The Rapid Social Response (RSR) Program, supported by the world’s leading development institutions, aims to build effective and adaptive social protection systems to prepare and respond to urgent social needs for sustainable livelihoods and jobs. The “adaptive” approach integrates basic social protection with disaster risk management to cushion poor and vulnerable people against losses of income that could force them to cut down on nutritious food for their families, take their children out of school, or make distress sales of precious assets such as livestock.

The RSR Partnership Program is supported by the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Australia, Denmark, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and World Bank and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). It is a key instrument for implementing the World Bank's 2020-2025 Social Protection and Labor Strategy to increase resilience, equity and opportunities for the poor worldwide. Launched in 2009, the RSR Program has undergone two phases, and created three special-themed windows. Namely:

**RSR Phase 1** (2009-2012) helped low-income countries address urgent social needs stemming from food, fuel, financial crises and natural disasters and build resilience to future shocks.

**RSR Phase 2** (2012-present) supports countries through innovative, catalytic windows aimed at introducing the adaptability of social protection systems in particularly high impact areas such as nutrition, disaster risk management, youth empowerment, gender-smart social protection, digital economy and artificial intelligence. Other emerging themes which are being piloted are refugees and humanitarian assistance and applying advances in behavioral sciences and decision making.

**RSR Nutrition Sensitive Window** (MDTF): This window develops nutrition-sensitive SPJ systems in WBG client countries—both IDA and IBRD. Since 2004, RSR-N has supported eight countries: Armenia, Botswana, Ecuador, Egypt, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Mexico, and one global initiative.

**RSR Gender Window** (MDTF): This dedicated window was created in 2018 to develop and promote gender-smart social protection policies, systems, and programs supported by the United Kingdom, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Commonwealth of Australia. RSR-Gender aims at supporting social protection and jobs systems sensitive and responsive to the needs of women, girls, and young people, with support from the Kingdom of Denmark.

**RSR Disaster Risk Window** (RSR-DR): This window develops SPJ programs and delivery systems more adaptable to natural disasters. So far, the RSR-DR has helped 9 middle income countries (Colombia, Jamaica, Fiji, the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Peru, Botswana, Serbia, Mexico and the Philippines). Solutions supported by RSR-DR have been increasingly adopted also by low-income countries both within and outside RSR support.

A Special RSR Youth Call in 2018 funded 11 grants (US$1.7 million) to help young people with support from the Kingdom of Denmark.
Innovative and Impactful RSR Projects which Improve Social Protection Coverage and Human Capital Outcomes

Due to the growing multitude of shocks (climate, economic, conflict) the world is facing, and their increasing severity and interconnectedness, the challenge for governments to build household resilience and be able to respond rapidly to such shocks has never been more acute. "Business as usual" is not enough. Governments must be able to better respond not only post-crisis, but also be able to quickly scale-up during crises as well as be better prepared for future crises. If the RSR is going to respond quickly and effectively to help mitigate the impact of shocks on the poor and vulnerable, and to build household resilience before a shock occurs, thus developing human capital and a path out of poverty.

Through small but catalytic grants, the RSR Multi-Donor trust fund supports impactful projects that often pave the way for larger World Bank-supported operations and yet larger government programs – thus multiplying the impact. The aim is to increase the adaptability and effectiveness of social protection systems.

Some examples:

In Armenia, the RSR-NS program helped support targeted nutrition-sensitive social safety nets programs. In the process, it facilitated building consensus around shared priorities and bridging nutrition sensitivity and social protection among key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Health, UNICEF; and USAID. The grant helped establish a case-referral system whereby local SP providers were trained to assess nutrition among beneficiaries and then refer them to the correct health service sectors.

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is at an endemic levels high in Cameroon. With RSR support, this pioneering initiative delivered the follow-up services that cause GBV and its consequences, and how existing safety nets and accompanying measures can be better designed and implemented in order to prevent GBV.

GBV financial activities have helped mainstream Care of Home's social protection and labor delivery system using digital financial platforms. The activities were instrumental in ensuring that, for the first time ever, vulnerable households enrolled in the productive social safety program received mobile phones and mobile money accounts with social cash transfers and digital financial inclusion, combined with economic support to livelihood activities. Thus far, more than 13,000 poor individuals – more than half of whom are women – have benefited, and 320,000 individuals have been registered with the program's Social Registry. The RSR was instrumental in mobilizing additional IDA financing for scaling-up this program. In 2017, the project won the KNWins (Knowledge Network Wins) award for "Client Solutions" Award for being a high-impact project focused on client feedback.

In Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, IDA financing supported Government efforts to strengthen identification systems. However, there was a critical gap when it came to vulnerable groups, and citizen engagement was lacking. The RSR helped fill this gap by ensuring that technocratic solutions did not inadvertently institutionalise discrimination against vulnerable groups. The RSR is currently helping to strengthen innovations to the civil registration and foundational ID systems that is inclusive of all across West Africa. In 2018, the project became one of the winners of the World Bank President's Award for Excellence.

The RSR-funded activities that helped youth and women "graduate" from the Honduras Conditional Cash Transfer program, hence helping them become productive members of society and contributing to long-term poverty reduction. The successful grant activities helped catalyze and leverage World Bank credit in the amount of U.S.$5 million for a new social protection operation on Youth Employability. The RSR also provided direct input into the design of the project.

In Pakistan, the RSR activities leveraged a $2 million IDB Social Protection and Labor Development Grant, which helped the government turn its focus to an agenda that includes social protection and adaptive labor policies. The activities were instrumental in ensuring that, for the first time ever, vulnerable households enrolled in the productive social safety program received mobile phones and mobile money accounts with social cash transfers and digital financial inclusion, combined with economic support to livelihood activities. Thus far, more than 13,000 poor individuals – more than half of whom are women – have benefited, and 320,000 individuals have been registered with the program's Social Registry. The RSR was instrumental in mobilizing additional IDA financing for scaling-up this program. In 2017, the project won the KNWins (Knowledge Network Wins) award for "Client Solutions" Award for being a high-impact project focused on client feedback.

In Somalia the work conducted under the USA$400,000 RSR grant was a game changer for its social protection landscape, shaping its direction while ensuring a steady focus on improving delivery mechanisms. The RSR enabled the team to improve the coverage for Safety Nets when it was not on the government's agenda, and IDA funds were also unavailable. Moreover, the RSR leveraged a $352 million Somalia Development Grant as well as 2020 IDA grant financing. The process that has been built in motion is expected to affect millions of Somalis through the setting up of a Government led Delivery System for Cash Transfers and other Social Protection Services.

In Viet Nam, RSR activities provided the foundational evidence that the Government needed to make informed decisions on the reform of its National Social Protection Policy and Programs. The RSR grant promoted crucial knowledge exchange and ensured that relevant international experiences were shared with key stakeholders.

The SocialAction Knowledge Platform of RSR-NS has successfully served the global development community as a critical knowledge resource, focusing on the interaction of social protection, nutrition, poverty, agriculture, and food security, with the objective to improve operational understanding of how to make nutrition-sensitive programs work.

IDA-NS published a pioneering report "The 1.5 Billion Question: Food, Vaccines, or Cash Transfers" (2018), which has been well received and read globally as an authoritative source on best practice in food assistance delivery mechanisms.

RSR Programs in 96 countries