

# Creating a case that led to policy reform on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

In early 2014, the Director of Joy for Children Uganda met BIC's Uganda-based consultant at a child rights conference. The Director told the BIC consultant about cases of child sexual exploitation that were occurring around a Bank-funded roadway. BIC then provided Joy for Children funding and technical support to monitor the road construction and develop a report on harms to children resulting from the road. When the report was complete, Joy for Children shared it with the Bank, which denied the allegations and insisted that there was no responsibility on the part of the Bank to address sexual exploitation perpetrated by road workers on a Bank-funded roadway. BIC worked with Joy for Children to file an Inspection Panel case, and carried out extensive advocacy with senior Bank management and executive directors, as well as the U.S. Government, including testifying before Congress. The Panel found that the Bank-funded project caused serious harm to the communities as a result of policy violations. As a result of this investigation and BIC's advocacy, the following things happened:

- The Bank provided remedy to the affected girls and initiated the SCOPE project to address sexual exploitation of girls in the community more broadly;
- The Bank created a Gender Based Violence (GBV) task force to make recommendations around what the Bank can do to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in its projects;
- The Bank developed a good practice note on addressing GBV in infrastructure operations, which requires project teams to assess project risks related to SEA;
- The Bank developed new procurement requirements for contractors around prevention of SEA; and
- The Bank retrofitted several road projects to add SEA prevention measures. These outcomes include both remedy to the affected community and policy reform to prevent the harm from recurring. The Bank has continued to work to improve its approach to preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA/H) and has added a new good practice note on preventing SEA in Human Development Projects. Other institutions, for example the Asian Development Bank and AfDB are also including policies and guidance notes on preventing or responding to SEA/H.

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