

SOUTH ASIA & THE WORLD BANK:

Stories of Resilience & Recovery

PHOTOS BY: WORLD BANK



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Introduction

The South Asia Region is at a pivotal stage of development. In recent decades, rapid economic growth, and progress across several sectors—including education, infrastructure, health, and agriculture—helped reduce poverty and improve the lives, well-being and opportunities for millions of South Asians.

Over the past decades, the number of extreme poor has fallen from 536 million people in 1990 to 216 million people in 2015. Countries also made progress in human capital development. The mortality rate for children under five years old fell by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. More young people were getting an education, with enrollment in post-secondary education growing by 300 percent between 2000 and 2015.

But the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to reverse decades of development gains in the region. It has increased income inequality, eroded human capital, and set back education and health outcomes for millions of vulnerable people. Almost two-thirds of the people who fell or remained in extreme poverty globally due to the pandemic live in South Asia. School closures have intensified learning poverty for students across the region and the average years of schooling in South Asia is expected to fall by between 0.3 to 0.5 years. This translates into an economic loss of up to \$1.9 trillion in lost earnings.

The World Bank has been a long-term partner for the countries of South Asia—in times of prosperity and in times of crisis.

Since March 2020, the World Bank has approved over \$23 billion of funding in the region. Nearly \$11 billion of this was directly channeled for the response to COVID-19 and has helped to save lives, protect poor and vulnerable people from serious illness, support business growth and job creation in slowing economies, and strengthen policies and institutions.

At the same time, the Bank has remained focused on longer-term priorities to help the countries of South Asia build back from the COVID crisis, focusing on a variety of sectors, to help them recover from the pandemic with a growth trajectory that is green, resilient, and inclusive.

Promoting green growth	Boosting resilience across the economy, markets & society	Accelerating human capital to drive inclusive development
<p>7 ENERGÍA ASEQUIBLE Y NO CONTAMINANTE</p> <p>11 CIUDADES Y COMUNIDADES SOSTENIBLES</p> <p>12 PRODUCCIÓN Y CONSUMO RESPONSABLES</p> <p>13 ACCIÓN POR EL CLIMA</p> <p>14 VIDA SUBMARINA</p> <p>15 VIDA DE ECOSISTEMAS TERRESTRES</p>	<p>2 HAMBRE CERO</p> <p>8 TRABAJO DECENTE Y CRECIMIENTO ECONÓMICO</p> <p>9 INDUSTRIA, INNOVACIÓN E INFRAESTRUCTURA</p> <p>10 REDUCCIÓN DE LAS DESIGUALDADES</p> <p>16 PAZ, JUSTICIA E INSTITUCIONES SÓLIDAS</p> <p>17 ALIANZAS PARA LOGRAR LOS OBJETIVOS</p>	<p>1 FIN DE LA POBREZA</p> <p>3 SALUD Y BIENESTAR</p> <p>4 EDUCACIÓN DE CALIDAD</p> <p>5 IGUALDAD DE GÉNERO</p> <p>6 AGUA LIMPIA Y SANEAMIENTO</p>

GREEN: Promoting green growth is a key priority for this region, which is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Toward this end, the Bank is strengthening investments, connectivity, and private sector partnerships and supporting the transition to cleaner forms of energy.

RESILIENT: The Bank is also boosting resilience across the economy, markets, and society by supporting reforms for debt and investment transparency, and channeling fiscal support to protect jobs and boost private sector-led growth.

INCLUSIVE: Accelerating human capital to drive inclusive development remains a priority in the region. To advance human capital development, the Bank is supporting policy and institutional reforms, boosting social protection, and strengthening health and education systems.

To learn more about how the World Bank is supporting the people of South Asia, we invite you to read the stories of recovery and resilience in the pages that follow. To read more about each project or program, click on the “Read More Here” button on the bottom left-hand page.

[Read more here](#)

*The South Asia Region includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Confronting the COVID-19 Crisis

Since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, the World Bank has moved quickly to mobilize nearly **\$11 billion** to respond to the COVID emergency in South Asia.

More than **857 million** vulnerable people benefited from **\$2.73 billion** of funding that supported social safety nets. These funds provided social assistance to the poorest families, helped them buy critical medical supplies and food.

The Bank provided **\$2.5 billion** for 15 health projects that helped establish or equip more than **23,000** hospitals and healthcare centers.

The Bank provided **\$2.80 billion** for **12** education projects, including support to respond to school disruptions caused by the pandemic, enhance digitization, expanding access for remote learning, and provide needs-based training that is benefitting millions of students and teachers.

The Bank has made available more than **\$1 billion** to support vaccine purchase and deployment in **6** countries. Nearly **83 million** doses have been contracted using World Bank financing, and almost **60 million** doses have been delivered.



PHOTOS BY: WORLD BANK / SHUTTERSTOCK

Bangladesh

Building Coastal Resilience to Protect Lives and Livelihoods

Spanning more than 580 kilometers and housing more than a quarter of the country's population, the coastal zone is key to Bangladesh's social, economic, and environmental well-being. But it remains extremely vulnerable to climate-related hazards such as cyclones, storm surges, coastal erosion, and sea-level rise, which are exacerbated by climate change.

Bangladesh has improved the resilience of its highly vulnerable coastal zone, with an integrated approach of cyclone shelters, strengthened polder systems, nature-based solutions, and early warning systems. The World Bank's Coastal Embankment Improvement Project Phase 1 (CEIP-1) and Multipurpose Disaster Shelter Project (MDSP) are helping protect lives and livelihoods.

CEIP-1 supports the rehabilitation and upgrade of protection polders—areas of low-lying land reclaimed from the sea—to mitigate the effects of tidal flooding and frequent storm surges, and to improve agricultural production by reducing saline water intrusion. The rehabilitation of 10 polders in six coastal districts will provide direct protection for more than 724,000 people living inside the polder boundaries.

MDSP is aimed at saving the lives of those at risk from cyclones and storms while providing safe schools for children in the communities most vulnerable to natural hazards. They will provide protection for more than 424,000 people.



Results Achieved

333,000 people — half of them women — are benefiting from greater protection from tidal flooding and storm surges.

424,000 people now have access to shelters.

63 new shelters have been completed and **320** have been rehabilitated under the MDSP.

Project Facts

Amount:

Coastal Embankment Investment Project Phase 1(CEIP-1)
\$375 million IDA //
Multipurpose Disaster Shelter Project (MDSP)
\$375 million IDA

Approved:

CEIP-1 June 2013 //
MDSP December 2014

Instrument:

Investment Project Financing

[Read more here](#) 

PHOTO BY SCOTT WALLACE / WORLD BANK

Bangladesh

Solar Home Systems Provide Clean Energy for 20 Million People

The World Bank helped Bangladesh build the biggest off-grid solar power network in the world, enabling 20 million people to access electricity and providing lessons for other countries seeking to expand access to clean and affordable energy.

The Bank, with other funders, provided successive financing through the Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Development (RERED) Project to support Bangladesh's Infrastructure Development Company Ltd (IDCOL) to implement the Solar Home System (SHS) program and build a thriving off-grid solar market.

Starting in 2003 as a 50,000-household pilot, the program at its peak provided energy to about 16 percent of the rural population. Bangladesh has now achieved near-universal access to electricity.

Between 2003 to 2018, the project reduced greenhouse gas emissions by about 9.6 million tons of CO₂ equivalent. The program helped cut indoor air pollution by avoiding the consumption of 4.4 billion liters of kerosene.



PHOTO BY: WORLD BANK



Project Facts

Amount:

\$155 million IDA

Approved

September 2012

Instrument

Investment Project Financing



Results Achieved

20 million Bangladeshis, many in remote areas, gained access to clean, affordable electricity. The SHS program sold over **4.1 million** solar power units by 2018.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were reduced by about **9.6 million** tons of CO₂ and indoor air pollution was reduced by avoiding consumption of 4.4 billion liters of kerosene.

[Read more here](#)

India

Farmers Learn Climate Adaptation in 'Open Sky' Schools in India

In the Indian state of Maharashtra the World Bank is supporting a \$600 million project to combat the effects of drought which includes creating thousands of so-called "open-sky" schools, or demonstration plots, to instruct farmers how to deal with climate change.

The state of Maharashtra is home to over 15 million farmers and has over 50% of cultivable land, but climate change has affected agricultural productivity.

A key part of the Maharashtra Project on Climate Resilient Agriculture (PoCRA) has been to create about 4,000 of the on-site schools where farmers learn how to prepare the soil, select a crop, use low-cost organic agricultural practices, and adopt water-conservation techniques.

The project, which began in 2018 and runs until 2024, is aimed at encouraging the state's 15 million farmers to adopt climate resilient agriculture practices.



PHOTO BY WORLD BANK

Project Facts

- Amount:
\$420 million IBRD
- Approved:
February 2018
- Instrument:
Investment Project Financing



PHOTO BY WORLD BANK

Results Achieved

4,000 informal "open sky" schools have been set up at drought-threatened areas in Maharashtra state to instruct farmers in techniques to combat climate change. A further 2,000 are planned before the project ends in 2024.

The Indian Institute of Technology created a **mobile App** that is providing farmers with information on water availability using real-time weather data.

[Read more here](#) 

Maldives

De-risking Solar Projects to Catalyze Private Investment

In 2019, Maldives imported more than 700,000 metric tons of fuel at the cost of \$465 million, equivalent to 8.3 percent of its GDP. Solar technology needs large amounts of private sector funding and it was essential to establish a program of risk mitigation to attract private investment. The Accelerating Sustainable Private Investments in Renewable Energy (ASPIRE) project has helped mobilize \$9.3 million in investment to install 6.5 megawatts (MW) of solar power in the Maldives.

The project provided technical assistance and capacity building to the Government of Maldives and has helped streamline the procurement and implementation of solar projects by formulating template contracts and guidelines. This helped reduce the cost of electricity through a bidding process. The project's innovative approach, including its risk-mitigation structure, provides the financial security required by the private sector.



PHOTO BY: MEGOM



Project Facts

Amount:

\$11.7 million IDA grant and \$16 million in a series of IDA guarantees

Approved

June 2014

Instrument

Investment Project Financing and IDA Guarantees



PHOTO BY: MEGOM



Results Achieved

Since 2014, the program has helped mobilize

\$9.3 million and is due to have a cumulative installation of **6.5 MW** solar photovoltaic installations.

The success of ASPIRE has led to a more ambitious follow-on initiative, the Accelerating Renewable Energy Integration and Sustainable Energy (ARISE) project to help Maldives meet its goal of increasing its share of renewable energy to **70%** by 2030.

[Read more here](#)

Sri Lanka

Climate-smart Farming Project Helps Sri Lanka Cope with COVID-19

After the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the World Bank-funded Climate Smart Irrigated Agriculture Project (CSIAP) in Sri Lanka was adapted to provide emergency help to support critical food supplies and farmers' livelihoods.

In 2020, CSIAP invested \$1.72 million in five programs that prioritized high-value food crops critical for food security and income generation, benefitting 19,923 families. The programs, along with the infrastructure investments such as tank rehabilitation, helped to boost employment, revive food supply chains, and support economic activities.

During 2020, the project also helped to create 2,695 climate-smart nutrition-sensitive home gardens that provided food and cost-savings for households. More than one-third of project beneficiaries reported significant improvements in land use, water use, farm productivity, and income levels.

CSIAP has established a strong planning and implementation foundation capable of delivering a package of climate-smart technologies, crop practices, water services, value addition, market integration, and farm organization essential for enhancing the productivity, income and climate resiliency of smallholder agriculture in Sri Lanka.



PHOTO BY CSIAP



PHOTO BY CSIAP

Results Achieved

\$1.72 million invested in five programs covering **7,645** hectares that prioritized high-value food crops.

19,923 families benefited from investments in high-value food crops.

2,695 climate-smart nutrition-sensitive home gardens were created to provide food and cost-savings during COVID-19 shortages.

Project Facts

Amount:

\$125 million IDA

Approved:

March 2019

Instrument:

Investment Project Financing

[Read more here](#) 

Bangladesh

Mobilizing Private Investment and Creating Better Jobs

The World Bank-financed Private Sector Development Support Project (PSDSP) helped develop special economic zones in Bangladesh, which have been critical to the country's economic transformation and the drive to create more and better jobs.

Increases in agricultural productivity prompted millions of agricultural workers to move into manufacturing and services in Bangladesh's cities, but a shortage of land for greenfield investments hindered this transformation. The government looked to special economic zones for its industrial growth and to create the desperately needed jobs. Safety had also become a high policy priority after a series of factory disasters, including large fire and building collapses in 2012 and 2013. This generated an urgent need for stronger mechanisms to promote socially and environmentally responsible industrial growth.

The project combined institutional capacity-building and infrastructure development together with firm and employee-level support. This led to the establishment of the Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (BEZA) and the Bangladesh High-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA). The \$500 million Private Investment and Digital Entrepreneurship (PRIDE) project, approved on June 19, 2020, will provide continuation to PSDSP. PRIDE will accelerate the country's economic recovery by promoting job creation, private investment, and environmental sustainability in participating economic zones and software technology parks in Bangladesh.



PHOTO BY: WORLD BANK



Project Facts

Amount:

\$40 million IDA

Approved:

March 2011

Instrument:

Investment Project Financing



Results Achieved

The project has facilitated **\$3.9 billion** in total direct private investment in economic zones from 2011 to 2021.

The project developed **1,500** acres of land and **\$407 million** worth of last-mile off-site infrastructure and on-site facilities and helped create **41,000** jobs (24% of which are held by women).

More than **21,000** trainees (31% of whom are women), have benefitted from the project's skills enhancement program.

[Read more here](#)

India

Unleashing the Power of Women's Collectives for Rural Development

India's JEEViKA (Livelihoods) program in the state of Bihar, financed by the World Bank, is the country's largest state-level program working exclusively with women from poor rural families. Between 2008 and 2020, the project worked with more than 12 million rural women, organized into more than one million self-help groups, giving them access to finance and markets and improving their health and nutrition practices.

The JEEViKA program has become the state's flagship program for rural development and poverty alleviation. During COVID-19, women's groups under NRLM, the national program modeled on JEEViKA, were among the first to respond, making more than 168 million face masks, running over 122,600 community kitchens, and facilitating the delivery of \$2.3 billion in financial assistance to more than 206 million women.



PHOTO BY: JEEVIKA, BIHAR



PHOTO BY: JEEVIKA, BIHAR

Results Achieved

1,085 digital banking kiosks run by members of women's self-help groups have carried out more than **\$350 million** in digital financial transactions between 2016 and 2020.

Over **12,000** community-level professionals have trained **1.2 million** farmers on practices to improve the productivity of crops such as rice and wheat since 2009.

Women's groups produced over **20 million** facemasks when COVID-19 hit.

Project Facts

Amount:
\$163 million IDA - (original \$63m, additional financing of \$99.24m "July 2012")

Approved:
June 2007

Instrument:
Investment Project Financing

[Read more here](#) 

India

Transforming the Urban Water and Sanitation Sector in Shimla City

After an acute water crisis in 2018 in Shimla—the capital of the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh and a major tourist attraction in the Himalayan foothills—the World Bank helped the city establish a fully autonomous water supply and sewerage company to improve service and be accountable to customers.

The World Bank provided \$40 million through a development policy loan to support the establishment of the Shimla Jal Prabandhan Nigam Limited - SJPNL (Shimla WSS Company), jointly owned by the Shimla Municipal Corporation (SMC) and the Government of Himachal Pradesh, with a majority ownership by the SMC.

Key reforms included shifting the institutional structure from the government's traditional departmental framework and replacing it with a company with full operational and financial autonomy and clear responsibilities to improve performance. The Board of Directors include independent directors to represent sector professionals

and civil society. Targets were set for cost recovery based on financial projections, and the sector's traditional focus was shifted from constructing infrastructure to service delivery. The project now draws up annual plans for finances, tariffs and subsidies. The state government has set standards for service delivery and the company's performance is evaluated against agreed targets.



Results Achieved

In just a year and a half, the project delivered 3-4 hours of water every day, compared to just once in 3 days before the project began. Pilot programs have been introduced to ensure 24/7 water supply.

As of 2020, **100%** water connections in Shimla city are metered - up from a baseline of 20%. Non-revenue water was reduced by 10%, and sewage collection rose by **133%**. Stringent water quality standards were maintained, ensuring that outbreaks of jaundice did not recur.

In 2019-2020, SJPNL received a performance evaluation of **4 out of 5** from its Independent Directors, based on service delivery and efficiency improvement targets agreed with the state government.

The program has also increased the percentage of female staff from almost none to **40%** in SJPNL's customer relations, information technology (IT), monitoring and evaluation and accounting departments.



Project Facts

Amount:
\$40 million IBRD

Approved:
January 2019

Instrument:
Development Policy Loan

[Read more here](#)

PHOTO BY FOXANNE BAUER/WORLD BANK

India

Indian Cities BET on Digitization for Better Services

Faced with inadequate roads, water and sanitation to service a rapidly growing population, cities in the southeast Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, the World Bank and the state government designed an Artificial Intelligence-based digital platform to improve municipal services across 110 urban local bodies (ULB).

The Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Municipal Development Project (APTMDP), backed by a World Bank loan of \$300 million, created an online building permit provision system linked to state-of-the-art digital platforms to allow online applications for new services.

As part of a new mapping and logging system, Andhra Pradesh was also the first state to implement a unique digital door numbering system to give each property a digital address, visible on a GIS map and linked to Global Positioning System (GPS).

Between 2015 and 2019 revenue from property taxes and water charges more than doubled and ULBs reported an increase of 30 percent in property tax revenues. New piped water connections were provided to over 200,000 households in 110 municipalities.

[Read more here](#) 



Project Facts

- Amount: **\$300 million IBRD**
- Approved: **December 2009**
- Instrument: **Investment Project Financing**

Results Achieved

- 110** urban local bodies (ULBs) are covered by the new digital services system.
- 200,000** new piped water connections have been provided.
- Tax revenues increased **30%** in the ULBs serviced.

PHOTO BY: 2016 VICTOR JIANG/SHUTTERSTOCK

PHOTO BY: TANTRIKY/SHUTTERSTOCK

Maldives

World Bank Financial Facility Strengthens Maldives COVID-19 Response

In August 2019, months before the emergence of COVID-19, Maldives signed an agreement with the World Bank to create a Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option (CAT-DDO) that gave the Indian Ocean archipelago a critical tool to help finance its response to the pandemic.

When Maldives declared a health emergency in March 2020 the World Bank immediately provided resources equivalent to \$10.02 million under the CAT-DDO through the International Development Agency (IDA). A Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (PEF) provided additional resources of more than \$952,000.

Thanks largely to planning in preparation for the CAT-DDO, the government was able to offer a multi-agency response to COVID-19, coordinating between first responders and the task force and building national capacity to put specialized health facilities in place.

As part of the CAT-DDO preparatory work, the meteorological observation network was expanded from 36 to 63 Automated Weather Stations (AWS), allowing more effective early warning and disaster preparation, especially for poor and agricultural communities.



PHOTO BY: MINISTRY OF HEALTH, MALDIVES



PHOTO BY: MINISTRY OF HEALTH, MALDIVES

Results Achieved

Simulation exercises for the CAT-DDO proved critical, enabling the government to quickly arrange **COVID-19** testing facilities at the international airport.

The government to put together a **full-scale** simulation exercise days after the first COVID-19 case to help plan the response to community spread in the capital Malé.

The CAT-DDO helped the government **expand** the water and sewerage network, enabling it to respond when 47 islands requested emergency water supply.

Project Facts

Amount:

\$10 million IDA (\$5 million grant, \$5 million credit)

Approved:

July 2019

Instrument:

Development Policy Financing

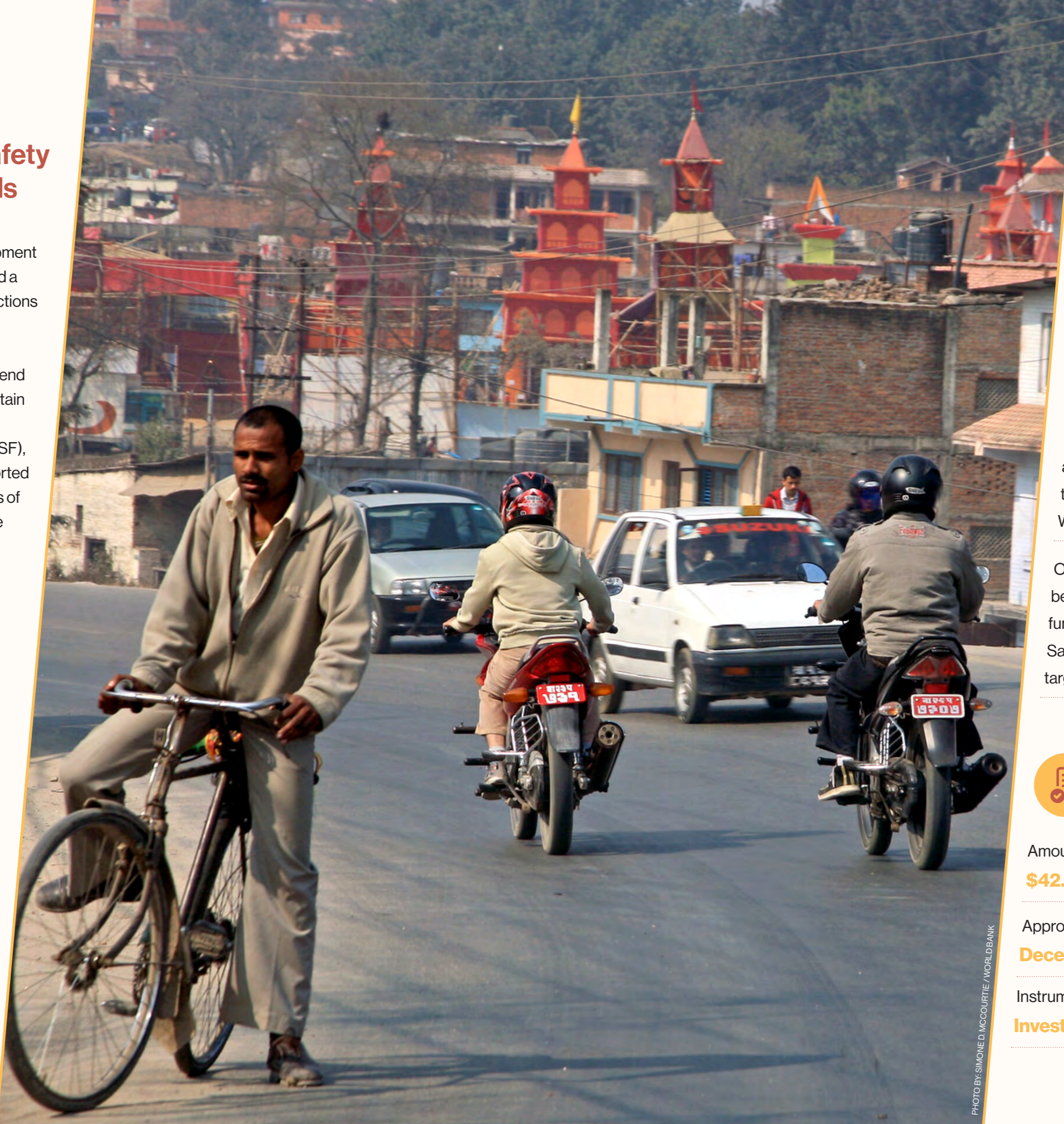
[Read more here](#) 

Nepal

Enhancing the Safety of Mountain Roads

Under the Road Sector Development Project, the World Bank financed a Road Safety Audit of various sections of the Nepalese Strategic Road Network (2015-2017) to identify critical safety risks and recommend solutions on the country's mountain road. Building on this work, the Global Road Safety Facility (GRSF), with funding from UK Aid, supported the installation of 73,000 meters of crash barriers along some of the country's deadliest roads.

The project has led to the establishment of a dedicated National Road Safety Council, drafting of amendments to various Road Safety Acts and Regulations, a Train-the-Trainer program on Road Safety Audit for developing future long-term road safety leaders and champions, and the development of Bachelors' and Masters' degrees in road safety.



Results Achieved

73,000 meters of crash barriers were installed on sections of road with high risk of crashes, addressing more than two-thirds of the high-risk locations identified in the World Bank's Road Safety Audit.

Over **4,000** lives were saved between 2017-2019 through the projects funded by the World Bank-Global Road Safety Facility - exceeding performance targets by **308%**.

Project Facts

Amount:

\$42.6 million IDA

Approved:

December 2007

Instrument:

Investment Project Financing

Read more here 

Pakistan

Economic Revitalization Project Steers Emergency Funds to COVID-hit Small Businesses in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province

COVID-19 exacerbated Pakistan's underlying health challenges such as low immunization rates, malnutrition, and maternal mortality. At the same time, the closure of all non-essential businesses in April 2020 and the disruption of domestic supply chains created more problems for already-stressed micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and threatened jobs, especially those in the informal sector.

The Economic Revitalization of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Project (ERKP) is financed through a multi-donor trust fund (MDTF) and provides matching grants to crisis-affected MSMEs, benefiting all types of small businesses from private schools to tour operators and beauty salons. With the pandemic, ERKP was restructured in June 2020 to align it with the provincial government's social and economic strategy for coping with COVID-19. The Bank introduced new flexibility in the matching grants program under the ERKP, allowing clients to process the grant applications from the pandemic-hit MSMEs on a priority basis to support immediate jobs restoration.



PHOTO BY: RESEARCH CONSULTANTS (IRFAN AHMAD (DIRECTOR), SAFRAZ BHATTI (SURVEY COORDINATOR))

Project Facts

Amount:

\$39 million (grant from the Multi-donor Trust Fund for Crisis Affected Areas of NWFP/ Fata/Balochistan)

Approved:

August 2011

Instrument:

Investment Project Financing



Results Achieved

Since it began, the ERKP has provided matching grants to **2,723** SMEs, of which 206 are owned by women, resulting in the direct and indirect creation or restoration of more than **13,000** jobs.

Matching grants for **15** SMEs affected by COVID-19 were approved in November 2020.

The project also procured and deployed **55** ventilators, personal protective equipment, and nebulizers to health facilities across the province between June-October 2020.

[Read more here](#) 

Sri Lanka

World Bank Helps Sri Lanka Build Clean Water Supplies

The Water Supply and Sanitation Improvement Project (WaSSIP), the third water project in Sri Lanka backed by the World Bank since 1998, is financing new water supply systems, rehabilitation of existing systems, toilets for households and schools, and septic treatment plants.

The project is extending access to safe drinking water and sanitation for nearly 700,000 people in urban, rural and estate areas in seven districts. It aims to reach people who may be left out of the country's progress in recent years and who risk further setbacks from the impact of COVID-19.

The Bank is also continuing to provide funds to rehabilitate aging dams, irrigation canals and manage water resources through the Integrated Watershed and Water Resources Management Project (IWWRMP). This is expected to help lessen longer term economic impacts of climate change and improve agricultural production and livelihoods.



Results Achieved

700,000 people gained access to safe drinking water and sanitation in rural and urban areas in **7** districts.

Over **40** new rural water supply schemes were completed, benefiting **13,538** households.

2,500 households were connected on **7** completed plantation water supply schemes.

13,362 individual toilets were completed.

Project Facts

Amount:

\$165 million IDA

Approved:

June 2015

Instrument:

Investment Project Financing

PHOTO BY: DOMINIC SANSONI / WORLD BANK

[Read more here](#) 

Bangladesh

Keeping Students Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The World Bank acted quickly to help the government of Bangladesh avoid irreversible losses of learning and human capital by redirecting its education projects during the pandemic. COVID-19 school closures affected some 38 million students and 1 million teachers.

The Bank-financed Transforming Secondary Education program provided stipends and tuition fees to 2.5 million secondary students (900,000 boys and 1.6 million girls) and the Bank and government are working to revamp the remote learning strategy to make it more inclusive and accessible.

The COVID-19 School Sector Response project funded by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is digitizing 35 subject programs to reach 2.5 million students through multiple platforms including radio, TV, mobile device, and online.

The ongoing Quality Learning for All Program is providing a remedial education program to be implemented initially in 500 lagging schools, as well as blended teacher training programs to help accelerate recovery of student learning. At the secondary level, the program is prioritizing an estimated one million poor and lagging students who cannot be reached by the mainstream remote learning channel to prevent school dropouts.

[Read more here](#) 



Results Achieved

2.5 million secondary students received stipends and tuition fees to reduce their risk of dropping out of school because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

900,000 boys and **1,6 million** girls received this financial assistance.

1,000 vulnerable adolescent girls and boys and their families have been contacted since March 2021 by trained facilitators to encourage them to stay in school.

1,000 grade 6 Math teachers enrolled in a special online teacher course on content-knowledge and pedagogical skills.

Project Facts

Amount:
\$14.9 million grant / \$510 million IDA for Transforming Secondary Education Results Operation, of which \$40 million redirected to support COVID response in the education sector.

Approved:
October 2020 / December 2017

Instrument:
Grant from Education for All Fast-track Initiative / Program for Results

PHOTO BY DOMINIC CHAVEZ/WORLD BANK

Bhutan

Bhutan Fast-tracks COVID-19 Response

When the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the world and quickly reached the small landlocked country of Bhutan in the eastern Himalayas, the World Bank and government counterparts worked fast to prepare a \$5 million COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness project. The objective was to ensure there were sufficient properly trained medical personnel and enough medical supplies and equipment and testing kits to protect the 770,000 population. This was quickly followed by the delivery of \$14.8 million made available through an existing Catastrophe Draw Down Option (CAT-DDO) to support the COVID-19 response.

The project also supported contact tracing and surveillance programs were put in place in all 20 districts. Hospitals also upgraded their isolation wards in preparation for mass community outbreaks and plans were in place for ICUs in the four COVID centers with a total of 54 beds. People were able to make use of COVID-19 testing facilities in specially upgraded laboratories and those who had the virus were able to safely quarantine and had access to fully equipped Intensive Care Units and ventilators.

[Read more here](#) 

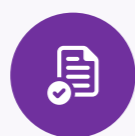


Results Achieved

664,713 people (out of a population of 771,612) were tested for COVID-19 as of April 2021.

87% of the eligible population was vaccinated with the first of two doses as of April 2021 with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (Gavi) and the World Bank.

100% of Bhutan's hospitals and 78 primary health centers received test kits and all 20 district health authorities received PPE and other supplies.



Project Facts

Amount:

\$5 million IDA credit / \$14.8 million IDA credit

Approved:

April 2020 / June 2020

Instrument:

Investment Project Financing / Development Policy Financing (Catastrophe Draw Down Option – CAT-DDO)



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Maldives

Helping Maldivian Women Left Jobless by the COVID-19 Crisis

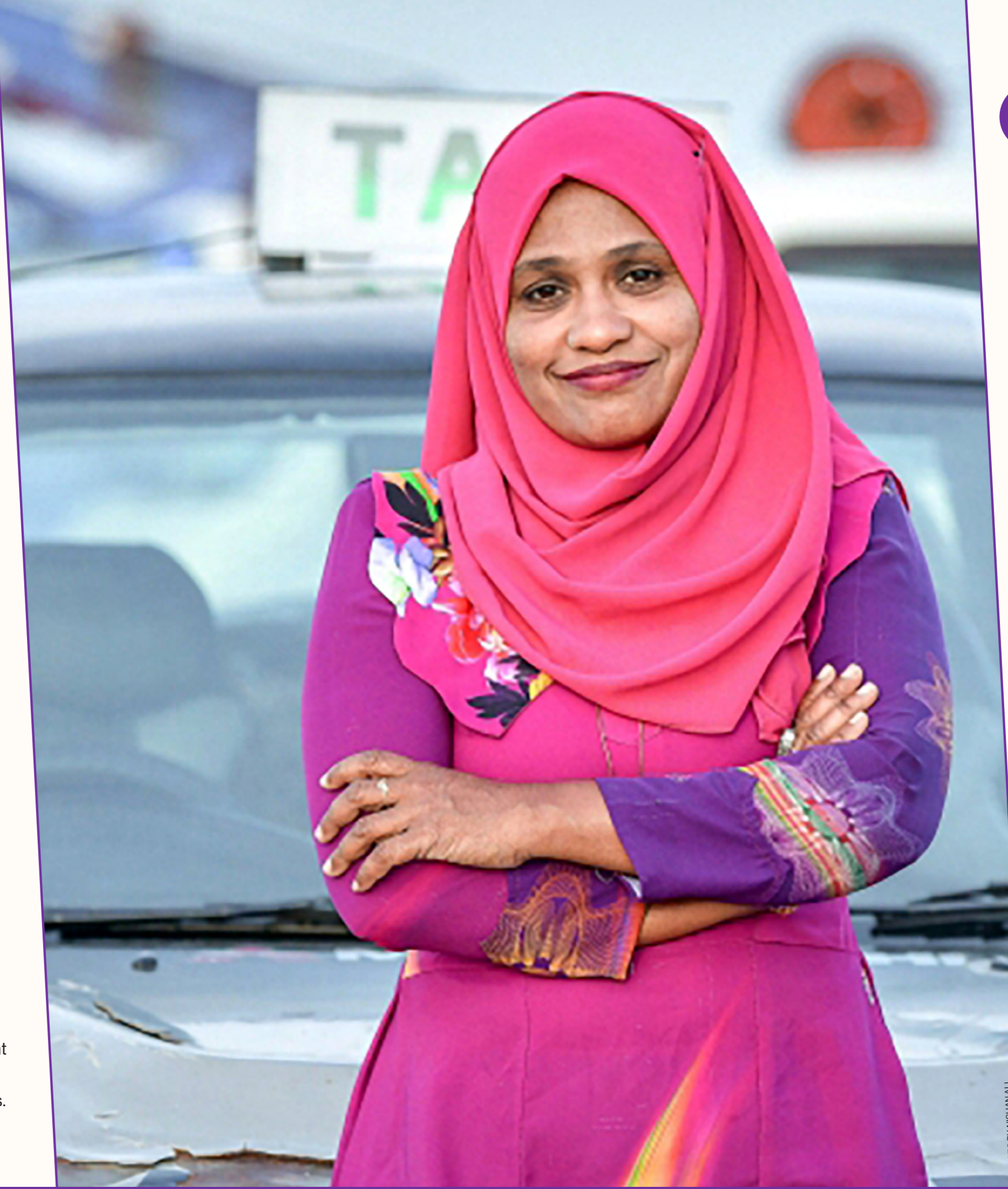
COVID-19 hit the Maldivian economy and its vital tourism industry hard as tourist arrivals fell to an unprecedented low. Restrictive measures imposed in the Greater Male' Region—home to at least one-third of the country's population—limited the ability of businesses such as cafes, restaurants and retail outlets to maintain their revenues, affecting jobs and incomes of many Maldivians.

Women were the first and largest group to lose their jobs. Without a secured income, many women would have no alternative but to return with their families to their native islands where they would have even fewer economic opportunities.

Women are often self-employed and work in the informal sector with no formal employment contracts. The lack of such documentation made it difficult them to prove income loss when applying for government assistance.

With support from the COVID-19 Emergency Income Support Project, financed by the World Bank, more than 18,500 women who lost their income received a monthly income support allowance to help them weather the crisis. The project is also financing initiatives to improve social safety nets, including a new unemployment insurance program, to help soften the blow to employers and employees in future emergencies.

[Read more here](#) 



Results Achieved

18,500 women— most of them self-employed—received allowances to ensure their livelihoods during the COVID-19 crisis.

\$19 million has been provided as income support allowances to 18,500 female workers who lost their incomes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Workers received an Income Support Allowance of up to **\$320** a month, while those who experienced even greater losses received an additional top-up.

Project Facts

Amount:
\$34.4 million \$6.4 million IDA grant and \$6.4 million IDA credit; additional financing of \$21.6 million (IDA grant)

Approved:
June 2020; January 2021

Instrument:
Investment Project Financing

PHOTO BY: NISHAN ALI

Sri Lanka

Saving Lives Today, Preparing for Tomorrow

Sri Lanka was vulnerable to COVID-19 because of its thriving tourism industry and large expatriate population and the government implemented strict measures to curb its spread. Since May 2020, the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project (ERHSP) has helped the Government of Sri Lanka respond to emergency needs by providing essential medical supplies.

The World Bank leveraged the dedicated [COVID-19 Fast-Track Facility](#) to mobilize \$128.6 million in resources and prepare the project in just 10 working days. Strategies and project priorities focused on gaps and needs outlined in the [Health Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery plan](#) developed by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and development partners including the World Health Organization (WHO), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the World Bank.

Longer-term activities included establishing isolation and treatment facilities, developing the laboratory system to increase testing and diagnostic capacity, and strengthening infection control and surveillance systems. Additional financing of \$88.97 million enabled a scale-up of social protection measures to vulnerable communities and an additional \$80.5 million supported vaccine procurement and deployment.

[Read more here](#) 



Project Facts

Amount:

\$296.36 million
(\$89 IBRD/\$207.36 IDA)

Approved:

April 2020

Instrument:

Investment Project Financing



Results Achieved

1 million rapid antigen test kits, **390,000** PCR test kits, and **1.1 million** sets of PPE procured for hospitals.

629,303 elderly persons, **52,940** people with special needs, and **18,972** patients with chronic kidney disease were supported with cash transfers.

Over **1.3 million** beneficiaries who lost their livelihoods received a one-time cash transfer of Rs. 5,000.



Learn more

Types of Financing

Investment Project Financing provides financing to governments for activities that create the physical/social infrastructure necessary to reduce poverty and create sustainable development.

Development Policy Financing provides budget support to governments or a political subdivision for a program of policy and institutional actions to help achieve sustainable, shared growth and poverty reduction.

The Development Policy Loan with a Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option (CAT-DDO) is a contingent financing line that provides immediate liquidity to countries to address shocks related to natural disasters and/or health-related events.

Program-for-Results links disbursement of World Bank funds directly to the delivery of defined results, helping countries improve the design and implementation of their own development programs and achieve lasting results by strengthening institutions, enhancing systems, and building capacity.

IBRD

The **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** is a global development cooperative owned by 189 member countries. As the largest development bank in the world, it supports the World Bank Group's mission by providing loans, guarantees, risk management products, and advisory services to middle-income and creditworthy low-income countries, as well as by coordinating responses to regional and global challenges.

Created in 1944 to help Europe rebuild after World War II, IBRD joins with IDA, our fund for the poorest countries, to form the World Bank. They work closely with all institutions of the World Bank Group and the public and private sectors in developing countries to reduce poverty and build shared prosperity.

IDA

The **International Development Association (IDA)** is the part of the World Bank that helps the world's poorest countries. Established in 1960, IDA aims to reduce poverty by providing zero to low-interest loans (called "credits") and grants for programs that boost economic growth, reduce inequalities, and improve people's living conditions.

IDA complements the World Bank's original lending arm—the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). IDA supports a range of development activities that pave the way toward equality, economic growth, job creation, higher incomes, and better living conditions. IDA is one of the largest sources of assistance for the world's 74 poorest countries and is the single largest source of donor funds for basic social services in these countries. Learn more about IDA in South Asia.

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