CRITERION INSTITUTE

INFRASTRUCTURE

Sectors Roadmaps

Incorporating a Gender-Based Violence Lens in Development Finance Institutions and Multilateral Development Banks' Infrastructure Investments

Influencing development finance institutions and multilateral development banks to recognize gender-based violence as material to their infrastructure investments, reflected in their processes and investment decision-making

Infrastructure investment is an established pathway to target development objectives, with an estimated annual investment size of $2.5 trillion per annum. Historically, infrastructure investment was viewed as gender-neutral, although this has evolved in the past decade. Development finance institutions and multilateral development banks that deploy infrastructure investment for development address gender-based violence in their infrastructure investments from a safeguarding perspective rather than regarding it as material to their investments; this limits their approach to compliance rather than integrating violence prevention into core risk/investment teams.

If development finance institutions and multilateral development banks can be engaged and influenced to recognize gender-based violence as material to their infrastructure investments, then awareness and response to gender-based violence will be incorporated into their assessments beyond the perspective of "Do No Harm." This shift will happen as development finance institutions and multilateral development banks incorporate indicators and process metrics to address the reduction of gender-based violence through their investments. The use of indicators and data sets will highlight the material nature of both the risk and the opportunity, while incorporating process metrics will ensure that gender-based violence is assessed and addressed in a meaningful way that addresses the underlying power dynamics.

As infrastructure investments are long-term, gender-based violence is a material risk to these investments. Safeguarding, while important, is limited in how it addresses risk. Gender-based violence must be considered a ubiquitous risk, similar to climate change. However, beyond addressing violence as a material risk, it also presents an opportunity in specific types of infrastructure in how they are designed. Similar changes have been made in infrastructure investments that previously incorporated climate change as a material risk but now consider it a lens for identifying investment opportunities.

In the wake of the current economic crisis, governments across the world have made significant budgetary allocations to "shovel-ready" infrastructure projects as a tried-and-tested approach to job creation and economic recovery. This trend is likely to further intensify in the coming years of global economic recovery, presenting more opportunities to have impact by integrating a violence lens.

1

Engage with development finance institutions and multilateral development banks to outline plan, evaluate current practices, and identify leaders from within the group.

2

Partner with select leaders at development finance institutions and/or multilateral development banks to research and develop tools for (a) indicators and data sets, and (b) process metrics; incorporate tools within internal team processes.

3

Present tools to group of development finance institutions and multilateral development banks through a peer-led training to identify new partners.

4

Work towards broader adoption of tools and create a "race to the top" amongst development finance institutions and multilateral development banks with new tools and standards.

5

Influence the broader sector of infrastructure development through development finance institutions and multilateral development banks as investors.

Infrastructure investment across the world will incorporate gender-based violence as material, such that it is understood to be material by project promoters and developers to incorporate a gender lens at the earliest stage in their project design. This would be supported by local gender experts that understand the local context.

Infrastructure, including physical infrastructure such as roads and cities as well as digital infrastructure, will incorporate gender-sensitive design at the earliest stage, reducing gender-based violence levels and improving safety.

Audiences:	Development finance institutions and multilateral development banks
Type of violence:	Sexual assault and sexual harassment
Asset of finance:	Public debt and real assets
Sectors:	Infrastructure

Resources

Criterion Institute's Mitigating the Risks of Gender-Based Violence: A Due Diligence Guide for Investing

Criterion Institute's Process Metrices That Analyze Power Dynamics in Investing

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