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The Rapid Social Response Adaptive and Dynamic Social Protection Program

*Building adaptive social
protection systems to promote
equity, resilience, and
opportunity for all.*



RAPID SOCIAL RESPONSE



WORLD BANK GROUP
Social Protection & Jobs

The Rapid Social Response Partnership Program at a Glance

Launched in 2009, the Rapid Social Response Program—now the Rapid Social Response Adaptive and Dynamic Social Protection Umbrella Trust Fund (RSR-ADSP) Program—seeks to increase social protection and jobs coverage worldwide. Generously supported by Australia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, and the World Bank Group, the RSR-ADSP has to date channeled \$141 million in small grants to 384 activities in 109 countries. These small grant activities, funded through 20 rounds of calls for proposals, have been catalytic, supporting roughly \$17 billion in World Bank operational financing around the globe.

Over the years, the RSR-ADSP has adapted to address emerging issues and priority topics.

RSR Phase 1 (2009–12) helped low-income countries address urgent social needs arising from natural disasters and the 2008/9 food, fuel, and financial crisis and build resilience to future shocks.

RSR Phase 2 (2012–20) promoted innovation in developing adaptive social protection systems in high-impact areas, including the following:

- The **RSR Nutrition-Sensitive Window** aimed to ensure that social protection and jobs systems adequately addressed nutrition among children and families.
- The **RSR Disaster Risk Management Window** looked to make social protection and jobs programs and delivery systems

more responsive to natural disasters; supported solutions have been adapted by low-income countries both within and outside RSR-ADSP support.

- The **RSR Youth Call for Proposals** funded activities in 14 countries and one global initiative to support the economic and social integration of young people.
- The **RSR Gender Window** develops and promotes gender-transformative social protection policies, systems, and programs aimed at reducing gaps and boosting socio-economic outcomes for women and girls.

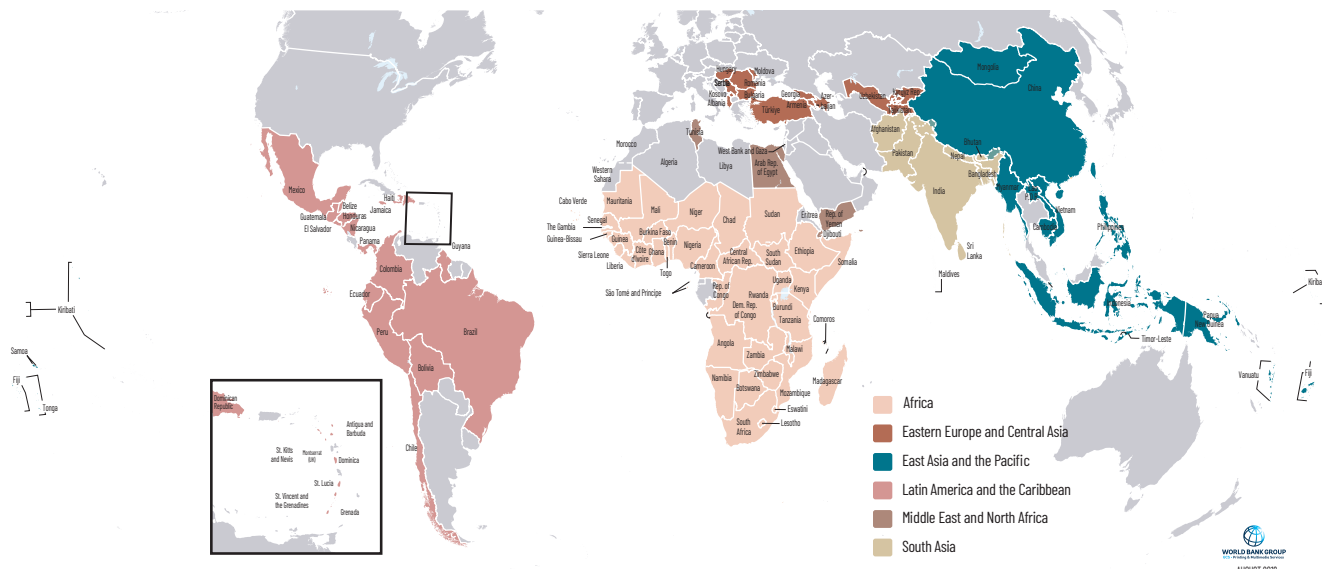
RSR Phase 3 (2023–30) continues the work of the Gender Window. Additionally, it has adapted to respond quickly to emerging concerns such as the COVID pandemic and the global consequences of the war in Ukraine. RSR-ADSP Rounds 19 and 20 (in 2021 and 2022, respectively) focused on climate change, especially in the East Asia and Pacific and South Asia regions.

Looking forward, the RSR-ADSP will be a key instrument for implementing the World Bank's 2023–28 **Social Protection and Jobs Compass** to achieve universal protection and to increase equity, resilience, and opportunities for all vulnerable households. The program will work with clients to develop adaptive and resilient social protection systems that can quickly respond to evolving challenges and new vulnerabilities—whether related to climate change and the transition to a green economy, conflict, migration, structural issues such as changing labor markets and the continued burdens facing women and girls, and the drive to achieve universal coverage and expand opportunities for all.

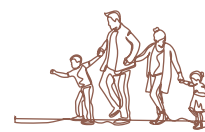
The Rapid Social Response Adaptive and Dynamic Social Protection Umbrella Trust Fund (RSR-ADSP) Program supports the world's poorest by **building adaptive and effective social protection systems** to prepare for and respond to urgent and evolving social needs for sustainable livelihoods and jobs. Its adaptive approach enables responsive social protection and services that can scale up and down and safeguard all vulnerable families in the face of unexpected shocks. The RSR-ADSP also supports efforts to expand access and opportunities to strengthen household resilience, develop sustainable livelihoods, and improve productivity to **foster human capital and a durable escape from poverty for all**.

As of December 2021, the RSR-ADSP had provided \$141 million to fund 384 activities in 109 countries across all six World Bank regions. In line with its mandated focus on low-income countries, it has supported work in almost all of the world's countries eligible for International Development Association (IDA) financing, and about half of its grants have been awarded for activities in Sub-Saharan Africa. In its most recent round of calls for proposals, Round 20, which was launched in May 2022, the RSR-ADSP is focusing on the South Asia and East Asia and Pacific regions.

Map of RSR-ADSP support, 2009-22



This map was produced by the Cartography Unit of the World Bank Group. The boundaries, colors, denominations, and any other information shown on this map do not imply, on the part of the World Bank Group, any judgment on the legal status of any territory, or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.



Multiplying Impact in World Bank Operational Lending

The RSR-ADSP provides small—its grants average \$470,000—but highly catalytic financing through four primary windows to World Bank teams for innovative and catalytic activities. In each round of calls for proposals, demand significantly exceeds the available resources, often by a ratio of more than two to one.

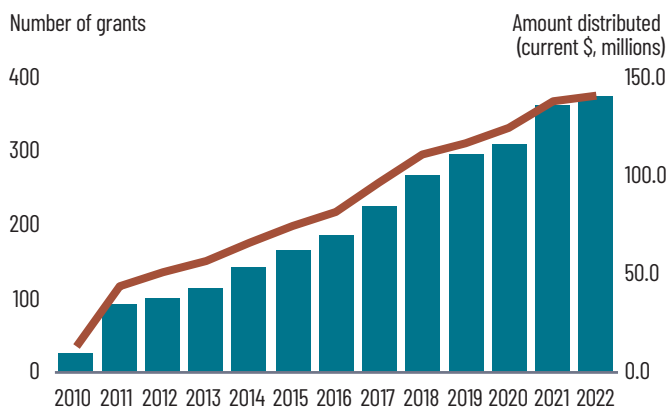
Grant-financed activities often pave the way for larger World Bank-supported operations. As of December 2021, these RSR-ADSP small grants have been linked to over **\$8.5 billion** in IDA financing and **\$8.7 billion** in International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) operations, matching government programs, and other domestic resources.

To date, country-specific activities financed by RSR-ADSP have reached **over 200 million poor and vulnerable people** (the majority of whom are women) and worked with **109 countries** to enhance the capacity, resilience, inclusivity, and effectiveness of their social protection and jobs systems. The RSR-ADSP has supported **new partnerships** and promoted the **global exchange** of knowledge and

experience such as in the South-South Learning Forum and numerous regional and subregional communities of practice on social protection and jobs issues. The RSR-ADSP has also helped develop **new tools** and collect data to improve our understanding—and thereby effectiveness and impact—of both the performance of social protection systems and the underlying vulnerabilities households face.

The RSR-ADSP has been instrumental in **addressing emerging concerns** and helping the Bank and clients respond to new crises. Beginning with Round 18 in 2020, the RSR-ADSP

Cumulative allocation of RSR-ADSP grants, 2010 to March 2022



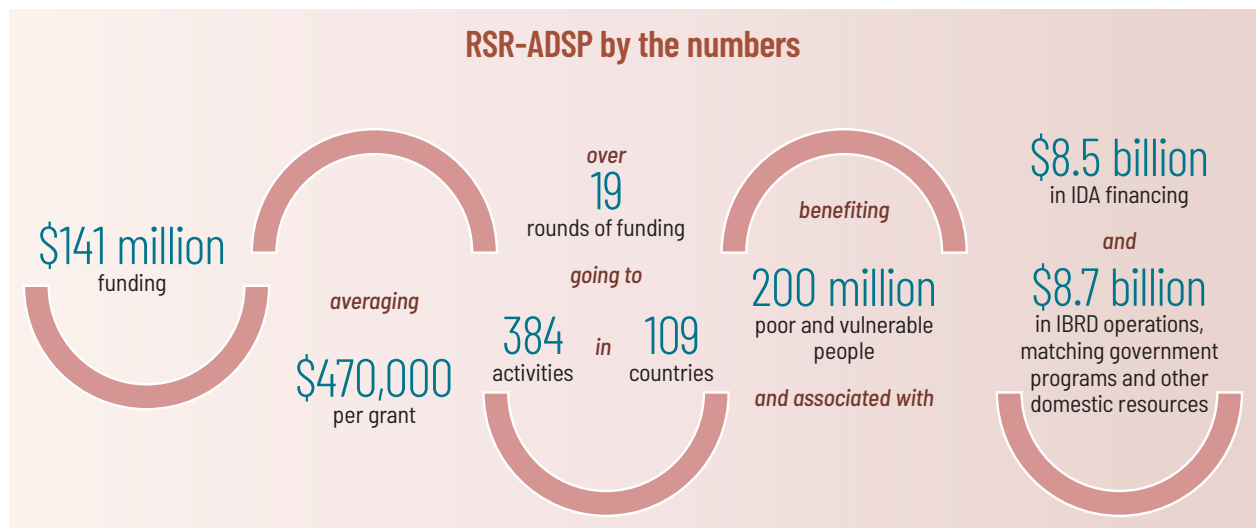


pivoted to support clients and teams adapt social protection and safety net programs to deal with the **COVID-19 crisis**. Notably, as evidence emerged of an increased incidence of gender-based violence due to COVID-induced psychological and financial stress, the RSR-ADSP responded by providing grants to support the development of social protection and safety net programs aimed at preventing and mitigating the impact of gender-based violence.

Beginning in 2022, the RSR-ADSP is focusing on delivering the new [Social Protection and Jobs Compass](#), the strategy that will guide the Bank's Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice over the next five years. The Compass, and the RSR-ADSP role in its implementation, are discussed on [page 8](#). Before turning to the future, it is useful to mine and explore the past.

Examples of RSR-Supported Activities and Impact

Since 2009, the scope of activities funded by the RSR-ADSP has helped accrue a vast array of experience, evidence, and tools to improve the performance of social protection systems. These include—but are by no means limited to—the examples highlighted on the following pages.



Building the Capacity of Social Protection Systems

RSR-ADSP activities strengthened the groundbreaking Unified Beneficiary Registry in **Malawi** through a rapid assessment which identified areas of strength, improvements needed, and the way forward. The highly replicable and inexpensive registry is a source of harmonized information on the socioeconomic status of households and contributes to a coherent social protection approach. So far, data on 4 million people have been collected, and the government is working to extend the registry's coverage nationwide.

In **Guinea** and **Côte d'Ivoire**, IDA financing supported government efforts to strengthen identification systems. There was a critical gap regarding vulnerable groups, and citizen engagement was lacking. The RSR-ADSP helped fill this gap by ensuring that technological solutions did not inadvertently institutionalize discrimination against vulnerable groups. The RSR-ADSP is helping to strengthen innovations in linking civil registration and foundational ID systems that operate across West Africa. In 2018, the project won a World Bank President's Award for Excellence.

A \$450,000 grant to **Liberia** supported the development of a social registry and a screening process for beneficiaries. The activities were associated with the design of an IDA safety net project. Key outputs included critical steps toward the development of a national social registry; these included

- Alternative designs for a unified comprehensive social registry database;
- Designs for an integrated management information system to address inefficiencies and reduce duplications in social protection interventions; and
- Support for promoting a shared approach to safety nets with common targeting tools, a unified registry, and stronger administrative processes.

Grant activities have supported the design of a Liberia Social Safety Nets Project, a five-year \$10 million IDA credit aimed at establishing the building blocks for a basic national safety net delivery system and providing income support to extremely poor and food insecure households.

The RSR-ADSP helped modernize **Côte d'Ivoire's** social protection and labor delivery system using digital financial platforms. Vulnerable households enrolled in the Productive Social Safety Net Project received mobile phones and mobile money accounts. The initiative entailed facilitating social cash transfers and digital financial inclusion, combined with economic support to livelihoods activities. It has directly benefited 300,000 poor individuals, more than half of whom are women. The RSR-ADSP was instrumental in mobilizing additional IDA financing for scaling up the effort. The high-impact project won a 2017 International Finance Corporation–World Bank Client Solutions Award.

Developing Responsive, Adaptive Social Protection Systems

Resilient and adaptive risk management is essential to cushion poor and vulnerable people against income losses that force them to turn to traditional—and often insufficient—coping mechanisms provided by family and community, and/or less desirable alternatives such as drawing down savings, going into debt, selling productive assets, and changing their diets—all of which can have profound and long-lasting effects on human capital investments and family well-being.

Through the RSR Disaster Risk Management Window, more than \$4 million was channeled from the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) to support a range of activities—from dialogue with governments on integrating disaster risk management into social protection and jobs programming to making service delivery more effective and responsive. For instance, in the Philippines, the World Bank worked with the government to develop a scalable cash transfer program that can respond more quickly to victims of disaster. And the RSR-ADSP used Disaster Risk Management Window funds to support the GFDRR Tokyo hub in developing an adaptive social protection-disaster risk management toolkit to facilitate communications across the whole spectrum of social protection and disaster risk management.

Disaster Risk Management Window support was instrumental in developing and launching the Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Program (SASPP), whose continued funding is provided by a €50 million contribution from the government of Germany. The SASPP supports the design and implementation of adaptive social protection programs and systems in six Sahel countries—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal. These programs are helping governments and poor and vulnerable households become more resilient to the effects of climate change. To date, more than 2 million people across the Sahel have benefited directly from SASPP-supported innovations and programs.

The adaptive social protection approach is also being adapted in countries outside the Sahel subregion. In Nepal, an RSR-ADSP grant helped the government shift its focus to an adaptive approach to social protection, integrating it with disaster risk management and climate change mitigation. The activities, analysis, and dialogue financed by the RSR-ADSP played a fundamental role in achieving a new policy consensus among partners and placing adaptive social protection firmly on the country's development agenda.

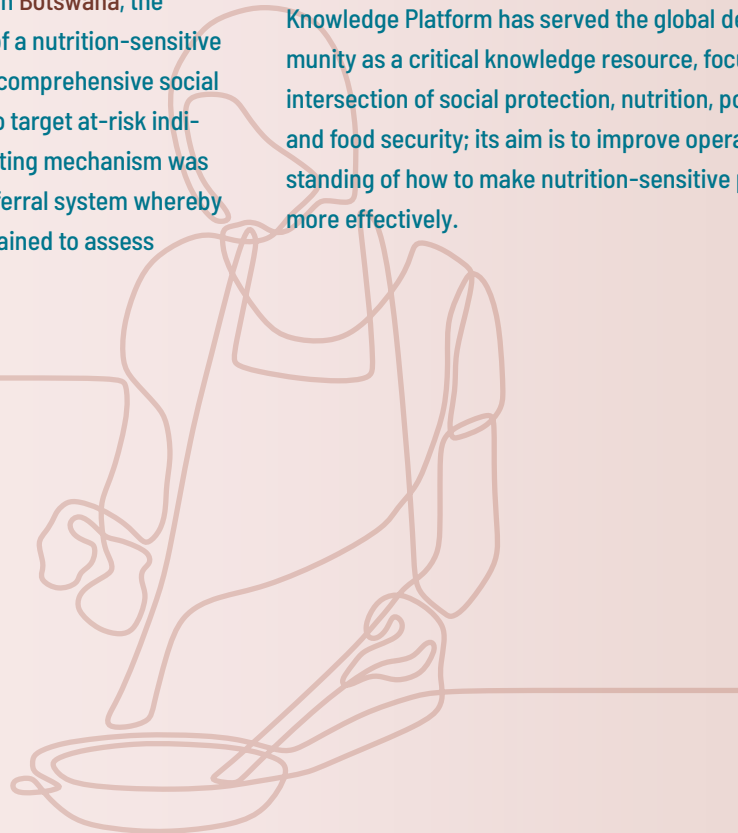
Integrating Nutrition into Social Protection Programs

The RSR Nutrition-Sensitive Window provided roughly \$3.3 million to eight countries for nutrition-sensitive safety net programs, and to one global program. The portfolio included support for enhancing the performance of public food delivery systems; promoting collaboration to improve coordination among sectors such as social protection, agriculture, and health; and improving knowledge sharing among countries.

At the country level, the window supported multisector approaches to reduce malnutrition in **Indonesia** by linking family development sessions in nutrition to the national community-level cash transfer system. In **Botswana**, the RSR-ADSP supported the development of a nutrition-sensitive safety net strategy, including building a comprehensive social registry; and introduced new methods to target at-risk individuals. In **Armenia**, a new poverty targeting mechanism was combined with incentives and a case referral system whereby local social protection providers were trained to assess

nutrition among beneficiaries and then refer them to the appropriate health services. In **Ecuador**, support from the RSR Nutrition-Sensitive Window enhanced coordination of existing programs and benefits, strengthened the monitoring of beneficiaries across sectors, and improved coordination with health and education stakeholders—including for social registration systems, results-based financing, and utilization of health and childcare services.

In 2018, the RSR-ADSP published a pioneering report, [The 1.5 Billion Question: Food, Vouchers, or Cash Transfers](#), which is regarded globally as an authoritative source on best practice in food assistance delivery mechanisms. The SecureNutrition Knowledge Platform has served the global development community as a critical knowledge resource, focusing on the intersection of social protection, nutrition, poverty, agriculture, and food security; its aim is to improve operational understanding of how to make nutrition-sensitive programs work more effectively.



Closing Gender Gaps and Empowering Women and Girls through Social Protection

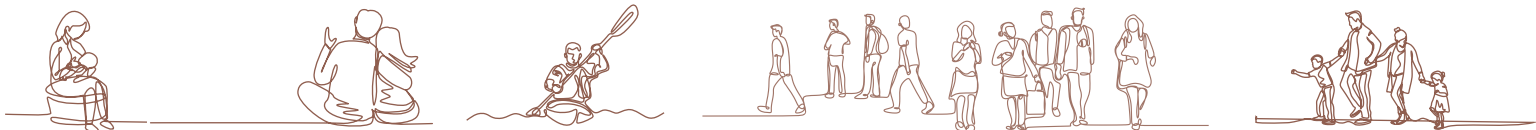
Since 2018, the RSR-ADSP Gender Window has distributed \$16 million in small grants to support the development of gender-transformative social protection programs in more than 50 countries and leveraged more than \$8 billion in World Bank financing. These grants have supported dozens of activities to close gender gaps, expand opportunities, improve productivity, support women's labor force participation, and generally enhance women's economic empowerment. Activities supported under this window have focused explicitly on the constraints facing women and girls—in terms of (1) access to resources and services such as childcare and financial markets and (2) the social norms that often limit the options available to women and girls.

The RSR-ADSP has provided support to more than a dozen country teams to design programs that address the causes of gender-based violence. In Cameroon, South Sudan, and other countries, the RSR-ADSP supported pioneering initiatives to understand the causes and consequences of gender-based violence and how safety nets and accompanying measures can be better designed and implemented to prevent it. The Bank's Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice assembled lessons from this and other operations to produce the [Safety First: How to Leverage Safety Nets to Prevent Gender-Based Violence](#) toolkit, which was launched in June 2021. The toolkit summarizes the growing impact evaluation literature which shows that safety nets can prevent violence by reducing poverty and

empowering women. Drawing on country case studies, the toolkit offers design and implementation tips for all stages of the social protection delivery chain to increase women's empowerment and contribute to violence prevention at every stage. In November 2022, an e-learning course summarizing the lessons of the Safety First toolkit was launched on the World Bank's Open Learning Campus with RSR-ADSP support.

The RSR-ADSP Gender Window has supported roughly 30 activities designed to enhance women's economic empowerment, such as productive inclusion programs in Mali and Honduras, understanding the transition to the labor market among women in Ghana, promoting opportunities for women in the post-COVID recovery in Colombia and Indonesia, and targeting refugee and displaced women in Niger. Lessons from these activities and others have provided the foundations for a series of instructive guidance notes for World Bank task teams on dealing with social norms in social protection programming and the importance of care work both to promote labor force participation and as a source of employment for women.

In addition, the Gender Window has supported the expansion of gender-disaggregated data through the ASPIRE (Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity) database, to promote the gender-based tracking of social protection outcomes and facilitate the design of gender-transformative programs.



Future Directions for the RSR-ADSP

Delivering the Social Protection and Jobs Compass and Achieving Universal Social Protection

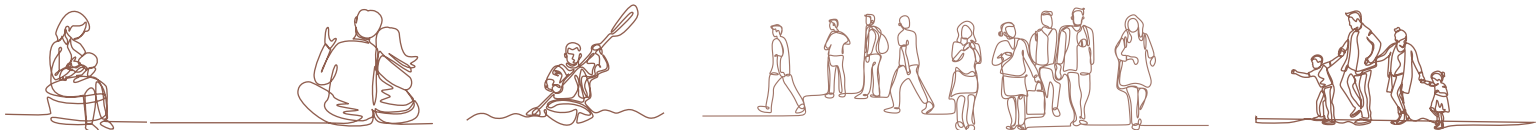
The RSR-ADSP will provide essential support to the World Bank to **achieve universal social protection** to ensure that all people have the assistance and opportunities they need and that no individuals or groups are left behind. Until the COVID-19 pandemic, the global community had made significant progress on poverty. However, even in the pre-pandemic world, governments were having to address the structural concerns that threaten well-being and a durable escape from poverty. These include the **persistent informality** which leaves many in low-productivity jobs, uncovered by social insurance and social protections; the **changing nature of work**, which is increasing productivity but threatening jobs and increasing the incidence of nonstandard and unprotected employment; **longevity and aging**, which on the one hand are major accomplishments but on the other pose significant challenges in labor force participation, pensions, and elderly care; and **gender**, as women and girls continue to face severe constraints in terms of social norms, access to markets and resources, and opportunities for social and economic empowerment.

The Social Protection and Jobs Compass identifies **five broad social protection areas as priorities for World Bank support to countries** in helping achieve universal social protection as well as gathering evidence of progress:

1. **Build strong foundational social protection systems.** To ensure the long-run strength of social protection systems, countries must develop a clear, coherent vision and goals, and understand the local constraints that bind both systems and households. In response, the Social Protection and Jobs Practice will work with clients to design programs that effectively support individuals and households, ensure strong institutional arrangements and client-facing capacity for delivery, and leverage common digital delivery systems to enable the broader systems agenda.



2. **Address the coverage gap.** Although major advances have been made to increase coverage, many households and individuals are still exposed to serious risks. The Social Protection and Jobs Practice will work with partners to promote greater inclusion with adequate support for the different risks faced across the life cycle and income spectrum; develop new social insurance instruments to support the “missed middle”; strengthen systems and expand coverage in fragility, conflict, and violence contexts; and address the specific needs of groups that face barriers to access.
3. **Address the flexibility gap.** To build more resilient, adaptive, and dynamic programming, the Compass highlights the development adaptive social protection systems and programs that facilitate dynamic entry and exit, as well as stronger unemployment benefit systems and other mechanisms that can support individuals and households to prevent, avoid, and overcome adversity.
4. **Address the opportunity gap.** Although systems and coverage have improved, many are still excluded from high-quality economic opportunities. The Compass focuses on the need to increase the scale and quality of labor market and economic inclusion programs and to better tailor these programs to the needs of participants and the constraints they face. Economic inclusion programs can be leveraged to support green, resilient, inclusive development, and to improve regulatory reform and collective bargaining that better balances the needs of workers and firms.
5. **Address the fiscal gap.** To achieve these goals—especially for universal social protection—requires greater fiscal space. This includes developing the data and capacity for evidence-based programming and continued innovation, monitoring, and evaluation. Innovation and adaptation are also needed in both spending and revenue, including reforms to pension systems and the reduction of regressive subsidies to promote fiscal sustainability as well as appropriate tax reform, domestic resource mobilization, and donor alignment.



Addressing Evolving Problems and Strengthening Adaptability and Responsiveness for Future Crises

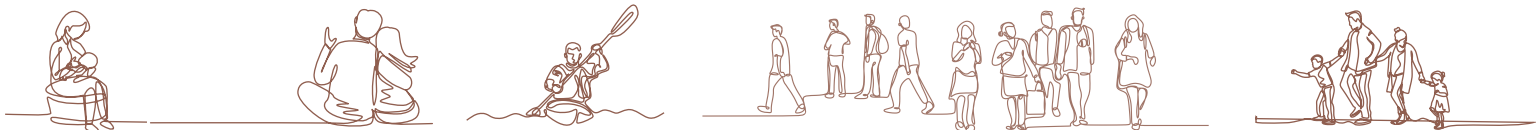
The COVID-19 pandemic revealed that many **millions of households**, mostly informally employed and uncovered by social protection and insurance, **are vulnerable to systemic and idiosyncratic shocks**—small fluctuations in income can cast them into poverty. The informal and community-based mutual assistance schemes on which many rely are manifestly inadequate to withstand sustained crises, which increases the need for stronger and more responsive social protection systems. In addition, social, environmental, and economic shocks—including the following—are continuing to grow in frequency and severity, with increasingly severe consequences for human flourishing.

- **Climate change and the just transition to a sustainable economy.** Climate change may push as many as 130 million people into poverty by 2030 and will challenge the resilience of economies and societies. The Paris Agreement highlights the need for concerted investment and action—including social protection systems and programs—to ensure a “just transition” to environmentally and socially sustainable jobs and economies. Presently, social protection systems are inadequately equipped to guarantee such a just and equitable transition. Moreover, the large numbers of people who will be affected by sea level rise, rising temperatures, and extreme weather events will dwarf the ability of existing systems to help them cope. Successful adaptation of green technology and climate-resilient activities will require significant investment and reorientation of training and skills, public works, and economic inclusion programs. Adequate social protection and the expansion of sustainable livelihoods will reduce pressures on natural systems and help protect the biosphere and biodiversity. Relatedly, successful elimination of fuel subsidies may need to be accompanied by compensating social protection measures. These activities require innovations in policy and technology as well as capacity among policy makers, World Bank teams, and the global community.
- **Gender and women’s economic empowerment.** The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the precarious position of women and girls in the face of shocks. Even prior to the pandemic, women were more likely to work informally in low-return activities and less likely to be protected by social insurance or other programs. Greater and more focused investments are needed to deliver women’s empowerment and incorporate these goals into national economic inclusion programs. While



women make up the majority of the beneficiaries of these programs, governments do not routinely apply gender-transformative lessons to program design and delivery. Among these are the need to increase opportunities for women to enter higher-productivity sectors and activities, the provision of childcare and other services to encourage greater labor force participation among women, preventing gender-based violence by increasing women's agency and involving men and boys, and improving women's access to finance and financial literacy.

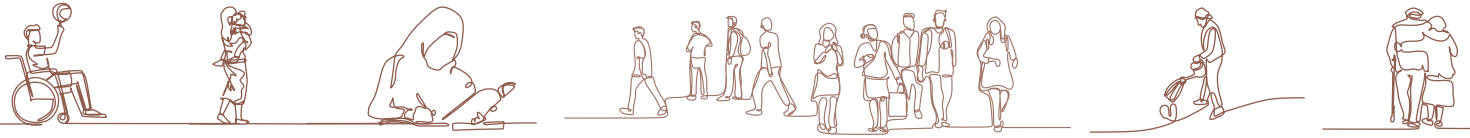
- **Migration, remittances, and the diaspora.** Social protection and jobs programs are essential for supporting the humane movement of people away from danger. Growing conflict and fragility and the disruption wrought by climate change are compounding the number of people on the move. Recent research shows the number of migrants is now higher than at any point since the early 20th century. In addition, as many as 1.5 billion people live in high-risk flood zones, many of whom will be forced to move to survive. Both forced displacement and economic migration present enormous challenges to the World Bank Group and the global community, with potential consequences for labor markets, livelihoods, and social cohesion. On the other hand, remittances continue to be a resilient source of support for poor households during crises. Effective and humane management of the movement of people and assets requires increased investment in social protection systems and the capacity of governments and others to deliver adequate, needs-based, responsive, and flexible services.
- **Fragility, conflict, and displacement.** By 2030, an estimated two-thirds of global poor will live in fragile and conflict-affected environments. This will have significant spillover effects for other countries, with large displacements of vulnerable populations, as has been demonstrated by the current war in Ukraine. Greater multinational and regional coordination among social protection systems are needed to address these cross-border crises effectively. At the same time, countries around the world all face the enormous challenge of delivering essential services and protecting households against the crises that can both drive and result from unrest and political instability. Social protection programs can contribute to domestic social cohesion and a stronger social contract by promoting the well-being of all people and engendering trust and belonging. Well-functioning and well-funded social protection programs can mitigate the worst impacts of shocks and minimize the threats of social unrest, increased inequality, and exclusion.



Supporting the World Bank's Commitments under IDA20

The [IDA20 commitments](#) that were agreed upon this past year direct the World Bank Group to deliver on a specific set of policies and objectives. The contributions of social protection and jobs systems and investments will be essential for many of these mandates. As in the past, the RSR-ADSP will play an important role in directing investment, policy, and program design:

- **Strengthening crisis preparedness.** World Bank Group country programs in all IDA countries will provide technical and financial support to strengthen crisis preparedness. This includes support to citizens in the form of safety nets and social protection, especially in terms of food security.
- **Human capital.** The World Bank Group will scale up and strengthen adaptive social protection to ensure inclusive and effective responses to crises and to attain universal social protection, especially among the poorest and most vulnerable and among those informally employed, to enhance well-being and investments in the next generation.
- **Climate change.** The World Bank Group will provide support to countries to develop equitable pathways to a green and sustainable transition by increasing investment in climate adaptation and mitigation, improving crisis preparedness and response capacity, and addressing the distributional and social impacts of shifts to a low-carbon, resilient economy.
- **Fragility, conflict, and violence.** The World Bank Group will address the drivers of fragility and bolster sources of resilience by strengthening country systems for social protection and expanding opportunities for both refugee and host communities in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, thus enabling transitions out of fragility.
- **Gender and development.** The World Bank Group will expand productivity and economic inclusion across all sectors, invest in women's empowerment, and make social protection systems more gender-responsive, minimizing sex segregation and employment traps for women, and preventing gender-based violence.



- **Jobs and economic transformation.** The World Bank Group will assist clients to create better and more sustainable jobs, raise productivity and earnings, promote inclusive economic transformation, while deepening the skills needed to access green jobs or jobs in green sectors. The World Bank Group is also committed to support safe and legal labor mobility and manage remittances and diaspora resources.



For additional information, please visit the following websites:

- RSR –ADSP Program: <http://www.worldbank.org/rsr>
- World Bank’s 2012–2022 Social Protection and Labor Strategy: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialprotection/publication/social-protection-labor-strategy-2012-2022>
- Social Protection and Jobs Compass: <https://open-knowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/38031>
- ASPIRE (Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity) Database: <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/aspire/>
- RSR Disaster-Responsive MDTF in partnership with the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery: <https://www.gfdr.org>
- Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment (ISPA) tools: <https://www.ispatools.org>

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