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THINGS
YOU NEVER
KNEW ABOUT
THE WORLD
BANK

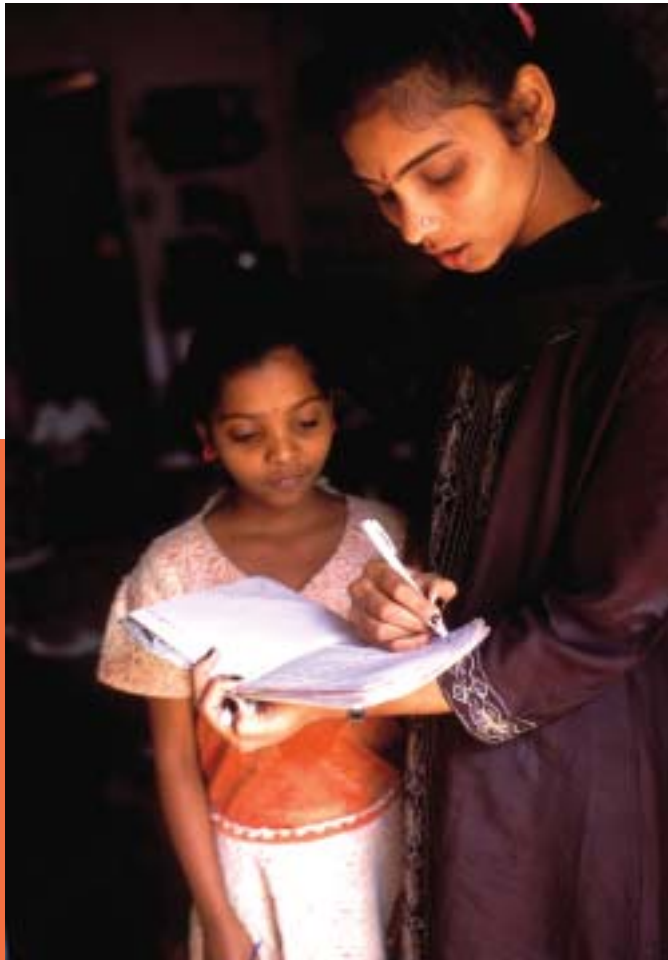


THE WORLD BANK




YOUR CONCERNS ARE THE WORLD BANK'S PRIORITIES

Our work in more than 100 countries is challenging, but our mission is simple: to help reduce poverty. Over the past 20 years the proportion of people living in poverty in the developing world fell by half—from 40 percent to 21 percent. Meanwhile, in the past few decades, life expectancy in developing countries has increased by 20 years, the number of children dying before the age of five has been reduced 50 percent, and adult illiteracy has been halved to 25 percent. And yet, over a billion people still struggle to survive on a dollar a day. The World Bank seeks to help those people through our support for social services like health, nutrition, and education as well as for infrastructure and policies to improve governance and fight corruption. Today, countries themselves are coming to us with their own plans for helping poor people, and we work together in real partnership.



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We are the world's largest external funder of education

Education is central to social and economic development. In addition to providing a wide range of technical, advisory and analytical services, we have transferred about US\$36.5 billion in loans and credits for education since we started lending in the sector in 1963. The lending portfolio consists of 143 operations in 88 countries amounting to US\$8.4 billion. We work closely with national governments, United Nations agencies, bilateral agencies donors, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to support developing countries in their efforts to provide education to all their citizens as a means to empower them and to boost national economic growth. Our support is tailored to the needs of the country and includes: ensuring that all children especially girls and disadvantaged children are enrolled in and able to complete a full course of quality primary education as an essential foundation for further education and training; equipping secondary and tertiary education students with skills, attitudes and values that are relevant for a growing competitive economy and expanding lifelong learning opportunities to enable all to participate in the knowledge society. The India Elementary Education Project supports the Government's efforts to universalize elementary education for 6-14 year old children, to close gender and social gaps and to improve quality by 2010.

Each day, 14,000 people become infected with the HIV virus. Half of them are between the ages of 15 and 24. HIV/AIDS is rapidly reversing many of the social and economic gains that developing countries have made over the past 50 years. As a sponsor of UNAIDS (the group that coordinates the international response to the epidemic), in the past five years we have committed more than US\$1.8 billion to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS around the world. We have also been one of the largest financial supporters of HIV/AIDS programs in developing countries. We have promised that no country with an effective HIV/AIDS strategy will go without funding. In partnership with African and Caribbean governments, we launched the Multi-Country HIV/AIDS Program (MAP), which makes significant resources available to civil society organizations and communities. Many have developed original approaches to HIV/AIDS, which others are learning from and adapting to local conditions. The MAP has made available nearly US\$1.2 billion to help countries in Africa expand their national prevention, care and treatment programs.



**We are one of the
world's largest
external funder in
the fight against
HIV/AIDS**



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**We are a leader
in the fight against
corruption worldwide**

Corruption is the single largest obstacle to development. It increases wealth for the few at the expense of society as a whole, leaving the poor suffering the harshest consequences by taking public resources away from those who need them most. Since 1996, we have launched hundreds of governance and anticorruption programs in nearly 100 developing countries. Initiatives range from requiring government officials to publicly declare their assets and introducing public spending reforms, to training judges and teaching investigative reporting to journalists. Our commitment to fighting corruption has helped to encourage an international response to the problem. We also continue to make anticorruption measures a central part of our analytical and operational work. We are committed to making sure that the projects we fund are free from corruption, by setting strict guidelines and providing a hotline for corruption complaints. So far, over 350 companies and individuals have been publicly banned from participating in projects that we finance. The World Bank Institute has also developed a major knowledge, learning and data center on governance and anticorruption.

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In 1996, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), we launched the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative—the first comprehensive effort to cut the debts of the world’s poorest, most indebted countries. Today, 28 countries are receiving debt relief that will amount to US\$56 billion over time. The HIPC Initiative, combined with other types of debt relief, will cut by two-thirds the external debt in these countries, lowering their debt levels to below the overall average for developing countries. As part of the initiative, these countries are using government funds freed up by debt relief for programs to cut poverty. For example, Rwanda has set targets to hire teachers and increase the number of children who enroll in primary school. Honduras plans to deliver basic healthcare to at least 100,000 people in poor communities. Cameroon is strengthening the fight against HIV/AIDS by, among other things, expanding education to promote the use of condoms by high-risk groups.

**We strongly support
debt relief to the
poorest, most
heavily indebted
countries**





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We are one of the largest international funders of biodiversity projects

Since 1988, we have become one of the largest international sources of funding of biodiversity projects which protect our world's wide variety of animals, plants and other living things. Even though the loss of biodiversity is an international concern, people who live in rural communities in developing countries feel the greatest effects since they are most dependent on natural resources for food, shelter, medicine, income, employment and their cultural identity. For this reason, we have joined Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the MacArthur Foundation and the Japanese government in a fund that contributes to the protection of developing countries' biodiversity hotspots, which are the Earth's biologically richest but most threatened places. We have also teamed up with the WWF to create and secure highly threatened protected areas, and certify production forests as sustainable. Concern for the environment is central to our mission to reduce poverty. Our environment strategy focuses on climate change, forests, water resources, pollution management and biodiversity, among others. Currently, projects we fund, that have clear environmental objectives, amount to around US\$11 billion.

Over the past few years, we have joined a large range of partners in the international fight against poverty. For example, to help reduce the effects of global warming, we worked with governments and the private sector to launch the new BioCarbon Fund and with the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA) to launch the Community Development Carbon Fund (CDCF). We are also working with the World Wildlife Fund to protect forests. With the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), we sponsor the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) which mobilizes cutting-edge science to reduce hunger and poverty, improve human nutrition and health, and protect the environment. Through the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), we work with 27 other international and donor organizations to provide access to financial services (such as loans and savings) for the poor, referred to as microfinance. A partnership to defeat river blindness throughout Africa has successfully prevented 700,000 cases of blindness, opened 25 million hectares of arable land to cultivation, and treats more than 35 million people a year for the disease.



**We work in
partnership
more than ever
before**







We are helping to bring clean water, electricity and transport to poor people

While most people in the developed world take infrastructure (for example clean water, electricity and transport) for granted, it is a dreamed—of luxury in many parts of the world. Almost 1.4 billion people in developing countries do not have access to clean water. Some 3 billion live without basic sanitation or electricity. Infrastructure is not simply about the construction of large projects. It is about delivering basic services that people need for everyday life, such as upgrading slums and providing roads to connect the poorest urban areas. Infrastructure is also an important part of our efforts to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Delivering safe water has a direct effect on reducing child death rates. Providing communities with electricity prevents women and children from having to spend long hours fetching firewood for cooking and heating, and gives them more time for other activities. Children especially are able to devote more time to schoolwork. In Morocco, a road project we supported helped to increase the number of girls who enrolled in schools from 28 percent to 68 percent. Infrastructure also connects communities to the world around them. A rural electrification project in Ecuador is helping to improve living standards and broaden opportunities by linking poor communities to telecommunications, electricity, the internet and business services.

The growth of civil society over the past 20 years has been one of the most significant trends in international development. Civil society organizations (CSOs)—which include groups that do not belong to government or the private sector such as, labor unions, NGOs, faith-based organizations, community groups and foundations—are not only influential in the international development policy debate but have become important channels for the delivery of social services and new development programs. CSO involvement in projects we have funded has risen from 21 percent of all projects in 1990 to about 72 percent in 2005. We are also increasingly supporting CSOs by sharing more information and offering skills training. We also provide grants to CSOs to rebuild war-torn communities, provide social services and support community development. Our civil society staff in more than 70 offices around the world consult and work with CSOs on a range of issues from preventing AIDS and developing microcredit to fighting corruption and protecting the environment.



**Civil society
plays a larger
role in our
work**





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We help countries emerging from conflict

We are active in 35 countries affected by conflict. We work with government and non-government partners (local and international) to help people who have been affected by war, resume peaceful development, and prevent violence from breaking out again. Our work deals with a range of needs including jump-starting the economy, repairing and rebuilding war-damaged infrastructure and institutions, clearing landmines, helping people who fought in the conflict and refugees back into society, and targeting programs at vulnerable people such as widows and children. We have also developed tools and research to better analyze and understand the sources of conflict, promote economic growth and cut poverty in a way that reduces the risk of future violence. Among the wide-ranging projects that we have supported are the reintegration of soldiers who fought in the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa, rebuilding infrastructure and helping communities in Afghanistan, dealing with psychological and social trauma in Bosnia and Herzegovina, rehabilitating street children in the Democratic Republic of Congo and protecting the property of Colombians who have been uprooted by conflict.

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Conversations with 60,000 poor people in 60 countries, as well as our day-to-day work, have taught us that poverty is about more than inadequate income. It is also about lack of fundamental freedom of action, choice and opportunity. It is about vulnerability to abuse and corruption. We believe that people who live in poverty should not be treated as a liability, but as a resource and a partner in the fight against poverty. Our approach to reducing poverty puts poor people at the center of development and creates the conditions where they can gain increased control over their lives through better access to information and greater involvement in decision-making. Today, we support a variety of community-driven development projects with funding of more than US\$2 billion. Other ways of supporting poor people include community-managed school programs, judicial reform and access to justice programs and providing citizens with the ability to rate basic services, such as access to water, education and health.

**We are responding
to the voices of
poor people**





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