

TOPIC: The IFIs – The Gender Policies of the Regional Development Banks

Conceptual rating: [BASIC to INTERMEDIATE level](#)

Suggested module objectives:

- 1) Learn about the gender policies and strategies of the regional development bank relevant for your country
- 2) Provide an opportunity to evaluate the ability of this development bank to advance gender equality given these policies and plans.

Notes to facilitator: These objectives assume that the audience will have at least a rudimentary knowledge of a gendered critique of IFI policy conditionality.

Key concepts:

1. Loan cycle
2. Gender policy – difference between a process or procedural policy and a policy that affects the content of loans and advice offered/policy prescriptions
3. How locating gender expertise and responsibility within a structure of an organization can make all the difference in how effective people are, how seriously a gender perspective is taken and integrated into the work.

Cross references:

- **Link with Module 5** – Gender and Debt – basic gender analysis of debt and policy conditionality
- **Link with Module 11** – IFIs’ importance to people’s lives – a historical look at the impact of various IFIs in your country, and the gendered consequences. May include a more advanced discussion of policy conditionality.
- **Link with Module 14** – Gender Policies of the World Bank Group and IMF. *Consider pairing the material from this module with Module 14 in order to provide a stronger contrast and backdrop for discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of your regional development bank. This is especially true if you are interested in the EBRD and EIB, which basically have nothing to offer in terms of explicit gender policies or strategies.*
- **Link with Module 17** – accountability mechanisms at the regional development banks and the extent to which they may be effective tools for advancing gendered concerns.

Time required: 90 minutes

Suggested methodology: BRAINSTORM. Large and small group DISCUSSION. Mini LECTURE, if needed.

Relevant readings:

- Heinrich Böll Foundation, Gender Action, CIEL, “Gender Justice: A Citizen’s Guide to Gender Accountability at International Financial Institutions” 2007.
- Center for Global Development, “Building Africa’s Development Bank: 6 Recommendations for the AfDB and its Shareholders”, 2006.
- Center for Global Development, “A New Era at the Inter-American Development Bank: 6 Recommendations for the New President”, 2006.

Additional:

African Development Bank www.afdb.org

- (See Topics tab – Social Development, Gender and Inclusion) Review the AfDB’s Gender Plan of Action for 2004-2007 and gender policy. Review sectoral policies for gender text. Check for your country’s Country Strategy Paper and a Multi-Sector Country Gender Profile.

Asian Development Bank, www.adb.org

- (see Topics tab – Gender and Development) – Review the ADB’s Medium Term Strategy (2006-2008), their GAD Policy Implementation Review, Gender Equality Results, and Gender Action Plan, among other documents. www.adb.org.
- “Gender, Law and Policy in ADB Operations: A Toolkit”, 2006. [documents]
- “Policy on Gender and Development”, June 2003 [documents]
- Look for your Country’s Strategy Program, and Country Gender Strategy.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development www.ebrd.org

- see 2007 news feature story “Energy Efficiency Is High on Donor’s Agenda” for mention of gender and the EBRD

Inter-American Development Bank www.iadb.org

- “Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Equity” strategy document. 2003.
- Review materials from Gender Equality and Development unit: such as Program Objectives; Program Strategies; Mainstreaming; Challenges and Opportunities.
- Also see the Bank’s “Operating Policy on Women and Development”.

Preparation and supplies needed:

- Newsprint pad/flip chart paper and markers to record certain parts of the discussion
- Review suggested reading material.
- Review the relevant regional development bank and Gender Action websites to determine whether there are any new developments with respect to the development and implementation of gender policies and strategies that should be incorporated into this module.
- Print out copies of relevant gender policies and documents related to the regional development bank you want to discuss. Duplicate, as needed, for participants.
- Duplicate copies of the comparative gender policy charts in the Appendices of “Gender Justice” and the relevant section of analysis for your regional development bank for participants. (OR acquire enough copies of the entire manual for participants.)
- Gather some statistics about the relative amounts of money lent to your country by the IMF, WB, and appropriate regional development bank. Print out information related to policy and project loans made in the last 5 years or so to your country by your regional development bank.
- Draw a simple schematic showing the key steps in the loan cycle of the relevant regional development bank’s relationship with your country on newsprint or flipchart paper and prepare to put this on the wall for all to see at the appropriate time.
- On flipchart/newsprint paper, write out the questions you want the small groups to consider. If the groups will be in different rooms, make enough copies of the questions for each group to have one. Note: if there is a lot of reading material, consider a division of labor among the groups concerning which documents and policies to analyze. Divide up the reading to make it manageable in a limited time.
- Research whether there are any active groups and efforts geared to improving your regional development bank’s policies and practices. Be prepared to share this information during the session.

Suggested content to be covered:

- How your regional development bank works (loan cycle); and what kinds of gender policies, plans and procedures it has in place
- Comparative background (basic) with other IFIs re: how they handle gender
- History of your regional development bank in your country (lending patterns, quantities, impact)

- Assessment of these policies, plans and procedures for the relevant regional development bank. What opportunities do they present for advancing gender equality? Where are there gaps? What would improvements look like?
- Discussion of any groups doing work to reform your regional development bank and whether they have taken on gender as part of the reform.

Description of how to conduct the session:

1. Welcome by host group(s) and introduction of facilitator(s); provide any needed logistical information; outline goals for session.
2. Depending on size of group, invite participants to introduce themselves, share an expectation or question they bring. (Record expectations or questions on newsprint, if you are doing this step, and refer to them throughout the session.) If this is part of a larger economic literacy effort and the group has already met, this step may be shortened or eliminated.
3. **BRAINSTORM.** Warm up the group by asking them to brainstorm criteria by which they would evaluate how committed the regional development bank is to advancing gender equality. What would they look for in policies, procedures, strategies? Write the ideas on newsprint/flipchart paper for all to see. Let them know that this will serve as the basis for your review a bit later in the program.
4. **Mini LECTURE.** Move into a **quick** review/refresher (as needed) about the mission of your regional development bank, the kinds of loans and services it provides, the history of its involvement in your country. If the group is somewhat knowledgeable, do this more as a dialogue with the audience rather than a lecture style. Review the process by which loans are made (using the schemata you drew in advance on newsprint).
5. Set the context for the small group work by talking about gender policy at the IFIs – generally comparing them. Distribute copies, if desired, of key gender documents from the relevant bank, and the comparative IFI gender policy charts and critique from “Gender Justice”.
6. **Small group DISCUSSION.** Break into smaller working groups of about 5-7 people. Go over the questions you want the small groups to discuss. Suggest that they use the criteria they brainstormed earlier as the basis for reviewing the documents, and that they can feel free to add criteria as they do their work. Prepare to report back in the large group.
7. **Large group DISCUSSION.** De-brief the small group work, going through each question and asking for comments from the audience. If the groups all read and discussed the same documents, one way to ensure more equal participation is to invite a different group each time to begin talking about their answer to a particular question. Track the salient points re: strengths and weaknesses of the policy and strategy on newsprint.

8. Help the group synthesize what they learned by first asking them what ideas they have to improve the regional bank's effectiveness in promoting gender equality. Close with a discussion of the question about how effective the bank can be as long as it advances neo-liberal economic policies. If there are groups in your country working to reform the regional development bank, talk about the extent they are integrated gender as part of their work. Supply information about their efforts and contact data.
9. If this is part of a larger economic literacy effort, link this session to the next one. Provide logistical details related to the next session, as appropriate. Thank the audience for their participation.

Ideas for alternative methodologies/modification of the level of discussion:

- **For a more basic audience:** Instead of reading and small group discussion, consider inviting one or more speakers to talk about these issues.
- **For a more advanced audience:** In addition to the analysis and small group work, consider inviting a representative of the regional development bank (if possible) to speak to the group.

Some useful organizations or websites related to this topic:

- www.adb.org The official website of the Asian Development Bank
- www.afdb.org The official website of the African Development Bank
- www.bicusa.org Bank Information Center, Washington, DC
- www.dawnnet.org Development Alternatives for Women for a new Era (DAWN)
- www.ebrd.org The official website of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- www.eib.org The official website of the European Investment Bank
- www.forum-adb.org NGO Forum on the ADB
- www.genderraction.org Gender Action, Washington, DC
- www.iadb.org The official website of the Inter-American Development Bank
- www.jubileesouth.org Jubilee South Network
- www.socialwatch.org Social Watch Network