

UN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN PAKISTAN



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This brief summarizes how the UN supported Pakistan's Federal and Provincial Governments to address the COVID-19 crisis and advance sustainable development in January 2021.

SUMMARY

The UN's response to COVID-19 in Pakistan is about saving lives, protecting people and recovering better. Guided by the Resident Coordinator, UN agencies are supporting the Government's country-level coordination, planning and monitoring. Our immediate WHO-led response is helping to control the transmission of coronavirus, reduce mortality and get people the health care they need. We are supporting better surveillance and case identification, stronger laboratory capacities and testing, and more precautions at points of entry.

Our COVID-19 response cuts across every outcome of the *One UN Programme III*, the UN's framework for cooperation with the Government of Pakistan: economic growth, decent work, health and WASH, nutrition, food security and agriculture, resilience, education and learning, gender equality and dignity, governance, and social protection. In each of these areas, we are prioritizing risk communication and community engagement, alongside infection control and prevention (IPC). We are reaching out to communities, authorities, the media, religious leaders, young people, parents and vulnerable groups nationwide to raise awareness of the continued threat of COVID-19. We are using different platforms to bust myths and spread accurate information – from the mass media to social media, helplines and public messages. Our IPC measures are tackling COVID-19 head on by providing personal protective equipment, training frontline workers, disinfecting schools and health centres, and building WASH facilities.

We are working to help Pakistan keep public services accessible, households afloat, businesses solvent, supply chains functioning, institutions strong and human rights at the forefront. UN initiatives are creating cash-for-work opportunities, training entrepreneurs and aiding business continuity. We are assisting Pakistan's health system to address the pandemic, plan for the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines and ensure the continuity of essential health services. We are striving to combat malnutrition and cement food security, even as COVID-19 hits agricultural livelihoods hard. Our efforts are building resilience to disaster risks and fomenting environmental sustainability because, if this pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we cannot afford to ignore risks to our planet and its people. We are helping children to continue learning, both remotely and safely in classrooms. UN agencies are striving to prevent, address and respond to gender-based violence while enhancing psychosocial support. We are engaging with governance stakeholders and mobilizing Pakistan's young people to combat COVID-19. UN support is also dedicated to strengthening social protection during this seismic global crisis, so that no one is left behind.

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“The world was rocked on its axis in 2020. COVID-19 continues to cast its shadow over 2021: infections are rising, in Pakistan and around the world. We begin the year with the resolve to move from ‘business as usual’ to transformation. Everything we do in Pakistan – during and after this pandemic – must be about building a more equal, inclusive, sustainable and resilient society and economy. Only then can we all come out of this crisis, leaving no one behind.”

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

<https://pakistan.un.org>



COVID-19: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE



COUNTRY-LEVEL COORDINATION, PLANNING AND MONITORING



MEETINGS

- **UNOPS** hosted a meeting between the Government of Japan, Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Department Health, at which they agreed to procure additional emergency medical supplies to continue supporting the COVID-19 response.
- **UNDP** assisted the 5th video conference between Balochistan's Command and Operation Centre and District Command and Operation Centres (19 January 2021). They discussed the COVID-19 situation, the *Winter Contingency Plan* with COVID-specific provisions, compliance with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), progress by SOP Implementation Committees and disease projections.
- **UNICEF** provided technical support for the Government's COVID-19 response, including by supporting federal and provincial water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) partners' coordination meetings, organizing 40 national and provincial meetings of the Child Protection Sub-sector Working Group in 2020, coordinating 98 federal and provincial meetings of the Nutrition Working Group, leading national and sub-national education coordination mechanisms, and chairing the Health, Population and Nutrition Development Partners Group. UNICEF co-facilitated 87 bi-weekly provincial and national Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Task Force meetings in 2020, which provided strategic direction for RCCE efforts. RCCE implementation plans were created and rolled out based on evidence from epidemiological and social/behavioural information to stop the spread of COVID-19.

RESEARCH AND REPORTING

- **UNICEF** helped to develop a harmonized [knowledge management platform](#) for sharing messages, information, education and communication (IEC) materials, robocalls, digital media sentiment analysis and RCCE recommendations.
- **UNICEF** supported the National COVID-19 Response Task Force at the Planning and Development Department to undertake rapid assessments of COVID-19's socio-economic impact on vulnerable children, prompting an enhanced focus on children in the *National Response Plan*. UNICEF's technical inputs on equity and 'child perspective analysis' informed social sector strategies (education, nutrition and health), contributing to a stronger measurement system to track interventions' outreach and impact. UNICEF Pakistan also contributed to the real-time assessment of the COVID-19 response by UNICEF's Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA).
- **UNICEF** led the review of the monthly 4W matrix. The [4Ws matrix online dashboard](#), created with the support of UNICEF and the Global WASH Cluster, facilitated reporting by showing progress by each partner in each location. UNICEF also contributed to the development of a nutrition dashboard and two nutrition bulletins with **UNOCHA**.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- **UNICEF** implemented a comprehensive *COVID-19 Advocacy Strategy* with the Government to mobilize public support and action to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, maintain essential services and mitigate the pandemic's socio-economic impact on the most vulnerable children and families – building on the Government of Pakistan's *COVID-19 Response Strategy* and UNICEF's global *Respond, Recover, Reimagine* campaign.
- **UNICEF** supported the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Unit at the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives to internally coordinate COVID-19 response efforts. With the SDG Unit's assistance, sectoral focal points were convened to develop action plans and strategies on education, health, WASH and nutrition.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- **UNICEF** provided data and research-based recommendations to high-level officials for response and policy planning. It also reached out to SDG Task Forces, parliamentarians, Standing Committees and other stakeholders on improving the monitoring and implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the local level during the pandemic.
- **UNICEF** supported the Nutrition Working Group to develop a *Nutrition Sector Response Plan* to guide the continuity of nutrition services, as well as the nutrition component of the *Pakistan Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19* and the nutrition section of the *COVID-19 Social-Economic Impact Framework*.

FUNDING

- **UNICEF** has committed US\$8 million of its own resources for the procurement of COVID-19 supplies, including US\$1.8 million for protective personal equipment (PPE) (gloves, surgical caps, boot covers) and hand sanitizers, US\$1 million for WASH supplies, US\$3 million for WASH construction activities – including in schools and health facilities – and US\$250,000 for IEC and RCCE materials, media engagement, COVID-19 call centre and consultancy services. With funding from the Asian Development Bank and the Ministry of National Health Services' allocation from the *Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility* (PEFF) grant, supplies worth US\$16 million have been ordered. These will arrive by March 2021, including equipment for 20 laboratories, 1,320 oxygen concentrators and accessories, PPE, testing kits and 1.15 million viral transport mediums. UNICEF's market survey and analysis will inform procurement planning. One key objective is to establish long-term agreements with local suppliers for the procurement of PPE.
- Funding gaps persisted in 2020. For instance, **UNICEF's** funding requirements were US\$9.5 million for RCCE, US\$17.1 million for WASH-IPC, US\$5.625 million for nutrition, US\$7.79 million for health, US\$3.35 million for alternative learning and US\$4.825 million for child protection. By the end of 2020, it had a 66% funding gap for RCCE, 72% for WASH-IPC, 22% for nutrition, 32% for health, 66% for alternative education and 49% for child protection.

RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



RCCE¹

- **UNICEF** played a key role in the development of Pakistan's *Risk Communication and Community Engagement Strategy, Response Plan* and IEC materials. In 2020, 31 RCCE briefs were prepared based on qualitative and quantitative data from over 15 sources – including anthropological surveys, social data, media analytics, social media sentiment analysis, helpline/call centre data and call-in radio programmes. The briefs provided strategic guidance for RCCE interventions by offering evidence-based strategic and programmatic recommendations for decision makers, sectoral managers and RCCE Task Force teams.
- **UNICEF** forged partnerships with local community-based organizations² and provincial governments to aid the implementation of provincial RCCE plans and build the capacities of frontline workers. These partners worked in coordination with other sectors, using innovative approaches to reach over 36.6 million people through mobile outreach, mosque announcements and by engaging key stakeholders, including religious leaders and youth groups.
- **UNICEF** supported the production and dissemination of 68 'social media sentiment analysis reports' in 2020. These were used by over 200 stakeholders to improve the design of communication strategies and fine-tune approaches. Total messaging increased by more than 50 per cent compared to December 2020. According to Twitter, a COVID-related tweet is shared every 45 seconds and #Coronavirus was the second-most used hashtag of 2020. Between 25 November and 31 December 2020, UNICEF's advocacy, communications and polio social media platforms reached 1,299,677 people per Facebook post, generating 121.67 million total 'impressions' (121 million through Facebook, 245,392 via Twitter and 390,985 on Instagram). Another 8.2 million people were reached through What'sApp. In December 2020 alone, 41,895 people were engaged per Facebook post through social media, eliciting 3.98 million 'engagements' – that is, likes, shares and retweets.

SURVEILLANCE, RAPID RESPONSE, QUARANTINE, CASE INVESTIGATION, MANAGEMENT & POINTS OF ENTRY



SURVEILLANCE

- **IOB**-supported teams engaged in surveillance at project sites at the Torkham and Chaman border crossings.
- **UNICEF** and **WHO** supported COVID-19 surveillance, data management and communications via the *Polio Programme*.

POINTS OF ENTRY

- **IOB** trained stakeholders on public emergency response at five points of entry (Torkham, Chaman, Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi). It provided supervisory support to build health workers' capacities on psychological first aid.

¹ Specific RCCE actions for different outcome areas are presented below.

² The Pakistan Medical Association and HANDS in Sindh, the Aga Khan Foundation in Gilgit-Baltistan and the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Balochistan.

ONE UN PROGRAMME III: MAINSTREAMING THE COVID-19 RESPONSE



OUTCOME 1 ECONOMIC GROWTH



BUSINESS CONTINUITY

- **UNDP** supported the business continuity of small enterprises during the COVID-19 pandemic. Training and mentoring assisted young people with innovative business ideas, with a view to mitigating the pandemic's economic impact by expanding avenues for income generation in the Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Training was held online in January 2021, given the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Pakistan. This month, UNDP registered 99 trainees – 30 men (two from Khyber, six from North Waziristan and 22 from South Waziristan) and 69 women (eight from Khyber, 14 from North Waziristan and 47 from South Waziristan) – for a one-month 'incubation training', delivered by its implementing partners. Fourteen entrepreneurs (two women and 12 men) each received the first tranche of their 'incubation grants' to start or scale up their businesses.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

- **UNDP** shared the findings of its *Business and Labour Market Survey* at an event in Peshawar (20 January 2021). This evidence is well-placed to inform the development of more effective government strategies to combat COVID-19's impact on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's economy.
- **UNESCAP** participated in the *Common Country Analysis 2020*, alongside UN agencies active in Pakistan.

OUTCOME 2 DECENT WORK



WORK AND TRAINING

- **UNDP's** *Cash-for-Work Programme* got underway in Balochistan. Its implementing partner, the Taraqee Foundation, worked with Balochistan's Forest Department to roll out the programme's two main components: the rehabilitation of government centres and a *Clean and Green* tree planting drive. The Forest Department specified which species of trees to plant and areas were prepared for plantation. So far, 236 labourers have been engaged for 1,407 labour days. The foundation's short video on the programme was welcomed by government ministers on social media.
- The **ILO** reached out to workers through implementation agreements with the Pakistan National Textile, Leather, Garments and General Workers' Federation (PNTLGGWF). The project developed an awareness raising toolkit in Urdu. It also trained 1,366 cotton pickers – including women and adolescents – on child labour, forced labour, occupational safety and health, and COVID-19 through 25 events in remote parts of Southern Punjab.
- The **ILO** signed an implementation agreement with the Bunyad Literacy Community Council to develop and implement a *Joint Action Plan* in partnership with local departments, registered bodies, institutions, unions and communities.

WORK AND TRAINING

- The project will establish 32 Decent Work Cotton Resource Centres (DCRCs) in eight union councils of the Khairpur Tamianwali *tehsil* in Punjab's district of Bahawalpur. It will support 800 working children (aged 5–14) to withdraw from the cotton value chain, and prevent their 350 young siblings from entering the value chain, by providing education through formal schools, non-formal centres and skills training institutions. The project will also link 500 families with social safety nets and establish a community-based 'multi-stakeholder monitoring and remedial mechanism'.
- The **IFAD**-assisted *Southern Punjab Poverty Alleviation Project* (SPPAP) enrolled 1,400 young people (60% of whom are young women) in vocational and entrepreneurship skills training in January 2021. Skills development promises better income-generation opportunities and work environments, especially for women.

RESEARCH

- The **ILO** and **UNDP** completed a strategic framework on *Livelihood Protection and Youth Employment in Response to COVID-19*, incorporating feedback from other UN members of the Livelihoods Group. Based on the framework, the Planning Commission is developing projects that will be implemented by the Federal and Provincial Governments.
- The **ILO** completed its *Rapid assessment of COVID-19's impact on labour migration governance, recruitment practices and migrant workers*.

OUTCOME 3

HEALTH AND WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE



COVAX

- **WHO** and **UNICEF** assisted planning for COVAX's roll-out in 2021 – the global initiative led by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, WHO and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations to accelerate equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines worldwide. UNICEF will facilitate the procurement, supply and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines which WHO has pre-qualified or placed on its *Emergency Use List*, in addition to supporting cold chain procurement, vaccine logistics, community engagement, crisis communications and training. Other development partners will provide support through the Vaccine Logistics Coordination Committee. Pakistan is expected to receive subsidized vaccines for 20% of its population through the COVAX facility, which will be rolled out in three phases. Phase 1 will target an estimated 7 million people (3% of the population) using mRNA (Pfizer and Moderna) and vector-based vaccines (AstraZeneca), subdivided into phase 1a, targeting frontline health workers, and phase 1b targeting all other health workers. Phase 2 will target 38.4 million members of 'prioritized groups' (17% of the population) – that is, people over the age of 60. Other developments are also worth highlighting:

- Talks are underway between the Government of Pakistan and Sinopharm for 1.25 million vaccine doses (not yet pre-qualified by WHO). A donation of 500,000 Sinopharm doses will be delivered by the end of January 2021 to vaccinate frontline health workers treating COVID-19 patients. Pakistan has identified 582 vaccination sites nationwide for the vaccine's administration. Master trainers will be trained as of 25 January, and vaccinations are due to start in the second week of February. The Prime Minister has approved US\$150 million for vaccine procurement through bilateral agreements – enough to vaccinate 10 million people.
- Pakistan has expressed an interest in receiving initial doses of the Pfizer vaccine to cover 0.25% of its 'phase 1' target population. In its COVAX application, Pakistan agreed to any COVAX vaccine portfolios. The vaccines that will most likely be rolled out are AstraZeneca, Novavax, Jansen (Johnson and Johnson), Sanofi and GSK. To enable the use of the Pfizer vaccine, Pakistan is procuring 23 ultra-cold chain equipment systems for the federal level and 15 high-burden districts, with funding from the Asian Development Bank. The procurement lead time of 2–3 months needs to be factored into the introduction of the Pfizer vaccine.

PROTECTIVE PERSONAL EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- **IOM** procured and distributed PPE, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) machines, oxygen concentrators and clinical assets to the National Disaster Management Authority and tertiary hospitals in Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. To respond to growing COVID-19 testing needs, it provided 400 test kits and 1,000 sampling swabs to the NDMA.
- **UNOPS** procured and provided 18 portable ultrasound machines and printers to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Department of Health to support the COVID-19 response by making diagnosis and treatment more accessible.
- **UNICEF's** provision of basic PPE (gloves, sanitizers and masks) to 130,154 frontline health workers in 2020 (91% of the target) was key to sustaining immunization services. To ensure the availability of oxygen therapy services for COVID-19 patients and maternal, neonatal and child health care (MNCH), UNICEF used its own resources to procure 525 oxygen concentrators, which it delivered to primary health care facilities nationwide (247 in Punjab, 149 in Sindh, 64 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 32 in Balochistan, 13 each in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and seven in Islamabad Capital Territory). An additional 220 oxygen concentrators were procured with funding from the Asian Development Bank. These will be delivered in line with the Ministry of Health's distribution plan.



ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES

- UN agencies, especially **UNICEF** and **WHO**, continued to work with the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination, provincial Health Departments, development partners, academia and civil society to ensure the continuity of essential health services, maintain monitoring capacities and raise public awareness. For instance, UNICEF helped provincial and regional Health Departments to ensure the continuity of immunization, antenatal and postnatal care, delivery services, child care and curative care for adults in 136 targeted health facilities – benefitting 3,459,844 people (108% of the target). These facilities vaccinated 104,565 children under the age of 1 (62% of the target) against measles in 2020.
- **UNICEF** mobilized 461,288 religious leaders (134% of the target) through existing polio alliances and health programmes to improve COVID-19 risk perception, emphasize the importance of handwashing, mask-wearing use and physical distancing, and engage other religious leaders to follow suit. These leaders disseminate health information – including messages promoting polio eradication and immunization – through Friday sermons and mosque announcements.
- **UNOPS** continued its ongoing human resource services for WHO’s *Polio Programme* by issuing contracts to 752 personnel working on polio eradication nationwide – including doctors, administrative and monitoring staff – alongside support for field staff in remote locations. This eased pressure on WHO, freeing up its resources to concentrate on health activities and surveillance campaigns.
- **UNICEF** assisted the Pakistan Paediatric Association to develop clinical guidelines for the management of children with COVID-19 and trained 1,570 paediatricians nationwide. This contributed to the continuity of child health services – including COVID-19 treatment, reporting multi-system inflammatory syndrome and the ‘birth dose’ initiative.
- **UNICEF** backed community-based interventions for the continuity of antiretroviral therapy for children and adults living with HIV in Larkana, Sindh, to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic from interrupting paediatric HIV services. Through telephone consultations and home, 2,274 people accessed HIV treatment services.

TELEMEDICINE AND TRAINING

- As part of **UNDP’s** and **UNFPA’s** support for *Sehat Kahani*, 1,000 doctors and nurses were trained on intensive care in Balochistan as were 2,000 more in the rest of Pakistan – three-fifths of the 5,000 medical professionals who will be trained overall. *Sehat Kahani* – in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA, the National Health Services Academy, the Ministry of National Health Services and the Institute for Development Studies and Practices (IDSP) – is implementing Pakistan’s first ‘tele-ICU’ project. This will enable critical care specialists to provide advice virtually to junior doctors in public and private ICUs on diagnosis and treatment. Telemedicine support has been extended through the *Sehat Kahani* app to trained health workers and 55 intensive care units (ICUs) have been made operational nationwide, including 10 in Balochistan, to bolster the COVID-19 response. The *Sehat Kahani* team navigated several challenges, such as limited internet access in remote hospitals, by proactively engaging with private and public sector partners. For instance, hospitals without internet access received a helpline number (0213-6100774) to enable telephone consultations. The training of 2,000 nurses across Pakistan is ongoing.
- **UNICEF** supported the introduction of telemedicine in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab through civil society and professional organizations. By enabling 12,718 users (10,818 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 1,900 in Punjab) to access health care, telemedicine proved a successful model for remote medical consultations, the management of common diseases and antenatal care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Building on this success, the Ministry of National Health Services is developing strategies and guidelines for telemedicine with UNICEF’s technical assistance. **UNICEF** supported the training of 215,241 frontline health workers (143% of the target) on IPC and another 92,273 frontline workers (92% of the target) and community volunteers on COVID-19 case identification and referral. This contributed to the continuity of essential health services for an estimated 4 million children every month in 2020.

TELEMEDICINE AND TRAINING

- With **UNICEF's** technical and financial assistance, two training modules were developed on COVID-19 and IPC for frontline health workers based in communities and primary health care facilities. The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination approved the modules and recommended that Pakistan's provinces and regions use them to train frontline workers.

HEALTH AWARENESS, RESEARCH AND DIALOGUE

- **UNICEF** conducted four rapid mobile-based population surveys in 2020 – longitudinal research that shed light on changing perceptions, behaviours, coping mechanisms, emerging needs and trust in institutions. For instance, surveys found that 62% of people are open to being vaccinated against COVID-19 and 33% (up from 13%) are willing to seek medical help if they have symptoms. They also reveal widespread complacency about preventive behaviours – only 23% of people wore masks in public places in late 2020, down from 68% during the 'first wave' of COVID-19 infections in March 2020. RCCE teams learned how to develop tools and techniques to collect and analyse social data during emergencies, alongside systems to use this information to develop, adapt and implement response strategies. The *WASH COVID-19 Survey* was also rolled out. Some 150 of 300 questionnaires were completed and a policy brief based on the survey's initial 1,000 responses was shared with government officials.
- **UNICEF** continued to use the mass media to communicate with the public, as 81% of respondents cite the radio and television are their most trusted sources of information on COVID-19. Twenty-five episodes of the weekly radio show *Kadam Kadam Sehat* were broadcast on Radio Pakistan – thanks to the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation, which has 83 million listeners – and 41 radio channels.
- **UNICEF** reached 36.6 million at-risk people with preventive messages on COVID-19 in 2020, including by using mobile vans, rickshaws and mobile floats in all provinces – most notably through polio and health structures – to spread the word on physical distancing, preventive behaviours, handwashing and hygiene. WhatsApp was used 297,109 times to reach people with information on risk perception, infection prevention and preventive practices.
- **UNICEF** continued to support 85 agents of the *Polio Helpline* (1166) to address COVID-19 in 2020. In November 2020, the number of hotline agents fell from 250 to 85 because of a funding gap at the NDMA. The hotline receives nearly 15,000 calls every day. To date, the helpline has received over 7.6 million calls (47% of the target) and responded to more than 5.4 million (49% of the target). Ten medical doctors support the helpline's 85 remaining agents to address callers' technical queries.
- **UNESCO** and Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad organized the online conference, *Awareness of the psychological consequences and mental health in pandemics: A case of COVID-19 infodemic* (31 December 2020).
- **UNICEF** supported the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination to conduct a web-based poll to understand COVID-19's impact on reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, adolescent health and nutrition (RMNCAH&N). This evidence will help guide strategies to maintain essential health services during the pandemic. The RCCE Task Force promoted critical links between the public and health centres, which were initially viewed as unsafe locations where people could contract COVID-19. Following government SOPs on infection prevention and control for health workers and health facilities, the Task Force promoted safe schools and safe health centres – especially for nutrition and vaccination services. As a result of the poll's findings, RCCE modules were included in all health care trainings, with a focus on improving frontline workers' interpersonal communication skills to address misinformation and build trust.
- **UNDP**-backed consultants – a public health consultant and a data analysts – have had their contracts extended at the request of the Ministry of Health, since their support is considered invaluable to the COVID-19 response. The latter drafted op-eds and developed presentations for journalists on COVID-19 and the upcoming vaccine roll-out. The data analysed visualized age-specific data from the second round of the *Seroprevalence Survey* and worked on 'proportional multi-state life table simulation' modelling, derivations and coding for COVID-specific data.

WASH FACILITIES AND SUPPLIES

- **UNICEF, WHO** and the Government of Pakistan worked in close collaboration to ensure safe water supplies, basic sanitation, hygiene promotion – including through the provision of handwashing stations – environmental cleaning and capacity building for sanitary and frontline workers. UNICEF's IPC and WASH response in Pakistan is aligned with UNICEF's *Global Emergency Guidelines* on resilience-building and COVID-19 prevention and control.
- **UNICEF** and WASH sector partners, coordinated by the Ministry of Climate Change, provided WASH services to 1,477 health care facilities, reaching more than 9.1 million people in 2020. WASH sectors partners, including UNICEF, installed 3,767 handwashing stations during the course of the year – 2,138 of which (119% of the target) were installed by UNICEF. Some 28.3 million people benefitted from hygiene promotion services, including IPC-related information. UNICEF also rehabilitated and installed WASH facilities in 701 health care facilities (78% of the target), encompassing ultraviolet (UV) water filters, toilets and handwashing stations (373 in Punjab, 38 in Sindh, 136 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 154 in Balochistan). This secured 2.2 million people's access to safe water and sanitation in health facilities and reduced the risk of COVID-19 infection. While UNICEF implemented WASH and IPC interventions nationwide, it focused on 20 of 27 districts with a high burden of COVID-19, in line with the Government's epidemiological data. It also supported the reopening of schools by ensuring the availability and functionality of school WASH facilities, including handwashing stations.
- **UNICEF** partnered with Unilever to distribute 8,000 bottles of bleach and 140,000 bars of soap to 38 health care facilities (20 in Sindh and 18 in Punjab). An additional 60,000 bars of soap were distributed to at-risk communities in Punjab. Distributing these supplies aided the effective cleaning and disinfection of health facilities, thereby reducing the risk of COVID-19 infection among health workers, patients and caregivers.
- **UNICEF** leveraged existing WASH programmes, like *Clean and Green Pakistan*, and networks of volunteers to advance RCCE. Given travel restrictions, it used digital and social media to engage communities and religious leaders.

WASH FACILITIES AND SUPPLIES

- To promote handwashing as a critical COVID-19 prevention and control measure, **UNICEF** supported the fabrication and installation of handwashing stations in strategic places in cities and communities, for instance at cattle markets during Eid Ul-Adha. These facilities included foot-operated handwashing stations, as well as mobile handwashing stations installed on water tankers, 4x4 trucks, motorcycles and rickshaws. UNICEF supported urban stakeholders to convert old 200 litre drums into handwashing stations and place them at strategic sites. Each station also served as a point for disseminating information on infection prevention and control. Over 10.2 million people (102% of the target) benefitted from such hygiene promotion services and information, while over 5.6 million people accessed the 2,138 handwashing stations installed by UNICEF in 2020.
- **IOM** worked closely with local government authorities to ensure communities' access to handwashing facilities, soap and reliable water supplies. It helped to install 130 handwashing stations nationwide to improve health and hygiene, while reducing the spread of COVID-19.
- The **ITC's** *Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress* (GRASP) project installed waste bins in three districts of Sindh (Karachi, Thatta and Khairpur) through Vegetable and Livestock Market Committees. It installed handwashing stations in fruit and vegetable markets to make their operations safer. In Balochistan, the GRASP project also distributed masks, soap and sanitizers.

WASH AWARENESS AND TRAINING

- A **UNICEF**-backed mobile application engaged young people by enabling two-way communication with *Clean and Green Pakistan* Champions. Some 119,000 youths registered on the system and 50,000 acknowledged social and behaviour change communication messages on hand hygiene.
- **UNICEF, WHO** and the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination developed training videos and manuals on cleaning and disinfection using chlorine. These were used to train partners, youths, frontline workers and other health workers, both in-person and online. UNICEF supported the training of 8,626 frontline sanitary workers and health workers on WASH and IPC in health care facilities and high-risk communities.

OUTCOME 4 NUTRITION



TREATING MALNUTRITION

- **WFP** supported *Ehsaas Nashonuma* – the Government's national stunting prevention and social safety programme – by establishing 29 facilitation centres in nine districts. These provide children and pregnant and lactating women with specialized nutritious foods and health-related support.
- **WFP** and **UNICEF** supported Sindh's Department of Health to strengthen nutrition supply chain management by training 47 district warehouse managers. All 13 targeted districts were never 'out of stock' in terms of nutrition supplies.
- 2,769 **UNICEF**-supported health sites (92% of the target) provided nutrition services in 2020 (1,710 in Punjab, 7,74 in Sindh, 122 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 163 in Balochistan). In total, 161,702 children (86,511 girls and 75,191 boys) suffering from severe acute malnutrition were admitted for treatment (58% of the target) (43,697 in Punjab, 60,728 in Sindh, 29,856 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 27,421 in Balochistan). UNICEF and its partner, the Shifa Foundation, established 10 mobile nutrition teams in Sindh to reach 650 remote villages in the drought-affected district of Tharparkar. As a result, 2,102 severely malnourished children were enrolled for treatment.
- **UNICEF**, other nutrition stakeholders and the UN-H5 partnership successfully advocated for the continuity of essential nutrition services during the pandemic. This helped children and women access lifesaving and preventive nutrition services nationwide in 2020 at the facility and community levels. The Nutrition Working Group developed simplified nutrition guidelines – on infant and young child feeding, identifying children suffering from wasting and wasting case management – which were endorsed by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination.

IMPROVING NUTRITION

- **UNICEF** supported Vitamin A supplementation in 130 districts, benefitting 27.3 million children (88.5% of the target). Due to the COVID-19 crisis, only one round of supplementation could be conducted. To ensure the safety of frontline workers, UNICEF developed guidance materials for them with the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination, the National Emergency Operations Centre and the *Expanded Programme on Immunization* (EPI).
- **UNICEF** contributed to government effort to make 3,405 face masks, 2,000 gloves and 23,500 sanitizers available to nutrition service providers – supplies worth US\$ 221,631.
- **UNICEF** supported online training for 22,495 service providers on the simplified guidelines for infant and young child feeding and the community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) (11,627 in Punjab, 9,963 in Sindh, 160 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 745 in Balochistan).
- With **UNICEF's** support, Lady Health Workers and community-based health workers spearheaded interpersonal communication on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices in the context of COVID-19, reaching 1,575,665 pregnant and lactating women in 2020 (142% of the target) (1,168,101 in Punjab, 205,989 in Sindh, 106,330 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 95,545 in Balochistan).
- **UNICEF** rolled out a comprehensive nutrition-specific plan for communications. The Ministry of National Health Services approved its communication products (flyers, posters, banners, counselling cards on infant and young child feeding, three radio messages and six short social media videos). These were used by the Ministries of Health and



Poverty Alleviation, NGO partners, Provincial Disaster Management Authorities and Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Units to promote good nutrition practices in the context of COVID-19. The products reached 48.2 million people through social media platforms, including Facebook, What’sApp, Instagram and Twitter.

- **UNICEF** commemorated *World Breastfeeding Week* by helping the Ministry of National Health Services and provincial Departments of Health to disseminate COVID-specific breastfeeding messages on social media and the mass media (radio, cable television and the print media). An op-ed by UNICEF’s Country Representative was published in a leading newspaper, as were four op-eds in local newspapers in Balochistan.
- **UNICEF** held a session with 44 adolescents (20 girls, 23 boys and one transgender adolescent) to sensitize them on adolescent nutrition in the context of COVID-19.

OUTCOME 5

FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



AWARENESS RAISING

- **FAO** encouraged all of its project participants to follow COVID-19 SOPs during Farmer Field School (FFS) sessions, such as handwashing, mask-wearing and physical distancing. It disseminated COVID-19 awareness messages in local languages (Balochi, Pashto, Brahvi and Urdu) through What’sApp and social media in January 2021, sensitizing communities in targeted districts to stem the spread of COVID-19. FAO conducted COVID-19 awareness sessions as part of all of its interventions, ranging from the distribution of inputs to training initiatives.
- The **ITC’s** GRASP project conducted awareness raising sessions for 98 women in six villages of Sindh’s district of Thatta. They focused on the Government’s *Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme* for households hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar sessions were conducted for Market Committees, whereby male entrepreneurs transferred knowledge to women entrepreneurs in targeted districts. The GRASP project also delivered two capacity building sessions on safe market functioning during the pandemic, alongside sessions on health and safety measures, and safe business practices for farmers and local support organizations in Thatta.
- The **ITC’s** GRASP project conducted a detailed study, contacting NGOs and other agri-business service providers – including government entities – to assess the challenges they faced during the COVID-19 lockdown in terms of reaching out to farmers and communities. The study proposes solutions to overcome similar crises in the future.

LIVESTOCK SUPPORT

- **FAO** and the **ITC** distributed 10,500 poultry birds to 2,000 women in Balochistan’s districts of Nushki and Kharan as part of the *Integrated Household Food Systems* (IHFS) initiative. Centring on kitchen gardening, homestead poultry and homestead dairy production, the initiative targets pregnant and lactating women, with a view to improving their diets and household food security during the pandemic. To date, the agencies have trained 2,286 women in these districts on vegetable gardening and poultry rearing. FAO also distributed flyers on poultry rearing to beneficiaries.
- The **ITC’s** GRASP project carried out a 5-day training session on animal health and nutrition for 30 livestock farmers, equipping them with technical skills to increase their productivity. Three sessions focused on value added milk products. Women beneficiaries benefitted from an exposure visit to Sindh’s Agriculture University in Tando Jam.

LIVESTOCK SUPPORT

- With the support of Balochistan's Livestock Department, **FAO** organized *Livestock Health Camps* in the province. It is also raised awareness, engaged in advocacy and provided technical support, information and guidance to help livestock farmers protect animals from disease.
- **FAO** provided 200,000 vaccine doses for foot and mouth disease (FMD) to the Livestock and Dairy Development Department in Balochistan's district of Musakhel.
- The **IFAD**-assisted *Economic Transformation Initiative's* investment in a public-private-producer-partnership (4Ps) model for dairy processing secured the incomes of 450 women dairy farmers, strengthening their resilience.

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT

- The **IFAD**-assisted *Southern Punjab Poverty Alleviation Project* provided 1,322 tonnes of wheat grain to 7,857 households through community food banks, boosting food security during the 'hunger' season. Some 89% of the women assisted have Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) scores of between 0 and 18, indicating such extreme poverty which exposes households to the risk of hunger in the months before the wheat harvest.
- The **IFAD**-assisted *Economic Transformation Initiative* (ETI) bolstered the income of nurseries and wage labourers in Gilgit-Baltistan by engaging them in planting 20,200 fruit plants and 43,000 forest plants in existing and newly developed land in Diamer and Baltistan.
- **FAO** trained farmers in Balochistan's district of Nasirabad on tunnel installation and the benefits of tunnel farming. It delivered post-harvest management trainings for women tomato farmers in Balochistan – honing their skills on picking, cleaning, sorting, grading and packing their produce for high-end markets.
- **FAO** and the **ITC's** GRASP project developed manuals on date processing and post-harvest management, mango processing and post-harvest management, and goat management as part of the *COVID-19 Emergency Work Plan*. Training for farmers began across Sindh.
- **FAO** trained farmers from South Waziristan on 'good agricultural and handling practices'. It delivered on-farm training for 'high tunnel' beneficiaries in the Newly Merged Districts of Orakzai, North and South Waziristan.
- **FAO** assessed 560 farmers for the provision of seed packages of alternative crops during the forthcoming *Kharif* season in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's district of Torgar and the Newly Merged Districts of Mohmand and Bajaur. Alongside post-distribution follow-up with 164 recipients of *Rabi* seed packages (wheat, onion and off-season tomato seeds), **FAO** provided technical assistance on crop production technologies in Mohmand, Bajaur, Khyber and Torgar.
- **FAO** installed 120 walk-in-tunnels in the Newly Merged District of Kurram for off-season vegetable production. It distributed 320 fuel-efficient stoves in Kurram – a proactive measure to conserve forests in sub-watershed areas. It also completed the installation of 65 high tunnels with drip irrigation systems in Khyber, Orakzai and North and South Waziristan.

OUTCOME 6 RESILIENCE



EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

- **WFP** continued to provide emergency assistance to vulnerable groups in Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to help them cope with the repercussions of shocks in 2020 – floods, heavy snowfall, locust swarms and the COVID-19 pandemic – and prevent their nutrition status from deteriorating further. As of January 2021, WFP has provided US\$2.2 million in cash support to over 130,000 food-insecure people in Pakistan.
- **WFP** carried out the second phase of its flood response operations with multipurpose cash transfers in three of Sindh's worst-affected districts (Mirpurkhas, Umerkot and Sanghar). These transfers target 117,000 people who did not receive food assistance during the first phase of the flood response in September 2020. In January 2021, WFP distributed US\$943,000 to 116,000 people in targeted areas. These efforts are in line with an inter-agency needs assessment by WFP and its partners in September–October 2020, which revealed that the devastating floods prompted by heavy monsoon rains in August affected 2.5 million people in Sindh, leaving 1.2 million highly vulnerable. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused their lives and livelihoods to deteriorate even further.
- The **IFAD**-assisted National Poverty Graduation Programme (NPGP) identified 3,000 households who will be provided with assets.
- The **IFAD**-assisted *Southern Punjab Poverty Alleviation Project* identified 5,000 household who will each receive two goats to improve their livelihoods and build resilience to socio-economic shocks. The project has provided goats to 72,748 households. The project also assist household in extreme poverty (Poverty Score Card 0-11) with secure housing. During January 1,339 were under construction while work on 49 new houses was initiated in January providing cumulative wage opportunity to more than 8000 households. In addition 200 plots have purchased for construction of additional houses. SPPAP has so far constructed 3206 secure housing for landless households in 10 districts of South Punjab. SPPAP under the revolving fund differed repayment of loans for 971 borrowers (micro-finance recipients) to mitigate the negative impact of COVID19 on their businesses.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- **UNDP's** implementing partner, the Taraqee Foundation, began the *Cash-for-Work Programme's* tree planting drive under the leadership of Balochistan's Forest Department. The foundation moved a step further by launching the *Adopt a Tree* campaign. It is also recording short video messages by prominent personalities, highlighting UNDP's support and the importance of community involvement in tree plantation.

RISK ANALYSIS AND TRAINING

- **WFP** teamed up with a consultancy firm on a *Climate Risk Analysis for Pakistan* in January 2021. The analysis is part of WFP's *Critical Climate Initiative*, which supports 'climate-vulnerable' countries to access financing opportunities for climate change mitigation. Analysing climate risks is especially prescient in Pakistan, as increasingly severe and frequent climate hazards – drought, floods and heavy snowfall – threaten the country's fragile nutrition situation.
- The **IOM**-led Natural Disaster Consortium trained 180 people on COVID-19 SOPs, hygiene and IPC – including religious leaders, frontline health workers, sanitary workers and Community Resource Persons. It adapted IEC materials on COVID-19 into local languages, including Urdu and Dari.

DIALOGUE

- **UNESCAP's** South and South West Asia Office (SSWA) organized the *4th South Asia Forum on the SDGs: Fostering sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19* (2–3 December 2020). Over 500 participants discussed COVID-19's impact on the SDGs and suggested priorities, strategies and responses to build back better. Prominent Pakistani participants – from the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute – explained how government interventions are offsetting the pandemic's devastating impact. They highlighted the urgent need for further investments in social sectors to address the deep-rooted inequalities that COVID-19 has laid bare. UNESCAP SSWA and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute also organized a panel on *Accelerating SDGs Achievement and Building Back Better from COVID-19 Pandemic* (15 December) as part of the SDPI's *23rd Sustainable Development Conference* in Pakistan.
- **UNESCAP** organized a special high-level event on *Disaster and Climate Resilience in South Asia* (4 December 2020) with government representatives from across the region, including the Adviser to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Climate Change. They recommended drafting a new regional framework to shape a long-term, holistic, strategic approach to reducing disaster risks and building climate resilience.

Majida's and Anwar's story: 4Ps help dairy farmers flourish



Dairy farmers Majida and Anwar Khan are thriving thanks to the 4Ps (public-private-producer-partnership) model. Majida is one of the 450 women farmers receiving support from Mamu Dairy – a small dairy farm in Gilgit that IFAD's *Economic Transformation Initiative* is supporting to strengthen the dairy supply chain. Mamu Dairy has improved Majida's and Anwar's understanding of dairy farming, medication for cows and feeding trays. It provides feed at lower-than-market prices, while giving them a platform to sell milk and earn a sustainable income. With the support of Mamu Dairy and the Bank of Khyber, Majida and Anwar also received 25 Australian cows on a loan basis.

“I started dairy farming back in 2012, when I only had four cows (local breed) through which I earned PKR 40,000 per month on average,” explains Majida. “Both I and my husband worked hard to establish a dairy farm. Today we can make ends meet.”

Shah Bibi's story: Women-owned grocery shop boosts rural resilience



“My husband is a daily labourer unable to cover the expenses of 10 family members,” says Shah Bibi. Their plight became desperate when his income “dropped to zero during COVID-19.”

The IFAD-assisted *National Poverty Graduation Programme* came to their aid. It provided families like Shah Bibi's with grocery items and livelihood assets.

Thanks to this lifeline, Shah Bibi opened a small home-based grocery shop in her hometown, the village of Hayat Brohi, in Sindh's Shikarpur district.

She saves an average of PKR 300–400 each and plans to invest her savings in her children's education. Today, Shah Bibi takes pride in being a role model for women in her community struggling with financial difficulties.



OUTCOME 7 EDUCATION AND LEARNING



EDUCATION PLANNING

- **UNICEF** assisted the development of a *National Education Response and Resilience Plan for COVID-19* to guide the Government's education response, as well as a simulation and costing model. With the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), UNICEF supported the formulation of a *National Continuity of Learning Framework* covering remote 'blended' learning options using various technological platforms. The agency also aided the development of guidance and SOPs for the safe reopening of schools and alternative learning programmes at the federal and provincial levels. It contributed to rolling out and monitoring these guidelines and SOPs through training manuals and packages, featuring content on handwashing, hygiene, mental health and psychosocial support.
- **UNICEF** successfully advocated for the prioritization of handwashing, which became part of the costed investment plan for the safe reopening of schools. This strengthened planning and budgeting processes by the Government, partners and school management authorities.
- In its programming framework for 2021, **UNESCO** has prioritized the provision of WASH facilities for girls in 18 of Pakistan's most marginalized districts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

TRANSFERS, TRAINING AND FACILITIES

- **WFP** has provided cash transfers to 5,000 adolescent girls to date, in order to incentivize girls' enrolment and school attendance in the Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These transfers are unconditional during the COVID-19 pandemic; they will become conditional upon attendance once schools reopen. WFP also provided capacity development and technical support to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Department of Education, including the provision of IT equipment, COVID-19 prevention kits and training on cash-based integrated education programming.
- **UNICEF** supported online and in-person training on the safe reopening of schools, mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) for 3,035 Parent-Teacher Councils and School Management Committees, as well as 28,258 teachers. The Government's local teacher initiatives reached thousands more, including 330 School Management Committee members in December 2020.
- **UNICEF's** WASH and IPC interventions targeted 1,370 schools in 2020, reaching 1,352 (99% of the target), 51% of which are girls' schools. Overall in 2020, WASH sector partners targeted 2,952, reaching 1,344. In addition to WASH facilities and services, UNICEF provided disinfection services and supplies to several schools. To support the safe reopening of schools, UNICEF set up handwashing stations and distributed essential supplies like soap to 13,177 schools and alternative learning centres, benefitting 1.06 million children.
- **UNOPS** worked with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Elementary and Secondary Education Department on solar electricity in schools in the province's seven southern districts, with funding from the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Saudi Fund for Development. In January 2021, UNOPS completed solar plant installation in 38 schools and handed these over to the Government. To promote community ownership, the UNOPS project team trained 84 Parent-Teacher Council members on the solar panels' operation and maintenance.
- **UNOPS** teams conducted health, safety, security and environment (HSSE) trainings for 99 workers at project sites, focusing on safe work practices, including safety measures to combat COVID-19.

CONTINUITY OF LEARNING

- **UNICEF** worked with federal and provincial education authorities to support the continuity of learning despite COVID-related school closures, and plan for children's safe return to school. It supported remote learning modalities – such as sharing curriculum-based video lessons via smart phones, take-home learning materials, 'catch-up' learning interventions, and online and offline platforms with digitized learning content. In 2020, 79,131 children benefitted directly from alternate learning opportunities with UNICEF's support, mitigating learning losses manifold.
- **UNICEF** facilitated a partnership between Microsoft and Sindh's School Education and Literacy Department to pilot 'digital classrooms' and a learning app. This reflects how high-tech, low-tech and no-tech solutions emerged and evolved quickly to support home-based learning during the pandemic. UNICEF also supported efforts to digitize curricula and learning content, which were shared on digital platforms. The Federal Government's *Teleschool* initiative reached 4 million households with educational content, benefitting 7–8 million children. In Balochistan, the *My Home, My School* initiative shared subject-based educational videos through WhatsApp with 13,890 teachers, facilitators and parents, who set up classes for children in their households.
- **UNICEF** worked with education authorities across Pakistan's provinces to develop take-home materials for self-learning or guided learning for children who do not have access to technology. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, UNICEF assisted the development of an Accelerated Learning Package and the distribution of learning packages to 33,185 schools. This enabled teachers to assign homework on a weekly basis for an estimated 4.5 million students.

AWARENESS RAISING

- **UNESCO** revised social mobilization campaigns for girls' education, integrating awareness raising on precautionary measures to stem the spread of COVID-19. The radio programme, *Radio – My Best Friend*, has added a special segment to disseminate public service messages on COVID-19.
- **UNICEF** enhanced the COVID-19 education response through advocacy, communications and awareness raising on infection prevention, safe school reopening and the continuity of learning. It worked with Education Departments to disseminate government-approved messages on preventive measures, stigma reduction, SOP adherence, mental health and psychosocial well-being to teachers, education personnel and Parent-Teacher Council members.
- **UNICEF** reached 1,708,347 School Management Committee members, teachers and education personnel (52% of the target) with COVID-19 prevention messages via SMS, robocalls and social media. It also reached 278,857 parents with messages encouraging learning. UNICEF adopted innovative strategies to reach out to communities, parents, students and stakeholders during school closures, such as:

- In Balochistan, 1,897 girls participated in virtual menstrual hygiene management sessions.
- In Sindh, UNICEF distributed posters to 4,560 public schools, low-cost private schools and Alternative Learning Programme Centres. It also disseminated a 'guide to school reopening' by and for children.
- In Punjab, 50,400 teachers received SOP checklists, while 12 million parents and students received flyers on preventive measures. Twenty radio programmes aired messages on mental health and psychosocial support, the continuity of learning and the safe reopening of schools. UNICEF also supported 323 School Management Committees in high-burden districts through school grants for their safe reopening, including supplies like thermal guns, face masks, soaps and handwashing stations.
- All public school teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa received accelerated calendars and worksheets, which were uploaded on the Directorate's website. Learning videos reached 14,707 Parent-Teacher Council members (4,746 of whom are women) via WhatsApp.
- UNICEF successfully advocated for the use of Parent-Teacher Council funds to print RCCE materials. Posters on school-based COVID-19 prevention were also disseminated to all schools in Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Islamabad Capital Territory.

OUTCOME 8 GENDER, EQUALITY AND DIGNITY



CARE WORK

- **UNDP** produced a video on parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting how difficult it is to navigate school closures, remote work and physical distancing, especially for parents. Its purpose is to raise awareness among parents on how to treat their children during the pandemic.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

- **UNDP** developed an [animated video on violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), in line with WHO guidelines. WHO estimates that one in three women worldwide has experienced physical and/or sexual violence, usually by an intimate partner. The pandemic is increasing the risk of gender-based violence, in Pakistan and around the world.
- A **UNDP** COVID-19 awareness campaign is reaching out to 100,000 rural women with information to help them mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection, encourage them to follow SOPs and to call the *COVID-19/Polio Helpline* (1166) for help. A knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey after the campaign reveals that most respondents are following SOPs – washing their hands frequently, wearing masks and maintaining a distance from others. It also shows that risk perception is worsening. Most respondents believe that the threat of COVID-19 is 'exaggerated'.

Domestic Violence during COVID-19



Helpline 1700: Women and child protection section



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

- **UNICEF's** messages on preventing COVID-related stigma reached 51,820,082 people (102% of the target) in 2020.
- A **UNICEF** study examined how confinement affects children's experiences of violent discipline at home and in institutional care facilities. Its findings are informing evidence-based programming approaches to address violence and improve parenting skills. Based on the study, UNICEF developed messages on preventing violence against children and promoting online safety. These reached over 5.71 million people (1020% of the target) – including 1.28 million girls, 1.39 million boys, 1.35 million women and 1.67 million men in Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- **UN Women** helped Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Provincial Disaster Management Authority enhance the scope of the [1700 helpline by introducing a dedicated section for 'women and child protection'](#).
- **UNICEF**-supported child protection services directly benefitted 947 children in 2020 (240 girls and 707 boys – 135% of the target) in Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan.
- **UNICEF's** manuals and toolkits on psychological first aid, mental health and psychosocial support were used to train 8,290 social workforce professionals (4,227 women and 4,013 men – 138% of the target) on psychosocial support and stigma prevention in all of Pakistan's provinces. They were trained using multiple service delivery modalities: face-to-face training, online clinics and helplines. These trained social workers provided psychosocial support services to 216,144 parents, caregivers, children and adults (30,777 girls, 27,085 boys, 82,528 women and 75,754 men – 341% of the target) in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan. Moreover, 135,133 of them (21,067 girls, 18,261 boys, 50,603 women and 45,202 men) also received specialized counselling.

OUTCOME 9

GOVERNANCE



LAW ENFORCEMENT

- **UNDP** worked with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Prisons Department and judiciary to protect prisoners from COVID-19 by reducing overcrowding in jails. It supported legal aid for prisoners accused of involvement in petty offences, leading to the release of 65 prisoners to date.
- **UNOPS** began construction work on four women's accommodation buildings at police training colleges for Sindh's Police and the National Highways and Motorway Police, with funding from the United States Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. UNOPS teams conducted health, safety, security and environment trainings at all construction sites, training 89 workers on safe practices and COVID-19 prevention.

MEDIA OUTREACH

- **UNICEF** engaged 184,418 journalists, reporters and bloggers nationwide in 2020 (461% of the target) to promote accurate messages on COVID-19 and counter myths. To combat the erroneous belief that coronavirus is somehow 'fake', media professionals wrote about the severity of COVID-19, the importance of testing and early health-seeking behaviour, and the immediate need to adopt preventive behaviours like handwashing and physical distancing. UNICEF also supported the Ministry of Health to prepare guidelines on ethical media reporting on COVID-19.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- **UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA** and UNHCR continued the *UN Joint Programme on Adolescent and Youth Engagement (AYE)* to 'inspire and engage', 'inform and educate' and 'call youth to action' to combat COVID-19 across Pakistan. Findings from the programme's *Youth Perception Survey* – officially presented during *International Youth Day* – indicate that behaviour change messages on COVID-19 have been largely successful among Pakistan's digitally literate adolescents and youth. More than 69% of online respondents view COVID-19 as a threat, while 50% of interactive voice response (IVR) respondents do not. Nevertheless, 44% of IVR respondents think that more children will have to leave school to find work after the pandemic. The findings and recommendations of the survey informed the programme's interventions, such as:

- 209 Youth Ambassadors took part in a seven-hour digital training course (119 young men, 89 young women and one young transgender person), yielding a 'critical mass' of change agents ready to promote positive behaviours in their communities. Equipped with a special kit, the Youth Ambassadors delivered cascade training to 970 youths and community members.
- UNDP-trained Local Government Ambassadors conducted 59 awareness sessions with religious leaders on COVID-19 and SOPs, benefitting 240 people. They also delivered 60 COVID-19 awareness sessions through megaphones in public places, reaching 1,180 people. Women Local Government Ambassadors conducted awareness raising sessions at the household level for 101 women.
- *Coping with Corona*, a 10-week digital media campaign, targeted young people with UNICEF-approved content. Each week, it introduced a new COVID-related theme. It reached more than 1 million people, eliciting 1.7 million 'impressions', 240,000 video views and 86,000 'engagements' through its 65 pieces of content – animated videos, static posts, GIFs, Instagram stories, user generated content and four influencer marketing campaigns. The campaign reached more young men (63%) than women (37%) and more adolescents (49%) than youths (31%) or adults (20%). It reached young people in areas with limited internet access through local radio networks. For instance, 3.5 million listeners tuned into a radio programme on mental health and psychosocial support with a certified psychotherapist.
- A *Youth Innovation Challenge* called on adolescents and youth to devise solutions for the COVID-19 response. Their top 28 ideas were selected and transformed into projects. Each project received seed funding of PKR 70,000 (US\$500) paired with mentoring support. These projects cover a range of ideas – from developing ultraviolet disinfectant lamps, to creating employment opportunities for digitally skilled youths.

OUTCOME 10

SOCIAL PROTECTION



SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES

- The **ILO** completed the basic design of an *Unemployment Insurance Scheme* and developed a related project for the Federal Government. It also devised a draft implementation framework for social security coverage for domestic workers, brick kiln workers, construction workers and miners.

SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES

- The **ILO** strengthened social security agencies' capacities on data entry and the social protection database (SDG 1.3.1). It also developed an orientation package for social security officials entitled 'SIMPLIFY' – a 'structured approach to social security enforcement in the field'.
- The **ILO** organized three awareness raising events for employers on the benefits of social security. Held in Karachi and Kotri, Sindh, the events encouraged employers to register their workers with Employees' Social Security Institutions, the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution and the Workers' Welfare Fund.

RESEARCH

- The **ILO** conducted an exploratory study to inform the design of a *National Universal Registry of Workers and Enterprises*, including both the formal and informal economy.
- **UNICEF** provided technical contributions to a study on the social protection response to COVID-19, focusing on *Ehsaas*. This flagship programme reaches more than 14 million of the most marginalized families in Pakistan through the *Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme*, *Ehsaas Kafaalat* (targeting disadvantaged women) and *Ehsaas Nashonuma* (targeting children's and women's nutrition).

FOCUSING ON CHILDREN

- **UNICEF** contributed to the strategic policy agenda on *Public Finance for Children* (PF4C) in the wake of COVID-19. To increase investments in children and adolescents, it led evidence-based policy advocacy on the fiscal budget for 2020–21, the *Public Sector Development Programme*, *Annual Development Plans* and other schemes, highlighting structural issues of equity, gender and institutional capacities that influence policy commitments and priorities.
- **UNICEF** helped child rights stakeholders – including members of SDG Task Forces, parliamentary Standing Committees and several parliamentarians – engage with policy makers and economists on the 2020–21 fiscal budget's strategic impact on children. The recommendations of their high-level deliberations were presented to the National Assembly, prompting it to endorse the prioritization of children in social safety programmes. UNICEF also held virtual sessions on *Budget Analysis for Children* with field teams at the federal and provincial levels. These analysed budgetary allocations for 2020–21 in light of COVID-19 and issues related to the adequacy of funding for child rights, the use of development budgets, and territorial, gender and income inequalities. The discussions recommended measures to remove bottlenecks in financial management systems, address systemic capacity gaps, boost domestic resource generation and increase public spending on education and health for vulnerable children.
- **UNICEF** organized a roundtable meeting of the Chairs of National Assembly Standing Committees on child-centred budgeting for the 2020–21 fiscal year. It presented an overview to help parliamentarians and officials understand whether the budget is responsive to child rights. UNICEF's policy advocacy sought to integrate child-centred budgeting, reporting and monitoring processes in the oversight and accountability roles of Standing Committees on health, education, WASH and education. The policy deliberations also highlighted existing resource distribution priorities and mechanisms during the pandemic. The deliberations advocated for increased political and policy commitments on child-centred budgeting for the 2021–22 fiscal year in the areas of health, education, social protection, nutrition and WASH by integrating them into Standing Committees' periodic agendas.
- **UNICEF** provided technical assistance on evidence-based planning to the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives by developing a *Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Capacity Assessment Toolkit*, a *Monitoring, Evaluation and Results Policy Framework*, and revising the M&E chapter of the *Development Project Manual* to inform budget allocations. UNICEF also supported national-level reporting on 80 SDG indicators and provincial SDG scorecards, identifying child-related data gaps in the context of COVID-19.

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