

COVID-19 RESPONSE

& UPDATES ON THE

ONE UN PROGRAMME III



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SUMMARY

This brief summarizes how the United Nations is supporting Pakistan’s Federal and Provincial Governments to address the COVID-19 crisis and make progress on the 10 outcomes of the One UN Programme III.

The United Nations’ response to COVID-19 in Pakistan is about **saving lives, protecting people and recovering better**. The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (UNRC/HC) is leading the UN’s health, humanitarian and socio-economic response, bringing the UN system together to support the Government of Pakistan’s country-level coordination, planning and monitoring. Our immediate WHO-led health response is working to control the transmission of the novel coronavirus, reduce mortality and get people the health care they need. We are supporting better surveillance and case identification, stronger laboratory capacities, risk communication, infection prevention and control. Our COVID-19 response cuts across every outcome of the **One UN Programme III** (OP III), the UN’s framework for cooperation with the Government of Pakistan.

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COVID-19: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

This section outlines the immediate support that the United Nations is providing for the Government of Pakistan's COVID-19 response.

VACCINATION



VACCINE DRIVE

As part of UN support for the Government of Pakistan's vaccination drive, **WHO** and **UNICEF** delivered over 18 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines (Astra Zeneca, Pfizer, Moderna and Sinopharm) to the Government on behalf of the COVAX facility between May and August 2021. Another 6 million doses were received in September. As of October, Pakistan has administered 82,830,350 vaccine doses. 29,054,821 people have been fully, while 59,565,195 have been partially vaccinated. As Pakistan's vaccination programme is open to holders of Proof of Registration Cards and Afghan Citizen Cards, 550 Afghan refugees have also been vaccinated.

Following **UNHCR's** advocacy efforts, on 30 July the Chief Minister of Sindh announced that modalities are being reviewed to provide COVID-19 vaccines to people in Karachi without Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) after on-the-spot biometric registration at the city's Mass Vaccination Centres. This will enable stateless and undocumented individuals to be vaccinated.

UNICEF is providing technical support for government monitoring systems to track vaccine compliance. In the first half of 2021, 64% of teachers and 48% of non-teaching staff in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and over 70% of teaching and non-teaching staff in Punjab, were vaccinated. Vaccinations are continuing for teachers in Sindh and Balochistan. Research by UNICEF reveals that the arrival of vaccines is being heralded as the end of the pandemic in Pakistan, causing widespread disregard for COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Public concerns about COVID-19 vaccination are related to potential side effects, effectiveness, the differences between different vaccines, confusion about the revised schedule for administering two vaccine doses, a lack of vaccine availability, a lack of clear and consistent communications from the Government, difficulties in accessing vaccination centres and navigating the electronic registration system.



An Afghan refugee is vaccinated in Rawalpindi, Punjab. As Pakistan's COVID-19 vaccination efforts focus on leaving no one behind, Afghan refugees are being vaccinated based on the same criteria applied to Pakistani citizens. Photo: © UNHCR/Asif Shahzad

COUNTRY-LEVEL COORDINATION, PLANNING, OPERATIONAL SUPPORT, MONITORING AND LOGISTICS



MEETINGS AND COORDINATION

UNDP provided technical assistance and supported capacity development, communications, advocacy and awareness raising to make the Government's COVID-19 response more effective and inclusive. This includes building the procurement, finance and supply chain management capacities of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to implement its COVID-19 roadmap. To enable remote working, UNDP provided information technology (IT) equipment – laptops, LED screens, a tele-conferencing system and a backup power supply – for the offices of Deputy Commissioners in North Waziristan, South Waziristan, Khyber, Kurram and Orakzai. UNDP consultants (a Research Associate, a Junior Engineer and a Software Engineer) have been deployed to support the Ministry of Health, working with the digital health team to manage digitization processes.

At the request of the Government of Pakistan, **UNDP** established a COVID-19 Secretariat at the Planning Commission to provide data, analytics and technical services to support the development of government COVID-19 response and mitigation strategies. A country-level *COVID-19 Social Economic Impact Assessment* was conducted as a key policy-making resource for the Government's and development partners' COVID-19 response strategy and programme responses. To make the pandemic response more inclusive, UNDP provided technical support for the Government's *Ehsaas* programme on research, stakeholder consultations, advocacy and the construction of the *Ehsaas Implementation Tracking Index*.

UNFPA co-led the Reproductive Health and Gender-based Violence (GBV) Sub-working Groups under the Health and Protection Sector Working Groups at the national and provincial levels to coordinate the COVID-19 response. It also led the Protection Sector Working Groups in Sindh and Punjab. As part of the GBV Working Group, UNFPA, UNHCR and the National Disaster Management Authority conducted a series of provincial trainings on protection and preventing gender-based violence for government and non-government partners, as well as two webinars on staff well-being with the support of UNFPA's headquarters.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Climate Change and provincial governments to convene weekly coordination meetings with WASH partners at the federal and sub-national levels. Federal WASH sector coordination meetings brought together over 70 organizations and government representatives from all of Pakistan's provinces. Participating organizations regularly report their progress through the 4Ws matrix – which identifies who is doing what, where and when – to ensure effective coordination and the efficient use of resources by avoiding duplication. The [online dashboard of the 4Ws matrix analysis](#), created with the support of UNICEF and the Global WASH Cluster, facilitated reporting by showing progress by each partner in different locations.

MEETINGS AND COORDINATION

As a frontline partner of the Government of Pakistan's COVID-19 response, **UNICEF** worked closely with the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination (MONHSR&C) and its Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) partners, provincial and regional health departments, UN agencies, development partners, academia and civil society. UNICEF spearheaded RCCE coordination at the federal level and co-led all provincial RCCE task force teams to strengthen coordination, planning, monitoring and implementation at the provincial and district levels. As part of sectoral coordination under the joint leadership of the Government and UNICEF:

- The UN Task Force Team, which includes eight UN agencies, continued its monthly meetings and the National RCCE Coordination Task Force met with partners every fortnight.
- The Nutrition Working Group met regularly at the national and sub-national levels to coordinate the nutrition response to the pandemic. The group made the *National Nutrition Dashboard* more effective by including supply information in the 4W matrix and sharing the dashboard with partners to track and monitor supplies. A consultative workshop held by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination validated the *Maternal Nutrition Strategy* and its provincial implementation plans. The ministry and provincial health departments validated the findings of the *Iron and Folic Acid Bottleneck Analysis*. The *South Punjab Stunting Reduction Programme* has been reviewed and trainings are underway in 15 districts. At a meeting with Sindh's Department of Education, partners reviewed the first draft of the province's *School Health and Nutrition Strategy*.
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Provincial Disaster Management Authority notified a Technical Working Group on Psychosocial Support. At its first meeting in June 2021, members received the draft outline of the *Psychological First Aid Handbook* and messages on COVID-related stigma prevention that they can disseminate among communities.
- Punjab's Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group agreed to enhance emergency preparedness, especially for floods.
- At a recent meeting of the National Education Sector Working Group (ESWG)-Education in Emergencies (EIE), sector members discussed parents' capacity building needs in terms of implementing, monitoring and assessing distance learning during the pandemic.
- Coordination continued on the child protection response to COVID-19 at the national and provincial levels, in collaboration with the protection and gender-based violence (GBV) sub-sectors.
- The meetings of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Child Protection Sub-Working Group were an important platform for coordination between operational actors engaged in child abuse prevention and response. Sindh's first Technical Working Group meeting enabled stakeholders to participate in the development of the province's *Child Protection Case Management and Referral System (CPCMRS)* system.

RESEARCH AND REPORTING

UNDP and the Ministry of Human Rights finalized a report on *Disaster Resilience in Pakistan: COVID-19 and Human Rights*, which responds to the UN Secretary-General's call to Member States to analyse the pandemic's impact and response from a rights-based perspective. At the report's launch in February 2021, a panel discussion explored how to translate the report's findings into policies and programming, linked with the UNDP-supported *National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights*. UNDP strengthened its partnership with Ministry of Human Rights and Provincial Human Rights and Social Welfare Departments by starting to institutionalize its social protection measures, including gender and legal aid desks. Through the Human Rights Task Force, UNDP supported the UN Resident Coordinator's Office to operationalize thematic sub-groups to promote the rights of target groups.

RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (RCCE)



DATA ANALYSIS AND SOCIAL LISTENING

UNDP, the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination and Gallup Pakistan conducted a survey on COVID-19 perceptions. An interactive event on the survey – with participants from WHO, UNICEF, the Health Services Academy and the Cancer Research Institute – sought to spark discussion on its findings.

UNICEF's RCCE efforts focused on data analytics, social analytics and promoting vaccine-confidence, with an emphasis on the public registration process and the increased participation of women, youth and teachers. Social surveys designed by UNICEF and its partners shed light on why the rate of COVID-19 vaccinations among men is nearly twice the rate among women, according to vaccine registration records. These include cultural norms that restrict women from participating in 'external activities' and system-related causes such as the fear of potential side effects, low levels of trust in the medical system, mistrust of vaccines, rumours and conspiracy theories, long distances to vaccination centres, inappropriate timings and a lack of transportation. Through RCCE briefs and advocacy with RCCE Task Force Focal Points, the results of social surveys on vaccine hesitancy are being translated into policy recommendations at the federal and provincial levels. All RCCE teams continued to prioritize social analytics and social listening, focusing on high-burden districts with a high number of COVID-19 cases and low levels of vaccine uptake.

UNICEF signed a contract with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSOS) to conduct:

- monthly knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) surveys in 26 districts across Pakistan on vaccine hesitancy to investigate the reasons for low vaccine uptake by women, youth and certain population groups;
- advanced weekly social media analytics;
- quarterly direct observational surveys; and
- a national media landscape survey to orient UNICEF's national media strategy.

In June 2021, **UNICEF** conducted qualitative anthropological surveys to identify the reasons for low vaccine uptake among women and teachers. Insights from two telephone-based surveys informed the development of a *Social and Behavioural Strategy* targeting these groups, including a commitment to organize personalized interactions between teachers and respected specialists. The surveys reveal that respondents want more in-depth information on vaccine effectiveness, the differences between available vaccines and possible side effects.

UNICEF and **WHO** are updating lists of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on COVID-19 vaccination. More comprehensive FAQs were shared with teachers and frontline workers. Updated FAQs will be translated into local languages and shared with partners, websites, religious and community leaders, journalists, teachers, frontline and health workers. Adapted versions will be drafted for adolescents.

UNICEF continued to support the Polio Helpline (1166) to address COVID-19. Agents respond to nearly 40,000 calls every day, one-third of which are requests for information on vaccination, including vaccine effectiveness, the registration process and when to receive a second dose. They inform callers on how to register for vaccination, locate the closest vaccination centre, get tested for COVID-19 and receive treatment. The helpline continues to be an effective tool for building trust between the public, the Government and implementing partners. Most of the complaints that the helpline received in June 2021 concerned the electronic vaccine registration system, which many rural Pakistanis lack the digital skills to navigate. The Government is considering 'walk-in policy' for persons unable to register online or who do not possess a Computerized National Identity Card. Demand for vaccines is relatively high and 31% of the complaints received by the helpline concerned the unavailability of vaccines at vaccination centres. Data collected through social listening, social media, community feedback, and Polio/COVID-19 Helpline reveals a widespread belief that the second dose of the vaccine is not as important as the first dose. As a result, many people are not returning for their second dose. Messages to counter this fallacy are being disseminated by national media platforms.

ADVOCACY AND MOBILIZATION

UNICEF continued community mobilization activities in six high-risk districts with the support of polio teams who disseminated messages on SOPs, vaccination uptake and testing. In the first half of 2021, COVID-19 prevention messages reached 12.78 million at-risk people. UNICEF also engaged in advocacy with religious influencers to address the cultural norms that underlie COVID-related risks. Through existing polio and health alliances, 68,099 religious leaders were mobilized to improve COVID-19 risk perception. At mosques around the country, they spoke of the importance of vaccination and encouraged followers to abide by Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), wash their hands, wear facemasks and avoid large gatherings during Eid-ul-Adha.

UNHCR's field supervisors conducted 314 meetings with religious leaders, engaging 1,944 participants in refugee villages. Religious, ethnic, and community leaders conveyed messages, including in refugee villages, through loudspeaker announcements after prayers for those who may not have access to phones or the internet. With UNHCR's support, community health workers conducted 574 health education sessions for 1,770 participants in refugee villages on preventing COVID-19, addressing stigma and procedures for registration and referral.

UNDP supported awareness raising sessions on COVID-19 in the Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in partnership with religious leaders, as well as sessions at schools, in public spaces using megaphones and household level sessions for women. These sessions engaged 6,444 people, including 1,413 women, in the first half of 2021. As part of the Mountain Protected Areas Project funded by the Government of Italy, UNDP joined hands with Gilgit-Baltistan's Departments of Health and Education to raise awareness of COVID-related risks and preventive measures. These sessions engaged 2,400 students – including 1,460 women and girls – and 434 community members, who will act as agents of change in their neighbourhoods. Some 500 hygiene kits were distributed to the participants.

UNDP disseminated COVID-19 awareness messages approved by WHO and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Health Department through billboards, posters, radio messages in Urdu and Pashto, and 149 banners on hand hygiene in public schools. At different locations, animated video messages on COVID-19 prevention were projected by a minibus with a surface-mounted mobile screen.

UNDP's COVID-19 messaging campaign for rural women sought to reach 100,000 women through simple phones, sharing information on COVID-19 risks, SOPs and the Polio/COVID-19 Helpline. UNDP and Balochistan's Women Development Department worked to integrate a dedicated helpline and virtual call centre to provide psychosocial support to women affected by COVID-19. The helpline links women callers with trained psychologists who offer counselling sessions in different languages, including Balochi, Urdu and Pashto. The helpline also refers general callers to information on COVID-related support, such as essential services and food distribution.

MASS MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Through national media channels, especially television and radio, **UNICEF**-supported messages on COVID-19 prevention and vaccination reached 1.94 million people. Facebook was the best performing social media platform for UNICEF Pakistan, eliciting 139.1 million total impressions and 3.7 million total engagements (i.e. 'likes' and comments) in the first six months of 2021. On average, each Facebook post received 1,300,655 impressions and 516,775 engagements per month. Total impressions on Twitter reached 1,041,509 and total engagements 44,2017 in the same period, while total impressions on Instagram reached 1,344,677 and total engagements 30,740. Social media posts on the arrival of COVID-19 vaccines through COVAX prompted the most impressions and engagements.

UNHCR combatted misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines and carried out risk communication on social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

UNDP's social media posts focused on its programming and the socio-economic response to COVID-19. It ran periodic social media campaigns to raise awareness of COVID-19 SOPs and vaccination, including a 3-day campaign during Eid in July 2021 that reached 19,000 people on Facebook and 17,485 on Twitter. In September, a one-week campaign shared awareness raising videos encouraging vaccination, reaching 8,627 people on Facebook and 5,460 on Twitter.

With **UNDP's** support, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa produced 38 public communications videos on COVID-19 prevention through mask wearing, social distancing, vaccination and by following SOPs between January and June 2021. Disseminated online, the videos included testimonials by people who have been vaccinated, a video addressing vaccine rumours and misinformation, and messages by senior government officials encouraging vaccination.

UNDP developed infographics and short videos to raise awareness of laws in Sindh on the rights of vulnerable groups affected by COVID-19, including Acts on Persons with Disabilities, Domestic Violence, Child Marriage and Hindu Marriage. These were released on social media in the first three months of 2021 and disseminated by digital news outlets, including Geo News, Saama, Dunya, the Express Tribune and Bol News. In partnership with federal and provincial human rights stakeholders, civil society and transgender rights organizations, UNDP continued to support the Ministry of Human Rights' Transgender Protection Centre.

SURVEILLANCE, RAPID RESPONSE, LABORATORIES AND POINTS OF ENTRY



EQUIPMENT AND CAPACITIES

UNOPS procured emergency medical and laboratory equipment for the Aga Khan Foundation's hospitals, including two in Gilgit Baltistan, Pakistan Administered Kashmir and the district of Chitral in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in order to support their response to COVID-19.

Laboratory equipment worth US\$ 1.5 million, funded by the Asian Development Bank, was delivered to **UNICEF's** warehouse in July 2021, following delays caused by global supply chain disruptions. This equipment was later delivered to 20 laboratories identified with the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination.

To strengthen COVID-19 testing and laboratory capacities, **WHO**:

- Provided 34 real-time testing machines and eight bio safety cabinets to the Government of Pakistan.
- Supplied more than 150 motorbikes for sample transportation and surveillance.
- Donated 20 ambulances, biomedical equipment and supplies (50 ventilators, 100 oxygen concentrators, 50 suction machines, 20 ECG machines, 50 automated beds, personal protective equipment (PPE), hand sanitizers and disinfectants) to COVID-19 designated health care facilities and points of entry to improve infection prevention and control, case management and critical care.
- Enhanced central sterile supply units in three tertiary care facilities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan by providing 20 instrument sterilizers (16 litre capacity) and three autoclaves (500 litre capacity) to disinfect medical equipment.
- Supported the establishment of three COVID-19 vaccination centers in Islamabad in line with global standards, as well as a COVID-19 vaccination monitoring cell at the offices of the federal Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) Islamabad.
- Supported the branding of 1,694 COVID-19 vaccination centers across Pakistan, including in Pakistan Administered Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.
- Provided technical capacity building for over 350 laboratory personnel on quality system management, bio-risk management, COVID-19 diagnostics and compliance with standards.
- Trained 10,000 vaccinators and data entry operators on the databases and mobile applications of the *Community Viability Monitoring Framework* (COVIM) and the *National Incident Management System* (NIMS).
- Trained 5,130 vaccinators and data entry operators on vaccine administration, and over 11,000 health care workers on infection prevention and control.

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL (IPC), QUARANTINE AND CASE MANAGEMENT



SUPPLIES AND PPE

UNICEF coordinated the shipment of vaccines with the COVAX facility and received supplies allocated to Pakistan from the World Bank's US\$15 million *Pandemic Emergency Financing Fund* (PEF), including personal protective equipment procured from local suppliers. Supplies are being distributed as agreed with the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination.

In July, 2.4 million surgical masks were expected to be delivered by sea from **UNICEF's** hub in Dubai, after efforts to expedite the additional approvals needed from the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) to import surgical masks into Pakistan. UNICEF also provided basic PPE (gloves, sanitizers and masks) to 15,637 frontline workers in the first six months of 2021.

UNHCR donated 600,000 face masks and ambulances to the Government of Balochistan to support its COVID-19 response, benefitting both Pakistanis and Afghans.



Refugee girls wearing facemasks at Surkhab refugee village. Children, teachers and community members participated in awareness sessions on COVID-19, health and hygiene. Photo: © UNHCR/Humera Karim

UNFPA provided 137 frontline health workers with 486 personal protective items to respond to COVID-19 and trained 163 frontline health workers on infection prevention and universal precautions. It organized 44 psychosocial support sessions and for clients, alongside 260 awareness raising sessions on COVID-19 for 5,797 women, men, boys and girls.

RELIEF SUPPORT

UNDP supported Punjab's Department of the Human Rights and Minority Affairs to distribute relief packages to 100 vulnerable minority families. These packages include essential food items and personal protective equipment (masks and hand sanitizers).

UNDP supported Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Prisons Department and judiciary to protect prisoners from COVID-19 by providing legal support to prisoners allegedly involved in petty offences in order to reduce overcrowding in jails. To date, 65 prisoners have been released.

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Focusing on vulnerable communities living in urban slums and informal settlements (*katchi abadis*), **UN Habitat** launched the *Pakistan COVID-19 Urban Slums Response Programme* (PCUSRP). The programme aims to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in slums, while empowering local communities to mitigate the pandemic's economic impact. The pilot programme supported community-driven solutions by raising awareness and advocating for preventive measures, installing communal handwashing stations, distributing masks, gloves and hand sanitizers, disinfecting public sites, supporting solid and hazardous waste management, and working to create income generation opportunities for slum communities. The programme conducted a rapid assessment of two slums in Rawalpindi to assess the pandemic's impact on socio-economic conditions and the status of preventive measures.



Photo: © FAO

ONE UN PROGRAMME III: MAINSTREAMING THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

This section covers developments related to COVID-19 and general developments on the One UN Programme III's 10 outcome areas.

OUTCOME 1 ECONOMIC GROWTH



ECONOMIC CONTINUITY AND SMES

UNDP supported the business continuity of small enterprises by training and mentoring youth to propose innovative business ideas on new avenues for income generation, employment and mitigating COVID-19's economic impact in the Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. To share the findings of a *Business and Labour Market Survey*, UNDP organized information dissemination and knowledge sharing events with government representatives in Peshawar. Its findings will help to inform government strategies to address COVID-19's impact on the economy.

With **UNDP's** support, the Government of Pakistan developed a *National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights* (NAP) which acknowledges the COVID-19 pandemic's disproportionate impact on the human rights impact of vulnerable or marginalized groups – including women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, minorities and transgender persons. It also acknowledges growing corporate activity in the digital economy as a result of the pandemic and calls for corporate respect for human rights and labour standards in freelance work and the 'gig' economy. The action plan emphasizes how important it is for businesses to use human rights due diligence processes, impact assessments and related tools, such as UNDP's *COVID-19 Due Diligence Rapid Self-assessment Tool*. This is vital to manage the impact of COVID-19 and other disasters on their operations, especially with regard to workers' human rights.

The **IFAD**-assisted *National Poverty Graduation Programme* (NPGP) engaged 3,000 extremely poor households whose breadwinners lost their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic. It transferred productive assets to help them navigate the pandemic and trained 3,000 Ehsaas-supported beneficiaries on asset management and functional literacy to maximize skills required by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It also supported women entrepreneurs to start small-scale home-based businesses. As of July 2021, the programme had benefitted 62,906 households in 23 districts across Pakistan's four provinces. To enhance the livelihoods of extremely poor households and improve food and nutrition security, the programme provided 2,285 livestock animals and 132 vehicles for transportation, paired with 316 enterprise trainings, benefitting 62,906 households by making their sources of income more resilient and sustainable.



Photos: © IFAD

REAL LIVES

Chutti Abdul's story: Livestock changing lives



Photo: © IFAD

“Due to insufficient income, managing family expenses was difficult and debt on us was increasing. To support the family financially, I used my embroidery skill to produce traditional Sindhi caps, adding to the household monthly income,” says 49-year-old Chutti Abdul Bari.

Before Chutti began earning, her family of seven depended on her husband's income of PKR 3,000 as a daily wage labourer – an income which he can only earn during the rainy season in their remote village in Chacharo, in Sindh's district of Tharparkar. A wealth-ranking exercise by the IFAD-assisted *National Poverty Graduation Programme* identified Chutti's family as 'ultra-poor'. During the programme's livelihood investment plan development phase, Chutti asked for livestock to meet her family's nutritional and economic needs. The village procurement committee transferred six goats to them, worth PKR 54,340. The animals have been a lifeline. With her husband's support, Chutti started a local milk run, earning PKR 200–300 per day. Within a year, her goats had four kids, doubling the value of the family's productive assets to PKR 100,000.

“I will sell bucks on Eid-ul-Adha because the rates are high during that season. From that earning I will purchase more female goats to increase my livestock herd and subsequently my family income,” explains Chutti. “The money we have earned from the livestock business has improved our living conditions and income-generating capacities. In future, we are hoping to make our own brick house and open a confectionery shop in the village.”

OUTCOME 2 DECENT WORK



EMPLOYMENT

UNDP joined hands with local tourist guides, porters and community elders to conduct a cleaning campaign in the Baltoro and Concordia glaciers in Gilgit-Baltistan, as part of the *Mountain Protected Areas Project* funded by the Government of Italy. The initiative provided 200 locals with short-term employment and provided economic relief to tourism-dependent communities affected by COVID-19. Participants were trained to observe COVID-19 SOPs in the tourism sector. Equipped with these skills, they will be able to continue their work and safely provide services.

UNDP's cash-for-work initiative continued in Balochistan with two main components: rehabilitating government centres, and a 'clean and green' tree planting drive.

REAL LIVES

Qadir's story: Entrepreneurs go from strength to strength



Photo: © IFAD



"Having an independent source of income is better than any donations and loans," says Qadir.

In 2020, Qadir opened his own mobile phone shop in Sindh's district of Kashmore, thanks to the support of the IFAD-assisted *National Poverty Graduation Programme/Ehsaas Amdam*.

"The programme reignited my lost dream of being an entrepreneur. Before I was unemployed, now I am generating employment and transferring skills," he explains.

Qadir's shop contributes an average of PKR 800 to his family's daily income. Within six months, Qadir hired a helper, Shankar, to manage the workload, diversify income streams and train him in mobile repair.

"There is no better job than being self-employed. Once Shankar is completely trained, I will help him open his own business," Qadir vows.

Qadir is one of 6,057 beneficiaries in Kashmore who, since 2020, have received productive assets worth PKR 60,000 with the support of IFAD and the Government of Pakistan. This livelihood support, paired with mentoring and training, is helping women and youth to find decent work, become entrepreneurs and secure sustainable sources of income.

OUTCOME 3

HEALTH AND WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE



PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

UNICEF supported sub-national Departments of Health to ensure the continuity of essential primary health care services, including immunization, antenatal and postnatal care, delivery services, child care and curative care for adults in 136 targeted health facilities, benefitting 2.25 million people. Between January and June 2021, 65,505 children were vaccinated against measles. UNICEF supported training for 9,312 frontline health workers on infection prevention and control, 3,306 frontline health workers and community volunteers on COVID-19 case identification and referral, and 1,343 paediatricians on the clinical management of children with COVID-19.

UNFPA's response to COVID-19 centred on two strategic areas: the COVID-19 response and strengthening health systems to ensure the continuity of reproductive health services, including family planning and community empowerment by protecting women and preventing gender-based violence. Planned activities were realigned in the wake of the pandemic, with the introduction of remote training and mobile applications to enable women to communicate and receive information on protection, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), particularly in humanitarian settlements and host communities. UNFPA distributed WHO-recommended information, education and communication (IEC) materials on personal protection and hygiene among women health workers and vulnerable populations.

To leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first, **UNFPA** developed pioneering models in Balochistan, linking remote communities to specialized care through a cluster of primary health care facilities ('spokes') connected to a secondary health care hospital (a 'hub') and complemented by telemedicine. Referral services aim to address the gender-based violence and ensure timely access to basic reproductive health services. To reduce the financial burden on the health system, financial and human resources will be organized between primary and secondary health care facilities.



Photos: © UNFPA

UNDP and Sehat Kehani trained 5,000 medical professionals on intensive care – a field that has never been in greater demand. Through this partnership, 65 ICUs were made operational nationwide for COVID-19 response. Dedicated psychosocial cells were established at Sindh's Local Government Department in Karachi and Balochistan's Women's Development Department in Quetta to assist people affected by COVID-19, including frontline health workers. These cells have been institutionalized within the provincial government setups to make the intervention sustainable.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

UNICEF's WASH and infection prevention interventions focused on 20 high-burden districts, rehabilitating and installing WASH facilities that include ultraviolet water filters, toilets and handwashing stations in 98 health care facilities (33 in Sindh, two in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 63 in Balochistan). During the first half of 2021, more than 392,554 people gained access to safe drinking water and sanitation in these health care facilities.

UNICEF leveraged existing volunteer communication networks and WASH programmes like *Clean and Green Pakistan* to promote basic hygiene, including handwashing – a critical COVID-19 prevention and control measure. UNICEF supported the fabrication and installation of 957 handwashing stations at strategic points in cities and communities, benefitting over 2.2 million people. Hygiene promotion services, including information on preventing and controlling COVID-19, reached 1.45 million people.

UNICEF supported the training of 3,617 frontline sanitary and health workers on WASH/IPC in health care facilities and high-risk communities. WASH and IPC services reached 282,256 children (138,305 girls and 143,951 boys) in 472 schools between January and June 2021 (111 schools in Sindh, 331 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 30 in Balochistan).

WASH (CONTINUED)

UNOPS is supporting the Government of Pakistan to improve water quality testing through a new partnership with Pakistan's Ministry of Climate Change and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The initiative is enhancing the Government's technical capacities to provide WASH services, while strengthening the ministry's coordination with facilities in Islamabad, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to monitor drinking water quality. In aid of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 on clean water and sanitation, UNOPS is upgrading water quality testing laboratories in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A management information system is being rolled out to improve monitoring, coordination and water quality data management with Islamabad, in collaboration with provincial governments.

OUTCOME 4 NUTRITION



COMBATING MALNUTRITION

In partnership with the Government, **WFP** worked to reduce stunting through the national *Ehsaas Nashonuma* programme. As of July 2021, 50 facilitation centres had been established across 15 districts of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad. Through these facilitation centres, WFP provided specialized nutritious food and health care support to 54,191 children under two years old, and pregnant and lactating women.

WFP's *Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition Programme* (CMAM) continued to treat children and pregnant and lactating women with moderate acute malnutrition. Currently active in five districts of Sindh and Balochistan, the programme will be expanded to cover 15 districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. As of July 2021, the programme had provided specialized nutritious food and held awareness raising sessions on nutrition and hygiene for 42,064 children and pregnant and lactating women with moderate acute malnutrition. WFP also launched a safety net project in Umerkot, Sindh, which provides beneficiaries of the CMAM programme with a one-off unconditional cash transfer. This injection of cash will enable beneficiaries to maintain good nutrition for up to four months and to diversify their livelihoods. The project is monitoring how beneficiaries use these cash transfers, while engaging in social and behavioural change communication on dietary diversity and maintaining personal health and hygiene.

WFP is rolling out its *Wheat Flour Fortification Programme* among small-scale mills (*chakki*) in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Ten of these *chakkis* are already producing fortified flour. In June 2021, production of fortified wheat rose by 83% compared to the previous month.

UNICEF supported 2,844 *Outpatient Therapeutic Feeding Programme* sites that provided nutrition services as part of the COVID-19 response (1,720 sites in Punjab, 813 in Sindh, 128 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 183 in Balochistan). As of June 2021, 86,525 severely malnourished children (47,840 girls and 38,685 boys) had been admitted for treatment and 213,179 children between six and 59 months old (107,822 girls and 105,357 boys) had received multi-micronutrient supplements. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, UNICEF supported the establishment of nine new nutrition sites in super high-risk union councils (SHRUCs) in Peshawar. Since June 2021, these sites have provided services for the management of severe acute malnutrition (SAM), better infant and young child feeding, early childhood development (ECD) and simplified guidelines for super high-risk union councils.

RAISING AWARENESS

With **UNICEF's** support, Lady Health Workers and other community-based networks provided counselling on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) in the context of COVID-19 for 677,056 pregnant and lactating women in the first half of 2021. New social and behaviour change communication materials are being tested on maternal, adolescent, infant and young child nutrition. Through social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter) UNICEF engaged 9,023 persons on these issues in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Photos: © IFAD

The **IFAD**-assisted *National Poverty Graduation Programme* carried out 143 community-based awareness campaigns – facilitated by the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) – on nutrition, climate resilience, gender, peace and justice in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. As of July 2021, 373 campaigns had reached out to 14,822 people. These campaigns enhanced the skills and knowledge that communities need to maintain nutrient-rich, balanced diets using locally available resources, while improving food safety and hygiene. These social mobilization activities will improve human development outcomes for households that participate in community organizations.

OUTCOME 5

FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

FAO provided fertilizer to 200 mango growers, and fertilizer and plastic sheets for date processing to 200 date growers in Khairpur, Sindh. More than 20,000 animals were vaccinated against peste des petits ruminants (PPR), benefitting 871 households in the district. In the district of Thatta, 200 tomato growers received certified seeds and fertilizers, while in Umerkot, 1,937 households received animal compound feed (17,433 bags). FAO distributed drought-resilient oat fodder seeds to 500 vulnerable households in Umerkot, while 397 women received wheelbarrows and mesh nets to protect their crops from birds and wild animals.

FAO distributed urea fertilizer to farmers in Sindh's districts of Tando Muhammad Khan, Jamshoro, and Matiari as part of the emergency support for smallholder farmers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 2,716 farmers (1,629 women and 1,087 men) received two 50 kilogramme bags of urea fertilizer each (5,432 bags in all).

In Tharparkar, Sindh, **FAO** provided cash disbursements for water schemes to 125 households, paired with 25 water harvesting structures, solar submersible pumps and water troughs for animals. Some 9,340 households received 84,060 bags of animal compound feed, while 800 families received mineral supplements, 437 households received drought-resilient seeds (mung beans, cluster beans and millet seeds) and 2,000 women farmers received vegetable seeds.

FAO provided improved packaging materials to 60 agribusiness enterprises in the Newly Merged Districts of North and South Waziristan, Kurram and Orakzai. Twenty high tunnels and drip irrigation systems were installed in these four districts (five in each district). In North Waziristan and Kurram, 20 grape vineyards with Y-trellising and drip irrigation systems were set up. Some 250 potato growers received jute bags – 150 in Kurram and 100 in Orakzai – to improve packaging. Another 2,500 beneficiaries in the districts of Khyber and Kurram received compound vegetable seed packages. Six gully plugging structures were built in two sub-watersheds of Kurram, while toolkits were provided to 130 agribusinesses that produce vegetables, 120 that produce fruits and 20 that produce poultry. FAO also rehabilitated 50 broiler farms (22 in Khyber, 18 in North Waziristan and 10 in South Waziristan) and provided 100 drinkers, 100 feeders, 70 feed bags and 1,000 day-old broiler chicks to each of these farms.

The **IFAD**-assisted *National Poverty Graduation Programme* distributed 45 hand-held tillers to small-scale farmers in four districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The machines are transforming agricultural practices. By moving from manual to mechanized farming, farmers are expanding areas of cultivation, increasing agricultural productivity and reducing rural women's burden of agricultural work.

TRAINING AND AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

FAO trained 690 people on livestock management, feed lot fattening and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 in Sindh's district of Tharparkar. Some 600 women were trained on kitchen gardening, addressing COVID-19 and locust attacks. Awareness raising sessions on COVID-19 prevention included practical handwashing demonstrations for 125 participants in Tharparkar and 2,000 participants in Umerkot. Training honed the skills of 800 male farmers on drought-resilient agriculture and animal feed management, and of 800 women farmers on livestock management. Capacity building on entrepreneurial skills, marketing and value chain development engaged 145 service providers (70 in the Newly Merged District of Khyber and 75 in Kurram), including extension workers, commission agents and agro-chemical dealers.

FAO organized trainings sessions for Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and Women Open Schools (WOS) to enhance the farming skills of men and women farmers in kitchen gardening and new cropping system techniques to boost the household economy. Overall, 38 Farmer Field Schools (22 for women and 16 for men) took part in the sessions, enhancing the knowledge of 1,049 members (582 women and 467 men) on cropping techniques to increase incomes and food insecurity.

The **IFAD**-assisted *Economic Transformation Initiative* in Gilgit-Baltistan (ETI-GB) introduced innovative agricultural practices, including high-yield cash crops, to help smallholders to work year-round. Organizing farmers into farmer-owned companies is strengthening value chain development and the transition from subsistence farming to commercial farming. It is also creating local opportunities for youth employment. To date, 162 farmer-owned companies have been formed, engaging 60,000 farmers and creating 524 employment opportunities within the companies for young people.



MUHAMMAD NAZIR

“I am a farmer and doing vegetable business. I am thankful to ETIGB for its intervention. Vertical Farming is a new profitable technique for us in vegetable farming to earn more money utilizing less amount of land”

Mr. Muhammad Nazir is a member of Greenland Farmers Cooperative Society Oshikhandas, Gilgit

<https://www.etigb.com.pk/>

REAL LIVES

Nar Angaiz’s story: Rising to new heights with vertical farming



Photo: © IFAD

“I couldn’t believe when I started earning PKR 5,000–6,000 every four to five days. Vertical farming has greatly aided me in alleviating my financial needs. I am grateful to ETI-GB for their assistance,” says 46-year-old Nar Angaiz.

Since her husband’s death, the mother of five has been her family’s sole breadwinner. The family struggled to make ends meet in Ghaluch Bala, in Gilgit-Baltistan’s district of Ghizer, with their small landholding (of 4/5 kanal)s. Nar’s eldest son dropped out of school at 17 to work as a car mechanic in a bit to support his mother and siblings.

Things changed when the IFAD-assisted *Economic Transformation Initiative* provided a 100% in-kind grant and built a vertical farming tunnel (of 12x100 feet) for growing off-season vegetables. Nar Angaiz was one of the farmers trained on efficient methods of introducing indeterminate hybrid seeds to maximize uniform yields. As a result, she earned PKR 50,000 by the end of the cropping season, transforming her household’s fortunes.

OUTCOME 6 RESILIENCE



TECHNICAL SUPPORT

As part of technical support for the National Disaster Management Authority's COVID-19 response, **UNDP** placed a technical expert and a United Nations Volunteer Public Health Officer at the NDMA to assist the handling and warehousing of internal vaccine consignments. The Public Health Officer also helped the NDMA to gather and process data on vaccine distribution among Pakistan's provinces and regions. Human resource support enhanced coordination and communication, as UNDP placed two professionals at the NDMA's National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) to coordinate monsoon contingency planning with the provinces and assist the development of a National Monsoon Contingency Plan. UNDP also supported NDMA to disinfect 70 federal government buildings to keep public sector work environments safe. Online courses on health emergencies are being developed as part of the digitization of disaster-related learning and training materials, with a focus on enhancing the pandemic management skills of local government officials. The content of four courses has been finalized and will be made available online to benefit a broad audience.

UNICEF's technical and financial support for the National Disaster Management Authority included co-facilitating emergency preparedness and response training workshops in Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan for 84 frontline government officials in at-risk districts. To increase humanitarian readiness, UNICEF updated its *Emergency Preparedness Platform* (EPP), revised its *Humanitarian Action Plan for Children* and finalized the *COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan* for the fourth wave of infections. UNICEF continues to maintain a minimum contingency stock for 150,000 people and, as of July 2021, it has put in place 19 stand-by *Contingency Programme Cooperation Agreements* (PCA) for procurement and services.

FOOD AND CASH AID

WFP launched an ad hoc relief intervention in Khyber, Lower Kohistan and Upper Dir in July 2021, at the request of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Provincial Disaster Management Authority. It provided two cycles of unconditional food assistance to flood-affected households in Kohistan, and to malnourished low-income families in Upper Dir and Khyber. During the first distribution cycle in July, 67,613 people received 915 metric tonnes of food assistance in the target districts.

WFP continued its *Food Assistance for Assets Programme* (FFA) in the Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The programme's cash transfers are a lifeline for vulnerable groups, including families who have returned to the region after prolonged displacement. The transfers are conditional on participation in community rehabilitation activities and training sessions designed to improve long-term food security and resilience. In June and July 2021, WFP disbursed US\$622,985 in assistance to 47,463 people in the districts of Kurram, Mohmand, North Waziristan and Orakzai.

The **IFAD**-assisted *National Poverty Graduation Programme* marked *International Environment Day* by reinforcing the importance of reforestation to mitigate the challenges of climate change. As part of the celebrations, programme beneficiaries and children planted fruit trees at local schools in Balochistan's districts of Gwadar and Lasbela. A cleanliness drive, awareness seminar and a walk were also organized, enabling rural communities and youths to clean Gaddani Beach in Lasbela, while raising awareness of the need for immediate climate action.



Photos: © IFAD

REAL LIVES

Shehzadi's story: Fostering resilient livelihoods



When Shehzadi's husband was laid off from his job at a garment factory during the COVID-19 pandemic, their family of eight was in dire straits. Although the 50-year-old was skilled at stitching and knitting skills, Shehzadi had few prospects to turn her skills into a viable livelihood – until the IFAD-assisted *National Poverty Graduation Programme* got involved. The programme provided Shehzadi with raw materials worth PKR 58,000. She seized this opportunity, starting her own business of making and selling traditional bed sheets (*rilli*) to support her family.

“My self-esteem has improved and I have found a decent livelihood. I am selling 5–10 rilli monthly and earn around PKR 16,000,” says Shehzadi. “With this business, I am making enough money to buy food for my family.”

OUTCOME 7 EDUCATION AND LEARNING



SAFE SCHOOLS

UNICEF supported provincial Departments of Education to ensure the safe reopening of schools, adherence to SOPs and monitoring compliance. As a result, the Directorate-General of Monitoring and Evaluation included an indicator on teachers' vaccination in the *Sindh School Management System* application to track the number of teachers who are vaccinated. In the first half of 2021, 9,419 teachers and education officials (3,512 of whom are women) were trained on safe reopening and school operations nationwide. Awareness raising campaigns on the continuity of learning, safe school SOPs and vaccination for teachers reached out to students, teachers and parents. With UNICEF's support, 79,131 children accessed formal and non-formal education, including early childhood education, and 20,547 teachers (9,300 of whom are women) and education officers were trained on mental health and psychosocial support between January and June 2021. SMS and social media messages reached 525,020 parents with messages on the continuity of learning.

CLEAN ENERGY IN SCHOOLS

UNOPS completed the *Solar Schools Project* (February 2018–July 2021), benefitting 1350,000 children in seven districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by providing electricity in their schools. The project installed solar photovoltaic systems in 1,240 schools in cooperation with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Elementary and Secondary Education Department (E&SED), with funding from the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Saudi Fund for Development. The project targeted schools without access to electricity in the districts of Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Hangu, Karak, Kohat, Lakki Marwat and Tank, across an area of more than 20,000 km².

Their free, clean, renewable and reliable electricity supply allows schools to operate lights and fans, reducing health problems related to extreme heat and improving the classroom environment. Renewable energy supplies in schools will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2,250 tonnes per year and decrease operating costs for the Elementary and Secondary Education Department.

Learn more about the Solar Schools Project by watching:
[Access to energy in Pakistan – Faryal’s story](#)



GIRLS' EDUCATION

UNESCO's project, *Support to Girls' Right to Education and Safeguarding Cultural Heritage through Education in Pakistan*, is assisting provincial governments to increase access to education, enhance retention and improve the quality of girls' education. Implemented in the districts of Bahawalpur, Punjab, and Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the project involves capacity building and targeted interventions at the institutional and community levels. In July 2021, a cultural festival raised awareness of the importance of girls' education at the Government Girls' High School in the village of Qandel, Swat. The festival aimed to mobilize communities, especially mothers and school administrators, to educate girls beyond the primary level. Students demonstrated their drawing, essay writing and tableaux skills, while stalls displayed local embroidery, dresses and handicrafts. Mothers took a keen interest in the festival and district education officials, parents and teachers agreed to support community outreach to enrol girls in secondary education.



Photos: © UNESCO

OUTCOME 8 GENDER, EQUALITY AND DIGNITY



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

UNOPS continued building accommodation for 440 women police trainees with funding from the United States of America's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. As part of the project, UNOPS is strengthening the capacity of contractors on health, safety, security and environmental sustainability through training sessions and 'toolbox talks'. In June and July 2021, 50 of the contractors' workers were oriented on safety at worksites.

UNOPS organized an online roundtable discussion on women in construction (7 July 2021) with a woman engineer, UN Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, ILO, UN Women and the United States International Development Agency (USAID). The participants discussed barriers for women in construction and how to overcome them. While the construction sector is Pakistan's second-largest employer, women account for only 1% of its labour force. The event built on a needs assessment conducted to incorporate gender considerations in strategies and plans. The assessment identified three key barriers to recruiting women into the construction sector:

- low levels of women's enrolment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects;
- socio-cultural norms, including the male-dominated nature of the construction sector and widespread gender-based discrimination; and
- inadequate employment opportunities and an unsupportive working environment for women.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

UNFPA reached 42,345 beneficiaries with integrated sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and gender-based violence services in 12 districts of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the province's Newly Merged Districts. Fifteen women-friendly health spaces set up by UNFPA are providing safe, confidential gender-based violence prevention and response services to women and girls, including awareness raising and sensitization, psychosocial support services and multisectoral referral services. Community outreach activities, such as social mobilization and mobile camps that provide psychosocial support, are reaching out to remote communities and linking them with health and GBV services in public facilities. Assistance for referral partners, including Women Development Departments and 'women smart' police stations, will help to scale up support services for survivors of gender-based violence.

In collaboration with district governments under the *Humanitarian Response Programme*, **UNFPA** set up multisectoral gender-based violence coordination structures in three districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Including government and non-governmental representatives, these structures facilitate referral mechanisms and follow-up. Engaging the Government in a leadership role ensures the sustainability of these structures, while linking district level coordination structures with provincial multisectoral GBV coordination structures under the Planning and Development Department. This helps to bridge humanitarian and development initiative.

With the support of the district health department and district administration, **UNFPA** established gender-based violence prevention and response services in Wana tehsil headquarters in the Newly Merged District of South Waziristan. These include psychosocial support services for survivors of gender-based violence and at-risk groups. UN agencies are coordinating ways to engage communities in gender-based violence prevention and response, and to establish multisectoral referral pathways.

OUTCOME 9 GOVERNANCE



MEDIA OUTREACH

UNDP trained 243 young journalists, between 23 and 35 years old, on COVID-19 reporting, including 40 women and 203 men. The training focusing on three broad areas:

- the 'science of the pandemic', covering the scientific discourse on the genesis of COVID-19 and the spread of misinformation about the virus;
- the 'psychological well-being of journalists' on possible psychological and mental health issues that journalists may face when reporting on the pandemic and possible safeguards against these; and
- 'finding news stories, dealing with misinformation and reporting' on how to collect human interest stories on the pandemic in ethical ways.

RULE OF LAW

In June–July 2021, **UNDP** organized 38 legal awareness sessions for over 500 people, including 106 women, in the Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Two sessions were exclusively arranged for the Christian community in the district of Mohmand. Women’s need for legal aid has increased as domestic violence surges during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNDP is working with the Legal Aid Unit of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Bar Council to provide pro bono legal assistance in the region. In June and July, 21 cases requiring legal assistance were received, 15 of which involve women.

HUMAN RIGHTS

UNDP supported efforts to address rights and governance concerns exacerbated by COVID-19 through the *Human Rights Information Management System* (HRIMS). UNDP worked with the Office of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Ombudsperson for the Protection of Women from Harassment in the Workplace to develop terms of reference to strengthen coordination among provincial human rights institutions, particularly on referrals. The recommendations of a desk review and in-depth interviews were shared with these institutions.

LISTENING TO COMMUNITIES

UNDP’s Innovation-AccLab and its partner, the Agirre Lehendakaria Center (ALC), are developing the *Social Innovation Platform*, a new programme design approach. The approach brings together different tools to help stakeholders listen to communities, understand perceptions and behaviour change in real-time, and predict emerging changes in the wake of COVID-19 – all with a view to informing policy design. The project team collaborated with VIAMO to develop digital listening tools. To maintain the element of ethnographic listening, the initiative experimented with robotic calls from prominent local leaders to obtain information on peoples’ perceptions of COVID-19 in Gilgit-Baltistan in real-time. This increased outreach by reaching people in remote areas who are often excluded from digital processes, such as people who cannot read. The information gathered from these calls was automatically transcribed and translated for the text-based data analytics phase using *natural language processing* techniques. These reveal real-time tracking and narrative evolution patterns, while enabling sentiment analysis and the identification of keyword density and bigram co-occurrences. This digital analysis helps to cluster narrative patterns through topic modelling, in order to compare and assess ethnographic information. As a result, the initiative is producing a portfolio based on listening to communities on the ground. The partners are running experiments using this approach to foster local businesses engaged in gastronomy.



Photos: © UNDP

OUTCOME 10 SOCIAL PROTECTION



CHILD PROTECTION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

As a key strategic priority, **UNICEF** supported the Planning and Development Department’s National COVID-19 Response Team to roll-out the national COVID-19 response by facilitating policy level coordination with social protection programmes, providing technical inputs on data management, supporting programme design and advocating for vulnerable children. UNICEF helped the *Ehsaas* programme prepare digital dashboards for enhanced, consolidated monitoring and reporting on ongoing initiatives. UNICEF also supported the development of an inclusive, child-sensitive monitoring and evaluation framework for the *Ehsaas* programme’s implementation, with a focus on the child-focused delivery of essential services.

Using a training package developed by **UNICEF**, the agency and its partners trained 7,932 social work force professionals across Pakistan (4,801 women and 3,131 men) on psychosocial support services and stigma prevention in the first half of 2021. As of June, 307,396 parents, caregivers, children and adults (49,564 girls, 48,363 boys, 106,773 women and 102,696 men) benefitted from psychosocial support delivered by trained social workers in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

DECENT HOUSING

In Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 11,415 people (1,923 girls, 1,864 boys, 4,166 women and 3,462 men) received specialized counselling. Messages on stigma and violence against children reached a total of 10,634,154 people, while 2,567 children (877 girls and 1,690 boys) accessed **UNICEF**-supported child protection services in Sindh and Balochistan.

The **IFAD**-assisted *Southern Punjab Poverty Alleviation Project* (SPPAP) is providing housing units to extremely poor households with a Poverty Score Card (PSC) score of 0–16. Notarized ownership is empowering women-headed households in the most underprivileged parts of South Punjab.

REAL LIVES

Hajra Mai's story: Decent housing changing lives



To make ends meet, Hajra Mai worked on a farm while her husband toiled for daily wages, earning just PKR 10,000 per month. Even their combined incomes barely met their family's daily needs, obliging Hajra and her four children to live in difficult conditions with a relative. When the IFAD-assisted *Southern Punjab Poverty Alleviation Project* (SPPAP) assessed households in Punjab's district of Rahim Yar Khan, it became clear that Hajra Mai's family fell in the Poverty Score Card category of 0–16 – making them eligible for a housing unit. As soon as their housing unit was ready, Hajra and her children moved in, started planting trees and took up kitchen gardening.

“Now the worry of my own home has disappeared,” explains Hajra, “allowing me to focus on the future of my children, their education and a healthy diet from my own garden.”

SPECIAL THANKS

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COVID-19
RESPONSE



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