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BRIEF

UNITED NATIONS RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN PAKISTAN

Update 7 September 2020

SUMMARY

This brief summarizes the United Nations’ (UN) support for Pakistan’s Federal and Provincial Governments to address the COVID-19 crisis in August 2020.

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“Because of COVID-19, people around the world are sick, suffering and scared. To overcome this global crisis, we need to manage it as a unique opportunity. We have a responsibility to ‘recover better’. We need to steer Pakistan’s recovery toward a more sustainable, inclusive path so that no one is left behind.” –

– Julien Harneis,
Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator,
United Nations Pakistan

The UN’s three-fold response to COVID-19 in Pakistan is about saving lives, protecting people and recovering better. Our immediate WHO-led health response is supporting the Government to suppress the transmission of the virus. Directed by the UN Resident Coordinator, UN agencies are assisting country-level coordination, planning and monitoring, including through a Partners Platform to track funding, standardize health actions, and procure essential medical supplies. With risk communication and community engagement, we are raising awareness of how to stay safe through awareness campaigns, helplines, radio outreach, and by engaging key players – from young people to farmers, journalists, refugees, migrants and law enforcement agencies. We are battling COVID-19 myths and misinformation by increasing the volume and reach of trusted, accurate information across Pakistan. UN training and crisis management is improving surveillance, case identification and rapid response. Screening and capacity building at points of entry is keeping spikes at bay. Support for infection prevention and control (IPC) ranges from providing personal protective equipment, to building water and sanitation facilities and delivering training, so that workers on the frontline and behind the scenes can tackle COVID-19 head on.

Second, our humanitarian response is addressing the humanitarian impacts of the pandemic on the most vulnerable groups in Pakistan, from Afghan refugees to marginalized Pakistani communities. Humanitarian funding is being used to scale up testing, data collection and IPC.

Third, the UN’s socio-economic response is mitigating the human crisis that COVID-19 has wrought at the heart of Pakistan’s society and economy. Our response is guided by the five pillars of the UN’s *COVID-19 Pakistan Socio-Economic Framework*. Our first priority is health. We are pairing an immediate health response to COVID-19 with measures to ensure the continuity of quality primary health services for all, especially mothers, children and others, including drug users. Social protection and basic services are our second pillar, prioritizing protection, food security and nutrition, the continuity of education and learning, social services and services for survivors of gender-based violence. Under our third pillar of economic recovery, we are prioritizing cash grants for the most at-risk groups in the country, such as women, transgender persons, daily wage earners, entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises. Our fourth pillar promotes multilateral collaboration and macroeconomic response, while our fifth pillar involves reaching out to advance social cohesion and community resilience, especially by sensitizing the public and engaging Pakistan’s youth.

The UN thanks the following generous donors for supporting the COVID-19 response actions highlighted in this brief, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the European Union, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), and the Governments of Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden, and the United States of America (USA).



SUPPRESSING TRANSMISSION OF THE VIRUS



COUNTRY-LEVEL COORDINATION, PLANNING AND MONITORING

The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (UNRC/HC) is leading the UN's health, humanitarian and socio-economic response to the COVID-19 crisis in Pakistan, bringing the UN system together to support the Government.

WHO is supporting Pakistan with science, solidarity and solutions, focusing on coordination, testing, infection prevention and control, case management and surveillance.

PARTNERS PLATFORM

- **OCHA** and **UNRCO** continued to orient stakeholders on how to use the Partners Platform (<https://covid-19-response.org>), a global tool by WHO that tracks funding, standardizes health actions, and enables the procurement of essential medical supplies. They coordinated with Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), Departments of Health, WHO and UN agencies in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. So far, 21 donors have registered on the platform, with a total outlay of US\$3.5 billion – including US\$508 million for the *COVID-19 Pakistan Preparedness and Response Plan (PPRP)* and US\$1.55 billion for the UN's socio-economic response. The total delivered contribution to date is US\$1.17 billion.

GENDER-SENSITIVE EVIDENCE

- A **UNFPA**-supported study shed light on the needs of poor women and health care providers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 200 women beneficiaries of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and 60 public and private sector health care providers participated in the investigation of women's knowledge of COVID-19, the pandemic's effects on their lives, mental health and well-being, their access to reproductive health and family planning (FP) services, and the knowledge, attitudes, practices and challenges faced by service providers.
- **UN Women** and the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Alliance Balochistan organized a meeting to assess COVID-19's impact on women and girls, humanitarian assistance provided during the lockdown, and ways forward.

TRAINING

- **UN Women** conducted 4-day training sessions on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) principles, with a focus on humanitarian assistance, to ensure that staff and implementing partners uphold PSEA codes of conduct when responding to COVID-19.



RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (RCCE)

Led by UNICEF, the UN is supporting Pakistan's RCCE Plan on responsive, empathic, transparent and consistent messaging in local languages through trusted communication channels, community-based networks, key influencers, and by building local capacities.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

- **UNICEF** rolled out a campaign on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), infection prevention and control (IPC) and RCCE to augment the Government's standard operating procedures (SOPs) for Eid al-Adha. It focused on cattle markets, grocery stores, family gatherings and places of worship. In tandem, UNICEF and the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation launched 25 live radio programmes on COVID-19, entitled *Kadam Kadam Sehat* ('health at every step'). These will be aired on 41 radio stations every Thursday for six months (July–December), reaching 83 million people nationwide.
- **UNDP** supported the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's awareness raising campaign on COVID-19. It delivered critical public health messages through videos on when to perform a COVID-19 test and psychosocial support for patients, coupled with a 1700 helpline and pamphlets/infographics for the provincial Department of Health. UNDP is working closely with Interflow Communications on television commercials to raise public awareness of COVID-19.
- **UNDP's** Local Government Ambassadors (LGAs) continued supporting COVID-19 prevention measures in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Merged Districts. Alongside Tehsil Municipal Administrations, they distributed sanitizers and masks, while conducting disinfection activities at the district and *tehsil* levels. The Ambassadors' approached 321 religious leaders to spearhead awareness campaigns, conducted 132 mass awareness campaigns conducted through megaphones, approached 3,783 men and 3,826 women through megaphones, held 524 meetings with women at the household level, conducted 133 disinfection activities, and displayed two banners and 872 posters in public places.
- **UN Women** sensitized the public on COVID-19's gendered impact through social media and the mainstream media, including radio campaigns.

HELPLINES

POLIO HELPLINE AND OUTREACH

- **UNICEF** continued to support 85 of the 250 agents working at the polio helpline (1166), while the rest are supported by Digital Pakistan. They have responded to over 3.4 million COVID-related calls of the 6.4 million calls received to date.
- **UNICEF** reached 18.9 million at-risk people with preventive messages on COVID-19 through mobile vans, rickshaws, mobile floats and existing polio and health structures across all of Pakistan's provinces. The polio team reached out to at-risk people in workplaces and households by visiting 375 shops and 243 families to promote COVID-19 SOPs, precautionary measures, the use of masks, handwashing and social distancing.

ENGAGING LAW ENFORCEMENT

- **UNODC** launched a three-month COVID-19 awareness campaign in July 2020 for police officers, law enforcement agencies and criminal justice stakeholders. The campaign disseminated 62,075 information, education and communication (IEC) materials, reached 533,926 people through social media, received 192,476 'likes' and 'shares' on social media, and reached 310,900 people via social media and radio.

ENGAGING FARMERS

- **FAO** continued disseminating health, safety and nutrition-related information through Farmer Field Schools and Women Open Schools set up as part of its land tenure governance project, as well as through emergency agriculture and livestock input distribution in drought-affected areas.
- **FAO** finalized a media campaign and practical demonstrations in Sindh through Livestock Farmer Field Schools (LFFS) on safe practices during Eid al-Adha (1–3 August), including buying and selling meat, slaughtering animals, and distributing meat in ways that follow COVID-19 SOPs.
- **FAO** organized nine Farmer Field School sessions in four Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Orakzai, Kurram, North and South Waziristan). These six sessions for men and three for women were attended by 77 men, 35 women and 15 children. While strictly adhering to COVID-19 SOPs, the sessions improved 'know how' of COVID-related precautionary measures.
- **FAO** also integrated COVID-19 information in radio outreach in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, such as 60-second radio 'promos' for tomato and maize farmers. Separate promos in a man's voice and a woman's voice are broadcast between 10 and 12 times per day, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., on four radio stations. COVID-19 information is also being incorporated in local radio talk shows.

ENGAGING YOUTH

- **UNDP, UNICEF** and **UNFPA** conducted a *Youth and Adolescent Perception Study* on COVID-19 that engaged over 10,000 young men and women. Its results are being used to enhance the targeting of activities. In tandem, **UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR** and **UNESCO** are spearheading a *Youth and Adolescent COVID-19 Awareness Campaign*.

- A **UNDP** project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is raising awareness of COVID-19's spread in public places, including mosques, among youths enrolled in *madaris* (religious seminaries). The agency continues to engage with parliamentarians and SDG Taskforces, to support cross-party messaging for vulnerable groups, to organize youth engagement initiatives, and to advance strategic communication with *madaris/madrassas* to raise awareness of COVID-19.

ENGAGING REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

- **UNHCR** intensified messaging to eliminate myths, misconceptions and stigma surrounding COVID-19 in refugee communities. Awareness raising was carried out through regular community interactions, messaging on social media platforms, and telephone calls.
- IOM conducted public awareness and risk communication campaigns at the community level, particularly at the Torkham and Chaman border crossings, for migrants and mobile populations.

ENGAGING JOURNALISTS

- **UNDP** trained 43 journalists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on COVID-19 reporting. To date, they have produced more than 40 empirically-informed articles on the pandemic.
- **UNICEF** engaged 19,906 journalists, reporters and bloggers at the federal and provincial levels to promote key messages on COVID-19 and counter myths. UNICEF also finalized a longitudinal behavioural survey tool on RCCE to provide insights on obstacles and support needed. The survey was translated into four local languages (Urdu, Sindhi, Pashto and Balochi) and rolled out through a contract with VIAMO.



SURVEILLANCE, RAPID RESPONSE TEAMS AND CASE INVESTIGATION

The UN is supporting the Government's detection of COVID-19 cases, contact tracing and case identification.

SURVEILLANCE

- **IOM** coordinated with the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination and the National Institute of Health to train surveillance staff on COVID-19 case definition, screening, detection, reporting and contract tracing.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- **UNDP** is working closely with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Provincial Command and Control Centre (PCCC) to strengthen crisis management capacity, including through regular district level data collection. It is also supporting the province's Department of Health and Emergency Operation Centre to implement a real-time clinical data system to respond to COVID-19, improving the timeliness of daily situation reports by 5 hours/day while boosting patient data accuracy to 90%.
- **UN Women** is supporting national and provincial partners to strengthen response helplines on gender-based violence (GBV) and cyber harassment. These will generate data to inform evidence-based interventions and policies to address increased cases of these phenomena. IOM trained stakeholders on public emergency response at points of entry and provided supervisory support to build health workers' capacities on psychological first aid.



INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL (IPC)

The UN is supporting IPC efforts in communities and health facilities to enhance awareness, good hygiene practices, and disease prevention and control.

TRAINING

- **UNFPA** helped set up six telemedicine and capacity building centres for health care providers – two each in Gilgit-Baltistan, Chitral in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh. These will facilitate cluster-based, decentralized virtual trainings. The agency procured essential equipment, such as polycom devices, teleconferencing equipment, laptops, mobile phones and IT supplies for these centres to support digital learning.
- **UNICEF** has supported the training of 5,377 frontline sanitary workers to date, enhancing their capacity on WASH/IPC in health care facilities and high-risk communities.

HELPLINES

- **UNFPA** supported the establishment of five COVID-19 helplines offering medical consultations, education, information, awareness raising, medical advice and referrals for patients to nearby health facilities, laboratories and emergency centres. The helplines also provide psychosocial support and



counsel patients on exposure, self-isolation and quarantine. To date, they have responded to 1,371 calls – 748 from women and 623 from men. In addition to providing COVID-related information to 1,264 callers, 91 callers were identified as suspected COVID-19 cases and 11 were referred to hospitals. Communities hailed the helplines as a cost-effective approach that has reduced out-of-pocket expenses.

GBV SERVICES

- **UN Women** supported the development of gender-sensitive SOPs for quarantine centres in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By providing hygiene supplies and training for police and prison staff, it is working to strengthen the delivery of essential GBV services by the police, social workers, prisons and shelters nationwide, particularly in hard-to-reach or high-risk settings.

WASH FACILITIES

- **UNICEF** rehabilitated and installed WASH facilities in 487 health facilities across Pakistan, replete with ultraviolet (UV) water filters, toilets and handwashing stations. As a result, more than 1,039,268 people gained access to safe water and sanitation in these facilities. To date, 3.1 million people have used 1,142 communal handwashing stations supported by UNICEF.



OPERATIONAL SUPPORT AND LOGISTICS

The UN is actively assisting the timely sourcing and availability of quality essential medical supplies and protective equipment for Pakistan's COVID-19 response.

PPE

- **UNFPA** supported health workers through the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE). To date, 49,000 PPE and hygiene kits have been distributed nationwide through the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), and provincial Departments of Health and Population Welfare.
- **UNOPS** assisted the emergency procurement of PPE and medical equipment, working with the NDMA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Department of Health, and discussing gender-responsiveness in procurement.

HEALTH DATA

- **UNDP** aided the Performance Management and Reforms Unit through public health data entry and situation reporting. After digitizing manual line lists from district health offices in an online integrated performance monitoring system (IPMS), the team focused on quality assurance by creating a system of manual checks, using scientific practices. UNDP is also helping government caseworkers to manually verify patient data.

COORDINATION AND SOPS

- **UNDP** helped the NDMA to improve interprovincial coordination. Identified areas of support include supply chain management and financial oversight mechanisms to ensure inclusive access to services.
- **UNDP** supported the Government's implementation of tourism SOPs through a pilot in Nathia Gali.



HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The UN is addressing the humanitarian impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable groups in Pakistan.

FUNDING

- Pakistan's chapter of the *Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19* (GHRP) has received US\$66.5 million in funding to date, roughly 54% of the requested amount of US\$145.78 million.
- **OCHA** managed the *Pakistan Humanitarian Pooled Fund* (PHPF) and launched its first standard allocation of US\$4.3 million, thanks to contributions from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the Government of Germany. The allocation prioritized food Security in Balochistan's districts of Chagai, Washuk, Jhal Magsi and Pishin. Aligned with the *Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19*, the allocation focuses on enabling vulnerable people to meet their food-related and basic needs. It will assist 145,000 vulnerable households affected by COVID-19 and other disasters. The districts prioritized host 100,000 Afghan refugee families and Afghan Citizen Card (ACC)-holders, who will also benefit from the allocation.
- The **Emergency Relief Coordinator** allocated US\$6 million from the *Central Emergency Response Fund* to Pakistan, of which US\$0.5 million is standalone funding to tackle gender-based violence. The funds prioritizes nutrition and sexual and reproductive (SRH) health services in Balochistan, and will support 430,000 people who have faced multiple recent shocks and crises – such as drought, swarms of locusts, floods, heavy snow and avalanches – as COVID-19 has exacerbated their plight. The funds will be disbursed as of early October 2020 over a 12-month period.

TESTING

- **WHO** provided real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) diagnostic kits and reagents to the National Institute of Health and Khyber Medical University, through PHPF funding. It supplied eight point of care testing (POCT) testing kits and equipment to laboratories, installed POCT machines in Quetta, Khuzdar, Peshawar, Lahore and Islamabad, and conducted training at these sites, all through funding allocated from the PHPF.

REPORTING

- **OCHA** developed regular situation reports on COVID-19 every fortnight. These were shared with a range of humanitarian and development stakeholders, including donors.



SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESPONSE

The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator is leading the overall UN response to COVID-19 in Pakistan based on five key pillars, supported by the technical guidance of UN agencies, funds and programmes (AFPs). The RC/HC continues to meet federal and provincial government counterparts to extend UN assistance for the COVID-19 response.

COORDINATION AND PLANNING

- **UNESCO** and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Pakistan organized a webinar on *COVID-19 and its Relationship with Nature – Build Back Better*. It engaged 130 experts, industry members, academics and students on the importance of sustainable natural resource management.
- **UNESCO** and the Muhammad Nawaz Sharif (MNS) University of Agriculture, Multan, organized a regional consultation on water, energy and food sustainability post-COVID-19. UN Habitat’s rapid assessment report of its *Pakistan COVID-19 Urban Slums Response Programme* was launched by Malik Amin Aslam, Advisor to the Prime Minister, on 28 August. UN Habitat, the Ministry of Climate Change and provincial Urban Units and Local Government Departments will develop a mega-project to reach out to 50–60% of the Pakistan’s urban slum population. It will focus improving basic services and infrastructure post-COVID, while mitigating the pandemic’s socio-economic impact on vulnerable low-income urban communities.



I. HEALTH FIRST: PROTECTING HEALTH SERVICES AND SYSTEMS DURING THE CRISIS

PRIMARY SERVICES

- **UNICEF** supported the sub-national Departments of Health to ensure the continuity of essential primary health services – including immunization, antenatal and postnatal care, delivery services, child care and curative care for adults – in 136 health facilities, reaching 1.3 million people since the COVID-19 pandemic began.
- **UNICEF** continued to provide telemedicine services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through the Public Health Association, focusing on maternal, newborn and child health care (MNCH) to make up for decreased access to MNCH services in light of outpatient department disruption and restrictions on movement. Some 389 people benefitted from these services.

ORIENTATION

- **UNFPA** coordinated with district Departments of Health to identify villages and households where mild COVID-19 cases are prevalent in Skardu and Shigar in Gilgit-Baltistan, and the district of Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. UNFPA also conducted orientation sessions for caregivers with community volunteers and health care providers on the home-based management of mild cases and self-protection, through field teams of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme.



COMMUNICATION

- **UNDP** consultants supported the Ministry of National Health Services to enhance the inclusion of behavioural insights in COVID-19 crisis communication, data analysis and research. UNDP also worked with the Ministry to pilot a telemedicine intervention that will assist doctor-to-doctor communication by linking junior doctors in under-equipped or understaffed intensive care units (ICUs) with critical care specialists who can guide them on patient care.

DRUG TREATMENT

- **UNODC's** drug treatment programme conducted six training sessions in rural parts of Faisalabad, Punjab, for 90 community team members and volunteers. These focused on clinical manifestations of COVID-19, diagnosis, prevention and control, distancing, handwashing, nutritional support to enhance immunity, staff's personal safety, and prevention in workplaces. It disseminated 590 pamphlets with COVID-19 prevention information in rural Faisalabad and raised awareness among drug use treatment clients through text messages and videos.
- **UNODC** also conducted six awareness sessions on COVID-19 for 71 participants, including treated drug users, their families and community members.



II. PROTECTING PEOPLE: SOCIAL PROTECTION AND BASIC SERVICES



1. SOCIAL PROTECTION

WOMEN, GIRLS, TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

- **UN Women** spearheaded immediate measures to minimize and mitigate COVID-19's economic impact on women and girls, especially women with disabilities, and transgender persons. The agency is designing medium- to long-term economic recovery solutions for these groups.
- **UN Women** and Shirkat Gah distributed 500 relief packages (150 per district) in Karachi, Khairpur, Lahore and Peshawar.
- **UNDP** supported the Ministry of Human Rights and provincial partners to be more inclusive of transgender persons and protect their political, legal and social rights. Based on the findings and recommendations of UNDP's socio-economic assessment of COVID-19 on transgender communities, it helped the ministry organize the distribution of relief packages for transgender persons affected by COVID-19 in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Punjab.

AFGHANS IN PAKISTAN

- **IOM** conducted a rapid needs assessment (15–22 May) on COVID-19's impact on ACC-holders undocumented Afghans in Pakistan. It found that access to information, health care, testing and livelihood opportunities remain their leading concerns. Based on these findings, IOM plans to implement a cash-based programme for these groups, complemented by risk communication and community engagement, setting up handwashing facilities, and supporting health facilities.

PRISONERS

- **UNDP** launched a project to provide legal aid to 70 prisoners in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in seven prisons.



2. FOOD AND NUTRITION

FEEDING CHILDREN

- **UNICEF** reached 418,662 mothers and caregivers through inter-personal communication on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) in the context of COVID-19. It delivered online training on simplified guidelines for promoting IYCF and managing wasting at the federal level as well as in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, reaching 128 civil society and government representatives.

INPUTS

- **FAO** distributed agricultural and livestock inputs – including fertilizer, animal feed and seeds – to its project beneficiaries in Sindh. Negotiations are underway with donors to increase the quantity of inputs distributed to farmers affected by COVID-19.
- **FAO** reprogrammed part of its ongoing *Building Disaster Resilience in Pakistan* (BDRP) programme to include COVID-19 response. The programme is reaching out to small-scale farmers to mitigate the pandemic's effects on agricultural livelihoods, including by providing 9,000 farmers with agricultural inputs and livestock-related support.



3. EDUCATION

DIGITAL LEARNING

- **UNICEF** engaged with Microsoft, which agreed to provide unlimited licenses to Microsoft 365 for public school students and Education Department officials in Sindh. In Balochistan, UNICEF used WhatsApp to share 348 content-based videos on mathematics, science and English with Parent-Teacher School Management Committees (PTSMC) and teachers to support the continuity of learning for students in kindergarten through to Class 5. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education developed a *Revised Accelerated/Abridged Academic Calendar* to guide teachers to conduct catch-up classes once schools re-open in September.

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING

- **UNICEF**-supported alternative learning opportunities directly benefitted 86,500 children across Pakistan.

REOPENING SCHOOLS

- **UNICEF** held coordination meetings in all the four provinces on the operationalization of the Safe School Reopening Framework, and developed key documents and guidance notes. UNESCO and McKinsey launched a study on the development of a global *COVID-19 Response Strategy and Toolkit*, involving a series of meetings with officials from the Ministry of Education and Professional Training and provincial governments to finalize the toolkit.

ANALYSIS

- **UNESCO's** and **UNICEF's** Regional Offices began a situation analysis of COVID-19's impact on education in Asia and the Pacific. They selected Pakistan for a detailed assessment, examining the pandemic's impacts on the country's education sector, children, adolescents, teachers, parents and education officials. The study also examines the pandemic's implications for progress on SDG 4 and the Education 2030 Agenda.

TRAINING

- **UNESCO** and Technovation launched a free 5-week online training course on artificial intelligence (AI) for girls between aged 10 to 18 in six countries, including 466 girls in Pakistan. Since its launch on 27 July, the course has enabled girls to identify and understand problems in their communities, to explore data, and to devise solutions by developing their own AI models.



4. CONTINUITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND ACCESS TO SHELTERS

SERVICES FOR REFUGEES

- **UNFPA**-supported Women Friendly Health Spaces remained functional in Afghan refugee settlements in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. They supported COVID-affected areas through case management, referral, and basic GBV and SRH services, including care for pregnant women, safe deliveries, emergency obstetric and newborn care, postpartum care, family planning and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections. To date, 4,251 women and girls – 712 in Balochistan and 3,539 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – accessed these spaces and engaged in awareness raising sessions.
- **UNFPA** assisted 20 health centres in refugee hosting areas and three mobile medical units in refugee camps to ensure the continuity of integrated SRH and GBV services. On average, skilled birth attendants assisted 935 women per month between February and August. During the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan, 29,524 women – both Afghan refugees and Pakistani host community members – in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continued to access family planning services.
- **UNHCR** identified 38,555 vulnerable Afghan refugee families by 25 August 2020 to receive emergency cash assistance through the urgent money orders (UMOs) issued by the Pakistan Post. To date, 25,802 of these families have collected this assistance. UNHCR expects to distribute emergency support to 70,000 vulnerable refugee families. This unique intervention with the Pakistan Post and the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) mirrors the Government's Ehsaas emergency cash programme, whereby vulnerable Pakistani families receive PKR 12,000 (US\$77) to cover their needs for a four-month period.

DIGNITY KITS

- **UNFPA** worked with provincial Departments of Social Welfare and Women Development, PDMAs, the Sindh Commission on the Status of Women and the National Commission on the Status of Women to distribute 4,919 dignity kits to support women's personal hygiene during the pandemic nationwide. These included 2,815 kits for women in prisons, orphanages and shelters in Balochistan, 320 for women in shelters and prisons in Sindh, 995 in Punjab and 317 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for women in shelters, and 272 for women and girls with disabilities across the country, including in Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad Capital Territory.
- **UNFPA** and HANDS Pakistan supported Sindh's Prison Department to provide 50 hygiene kits to juvenile boys in Hyderabad jail and 239 dignity kits to women inmates in jails in Hyderabad, Sukkur and Larkana. Two handwashing stations were installed for juvenile inmates of both sexes in Karachi's central jail, where a sensitization session on GBV was held for 30 staff members. The partners also distributed 130 dignity kits to women's shelters in Karachi, Sukkur and Hyderabad.





PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

- **UNICEF's** training package on psychosocial support and stigma prevention has been used to train 2,967 social workforce professionals to date – including 1,541 women and 1,426 men. In turn, they have provided psychosocial support services to 47,143 parents, caregivers and children – 2,665 girls, 2,911 boys, 21,521 women and 20,046 men – in Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh.
- **UNFPA** and HANDS Pakistan continued to support radio messages aired in Sindh on psychosocial well-being and addressing gender-based violence.

AWARENESS RAISING

- **UNFPA** engaged 64 local support organizations (LSOs) in Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Skardu, Hunza and Gilgit in Gilgit-Baltistan in awareness raising sessions on COVID-19's symptoms and precautionary measures. These LSOs are federations of village organizations at the Union Council level that aid community-led development by empowering marginalized people, especially women and girls, at the grassroots level. Some 285 participants – 80 women and 205 men – attended the sessions, including the representatives of LSOs, women's organizations, District Teams of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, local administrative units. They will roll out further awareness raising sessions at the community level.

HIV PREVENTION

- **UNFPA** and **UNAIDS** assisted the Global HIV Prevention Coalition by providing 3,400 PPE kits to its Country Coordination Mechanism to protect frontline workers from COVID-19, including the transgender community. The mechanism supports the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) in Pakistan.



5. SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

HELPLINES

- **UNFPA** supported Rozan's helpline for GBV survivors at the national level to provide tele-psychosocial support services. In July–August 2020, it responded to 1,190 calls – 783 from women and 407 from men.
- **UN Women** supported Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department's 1700 Helpline, including by providing psychosocial support for GBV survivors. Psychologists are compiling data on survivors' profiles and undertaking initial screening to enable individual counselling. An analysis of this data will be fed back into a gender-responsive COVID-19 response.

TRAINING

- **UNFPA's** partner Rozan conducted two refresher trainings on psychosocial support and GBV referrals for response team members – eight women and nine men – from the Punjab Safe City Authority, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Darul Aman and the International Medical Corps (IMC), and basic health units in Balochistan.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN

- **UNFPA** will assist the National Disaster Management Authority's mass media campaign on psychosocial support, with a focus on GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic.





III. ECONOMIC RECOVERY: PROTECTING JOBS, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES, AND THE MOST VULNERABLE PRODUCTIVE ACTORS

PLANNING

- **UNDP** provided technical assistance for the development of the *Azm-e-Nau Economic Recovery Plan* by the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the identification and elaboration of interventions, alongside policy support through policy briefs and notes. The wide-ranging plan aims to mitigate the pandemic's impact on the province's economy through 43 interventions across nine pillars – health, economy, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), employment, financing, social protection, emergency relief, education, and governance. Valued at PKR 29 billion, the plan will be implemented over the next three years.

CASH GRANTS

- **IFAD's** *National Poverty Graduation Project* (NPGP) identified 25,000 beneficiaries for a COVID-19 response cash grant as part of asset provision under its poverty graduation package. The IFAD-funded *Gwadar Lasbela Livelihood Support Project* in Balochistan provided 4,366 cash grants to help 35,365 people mitigate COVID-19's impact. The IFAD-funded *South Punjab Poverty Alleviation Project* (SPPAP) provided cash grants to 1,200 vocational training participants.

DAILY WAGE LABOURERS

- **UNDP** provided short-term employment for daily wage earners through cash-for-work activities in the suburbs of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to sustain livelihoods affected by the pandemic. The activities will rehabilitate community infrastructure in eight villages, engaging 722 labourers. Civil work began on community physical infrastructure (CPI) in seven villages, engaging 333 labourers – including 33 women – for a total of 3,986 working days. In seven villages, UNDP supported 568 awareness campaigns on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and COVID-19 prevention, by engaging 71 community response persons, including 33 women.

HOME-BASED WORKERS

- **UN Women** and CIRCLE will train 80 home-based workers to list their products on online platforms. This initiative will systematically reach out to marginalized women with limited incomes, literacy levels and access to resources through online training adapted to home-based workers' specific needs.

ENTERPRISE SUPPORT

- The **ILO** is providing consultancy support to enterprises returning to work, through risk assessments and the development of business continuity plans.
- **UNDP** is supporting small enterprises' business continuity during the pandemic. In August 2020, 31 young people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Merged Districts accessed online business incubation training and mentoring, to create innovative new avenues for income generation. UNDP also provided in-kind business development grants to 406 small-scale entrepreneurs in the Merged Districts – including 43 women – to help them start or scale up their businesses.
- **ITC's** *Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress* (GRASP) initiative conducted activities to mitigate COVID-19's impact on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and smallholder farmers. The *COVID-19 Business Impact Survey* conducted in May–June assessed the pandemic's impact on agricultural MSMEs in two provinces.

MICROCREDIT

- **UNDP**, with funding from USAID, is making affordable financing accessible to people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Merged Districts by providing microcredit loans to 146 beneficiaries, including seven women, in the district of Khyber. Some 287 loan borrowers benefitted from enterprise development training. Access to financial services has enabled local to establish or expand new and existing businesses and create livelihood opportunities.

TEXTILE SECTOR

- The **ILO** commissioned a study on the *Impact of COVID-19 on the Garment and Textile Sector in Pakistan* to identify specific support required by textile/garment enterprises and workers.

BRICK KILNS

- The **ILO** commissioned a *Rapid Assessment of the Impacts of COVID-19 on the Brick Kiln Sector in Pakistan*. It will gauge losses experienced by brick kiln owners and workers as construction stopped and slowed, including job losses, delayed wages, the non-payment of wages, and the lack or delayed provision of legal benefits.

LABOUR MIGRATION

- The **ILO** commissioned a *Rapid Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Labour Migration Governance, Recruitment Practices, and Migrant Workers in Pakistan*. It will identify the key socio-economic challenges brought about by the pandemic on labour migration governance, workers' and employer's organizations, migrant workers and recruitment practices. It will also assess government policies to address COVID-19's impacts on migrant workers, including how these measures are aligned to existing policy frameworks – specifically labour migration policies, legislation, and bilateral agreements – while identifying emerging needs and challenges.





AWARENESS RAISING

- The **ILO** customized its COVID-19 awareness video, previously produced for Sindh, to the requirements of Punjab, in line with the provincial government’s SOPs. A customized version of the video for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is being developed in Pashto with English subtitles.



V. SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

YOUTH TRAINING

- **UNFPA** trained 144 young people and adolescents as Young Ambassadors on topics related to COVID-19, including mental well-being, reproductive health and gender-based violence. These ambassadors have started delivering community trainings, following prescribed SOPs.
- **UNICEF** completed an open call to identify 200 adolescents and youth as ambassadors across Pakistan. Of those selected, 99 – 28 adolescents, 52 young men, 46 young women and one transgender person – completed three days of training on the COVID-19 response, including key actions to keep themselves and others safe.

YOUTH INNOVATION

- **UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR** and **UNICEF** announced 28 winners of the *Youth Innovation Challenge*, launched under the joint *UN Youth Initiative*. UN agencies assisted these winners to prepare implementation plans so that they can begin acting on their ideas. They will receive mentoring support until November 2020.

YOUTH AWARENESS

- **UNFPA** and its implementing partner developed infographics on menstrual hygiene management (MHM), gender-based violence, inequalities and the psychosocial well-being of young people during the COVID-19 pandemic. These were disseminated through social media.
- **UNICEF** disseminated an animated video to promote mask-wearing among adolescents and youth, coupled with other key messages on COVID-19. Shared on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, the animation has been viewed by 29,000 people to date, 80% of whom are between the ages of 15 and 29. Its reach is expected to increase as trained ambassadors re-share posts.
- **UNICEF’s** interactive ‘Bingo post’ has been shared among adolescents and youths since 26 July 2020 to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and promote good mental health.

