Type of Impact	Sanitation & Hygiene	Potable Water	Energy	ICT	Transport
<i>Social Empowerment</i>					
Dignity	√	√			√
Equal Voice: Individual, Household, Community	√	√	√	√	√
Access to administrative, financial, and technical services	√	√	√	√	√
Mobility within or outside the community	√		√	√	√
<i>Economic Empowerment</i>					
Time Saved	√	√	√	√	√
Productivity		√	√	√	√
Income		√	√	√	√
<i>Human Capital Development</i>					
Basic Needs	√	√	√		
Access to Health	√	√	√	√	√
Access to Education	√	√	√	√	√
Leisure			√	√	√
<i>Risks and Vulnerabilities</i>					
Security	√	√	√	√	√

Check mark indicates the contribution of the sector to a specific impact. Blanks indicates no or limited contribution.