

G20 PRINCIPLES FOR QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

MEXICO CITY, MEXICO



REDUCING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN THROUGH INTERVENTIONS IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Public transport is often the only way for girls and women to get to work, school, and healthcare services in developing countries. However, safety can be a major concern. Experience from several parts of the world suggests the most effective way to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG) in public transport, including sexual harassment and violence, is through a holistic approach using technology, effective response protocols, and awareness-raising. The World Bank—in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and G20 QII Principles—is looking to enhance and implement these solutions across its transport projects in Latin American cities with this 2016 pilot strategy in Mexico City leading the way.

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

In 2014, a [Thomson Reuters Foundation survey](#) ranked Mexico City as having the second most dangerous transport system for women among the world's largest cities. World Bank research shows that 65 percent of women suffered from gender-based violence (GBV) in transit and in public spaces related to transportation, and that survivors underreport cases, often due to the length of time required to spend at police stations, stigma, and fear of their identity not being protected. Mexico City's government, through the Traveling Safely (Viajemos Seguras) program, designed and implemented measures to address sexual harassment in public transport, such as pink buses and segregated transport. To continue to address the structural causes underlying VAWG in transport, the World Bank designed a pilot project that could generate bystander interventions within bus services and contribute to behavior change.

WORLD BANK PROJECT

In 2016, the World Bank together with George Washington University, the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, CTS EMBARQ Mexico (now WRI Mexico), and ITDP designed a pilot program called “¡Hazme el

paro!”—a colloquial expression in Mexico that means “help” or “have my back!” The pilot had three core components:

- A communication campaign with posters and information addressed to the transport community on methods to interrupt harassment in a non-confrontational way.
- A mobile app that compiled data, provided a tool for reporting verbal or physical abuse, and allowed users to activate a warning message through the buses sound system. The app allowed the transport community to report cases they experienced or witnessed, while linking victims with a citizen's service of the police for support.
- A SHARP (Sexual Harassment Appropriate Response Program) training for bus operators was adapted with the collaboration of a local NGO. Workshops engaged 30 drivers on ways to intervene during a sexual harassment incident and elicited ideas to adapt action protocols to the Mexican context.

The 14-week program was piloted on two similar bus routes. To evaluate the interventions, passengers and operators were surveyed and interviewed before and about four months afterwards.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF QII PRINCIPLES

The World Bank pilot project “¡Hazme el paro!” follows [G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment \(QII\)](#) specifically related to Principle 5 (Integrating Social Considerations in Infrastructure Investment), which advocates that public transport—as well as other infrastructure—should be inclusive, allowing for all to participate economically and socially in a respectful, safe, and healthy environment. This case specifically complies with the following components of:



QII PRINCIPLE 5:

OPEN ACCESS TO INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD BE SECURE IN A NON-DISCRIMINATORY MANNER

Public transport in Mexico often exposes women to violence, inhibiting safe and non-discriminatory access to services. The pilot project “¡Hazme el Paro!” created awareness of the issue among the local population and led to bus operators and companies taking action against sexual harassment. The pilot communication campaign helped promote public transport as a safe space for women where they can feel empowered while using the service. This objective is achieved by enhancing collaborative action for prevention and response to cases of sexual harassment, as well as encouraging survivors and transport users to report. The smartphone app, posters, and concrete actions helped survivors feel they were in a safer environment that enabled reporting. The campaign was well-suited for the Mexican context where social norms that enable violence are strong and reporting systems are complex. Ultimately, it helped convince the community to become agents of change instead of passive users of transport.

IMPROVING CONSULTATION AND INCLUSIVE DECISION MAKING BY THE COMMUNITY

Aligned with Principle 5, the three activities aimed to make drivers and passengers key players and owners of the initiative in order to combat sexual harassment in public transport. The communication campaign was designed through four focus groups with female and male bus users. They provided key social and behavioral information to orient the campaign and mobile app design. The interactive training for bus drivers included two types of exercises: awareness-raising about gender aspects, and soliciting ideas on non-confrontational strategies to help prevent harassment in buses. Bus drivers developed their own response protocol through the facilitation of a local NGO, which gave them a sense of ownership as it was the first time they felt their opinion was considered.

“Now I know how to respond to a passenger who is experiencing sexual assault, thanks to the training we received.”

Bus driver, COREVSA Company



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Evaluation results confirmed that with increased awareness-raising, transport users were able to perceive public transport as being unsafe for women. The results showed positive changes in attitudes of transport users, specifically young men, with increased willingness to intervene in cases of sexual harassment. Another step would involve expanding the project to other modes of transport and related spaces through training, communication, and awareness. Similar activities have now been applied in other cities, including Quito, Ecuador’s integrated transport system. A more inclusive and respectful public transport network decreases stressful and dangerous situations for women and increases their safe access to economic opportunities.

ABOUT THE QII CASE STUDY SERIES

This case study is one of eight developed by the Quality Infrastructure Investment (QII) Partnership to illustrate how the QII Principles are being applied in practice. The World Bank Group and the government of Japan established the QII Partnership to raise awareness and scale-up quality infrastructure investment aligned to G20 QII Principles in developing countries.

Access the entire series at www.worldbank.org/QII.