

SECTION

1

GENDER EQUALITY & INFRASTRUCTURE: FRAMING THE RELATIONSHIP

GOAL OF SECTION

Ground the reader in key concepts and ideas related to gender equality and infrastructure. For further detail readers are directed to Annexes 1–4.

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Why is gender important for infrastructure policy and operations? Infrastructure development is not simply a technocratic question. It requires combining supply-side issues of technical design specifications... with demand side dimensions of who uses infrastructure, for what purposes, how it is paid for and with what impacts on individuals, households and communities. In this respect, infrastructure development is not gender neutral.

Making Infrastructure Work for Women and Men: A Review of World Bank Group Infrastructure Projects 2005-2009, World Bank 2012

KEY GENDER DEFINITIONS

Agency: the capacity to make decisions about one's own life and act on them to achieve a desired outcome, free of violence, retribution or fear.

Gender: the social, behavioral and cultural attributes, expectations and norms associated with being male or female.

Gender equality: how these aspects determine how women and men relate to each other and the resulting differences in power between them.

This section lays out a conceptual framework and vocabulary for how to think about gender equality and infrastructure. It is grounded in the World Bank's gender strategy, which is anchored in the *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development* (WDR 2012).

A. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The WDR 2012 framework proposes that households, markets and institutions, and the relations between them, influence gender equality and economic development (refer to Box 1), emphasizing:



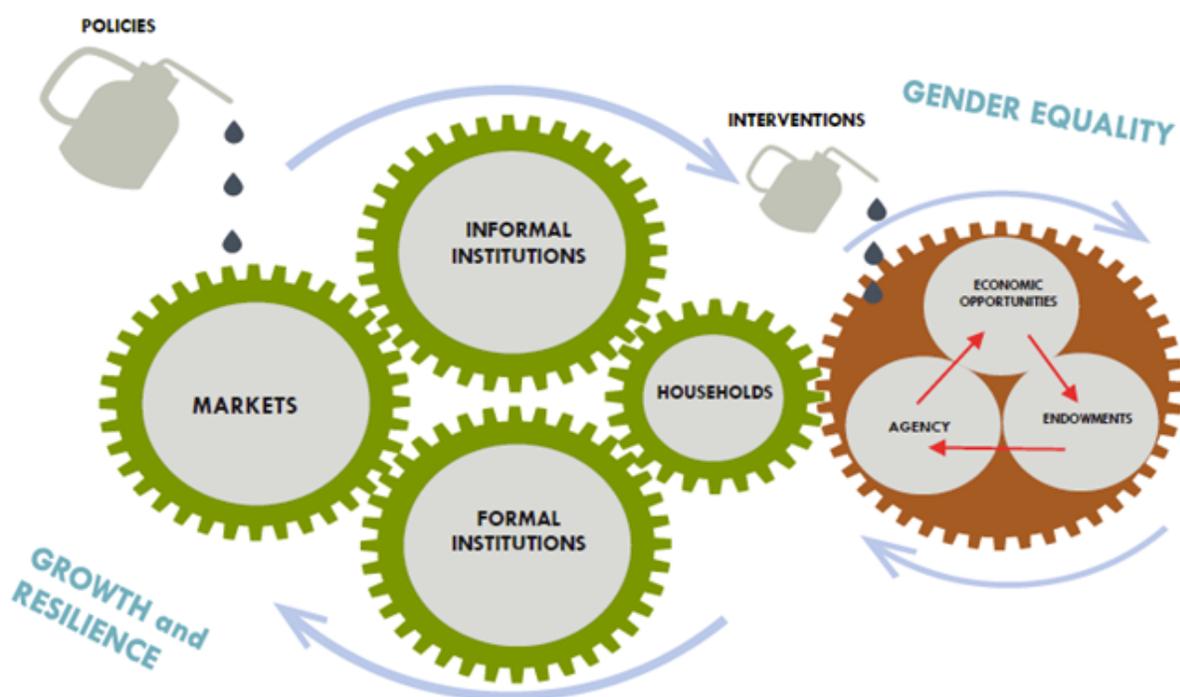
When [the relationships between the household, markets and institutions] are not considered, the intended policy interventions can be muted or contrary to expectations.

The World Bank Group's 2016–2023 Gender Strategy (World Bank Group Gender Strategy),⁹ built on this framework, aims to tackle four objectives important to promoting gender equality and overcoming the existing gaps in opportunity between men and women (refer to Figure 1):

1. **Improving human endowment gaps**—reduce health, education and social-protection gaps between men and women.
2. **Removing constraints for more and better jobs**—increase women's participation in the labor force, enhance income-earning opportunities, and improve access to key productive assets.
3. **Removing barriers to women's ownership and control of assets**—improve women's access to land, housing and technology.
4. **Enhancing women's voice and agency and engaging men and boys**—include women in decision making on service delivery; reduce gender-based violence and its impact in conflict situations.

⁹ World Bank Group gender strategy (FY16-23): gender equality, poverty reduction and inclusive growth (English), World Bank, 2015. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/820851467992505410/World-Bank-Group-gender-strategy-FY16-23-gender-equality-poverty-reduction-and-inclusive-growth>.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Viewing Gender Equality and Development



Source: World Bank Group gender strategy (FY16-23): gender equality, poverty reduction and inclusive growth (English), World Bank, 2015

B. INFRASTRUCTURE'S ROLE IN HELPING CLOSE IDENTIFIED GENDER GAPS

The challenges that prevent men and women from achieving similar outcomes in the areas of human development, accessing jobs, control of assets, and voice and agency—the four key objectives of the World Bank's Gender Strategy—range from easily identifiable to harder to pinpoint.

- **The easily identifiable challenges**—such as those leading to human endowment gaps such as different educational outcomes for girls and boys at the secondary-school level—may have concrete solutions, such as building a school or improving water and sanitation in a community, which frees time for girls to go to school.
- **The invisible challenges**—the unspoken societal norms and stereotypes dictating men's and women's behaviors, such as whether a woman would offer her opinion in front of a man—are sometimes harder to recognize or identify. In such cases, however, infrastructure may offer solutions that are transformational at an individual or community level—for example, by employing women in non-traditional jobs such as road maintenance, which can both challenge pervasive social norms and give women the space to exercise their agency. Ample opportunities exist along the infrastructure project cycle to take the different realities of men and women into account, giving women opportunities to build their skills, ultimately leading to better-designed infrastructure and improved development outcomes.

It is worth noting that, although plentiful opportunities exist within a more inclusive infrastructure-project-development process to address gender gaps in outcomes, tackling these disparities at the project level will not eliminate some of the root causes of gender disparities. This will require systemic cultural and behavioral changes.

Annexes 1–4 contain more detailed discussions of the four gender equality gaps targeted by the World Bank Group 2016 Strategy and include discussion of how infrastructure can contribute to closing them. These findings are summarized in Table 1.

Box 1: Definitions of Markets, Formal Institutions, and Informal Social Institutions

Markets—a variety of arrangements that allow buyers and sellers to exchange any type of goods and services subject to a set of rules. Markets allow for any item that is exchanged to be evaluated and priced. Markets can be influenced and shaped by formal and informal institutions.

Formal institutions—all aspects that pertain to the functioning of the state, including laws, regulatory frameworks, and mechanisms for the delivery of services that the state provides, such as judicial services, police services, basic infrastructure, health and education.

Informal social institutions—the mechanisms, rules and procedures that shape social interactions but do not pertain to the functioning of the state. Gender roles provide guides to “standard” or normative behaviors for each sex within certain social contexts. Roles gain power as they are learned through socialization, elaborated in cultural products, and enacted in daily life. The repeated experience of performing gender roles affects widely shared beliefs about men’s and women’s attributions and one’s own sense of identity. Social norms refer to patterns of behavior that flow from socially shared beliefs enforced by informal social sanctions. These can affect household bargaining in many ways: They set limits on what can be bargained about; they can be a determinant of or constraint to bargaining power; they can affect how bargaining is conducted; and they themselves can be subject to bargaining and can change. Social networks refer to the systems of social relationships and bonds of cooperation for mutual benefit that shape one’s opportunities, information, social norms and perceptions.

Source: The World Development Report 2012 (Box 4), based on Agarwal, 1994, 1997; Fehr, Fischbacher, and Gächter, 2002; Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1990.

Table 1: Infrastructure’s Role in Closing the Gender Gaps

Gender Gaps to Close	Description	Infrastructure’s Role in Closing these Gaps
Human endowment gaps—health, education, social protection gaps	Investments in health and education ensure people meet their potential. Progress has been made in health, yet worrying maternal mortality rates remain. Education gaps—between girls and boys—are closing, but not evenly.	<p>Improved access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport and ICT technologies can facilitate access to health and education • Water, sanitation and electricity can improve health outcomes and reduce time poverty—freeing up time for education • Nearby health facilities and schools can help close these gaps <p>Process for building infrastructure provides opportunities to: Deliver benefit schemes to local population—e.g., schools, health facilities; ensure that contractors take measures to prevent sexual harassment and gender-based violence (GBV)</p>
Removing constraints for more and better jobs	Women’s labor-force participation matters for economies, women’s voices, and agency. Unfortunately, across countries, the rate of women in the labor force pales in comparison to that of men, due to: skills gaps, occupational sex segregation, lack of child/elder-care, mobility constraints, unpaid “drudge work,” gender pay gaps, and legal and regulatory constraints.	<p>Improved access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity has been shown to reduce time poverty and enable entrepreneurial pursuits • Water and sanitation can reduce time poverty and free up time for work • Well-designed transport can improve women’s labor-force participation • ICT can allow women access to online-based work and different economic opportunities <p>Process for building infrastructure provides opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote women-run businesses along the project-development cycle <p>Encourage companies to provide equal opportunities for women and men in the workforce through codes of conduct; build skills, and provide jobs for both sexes</p>
Removing barriers to women’s ownership and control of assets	Owning assets helps people generate income, access capital and credit, and cope with shocks. Barriers for women include: no access to financial accounts or credit; and not having proper identification, which prevents women from getting mortgages or connections to services.	<p>Improved access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT networks provides more opportunities for women to build a digital credit history <p>Process for building infrastructure provides opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide joint titling of land during resettlement <p>Promote gender-sensitive procurement to build/run infrastructure projects/services</p>
Enhancing women’s voice and agency; engaging men & boys	Addressing voice and agency constraints requires engaging men and boys as change agents; changing unequitable social norms, discriminatory laws, and legal institutions; challenging gender stereotypes; and developing programs to promote economic opportunities in emerging high-growth sectors, social protections, and education, especially in STEM.	<p>Improved access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-designed infrastructure can improve health outcomes, reduce time poverty, etc., giving women opportunities to improve their education and exercise agency • Safe transport services can promote personal security of women and girls <p>Process for building infrastructure provides opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote women’s voices—especially through stakeholder consultations • Develop skills and leadership potential equitably for women and men <p>Hold construction contractors and service providers to a Code of Conduct designed to prevent incidents of sexual harassment and GBV</p>

C. SECTION ONE REFERENCES FOR FURTHER READING

- *World Bank Group gender strategy (FY16-23): gender equality, poverty reduction and inclusive growth (English)*, World Bank, 2015.
- *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development*, World Bank.
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Annex 1: Infrastructure and Human Endowments

Annex 2: Infrastructure development and equal access to jobs

Annex 3: Infrastructure development and women's ownership and control of assets

Annex 4: Infrastructure development and women's voice and agency