SUPPORTING THE EXPANSION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

RSR helped to identify and resolve some of the key implementation challenges of the National Social Protection Strategy and laid the groundwork for the expansion of Rwanda’s largest social safety net program. The technical assistance funded by RSR paved the way for two programmatic operations totaling US$ 90 million in Development Policy Grants from IDA.

CHALLENGE

Nearly 1,000 days away from the target year of 2015, Rwanda has made notable progress towards some of the Millennium Development Goals, as witnessed by the two thirds drop in child mortality and the attainment of near-universal primary school enrollment. But the country’s rapid population growth combined with sustained high food prices and the adverse impacts of economic and climatic shocks presents serious concerns.

Over a decade ago, the government and donors launched several initiatives for poverty reduction. In the absence of a defined social protection policy or strategy, interventions remained poorly targeted and fragmented across government institutions with no firm coordination framework. This rendered them inefficient in reducing poverty and buffering against shocks.

APPROACH

Since 2005, the social protection sector has evolved significantly in Rwanda. RSR supported the country’s first social safety net assessment, which helped to define and solve some of the implementation issues of the new National Protection Strategy (approved in 2011). The assessment analyzed and identified gaps in a number of policy areas related to the fast-developing social sector, such as, cash transfers, social insurance, targeting, decentralization and harmonization, management information systems’ requirements and design, and thus helped the government to improve and prioritize social protection.

RSR also assisted in the evaluation of the country’s largest safety net program, Vision 2020 Umurenge Program (VUP), which combines direct cash transfers, public works and micro-credit interventions to benefit the most vulnerable segments of the population.

The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Executive Directors of the World Bank or the governments they represent. The World Bank does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work. The boundaries, colors, denominations, and other information shown on any map in this work do not imply any judgement on the part of the World Bank concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

RSR Funding:
US$ 2,191,995

Associated IDA Projects:
Support to Social Protection System (US$ 40 million), Second Support to Social Protection System (US$ 50 million, approved in March 2013), Third Community Living Standards Grant (US$ 6 million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population, total</th>
<th>10.94 million (2011)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty headcount ratio at $2 per day (PPP) as percent of population:</td>
<td>82 (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US$)</td>
<td>570 (2011)</td>
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</tbody>
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Elements of the Evolving Coordinated System for Social Protection in RWANDA:

- Social protection has a strong and evolving coordination structure under a single ministry with policy oversight for the main SP programs.
- The sector has a systems approach, including built-in mechanisms for targeting, graduation and management information system.
- There are structured implementation arrangements for the ministry, agency level and local governments, and subnational administrations.

All together, these RSR-funded activities helped Vision 2020 Umurenge to expand, so that it can cover more families without jeopardizing fiscal sustainability.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RESULTS

- Provided support to the redesign of the Vision 2020 Umurenge Program (VUP), the country’s largest safety net program.
- Helped VUP cover (as of July 2012) nearly half of the country’s 416 geographical sectors, up from just 30 when it was launched in 2008, with the number of beneficiaries growing from less than 10,000 to over half a million.
- Developed policy guidelines for linking social protection with disaster risk management.
- Associated IDA Projects: Support to Social Protection System (US$ 40 million), Second Support to Social Protection System (US$ 50 million, approved March 22, 2013) and Third Community and Living Standards Grant (US$ 6 million).

2 www.worldbank.org/rwanda/overview