

# World Bank Timeline of Social Development Events



1973

Report with “[Recommendations on the Use of Anthropology in Project Operations of the World Bank Group](#)” (Warren Baum)

Written by Glynn Cochrane and Raymond Noronha, the report recommended that the WB hire 11 anthropologists to help operations people. Report adopted by President McNamara

1976

[Maritta Koch-Weser](#) and [Jacomina de Regt](#)

First generation of anthropologist consultants, later joined as full-time staff

1982

**OMS (Operational Manual Statement) 2.33: Involuntary Resettlement and Development**

First global social policy statement. Later updated as Operational Directive 4.30

1967

Albert Hirschman publishes “**Development Projects Observed**”

Every tribe needs an ancestor and Hirschman is our founder. “[Development Projects Observed](#)” was a field-based look at how much culture, context, and local social structure affected the success or failure of WB projects.

1974

[Michael Cernea](#) hired as first professional full-time sociologist

This is significant not just because Cernea was the first fully professional social scientist, but also because the choice of a non-US/non-UK sociologist affected future developments.

1978

[Gloria Davis](#) hired to Work on Indonesia

First professional anthropologist hired as full-time operations officer. Both Gloria and Maritta became project officers for large and highly controversial land settlement operations in Indonesia and Brazil, respectively, a history that ended up having a huge influence on social development’s trajectory.



1982

**OMS 2.32: Indigenous People**

Policy on indigenous people, later broadened and reissued as Operational Directive 4.20





1984

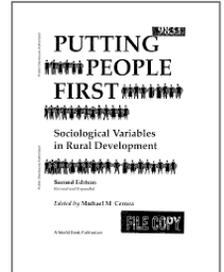
**OMS 2.20: section on “Sociological Aspects of Project Appraisal”**

First umbrella policy on social analysis, embedding it in a major operational policy

1986

**Putting People First published (M. Cernea, ed)**

Compilation of quantitative and qualitative evidence on the value that including social variables adds to project outcomes



1986

**First informal review of involuntary resettlement in Bank projects (M. Cernea, W. Partridge)**

Internal review of 25 large infrastructure projects that documented systematic shortcomings in resettlement policy compliance

1987

**Formation of 4 Regional Technical units, which included social managers and specialists.**

Growing institutionalization and operational linkages



1987

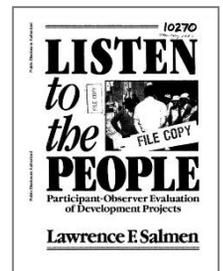
**Formation of NGO Unit under David Beckman**

Opened a long-term dialogue with NGO networks

1987

**“Listen to the People” (L. Salmen) published**

Systematic look at opportunities to engage diverse communities in development through participatory approaches



1989

**Social Development Department created, Gloria Davis, Director**

First time Social Development was given a high-level Institutional Foundation

1990

**Participation Learning Group formed**

Coordinators were Aubrey Williams and Bhuvan Bhatnagar, later under David Beckman. Began building a Bankwide network of people interested in participation. Report in 1994





1992

**United Nations Conference on Environment and Development**  
(“Earth Summit”)

First major global gathering where social issues, including indigenous people’s rights, participation, and social impacts, were core agenda items. (WB report contribution under Andrew Steer, Maritta Koch Weser author of social development)

1992

**Independent Review of Narmada Sardar Sarovar**

Global controversy over issues of accountability and compliance with social and environmental policies



1992

**Working Group on Social Capital (Gloria Davis and Robert Putnam)**

Theoretical and practical exercise to apply concepts of social capital in development involving Bolivia, Burkina Faso, and Indonesia

1994

**Publication of Indigenous People and Poverty in Latin America**

This publication for the first time gave a central role to ethnicity in explaining poverty



1994

**Guidelines on Social Assessment**

Controversial (though adopted by the Global Environment Facility) and never formally adopted

1994

**Bankwide Review of Involuntary Resettlement published**

Systematic review of safeguards application. Documented benefits of including social variables in high-risk operations



1994

**\$4.2 million Fund for Innovative Human and Social Services (FIAHS)**

Following visit by European donors, Bank funds used to hire social scientists

1995

**World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen)**

Accelerated institutionalization of social analysis in the WB



1996

**Environment and Socially Sustainable vice presidency created, Ismail Serageldin as VP**

Provided high level anchor and leadership across Bank "networks." An additional \$12 million supported social staff and analytical work

1996

**Participation Sourcebook published**

State of the art compilation of guidance

1996

**Defining, Monitoring and Measuring Social Capital Initiative**

Use of social capital metrics to show that levels of trust and social solidarity are correlated with more effective poverty reduction. (Grootaert et al)

1997

**Learning and Innovation Loans and Adaptive Program loans introduced, with strong social input**

Early recognition that lending instruments needed to be modernized to reflect a learning-based, adaptive approach



1997

**Social Development and Results on the Ground**

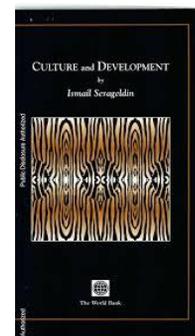
Presidential task force (Javed Burki chair) that recommended mainstreaming social development. Over 100 staff participated.



1998

**"Culture and Development" (Ismail Serageldin)**

First high-level endorsement of the role that culture plays in development. Followed by official policy and large investment program



2000

**World Development Report on Poverty (led by Ravi Kanbur)**

Report and Background Paper by Deepa Narayan called "Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us? Identified key issues of gender, violence and other factors that perpetuated poverty. Introduced the "empowerment" vocabulary to WB operations.



2004

**World Development Report "Making Services Work"**

Influential model explaining how and why more participation could produce service provider accountability



2011

**Beginning of DEC/Social Collaborations**

Woolcock, Barron, and Diprose's research on conflict ("Contesting Development") wins American Sociological Association's best book award.

JPAL (MIT) and social cooperate on CDD, Governance and Poverty analysis.

2011

**Conflict, Security and Development (WDR)**

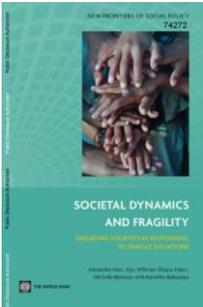
Influential WDR led by Sarah Cliffe and Nigel Roberts that built much of its argument around social analysis on what restores stability and trust after conflict.



2013

**Societal Dynamics and Fragility (A. Marc et. al)**

Detailed review of operational uses of social development in fragile and post conflict settings



2014

**Social Development submerged in another reorganization, as "Social, Urban, Rural' GP"**

Social development nearly disappears beneath the high-lending sectors. Re-appears in 2018 reorganization



2018

**Environment and Social Management Framework (ESF) issues**

Comprehensive policy framework that incorporates all social safeguards under a unifying umbrella policy.