



Australia supports social protection programs to help poor people deal with predictable daily stresses and unexpected shocks. They address risk, vulnerability, inequality and poverty through a system of transfers to people in cash or in kind. These transfers can unlock the economic potential of the poorest and contribute to inclusive growth.

### Strategic direction

Social protection is a relatively new space for the Australian aid program, but one which is growing in importance in the Indo-Pacific region.

Australia’s approach is outlined in the Strategy for Australia’s Aid Investments in Social Protection. This strategy guides our official aid expenditure in social protection, and supports our program teams to make informed investment choices within their respective global, regional or country level allocations.

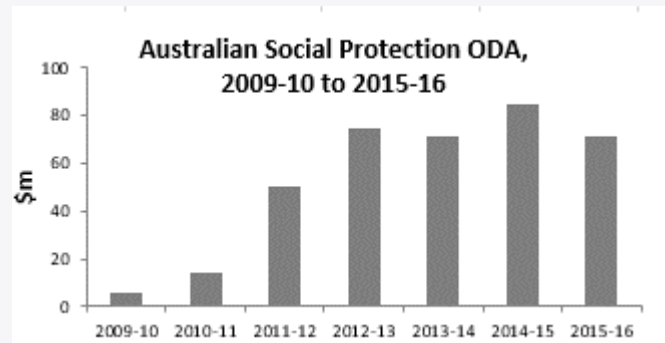
Australia’s approach to social protection typically involves leveraging partner governments’ own funding to improve social protection for the poor and vulnerable, contributing to human development and economic growth outcomes.

We work in economic partnership with a number of governments in the region including Indonesia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, the Philippines, Laos and Timor-Leste to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and reach of their systems.

Australia’s aid investments in social protection pursue three objectives:

- improve social protection coverage in the Indo-Pacific
- improve the quality of social protection systems
- enhance our partner governments’ ability to make choices on appropriate programs and systems for their context.

Australia’s work in social protection contributes directly towards achieving SDG 1 and indirectly to SDGs 8 and 10 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



ODA = Official Development Assistance

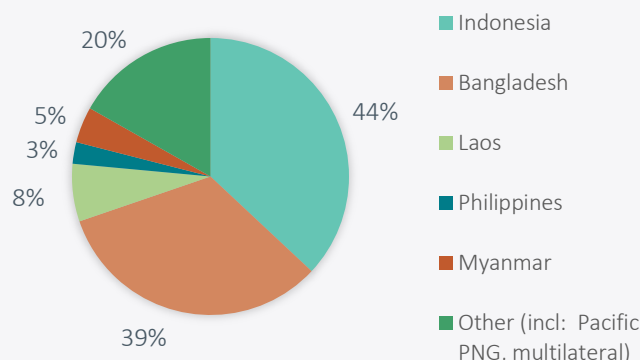
### Sector performance in 2015-16

- Assisted the Indonesian Government to improve targeting of social protection programs by updating a unified database comprising 25.8 million households. This improved government targeting for social protection programs, including the Family Hope conditional cash transfer program, benefiting around 3.5 million very poor households, and the Smart Indonesia cash transfer program, benefiting 18.9 million poor students in 2015.
- Support to Program Peduli in Indonesia has helped to improve access to services for some of Indonesia’s most marginalised people, including those with disabilities, indigenous minorities, and vulnerable youth and children.
- In the Philippines, Australia supported poverty targeting contributions to the Conditional Cash Transfer program reaching 4.4 million poor households. The program has lifted 1.5 million households out of poverty since 2010. We have also assisted in making the program better targeted towards vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples and people with a disability.
- Supporting extremely poor people in Bangladesh by contributing to social transfers for 85,264 households and increasing incomes for 114,506 households in 2015-16.

### Operational evaluations in 2015-16

- Laos Australia Rural Livelihoods Program: Investments are ending as a result of budget cuts but the independent evaluation recommended extension of some components to ensure the premature ending of the program did no harm.
- Strengthening Government Social Protection Systems Program, Bangladesh: Annual review recommended a program extension based on positive results achieved so far.
- Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction: Targeting the Ultra Poor, Bangladesh: A mid-term review of this BRAC-run program had important findings influencing the next five-year design phase of this ground breaking program including how well the program model had transferred from rural to urban areas. Emphasis was placed on doing more work linking poor urban households to formal employment instead of self-employment.
- The Hunger Safety Net Programme, Kenya: An internal end-of-program evaluation of DFAT’s investment found it to be a well-performing program, which was highly relevant to Australian and Kenyan development interests.

**Australian Social Protection ODA by country, 2014-15**





## Key framework document

- [Strategy for Australia's Aid Investments in Social Protection](#)

## Current Priorities

- The program will seek to expand our engagement in the Pacific, both through furthering country preparedness for greater use of cash in emergencies and the development of longer term social protection systems.
- DFAT will contribute to the global learning and engagement on social protection through the hosting of webinars, South-South events, global online communities, funding of key social protection tools and research where there are clear evidence gaps.



### Gender equality

The social protection programs we support around the region overwhelmingly target women, empowering them to pursue economic opportunities as well as supporting their families' basic needs.



### Innovation

In Indonesia, our support is enabling the Government to test different mechanisms to distribute electronic funds through the banking system. This includes trialling mobile phone payments, smart cards and vouchers with barcodes.



Participants of the Chars Livelihood Programme's Milk Market Development Project in Bangladesh. Photo credit: Narayan Chandra Debnath, British High Commission Dhaka, 2015

## Social Protection Investments Performance 2015-16

% of Aid Investments rated Satisfactory

