Our work in South Asia
South Asia Regional Challenges

- **Mixture** of low and middle income countries
- **Fragile** contexts e.g. Afghanistan
- **Difference in scale of operations**
  - Small: Bhutan and Maldives
  - Large: India, Pakistan and Bangladesh – reaching millions of people
The Social Sustainability and Inclusion Practice Group supports communities and governments by focusing on:

**Inclusion**
- Opportunities for all people
- Irrespective of income level, geography, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, sexual orientation or other grounds of discrimination

**Resilience**
- Opportunities to overcome
- Socio-economic shocks, fragility, climate extremes and natural hazards

**Empowerment**
- Opportunities to shape
- Their own futures and have a meaningful voice in government
The South Asian Regional Context
SAR is home to a third of the world’s poorest people:
- Multi-dimensional poverty
- 54% of South Asia’s population lives on less than $3.20 / day
- vulnerable to falling back into poverty after COVID

Large and Persistent Disparities in income and development outcomes
- Despite economic growth
- Discrimination & exclusion from opportunities (such as labor markets)
  Female labor force participation dropping from a low 32% in India
- Exclusion due to physical or mental disability
  80% of adults in Afghanistan suffer impairment
  (24.6% mild, 40.4% moderate, and 13.9% severe)
- Some 40% of women across the region report Gender-Based Violence
- High rates of child marriage (Dalit caste of India, Nepal etc.)
Some of the challenges we are trying to tackle

**Millions of people in SAR are missing out!**

On their social, economic and political rights and opportunities due to poverty, fragility and conflict

**Access to basic services are limited**
- Over one million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh
- Cox’s Bazaar is home to the largest refugee camp in the world
- The crisis in Afghanistan expected to result in a large exodus
Great progress in women’s health and education outcomes across the region. Yet, some challenges remain in these areas:

✓ There are wide gender gaps in access to economic opportunities
✓ Gender-based violence remains a serious issue in SAR

Impacts of COVID
✓ Women and girls disproportionately affected by COVID 19
✓ Widening gender gaps within the region
In the *Eye Of The Storm* .... With COVID-19

Domestic violence

Migrant workers
SAR SSI

What we do
Different ways in which the WB/SSI supports SAR Governments:

1. Lends to governments and provides technical advice in designing and implementing projects

SSI supports every Bank project with the implementation of the Bank Social and Environmental Framework – to ensure project benefits reach those intended, and no one is harmed by our projects.

2. Provides policy advice to governments on a range of social policy issues, including gender, citizen engagement, social inclusion.

3. Carries out research and shares new evidence with policy-makers regarding what makes for good development and strong impacts.
SSI helps other sectors apply the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF)

Protecting People and the Environment in Investment Projects
What are the Environmental & Social Standards?

Designed to help Borrowers

➢ manage project risks and impacts
➢ improve environmental and social performance
➢ consistent with good international practice *(national and international obligations)*

Include objectives

That define the environmental and social outcomes to be achieved

Include requirements

Help Borrowers achieve ESS objectives

Through means appropriate to nature, scale and risks of the project
Ten Environmental and Social Standards

1. **ESS1**
   Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

2. **ESS2**
   Labor and Working Conditions

3. **ESS3**
   Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

4. **ESS4**
   Community Health and Safety

5. **ESS5**
   Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

6. **ESS6**
   Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

7. **ESS7**
   Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities

8. **ESS8**
   Cultural Heritage

9. **ESS9**
   Financial Intermediaries

10. **ESS10**
    Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

*WORLD BANK GROUP*
Social Sustainability & Inclusion
Why is the ESF a *Step Forward* for the WB?

➢ **First policy** on social impact assessment

➢ **Stronger emphasis** on integrated environmental and social assessment and risk management

➢ **Broader coverage of social issues**, including:
  ✓ Inclusion and non-discrimination:
    
    explicit protection for disadvantaged & vulnerable groups
  ✓ Clearer and broader focus on gender issues
  ✓ Labor and working conditions
  ✓ Introduction of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for
    
    Indigenous Peoples/Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities
  ✓ Expanded community health and safety provisions, including road safety
  ✓ Introduction of loss of ecosystem services as a social impact
**Application of ESF**

*Sri Lanka COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project*

**Social Risks:** Exclusion of vulnerable groups, health & safety risks, risks of GBV during isolation, lack of meaningful consultations leading to social tensions during establishment of treatment facilities, rumours affecting vaccine uptake etc.

**Project objective:** To respond to and mitigate the threat posed by COVID-19 and strengthen national systems

---

**ENSURED INCLUSION OF VULNERABLE AND AFFECTED GROUPS**

Mobile health services, vaccinations to prioritize elderly, sick & disabled, access in remote locations

Trained & equipped around 100 staff at elder care homes on prevention and care measures.

Social and financial support provided to high-risk groups and those in quarantine.

---

**STRENGTHENED GBV PREVENTION AND RESPONSE SERVICES**

Operationalized hotlines and expanded GBV services through Mithuru Piyasas (i.e. Hospital-based GBV care centres) - 9400 women have accessed services so far.
**Engaged Communities and received their Feedback**

- Consultations done with affected & vulnerable groups and interested parties to understand project risks and impacts to plan mitigation measures.
- Mobilized community groups attached to hospitals (i.e. 'Friends of the Facility committees') to share information and receive feedback.

**Risk and Behavior Change Communication Campaigns implemented**

- Risk Communication campaigns targeting vulnerable groups and their concerns implemented.
- Campaigns to address public misperceptions and vaccine hesitancy implemented.

**Grievance Management System evolved into a national system**

- Grievances can be received through postal mail, e-mail, short cord hotline (1907) and social media (WhatsApp & Viber)
- The national call center is adequately staffed and can receive complaints in the two local languages as well.
Some of our SSI-led projects in SAR
Community-driven development (CDD) programs empower citizens to collectively define key priorities for their communities, design their own solutions, and control how resources are used.

These projects can respond to a variety of urgent needs including access to clean water, rural roads, school and health clinic construction, and support for micro-enterprises.
Citizens’ Charter Afghanistan Project

Project Objective: Citizens’ Charter is a promise to deliver a basic package of minimum service standards to every Afghan citizen (and community).

Key Activities:

(1) Assist communities to collectively identify their development needs and manage projects to address them.

(2) Provides grants to communities for:
   - Community infrastructure projects;
   - Labor intensive public works;
   - Women’s livelihoods projects;
   - Grain banks (sharing and re-distributing food and non-food items for vulnerable families);
COVID-19 Relief Effort for Afghan Communities and Households

**Project Objective:** Distribute food/hygiene items to vulnerable households through the existing Community Driven Development platform to meet their basic needs during the COVID-19 outbreak.

**Key Activities:**

(1) Mobilize and support community groups to identify eligible households in each community;

(2) Provide grants to community groups to purchase and distribute food and hygiene products to eligible households.
Bangladesh Low Income Community Housing Support Project

➢ Improves living and housing conditions for residents of low-income slum settlements

➢ Community members mobilize to identify what they perceive as most pressing social and infrastructure problems

➢ Settlement upgrading plans developed based on community priorities e.g., roads, drains, streetlights, toilets, community centers, parks, lakes, recreational spaces

➢ Concessional loans and support to low-income families to make housing improvements and access secure housing
Bangladesh Low Income Community Housing Support Project

Before

A newly constructed drain

After

A new school boundary wall
Gender

SAR SSI
A Sharper Focus On Gender in WB work

1. In the last 10 years, WB has been trying to have a greater focus on gender, as reflected in the The World Bank Gender Strategy

2. In SAR, we have been trying to do this in several ways:
   ✓ By providing more research and analysis showing disparities along gender lines and the economic and social costs of such practice;
   ✓ By supporting governments to develop more gender equitable policies;
   ✓ Making WB projects more gender sensitive and/or gender focused;
   ✓ By addressing issues such as Gender Based Violence more rigorously.
The Bangladesh Health and Gender Project

Overall Objective:

1. Strengthened integrated sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and
2. Gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response services and
3. Information for the host and the displaced Rohingya population in Cox's Bazar district.

Specific Objectives:

1. Strengthened integrated SRHR and GBV prevention and response services and information in all tiers of healthcare facilities
2. Strengthened government system's capacity to deliver enhanced integrated SRHR and GBV prevention and response
What we expect to achieve through the Bangladesh Health and Gender Project by 2023:

- 20 Government facilities in Cox’s Bazar will provide 24/7 care for pregnant women
- 84 health facilities in Cox’s Bazaar will provide GBV response services
- At least 15,500 women and girls from the host community will utilize GBV response services
- At least 1,890,000 women and girls from the Rohingya camps will utilize GBV services from health facilities
Pakistan: Development Policy Credit Series

Supporting Policy Reforms on Gender

Enhanced Legal Protection For Workers

Registration of home-based workers (HBW)

Improved Working Conditions

Fewer restrictions on women’s work

Next steps

• Research and data collection
  • For impact evaluation of HBWs policy reforms in provinces (KP & Balochistan)

• Technical Assistance for Govts’ implementation of laws
  • for protection and well being of women HBWs (Sindh, KP & Balochistan)

• Capacity building of labor departments
Cutting Edge Research

Gender Research and Analytics Program, World Bank, South Asia

- Diagnostic research to understand what drives gender inequalities
- Impact evaluations of innovative interventions
- Gather evidence on effective solutions to narrow gender gaps

A growing portfolio of more than 25 ongoing evaluations, evidence reviews, and synthesis papers
Impact Evaluation of COVID lockdown on girls in Pakistan

Evaluation of innovative behavioral interventions to minimize school dropouts

- **SMS and WhatsApp** suggestions on remote education, lesson plans and scheduled classes
- **Phone-based text messages** to ensure that girls re-enroll once schools reopen
- **Outreach and reminders to families** on the importance of girls’ education

Research will provide the evidence for scaling these low-cost interventions across developing countries to ensure uninterrupted education for girls
Citizen Engagement in South Asia
Citizen Engagement in South Asia

Wealth of experience linked to decentralization processes, access to information, management of public resources, and service delivery at the local level

But the Region ....
- Scores low on voice and accountability
- Has limited budget transparency and participation
- Includes fragile and post conflict countries
- Faces issues of exclusion
Citizen Engagement Approach

- Public Awareness Campaign
- Consultations
- Online Beneficiary Feedback Mechanism
- Satisfaction Surveys
- Grievance Redress Mechanism
Citizen Engagement in Maldives COVID-19 Emergency Income Support Project

Covid-19 caused significant job and income losses with 50% of workers affected.

The Project mitigates the economic impact by providing temporary income support for people who have lost a job or suffered a loss of income.

Citizen Engagement improves the design and outcomes of the project by engaging with people:

- **Results** from phase 1 to phase 3: increase of application approvals from 66% to 93%; increase of female applicants from 23% to 45%.

**Public Awareness Campaign to increase awareness and participation**

**Representative Committee to improve oversight**

**Satisfaction Survey to track progress**

**Consultations to improve project design**

**Online Reporting on Effects of COVID-19 & Feedback to course correct**

**Grievance Mechanism to address issues early on**
Why Join this SSI team?

If you want to keep the World Bank focused on people and investments that reduce poverty and increase shared prosperity

If you are interested in working to address the critical social problems in complex and diverse South Asian societies.

If you are up for the challenge of dealing with regular political upheaval and fragility – we never know what headlines we will wake up to in the news ...

If you like working as part of a team, learning about different sectors, and different countries, and working alongside South Asian Governments

........ Then SAR SSI is the right place to consider!
SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND INCLUSION