

Gaining accessibility features for persons with disabilities in World Bank projects

BIC has been working with Society and Disability (SODIS) in Peru for more than eight years, supporting their advocacy with the World Bank and the IDB for stronger policies and projects that include the needs and rights of persons with disabilities. In 2019, BIC began working with SODIS on advocacy in a governance project, the Improving the Performance of Non-Criminal Justice Services Project (IPNCJSP). Because the IPNCJSP was in the pipeline, BIC anticipated there would be significant opportunities for change in project design before it went to the WB Board of Directors for a vote. Additionally, SODIS had connections to those in the Peruvian Congress and judicial system because of their long standing work on legal capacity issues in the country. BIC recognized that these long standing connections would increase the likelihood that monitoring and advocacy work would be effective.

When BIC started to look at the project documents, BIC saw that the IPNCJSP was targeting “vulnerable groups,” but that seemed to only be limited to women and indigenous peoples. Persons with disabilities had significant difficulty accessing the justice system, yet there were no specific provisions that highlighted how persons with disabilities would be able to benefit from the project.

BIC started to engage in advocacy with the WB Task Team Leader (TTL) based in Washington, D.C. It quickly became clear that he was an ally and understood the need to include persons with disabilities in the project documents and work with the government to design a more inclusive project. Though he was the ultimate decision-maker, he still needed to make sure that the WB consultant in Peru was on board and able to do advocacy to the government there. The consultant also understood the importance of, and then pushed for, inclusion of persons with disabilities in the project. SODIS continued to meet with the consultant in Peru, and BIC continued to meet with the TTL in D.C. BIC also continued to support SODIS throughout the advocacy process by identifying who to meet within the WB to push further and what language to use in advocacy.

Ultimately, as a result of BIC pressure in D.C. and SODIS pressure in Peru, the project design was changed to include accessibility measures for legal aid centers. Those accessibility measures were included in updated project documents, and the project design that was approved by the WB Board included design elements to make the project inclusive for persons with disabilities.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE ISSUES RAISED IN THIS REPORT, PLEASE CONTACT BANK INFORMATION CENTER AT:

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