

UNICEF in Pakistan

Annual Report 2025



Progress, Partnerships,
Impact for Children

COVER: Mujahid lifts his 9-month-old daughter Ayra into the air, sharing a joyful moment together. Baby Ayra, born 7 weeks preterm, was fragile and fighting for life. Through Kangaroo Mother Care, skin-to-skin contact, breastfeeding support and dedicated health workers, she steadily grew stronger, with normal developmental milestones, showing that simple, proven care can help babies survive and thrive.

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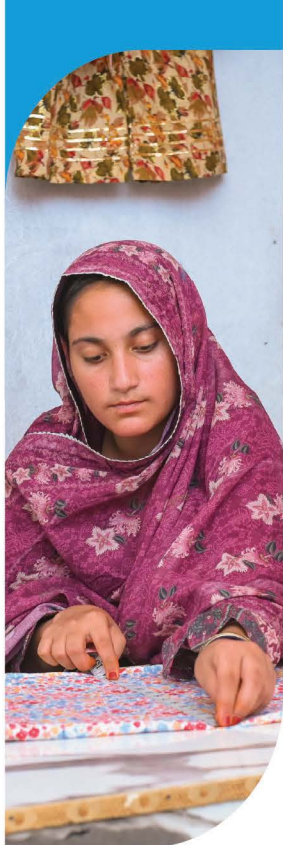


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Foreword

Pakistan stands at a pivotal moment for its children. With almost half of the population below the age of 18, the decisions made today will shape not only individual lives but the country's long-term development. Despite economic pressures, a constrained official development assistance environment and the continued impacts of flooding and climate shocks, and persistent inequalities, families and communities continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience and determination in striving for better futures.

This 2025 report reflects a year of both challenge and progress. Operating in a complex environment of fiscal tightening, climate emergencies and persistent inequalities, important gains were achieved. More children accessed essential health, nutrition, and learning services, while systems became more responsive, data-driven, and resilient. These results reflect the leadership of the Government of Pakistan, the commitment of frontline workers, and the strength of partnerships across sectors.

At the same time, the scale of unmet needs remains urgent. Too many children continue to die before their first birthday, face malnutrition, learning poverty, protection risks and climate vulnerability.

The intersecting nature of these challenges underscores the need for sustained, system-wide responses that

place children at the heart of public policy implementation, public financing and climate adaptation efforts to create a lasting impact at scale.

The year reinforced a fundamental lesson: lasting progress for children depends on strong public systems, coordinated multi-sectoral action, and meaningful community engagement. UNICEF and partners continued to strengthen these foundations in 2025, advancing integrated service delivery, expanding digitalization of government systems alongside data use, and placing communities at the center of solutions.

As UNICEF transitions to the Strategic Plan 2026–2029, the aim is clear: focus, scale and impact for children, taking into account differentiated requirements in each province. This direction is also shaped by the voices of young people themselves. As one young girl powerfully conveyed, the future depends on the imagination to dream, the courage to dare, and the determination to do. With aligned and sustained collective action, Pakistan can turn its demographic reality into a powerful opportunity for inclusive and resilient social and economic development-fulfilling children's immense potential and that of the nation.

Pernille Ironside

UNICEF Representative in Pakistan





© UNICEF/UNI973039/Reidy. UNICEF Representative in Pakistan, Pernille Ironside (center), with children attending a UNICEF mine risk awareness session in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Executive Summary

In 2025, Pakistan made important progress towards economic stabilization, with declining inflation, modest growth and reduced poverty offering some relief to families. However, these gains remain fragile. Fiscal constraints, climate-related shocks and persistent inequalities continue to shape the lives of children and the systems that serve them. In a context of increasing pressure on development financing and multilateral cooperation, sustained and coordinated efforts remain essential to achieve results for children.

Pakistan is home to over 112 million children, placing substantial demand on systems to deliver services at scale. Across sectors, many children continue to face barriers, with outcomes varying widely across provinces. Preventable child deaths remain high, malnutrition affects a large proportion of children, millions remain out of school, and access to protection and basic services is uneven. These challenges are closely linked to poverty, social norms, climate risks and differences in system capacity.



In 2025, UNICEF supported Pakistan to strengthen systems and expand access to services, focusing on reaching the most vulnerable children.

2025 results were achieved through a combination of system strengthening, community engagement and partnerships. UNICEF supported improvements in service delivery systems, while strengthening supply chains, workforce capacity and data systems. Digital platforms such as the District Health Information Software 2 (DHIS2) and interoperable registration systems helped improve targeting and ensure that services reach children who are most at risk of being missed.

Partnerships remained central to delivering results at scale. UNICEF worked closely with the government at federal and provincial levels, development partners, international financial institutions and communities to align priorities, mobilize resources and strengthen coordinated action across sectors.

However, significant challenges remain.

Economic pressures continue to affect households and public systems, climate shocks disrupt services and livelihoods, and disparities across provinces and population groups persist. Ensuring access to quality and consistent services remains a key challenge.

Several lessons emerged from implementation. Strengthening systems is essential for sustainable results. Integrated approaches that bring together services across sectors are more effective in addressing multiple deprivations.

Community engagement is critical to ensure uptake and sustainability, while data and evidence enable more targeted and efficient responses. Climate resilience must be embedded across all programmes to protect gains and ensure continuity.

Looking ahead, UNICEF will continue to

support Pakistan to strengthen systems, expand equitable access to services and build resilience. There is a growing recognition that improving outcomes for children requires addressing the full ecosystem in which they grow up. In response, UNICEF will advance area-based, integrated approaches, including the development of child friendly communities, bringing together services and partners at the local level.

This approach aligns with UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2026–2029, which places greater emphasis

on systems strengthening, integrated programming, efficiency and leveraging public systems and domestic financing. In a context of constrained global financing, stronger partnerships and more aligned use of resources will be essential.

By working together with government, partners and communities, there is an opportunity to accelerate progress and ensure that every child in Pakistan can survive, learn, be protected, safe, and thrive.



© UNICEF/UNI972060/Owais Rafiq. UNICEF Pakistan Deputy Representative Programmes, Sharmeela Rassool shares a cheerful moment with Hoorain (left) and Haroon (right) who studied in UNICEF-supported Temporary Learning Centres after the 2025 monsoon floods in Punjab.

Key Achievements

Every Child Survives and Thrives



162,000 newborns

received improved care in health facilities.



304,000 children

were treated for severe acute malnutrition.



437,000 children

were treated for pneumonia, diarrhoea and other illnesses.



37.3 million children

received vitamin A supplements.



Zero-dose children reduced by **27 percent** in high-risk urban areas.



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Children in Skardu play beneath cherry blossom trees, shaking branches as petals fall around them.

Every Child Learns



729,000 children, adolescents and youth accessed inclusive and climate-resilient learning and skilling opportunities (51 per cent girls).

288,000 learners benefitted directly from foundational learning interventions, including 54,000 in early childhood education.

Every Child Learns



311,000 adolescents and youth accessed learning and skills programmes (55 per cent girls).

71,000 out-of-school adolescents enrolled in accelerated learning pathways.

79,000 young people engaged in civic participation, climate action and community solutions.



Every Child is Protected

- **110,000 children** were registered through health-interoperable birth registration systems supported with the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA).
- **600 Community-Based Child Protected Committees** were established and strengthened.
- **1.5 million people** reached with child protection prevention efforts.
- **4,000 children** at risk or survivors of violence accessed case management and essential protection services.



Every Child lives in a Safe and Clean Environment

- **1.2 million people** were reached with Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) services.
- **865,000 people** gained access to durable basic safe water services.
- **459,000 people** were reached with emergency water services.
- **169,000 people** gained access to basic sanitation services.
- **93,000 people** were reached with emergency sanitation services.
- **500 communities** were declared open defecation free.



Every Child has an Equitable Chance in Life

- **PKR 716 billion** was allocated to the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) (20 per cent increase compared to 2024).
- **253,000 beneficiaries** were reached with digital and financial literacy support.
- **1 million women** were supported through the scale-up of digital wallets for financial inclusion.
- **57 government officials** were trained in multi-dimensional poverty measurement and evidence-based planning.
- **9,000 children** were screened for vision and hearing impairments.
- **1,200 adults** were trained and 3,200 community members were reached through disability inclusion initiatives.
- **134 research** and evaluation products consolidated through the Research and Evaluation Dashboard.



© UNICEF/UNI993875/Palazon.
A family sits on a charpai under the shade in Sujawal, Sindh. With intensifying heatwaves, shaded spaces provide limited but critical relief.

2025 in Review: Progress under Pressure

Pakistan is home to one of the largest child populations in the world, with more than 112 million girls and boys under the age of 18. Their well-being is central to the country's future, yet millions of children continue to face serious barriers to survival, development, learning and protection. Poverty, climate shocks, harmful social norms and inequitable access to services shape daily life for many families and disproportionately affect the most vulnerable children.

Despite recent efforts to stabilize the economy, the impacts of past economic stress, high living costs and recurrent climatic emergencies continue to be felt at household level. Flooding and other climate-related shocks in 2025 disrupted access to health care, safe water, nutrition services and schooling, increasing risks for children in already marginalized communities. While easing inflation may have provided some short-term relief for families, these gains remain fragile and unevenly experienced.

Pakistan's human development outcomes remain among the lowest globally, with deep inequalities across gender, geography and socio-economic status. Children born into poverty face compounded deprivations from early childhood that limit their chances to survive, grow and learn. Harmful gender and social norms continue to restrict girls' access to education, nutrition, health services and decision-making, reinforcing cycles of disadvantage.

Malnutrition remains a critical threat to child survival and development. More than four in ten children under five are stunted, and many suffer from wasting and micronutrient deficiencies, undermining their physical growth, cognitive development and future earning potential. Preventable diseases

continue to claim young lives: neonatal mortality remains high, hundreds of thousands of children miss routine vaccinations, and Pakistan has yet to eradicate polio.

Education outcomes reflect a deepening crisis. Over one-third of children aged 5–16 are out of school, with girls, children in rural and informal urban settings, and those in Balochistan facing the most severe exclusion. Many children who do enroll struggle to acquire foundational learning skills, limiting their ability to progress through the education system and transition into productive adulthood.

Children also face significant protection risks. Millions lack birth registration, restricting their access to basic services and legal protection. Child labour, child marriage and violence against children persist, particularly among poor, displaced and refugee populations. Children with disabilities and refugee children remain among the least visible and most underserved. Climate change continues to intensify these vulnerabilities.

Floods and heatwaves disrupt essential services, displace families and increase health, nutrition and protection risks for children. At the same time, limited digital access and unequal connectivity further widen gaps in learning, information and participation.

Pakistan's young population presents a powerful opportunity for social and economic progress, but only if children's rights and needs are placed at the centre of national development efforts. Accelerated, child-focused investments in health, nutrition, education, protection, climate resilience and social

protection are urgently needed to ensure that every child survives, learns and is protected. Without sustained action, the deprivations

children face today risk shaping inequalities for generations to come.

Development outcomes across provinces

	National	Balochistan	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Punjab	Sindh
Neonatal Mortality (%)	27	29	23	33	24
Birth Registration (%)	57	44	30	80	34
Stunting (%)	41	50	37	27	50
Access to safe water (%)	28	14	18	46	35
Out-of-School Children (%)	44	69	34	27	44
Child Multi-dimensional poverty (%)	53	75	52	33	53

Children living through crisis

In 2025, many children in Pakistan were affected by overlapping crises, including climate-related disasters, economic hardship, insecurity and ongoing displacement. Repeated floods, extreme heat and harsh winters damaged homes, schools and health facilities, disrupting access to essential services and placing additional strain on already stretched public systems.

The 2025 floods displaced thousands, severed access to education, health care and nutrition services, and heightened vulnerabilities among already marginalized communities. By mid-September, over 6.9 million people were affected nationwide, including millions of children, and at least 275 children had lost their lives. The floods increased the outbreaks of diseases like acute watery diarrhea, malaria, and dengue, and worsened child malnutrition and food insecurity.

These shocks made it harder for families to meet children's basic needs. Access to healthcare, safe drinking water and education was frequently interrupted, while food insecurity and health risks increased for young children and pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Displacement and population movements also heightened protection risks, including family separation, psycho-social distress and increased exposure to violence and exploitation.

Across affected areas, children's needs remained high, underscoring the importance of sustained humanitarian support to protect access to essential services and prevent further setbacks for the most vulnerable children.

Results for Children in 2025



UNICEF's work is guided by five interlinked goal areas that together address the full spectrum of children's rights and needs. In 2025, results for children in Pakistan were achieved through this integrated approach, as progress in health and nutrition was reinforced by improved access to safe water and sanitation; learning outcomes depended on protection services, community engagement and climate-resilient education systems; and the most vulnerable families were reached through stronger social policies and public financing for children. Across these goal areas, UNICEF supported government and partners to link services, data and financing-helping systems respond more effectively to shocks while delivering coordinated, life-course support to children, especially in underserved and crisis-affected communities.



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Two-year-old Zaryab sits next to his
1.5 year-old cousin Hina in the
remote mountains of Mansehra in
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Goal Area 1

Every child survives and thrives

Health and Nutrition (including Polio)

Too many children in Pakistan continue to die from preventable causes. For every 1,000 babies born, 35 die in their first month of life, and overall, 47 out of every 1,000 children do not survive to their first birthday. Adolescents also face serious health risks, with 9 deaths per 1,000 young people aged 10–19. These challenges persist alongside minimal public investment, with health accounting for only 0.9 per cent of total government expenditure (percentage of GDP) in the 2025–26 budget.

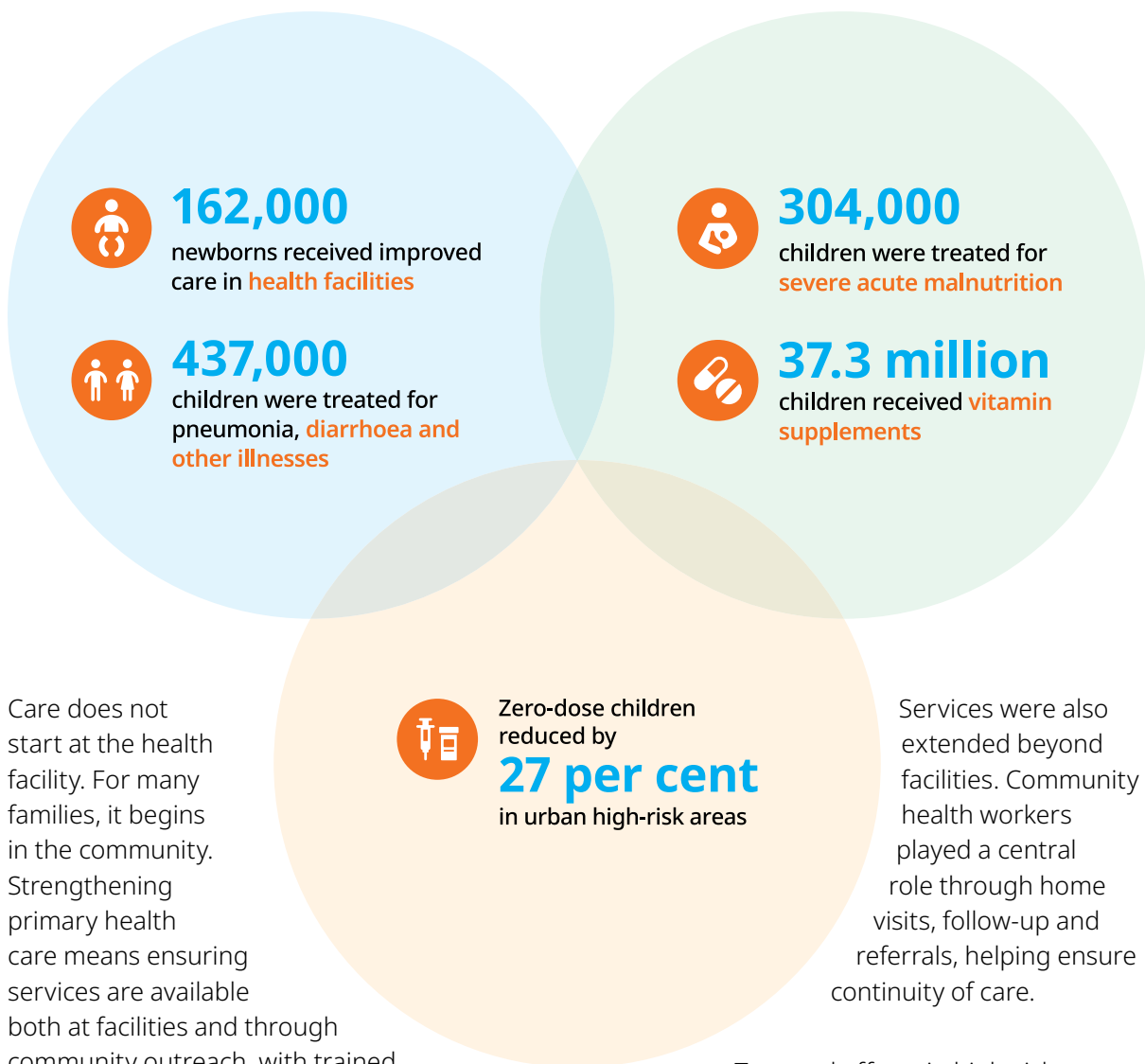
Malnutrition remains widespread and deeply harmful to children's growth and development. Over 40 per cent of children

under five are stunted due to long-term undernutrition, limiting their physical and cognitive development. A further 17.7 per cent are wasted, reflecting acute undernutrition, while more than half suffer from micronutrient deficiencies that weaken immunity and increase the risk of illness and death.

Gaps in immunization continue to place children at risk. Around 400,000 children have not received even a single routine vaccine, and Pakistan remains one of only two countries worldwide yet to eradicate polio, underscoring the ongoing urgency of reaching every child with life-saving vaccines.



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Kohshad proudly holds her newly born granddaughter as she brings her for vaccination at the Birth Dose Center in the Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences Hospital in Hyderabad, Sindh.



Care does not start at the health facility. For many families, it begins in the community. Strengthening primary health care means ensuring services are available both at facilities and through community outreach, with trained workers, reliable supplies and systems that link the two.

In 2025, UNICEF supported Pakistan to strengthen these connections. Health, nutrition and early childhood services were brought together, enabling families to access multiple services through a single visit or community outreach. This reduced the need for repeated travel and made care more accessible.

A key focus was improving reliability. Thirty-eight health facilities strengthened newborn care, while health workers were trained to manage common childhood illnesses. Cold chain systems and refrigerated transport were expanded to ensure vaccines remain effective and available.

Services were also extended beyond facilities. Community health workers played a central role through home visits, follow-up and referrals, helping ensure continuity of care.

Targeted efforts in high-risk urban areas reduced zero-dose children by 27 per cent. Nutrition and early childhood development were further integrated, including through the Benazir Nashonuma Programme, which provides cash support and nutrition services to pregnant women and young children, and parenting support initiatives.

Despite climate-related disruptions, the solarization of 493 facilities, pre-positioned supplies and emergency services helped maintain access to health services. Improved data systems and community engagement further strengthened results, contributing to a more connected and reliable health and nutrition system that reaches children consistently, including the most vulnerable.

The Best Start in Life

The early years of life shape a child's future. When children receive the right nutrition, care, and stimulation from the beginning, they are more likely to grow, learn, and thrive.

In 2025, UNICEF supported Pakistan to strengthen early childhood development through integrated approaches that bring together health, nutrition, early learning, and parenting support. A key milestone was the advancement of a national Early Childhood Development Framework, providing a foundation for coordinated action across sectors.

Innovative approaches such as "Project Play" helped translate this vision into practice, promoting learning through play and strengthening caregiver engagement. Through the establishment of Nurturing Care

Centers/Early Childhood Development centers, families received support to improve children's development in the earliest years. Communities are actively engaged through a state-of-the-art approach, "Community Play Lab," that enhances the parenting engagement for childcare at the household level. By localizing the procurement of early childhood development supplies, which include articles like arts and crafts supplies, books, toys, puppets, and other learning and playing materials, Pakistan is managing faster, more effective support to the children and women who need it most. By supporting systems, capacities, and families, UNICEF is helping to ensure that children not only survive but have a real opportunity to reach their full potential.



© UNICEF/UNI973002/Fahad. Maryum Shah is playing with her baby Zunaisha in the childcare room of Moulvi Ameer Shah Memorial Hospital in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Nurse Maryum's experience with premature birth shifted from professional to deeply personal when her second child, Zunaisha, was born with a low birth weight and severe respiratory complications. Maryum sought treatment at a Kangaroo Mother Care unit, where continuous skin-to-skin contact and exclusive breastfeeding became central to her child's recovery. Kangaroo Mother Care is a low-cost, high-impact intervention supported by UNICEF through training, advocacy, and supplies; the approach strengthens neonatal care in resource-constrained settings by enabling mothers to play an active role in stabilizing and nurturing premature infants.

Fighting Typhoid

Integrating Typhoid Conjugate Vaccination into routine immunization

Quetta, Balochistan: Perag, just nine months old, is a healthy, happy, and active baby - thanks to his parents, who understand the importance of timely vaccination to protect their child from preventable diseases.

His father, Saghir, took a day off work to bring him to the vaccination center at Bolan Medical Complex Hospital in Quetta for his typhoid conjugate vaccine shot.

Typhoid is a serious bacterial infection that spreads easily from person to person, particularly through contaminated food or water. The risk is especially high in overcrowded communities with limited access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene.

As the vaccinator draws the Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV) into a syringe, Saghir looks uneasy. He knows the prick will hurt his child, but he also understands that a moment of pain now can protect Perag, and the entire family, from far greater suffering in the future.

Perag receives the shot, lets out a loud cry, and is immediately soothed by his father. The procedure takes less than a minute, but its impact will last a lifetime. A precious life shielded from a potentially deadly disease.

Typhoid is highly prevalent in South Asia, where poor communities, vulnerable groups, and children are most at risk.

The TCV is the first typhoid vaccine that can be given to children as young as six months and adults up to age 45. It provides strong protection for at least four years, requires only a single dose, and is used in typhoid-endemic regions as part of routine immunization for children. In 2019, Pakistan became the first country in the world to include TCV in its routine immunization programme. Since then, multiple vaccination campaigns have been conducted across the country, protecting millions of children from typhoid.



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Perag, 9 months, gets his single dose TCV vaccination to protect him against Conjugate Typhoid Virus.

The Unsung Heroes of Polio Eradication in Pakistan

In the dusty lanes of Taxila, located along the historic Grand Trunk Road in Rawalpindi District, Azmat Rasool, a Community Mobiliser is on a mission to immunize children in her community.

In Pakistan's fight to eradicate polio, she is one of more than 400,000 frontline workers including 225,000 female vaccinators, resolute in their commitment to prevent this crippling disease so children survive and thrive. Polio, or poliomyelitis, is a crippling and potentially deadly infectious disease caused by the polio virus. It primarily affects children under the age of five and can lead to irreversible paralysis. While most of the world has eliminated polio, Pakistan remains one of only two countries, along with Afghanistan, where the virus continues to circulate endemically.

Despite massive nationwide immunization drives and global support, misinformation, and mistrust continue to hamper polio eradication efforts in Pakistan.

The virus spreads quickly, particularly in areas

with poor sanitation and high population mobility.

Targeting high-risk areas
Rawalpindi and Lahore, two of the largest districts in Punjab province, account for 40 percent of the country's high-risk mobile population.

Communities of seasonal migrants pose a unique challenge to Pakistan's polio eradication efforts. They are difficult to track, hard to access, and often carry cultural or religious suspicions about the vaccination programme.

UNICEF, under the leadership of the Government of Pakistan, and in collaboration with other global health partners, has taken proactive steps to combat the existence of polio.

As part of efforts to target high-risk urban populations in Rawalpindi and Lahore, over 500 Community Mobilisers have been deployed. These workers are the face of the immunization campaign for communities - trusted neighbours and not uniformed health officials.



©UNICEF/UNI993885/Shahzad Mahmood.
Azmat stands with a group of children she vaccinated against polio.

Leaving no child behind

Azmat, a Community Mobiliser, is committed to reaching every child in her community to ensure that no child remains unvaccinated and at risk.

Her journey has not been easy.

Azmat's husband, a construction worker, was initially opposed to her taking up the job because of the dangers faced by polio teams.

"I told him that vaccination can save children from paralysis, or even death. Eventually, he agreed and is now one of the biggest supporters of my work," says Azmat.

"My first assignment was a difficult one. I visited a family to vaccinate their children, and they thought I had ulterior motives, theft or something. They did not want a stranger giving their children any kind of vaccine," Azmat recalls.

"I stayed calm and relied on empathy and patience. I told the family that I am a registered member of the health department and showed them my official card explaining that I meant no harm and had only come to give polio drops to their children."

"I told them that I am a mother too and know how important it is for a child to be vaccinated at the right age," she adds.

Azmat's resilience and honesty resonated, and the family understood the real purpose of her visit.

"After two hours, I had answered all their questions, they agreed for me to vaccinate their children," Azmat says with a sense of accomplishment.

The resolve and courage of Community Mobilisers is recognised and regarded by the entire health community in Pakistan.

"We acknowledge the bravery and persistence of our Community Mobilisers," says Yasmin Bibi, who is the Union Council In-charge of the area where Azmat works.

"They not only respond to crises but also prevent them."

"Newly arrived families from other provinces often refuse their children being given polio drops. They have heard rumours and are reluctant to vaccinate. In such cases, Community Mobilisers play a crucial role. They involve influencers such as community elders, mosque imams, and gradually build a network of trust, Yasmine explains."

"The end objective for all of us is to leave no child unvaccinated."

Until polio is eliminated from Pakistan, the journey for health workers like Azmat Rasool, is long and hard, and far from over.

Their role is crucial in every polio immunization campaign until the disease is completely eradicated.

The fight against polio is not just about medicine or science. It is about connection, communication, and courage. With dedicated community mobilisers like Azmat Rasool, Pakistan is inching closer to becoming polio-free.



©UNICEF/UNI993886/Shahzad Mahmood.
Azmat walks for miles each day to urge families to vaccinate their children.

Goal Area 2

Every child learns and acquires skills for the future

Pakistan is facing one of the world's most severe education crises. More than one in three children aged 5–16—over 36 per cent—are out of school, placing the country second globally in the absolute number of out-of-school children. This represents 25 million children, including 13.4 million girls and 11.9 million boys. Nationally, 67 per cent of out-of-school children have never entered a classroom, with exclusion far higher in rural areas (74 per cent) than in urban centres (59 per cent).

While Punjab has the largest number of out-of-school children at 7.8 million, Balochistan faces the most severe deprivation, with nearly 69 per cent of children out of school. Despite this emergency, public investment remains critically low. The 2024–25 budget allocated only Rs 112.7 billion (US\$400 million) to education, equivalent to just 0.7 per cent of GDP. Spending on primary education stands at US\$397 per child (purchasing power), 66 per cent below the South Asian regional average, leaving many children without the learning opportunities they need to thrive.

A key priority in 2025 was reaching children who are out of school or at risk of dropping out.



© UNICEF/UNI971746/Roham. Muzzamil Hussain, a 7th-grade student at Government High School Dobandi in Haripur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in his class.

After being out of school for two years due to financial constraints, Muzzamil Hussain had all but disappeared from the education system. His return became possible when his records were identified through the Integrated Education Management Information System (IEMIS), prompting education officials to trace his case, reconnect with his family, and support his enrollment in a nearby government school. Today, Muzzamil is back in class, learning, smiling, and working towards his dream of becoming a teacher.

Accelerated Learning Pathways enabled over 70,000 adolescents who had missed years of schooling to re-enter education. These programmes provided flexible learning opportunities, helping children catch up and transition into formal schooling.

At the same time, improving what children learn was central. Foundational learning interventions helped over 418,000 children strengthen basic literacy and numeracy skills, including more than 100,000 children who had previously been excluded from learning. This is critical in a context where many children are enrolled but are not acquiring basic skills.

Teachers play a key role in improving learning outcomes. In 2025, nearly 36,000 educators were trained in more effective teaching practices, strengthening classroom instruction and supporting more engaging and inclusive learning environments.

Efforts also focused on strengthening education systems. Through support to national and provincial planning processes, including engagement with the Prime Minister's Task Force and Local Education Groups, UNICEF helped improve coordination, data use and accountability

across the sector. These efforts contributed to more coherent, evidence-based reforms across provinces.

Learning opportunities were also expanded for adolescents and young people. More than 310,000 young people accessed skills development programmes, including technical and digital skills, helping prepare them for employment and participation in society. Youth engagement was also strengthened, with nearly 80,000 young people contributing to policy dialogue, climate action and community initiatives.

Climate resilience remained a key priority. During floods, UNICEF supported continuity of learning for over 96,000 children, ensuring that education could continue despite disruptions. This included strengthening education in emergencies capacities and promoting climate-resilient learning environments.

Digital systems played an increasingly important role. UNICEF supported improvements in Integrated Education Management Information Systems, strengthening data quality and enabling better planning and decision-making. These systems help ensure that resources are directed to where they are needed most.



729,000

children, adolescents and youth accessed inclusive and climate-resilient learning and skilling opportunities (51 per cent girls).



419,000

children (49 per cent girls) improved their early-grade learning outcomes, including 105,000 children who were previously out of learning.



288,000

learners benefited directly from foundational learning interventions, including 54,000 in early childhood education.



79,000

young people engaged in civic participation, climate action and community solutions.



36,000

educators (19,000 women) were trained to improve the quality of teaching.



76,000

community members (39,000 women) were engaged to strengthen local ownership of education outcomes.



311,000

adolescents and youth accessed learning and skills programmes (55 per cent girls).



71,000

out-of-school adolescents enrolled in **Accelerated Learning Pathways**, including 13,000 participants who improved their technical and digital skills.

From Data to Delivery: Strengthening Systems for Children

Getting services to the children who need them most depends on more than availability. It requires systems that can identify children, track their needs and ensure they are not left behind.

In 2025, UNICEF supported Pakistan to strengthen the systems that underpin service delivery, including health, education and civil registration. A key focus was improving how data is collected, shared and used across sectors.

To improve the visibility of children in the education system, UNICEF strengthened data governance by enhancing the provincial Education Management Information Systems through integrated dashboards, improved data quality protocols and smoother interoperability. This enables better planning and the integration of youth development priorities into sector policies and budgets.

In the health sector, UNICEF supported the strengthening of DHIS2, enabling more timely and reliable data on services such as immunization, maternal care and disease trends. This allows health workers and decision-makers to identify

gaps, for example, children who have missed routine vaccinations, and respond with targeted outreach.

A critical area of progress was improving interoperability between systems. In birth registration, digital links between health facilities and NADRA mean that children can be registered shortly after birth, rather than requiring families to navigate multiple steps. This reduces barriers for families and increases registration coverage.

Interoperability also helps connect services. When systems can “talk to each other,” data from one service, such as birth registration or health visits, can help identify children who may need additional support, including immunization, nutrition or social protection.

These investments are essential to ensuring that services reach children at the right time. By strengthening data systems and how they are used, UNICEF is helping build more responsive systems that can deliver results for every child.



©UNICEF/UNI993370/Asad Zaidi. Zahoor Ahmad, a social organizer, provides a birth registration certificate to a father in a UNICEF supported birth registration center in Naseerabad, Balochistan.

Learning and Earning Towards a Bright Future

For 16-year-old Yasmine, hailing from a remote community in Killa Saifullah, Balochistan, education and earning felt like distant dreams. As the eldest of seven siblings in a family supported by her father's modest income as a bus driver, her future seemed limited. While she attended a nearby madrasa for religious studies, she carried an entrepreneurial spark waiting for an opportunity to be discovered.

The opportunity arrived when a team from the School Education Department visited her madrasa. Soon after an Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) center was established on the premises, providing quality education to out-of-school children.

The madrasa began serving a dual purpose: religious education in the morning and regular schooling in the afternoon. Children who

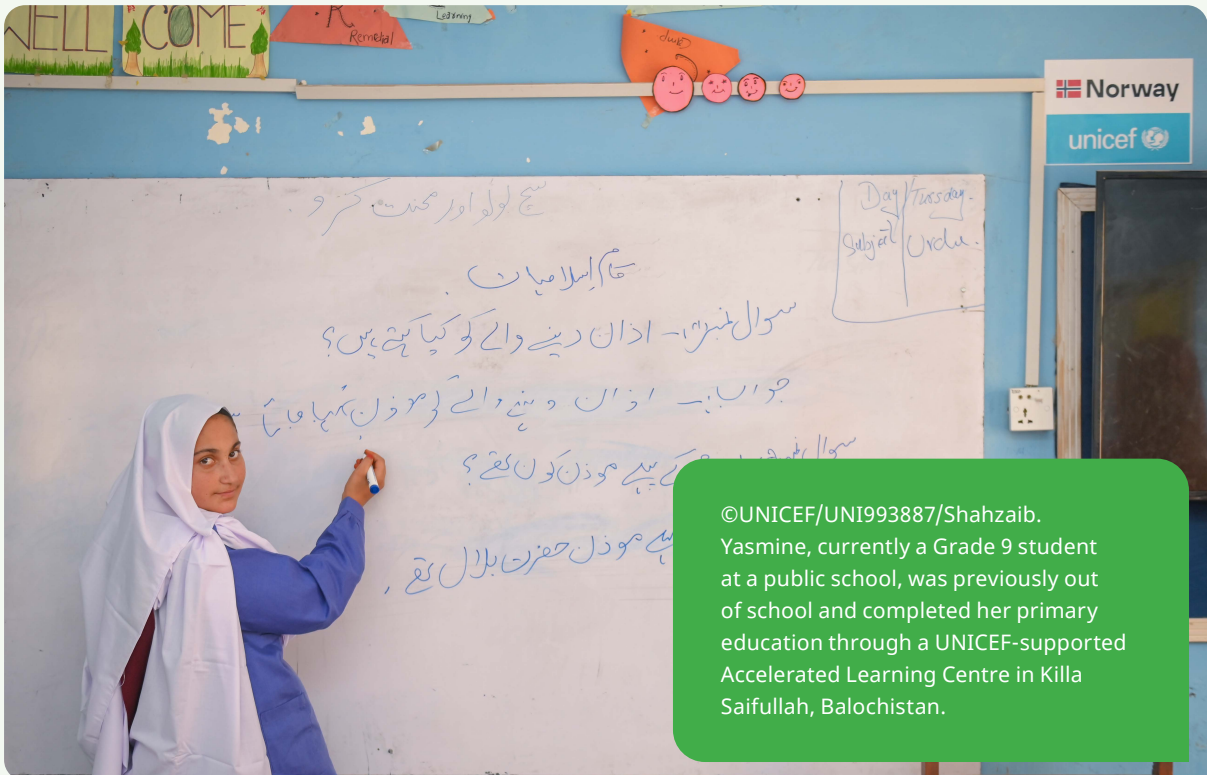
were already enrolled in the madrasa were encouraged to also join the ALP.

"I told my father about the opportunity for free education in the ALP and asked if I could enroll," Yasmine recalled.

"He agreed on the condition that my religious education should not be disturbed," she added.

Balancing both religious and regular education was difficult at first, but Yasmine persevered. She excelled academically, supported weaker students after class, and encouraged families in her community to enroll their daughters.

After nearly five years at the ALP, Yasmine passed her board exams and joined mainstream education in Grade 9 at the Government Girls High School, Killa Saifullah.



©UNICEF/UNI993887/Shahzaib.
Yasmine, currently a Grade 9 student at a public school, was previously out of school and completed her primary education through a UNICEF-supported Accelerated Learning Centre in Killa Saifullah, Balochistan.

Many ALP centers established in Balochistan now also provide vocational training, including motorcycle repair, IT, beautician courses, poultry farming, arts and crafts, and dressmaking.

During her time at the ALP center, Yasmine joined a dressmaking course.

“From teaching how to cut and stitch to resources such as stitching machines, cloth and threads, everything was provided to us at the ALP center. I was fascinated to learn this art,” said Yasmine.

What began as a hobby, soon revealed itself as a potential livelihood.

“Once I realized that by learning this skill, I can not only make clothes for myself and my family members but also sell them, my interest grew,” Yasmine adds.

Laila Sanaa is a well-qualified and trained instructor, contracted by the Balochistan Trade Testing Board, who teaches children dressmaking at the ALP centre.

“Girls are very talented but need some guidance and skills development at the initial stage,” says Sanaa.

“They are motivated and want to progress in life by becoming entrepreneurs. Yasmine is a shining example for them.”

By the time she graduated from the ALP, Yasmine’s confidence had soared. She moved to her uncle’s home in Killa Saifullah city to continue her studies and set up her own workshop. Her uncle’s shop, which sells unstitched cloth and tailoring materials, provided the perfect space for her business.

Within a year, Yasmine’s workshop flourished. She now earns a steady income, supports her family, and reinvests in her growing business.

Her proudest moment came when she participated in the Quetta Fest for Ladies’ Dresses, where she and other girls from Killa Saifullah showcased their creations. The response was overwhelming.



©UNICEF/UNI993888/Shahzaib.

Having learnt the art of dressmaking at a UNICEF-supported ALP centre, Yasmine (16) has set up her own workshop and makes traditional dresses to sell in the local market.

Goal Area 3

Every child is protected from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and harmful practices

Protection-related risks continue to threaten children's safety, dignity and future opportunities in Pakistan. Six in ten children under the age of five remain unregistered at birth, leaving them without a legal identity and limiting access to essential services. Pakistan is home to around 20 million child brides, while child labour affects around 8.6 million children perpetuating cycles of poverty and exploitation.

Harmful practices and exclusion remain widespread among adolescents and vulnerable groups. Children with disabilities number 946,000, representing 0.8 per cent of all children, while refugee children face heightened risks, with 53 per cent of Afghan refugees in Pakistan under the age of 18. Persistent gaps in disaggregated data across these groups continue to limit targeted action and equitable service delivery.

Through evidence-based policy support, institutional strengthening, community-led prevention and improved response services, UNICEF helped advance a more effective and sustainable child protection system for vulnerable children across Pakistan.



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OwaisRafiq.
Child playing with
toys and board games
in the District Child
Protection Unit,
Rajapur.

110,000
children were registered through health-interoperable birth registration systems supported with NADRA

1.5 million
people reached with child protection prevention efforts

600
community-based Child Protection Committees were established and strengthened

4,000
children at risk or survivors of violence accessed case management and essential protection services

UNICEF supported evidence generation and policy development to strengthen the national child protection framework. This included nationwide child labour surveys, research on online child sexual exploitation, and studies on child marriage and on displaced and refugee children. These efforts informed policy decisions and programme design, helping ensure that interventions are grounded in evidence.

Institutional strengthening was also a key priority. UNICEF supported the National Commission on the Rights of the Child and the National Commission of Human Rights, reinforcing oversight, reporting and accountability for children's rights. At the same time, support to NADRA enabled the expansion of digital, health-interoperable birth registration systems, resulting in the registration of over 100,000 children, strengthening access to legal identity and services.

Prevention efforts were scaled up through community-based approaches. Life skills education, child rights awareness and positive parenting programmes reached 1.5 million people, helping shift social norms and reduce risks of violence and harmful practices. The establishment of 600 Child Protection Committees strengthened

community-level systems for identifying, referring and responding to cases.

UNICEF also supported improvements in response services. Through strengthened district-level systems, including 42 Child Protection Units and the rollout of digital case management tools, 4,000 children at risk or survivors of violence accessed essential protection services. These efforts helped improve the quality, coordination and timeliness of support.

Targeted initiatives also informed system improvements. Pilots on alternative care and services for child survivors of sexual abuse contributed to the development of national standards, while continued investment in the professionalization of the social service workforce is helping build more sustainable protection systems.

Advocacy and policy engagement contributed to important legislative progress, including the adoption of the Child Marriage Restraint Act in Islamabad Capital Territory and Balochistan. At the same time, UNICEF supported the development of national prevention and life skills frameworks, which are expected to guide future programming.

Focus on Child Rights

In May 2025, Pakistan came under international review as the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child assessed the country's progress under the Convention from 12 to 30 May 2025. Taking place approximately every five years, this review is a key moment for countries to reflect on progress, challenges and the steps needed to better realize children's rights.

The Committee's Concluding Observations pointed to urgent priorities, including reducing child labour and child marriage, improving access to education and health services, strengthening birth registration systems, and addressing inequalities affecting the most vulnerable children.

UNICEF supported the Government of Pakistan throughout this process, helping bring together

evidence, data and experiences from across sectors. Following the review, UNICEF worked with federal and provincial partners to translate the Committee's recommendations into action, supporting their integration into policies, programmes and systems.

This included strengthening oversight institutions such as the National Commission on the Rights of the Child, aligning sectoral priorities with the Committee's recommendations, and promoting the use of data to track progress.

By linking global commitments to national action, the review is helping drive renewed momentum to ensure that children's rights are not only recognised but realized in the lives of children across Pakistan.

Trading Tools for Textbooks

How Child Protection services helped a 12-year-old boy reclaim his childhood

In a quiet village in Rajanpur, Punjab, 12-year-old Sajjad (name changed for protection) spent his days not with schoolbooks, but with the hot sparks of a heavy, dangerous welding torch. His school days had ended before they could even begin.

After losing his father at a young age, Sajjad and his mother, Fazeela (name changed for privacy) found themselves trapped in a cycle of abuse. Living under the control of his uncle, who wanted to take over their inheritance, the young boy was forced into hazardous child labour. Education was out of the question, while violence was a daily reality for Sajjad.

“I didn’t think anything could change,” Fazeela shares. “We were completely alone and both of us were getting quite frustrated.”

But in early 2024, their situation was reported to the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) in Rajanpur, setting in motion a response that would change their lives.

Within days, the DCPU mobilized a multidisciplinary team—a child psychologist, case worker, and legal advocate. Sajjad and his mother received support to safely leave the harmful environment and settle with nearby relatives.

At their first session at the DCPU, Sajjad arrived quiet and withdrawn, but he voiced a clear and determined wish: “I just want to go back to school.”

Over the next few weeks, the team worked together to make that happen. Legal action was taken to secure protection for both mother and child, including formal mediation with the abusive uncle, who was held accountable and agreed to end all forms of violence and child labour.

“When I went to the DCPU, they were very supportive and offered me encouraging words,” says Sajjad now.



©UNICEF/UNI993891/Salman.
Staff at the Child Protection centre speaking to a child and his mother.



©UNICEF/UNI993892/OwaisRafiq.
Inside a child protection centre, basic facilities are in place to support safe and accessible services for children.

At the same time, the DCPU supported them with psycho-social counselling and practical help, like assisting Fazeela to apply for the Benazir Income Support Programme to improve their financial stability. Fazeela also began attending parenting sessions and received vocational training to help her build a more secure future. This process, supported by legal measures and close follow-up, helped restore safety and stability for Sajjad and Fazeela, and made it clear to the extended family that abuse would not be tolerated.

Sajjad was re-enrolled in school and began attending regularly. To support his emotional and mental wellbeing, the DCPU worked closely with school administrators to ensure a welcoming and supportive environment. His teachers were sensitized on signs of distress and guided on how to respond with care. As part of a buddy system, a classmate was paired with Sajjad to help him adjust, especially during transitions and break times.

Alongside weekly counselling sessions, these steps helped Sajjad slowly rebuild his sense of self, and he began looking ahead with hope.

"I love going to school. They gave me a uniform and schoolbooks. I go every day and get to play with my friends," shares a vibrant Sajjad.

Fazeela, too, began to regain a sense of independence. With a new set of skills in tailoring, she earns a small income and feels more confident about her role as a parent.

"We are finally standing on our own feet," she says.

Counseling sessions helped Sajjad manage anxiety, while his mother received support to establish routines, reinforce learning, and build her parenting confidence. By the fourth and final session, Sajjad was thriving, academically, emotionally, and socially.

Their case continues to be monitored by the DCPU to ensure safety and long-term support—but for now, Sajjad is right where he belongs: in school, playing with classmates, and building a future. Sajjad's journey is just one of many being supported through a strengthened child protection system in Rajanpur.

UNICEF is working with the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau, Government of Punjab, to operationalize and strengthen DCPUs in six districts, including Rajanpur. These units provide case management services to respond to children who are victims and survivors of child abuse, violence, neglect, and exploitation.

Each DCPU has a dedicated team including a child protection officer, case workers, and a psychologist that provide a safe and supportive setting where children and families can seek support and connect with services – such as legal support, education, health care, counselling, and follow-up care.

With continued support, more children like Sajjad can be protected from exploitation, transitioned back into school, and given the tools they need to rebuild their lives with dignity. By investing in strong local systems and coordinated child protection services, UNICEF and its partners are working to ensure that every child is safe, heard and supported to secure a brighter future.

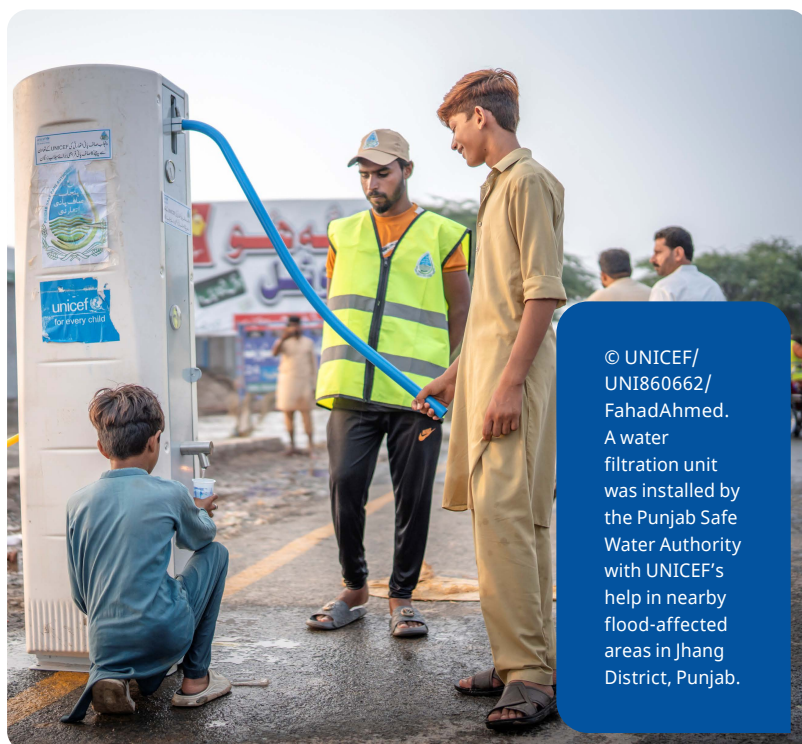
Goal Area 4

Every child has access to safe and equitable WASH services and supplies, and lives in a safe and sustainable climate and environment

Access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) remains uneven, putting children's health and well-being at risk. While 91 per cent of the population has access to basic drinking water, less than half-45 per cent, or around 113 million people, have access to safely managed water that is reliably available and free from contamination. Around 8.2 per cent of the population, or 20.5

million people, still practice open defecation, and gaps in sanitation and hygiene continue to expose children to preventable diseases, particularly in poor, rural and climate-affected communities. Although 85 per cent of people have access to handwashing facilities with soap, disparities persist, undermining efforts to reduce child illness, malnutrition and mortality.

Against a backdrop of increasing climate shocks, UNICEF combined service delivery, climate-resilient systems strengthening, community engagement and youth participation to improve access to safe WASH services and protect children's well-being.



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FahadAhmed.
A water
filtration unit
was installed by
the Punjab Safe
Water Authority
with UNICEF's
help in nearby
flood-affected
areas in Jhang
District, Punjab.

1.2 million
people were reached
with **WASH services**

865,000
people gained access
to durable basic **safe
water services**

459,000
people were reached
with **emergency
water services**

169,000
people gained access
to basic **sanitation
services**

93,000
people were reached
with **emergency
sanitation services**

500
communities were
declared open
defecation free

A key priority was expanding access to safe and reliable water services. More than 865,000 people gained access to durable basic water services, while an additional 459,000 people were reached with emergency water supply in response to climate-related crises. These efforts helped ensure that children and families have access to safe water both in stable settings and during emergencies.

Sanitation services were also strengthened. Around 169,000 people gained access to basic sanitation, while 93,000 people were supported with emergency sanitation services. At the community level, 500 communities were declared open defecation free, contributing to improved hygiene practices and reduced exposure to disease.

Strengthening systems and governance was central to ensuring sustainability. UNICEF supported the development of climate-resilient WASH sector plans, including 10-year strategies in Punjab and Balochistan, helping governments prioritise investments and plan for future risks. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, support to review the Water Act contributed to improved governance and accountability.

Climate resilience was integrated throughout programming. UNICEF applied climate-resilient

approaches to infrastructure design, service delivery and post-flood recovery, helping provinces secure investments to build back better. These efforts are critical in a context where floods, droughts and extreme weather increasingly disrupt services and affect children's well-being.

Behaviour change and community engagement were also key. UNICEF supported partners to strengthen social and behaviour change approaches, including on hygiene practices and menstrual health, helping improve uptake and sustainability of services.

Young people played an important role in advancing climate action. In 2025, thousands of youth were engaged in national and global climate processes, including consultations on Pakistan's Nationally Determined Contributions and participated in mock climate negotiations. These efforts helped ensure that children and young people's voices are reflected in climate policy and action.

Environmental governance was also strengthened through partnerships with provincial institutions, including environmental protection agencies, supporting coordination, knowledge sharing and action on environmental risks.

Young Voices Shaping Climate Action

Children and young people are among those most affected by climate change, they are also powerful advocates for change.

In 2025, UNICEF supported young people across Pakistan to engage directly in climate policy and action. More than 4,000 youth contributed to national processes, including consultations on Pakistan's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0), helping ensure that their perspectives are reflected in climate commitments.

Young people were also supported to build their knowledge and leadership. Through

initiatives such as mock COP negotiations, over 560 youth gained hands-on experience in climate diplomacy, strengthening their ability to advocate for solutions at local and global levels.

Through partnerships with government and youth platforms, including the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, UNICEF helped amplify youth voices and connect them to decision-making spaces.

By supporting meaningful youth engagement, these efforts are helping ensure that climate action reflects the realities and priorities of the generation most affected.

Building glaciers and moving mountains

By Zeeshan Abbas, 17, winner of the Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge 3.0 in Pakistan



Our ancestors understood nature. They built artificial glaciers, man-made ice structures formed during the colder months to store water and release it slowly during the dry spring, when seasonal shortages make life difficult. These ingenious systems helped mountain communities survive in harsh conditions. But over time, that wisdom faded. Now, with climate change threatening our way of life, we knew we had to bring it back.

We were just kids, drawn to the towering glaciers of Skardu. But one year, the ice didn't just melt-it destroyed everything in its path. Entire villages were left barren. People fought over the last drops of water. Families started leaving. That's when it hit us: fighting won't bring water back. And the brutal effects of climate change were happening right in front of us, changing our lives.

We had never filled out an application, didn't own a laptop, and had no way to send anything online. But Nasim believed in us. We wrote our answers by hand, and he kindly submitted the application for us. A few weeks later, we got the news-our idea had been selected, out of hundreds!

We had never left our village before. Traveling to Islamabad felt like stepping into another world. The buildings were tall. The roads were loud. For the first time, we used a laptop and connected to WiFi. We entered a digital universe we never even knew existed. And in that moment, we realized just how much we didn't know.

But we were here, and we were determined to learn. And we refused to be left behind because of our backgrounds.

At the Generation Unlimited bootcamp, we found our voice and confidence. Our English wasn't perfect, but our ideas mattered. Our trainer, Imad Rizvi, told us something we'll never forget: "Your ideas matter just as much as anyone else's."

We returned home with new energy. Then something unimaginable happened-we were selected among the top five teams and awarded PKR 175,000 to bring our idea to life.

We were overwhelmed with excitement, but the real challenge was just beginning.

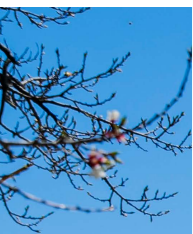
The glacier site was at 4,800m altitude. It took a full day's trek through freezing terrain, carrying heavy equipment, and facing the constant risk of a fatal fall. Our mother worried every time we left.

"Be back before dark," she'd say. But she never stopped us. Her trust gave us the courage to keep going.

We weren't just kids anymore. We were leading a team of experienced men (paid volunteers from the community), making real decisions, managing money, and learning from every mistake.

Along the way, we learned so much-like how to choose the right materials, such as high-quality pipes that wouldn't burst in extreme weather. We figured out how to pick the best glacier sites, which direction they should face to prevent premature melting, and most importantly, how to design something that would be sustainable.

Armed with the lessons we learned with our first artificial glacier, we reached out to UNICEF again with a better plan. While our core team worked in the mountains, I led the proposal writing from Islamabad, where I had just started my studies. After months of back-and-forth, we received another sizeable grant from them along with a full year of mentorship from UNICEF and the School of Leadership Foundation.





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Zeeshan Abbas, Team Lead at Siachen Sherpa, engages with villagers and local labourers on the planning of an artificial glacier initiative.

From August 2024 to June 2025, we put our new plan into action. After careful assessment, we selected Machulo village as the next glacier site. This time, we scaled up-using stronger materials, building larger and more efficient glacier structures, and applying every lesson from our first attempt. Our goal had evolved too.

It wasn't just about survival anymore-it was about helping entire communities adapt to a changing climate.

In October 2025, with the help of twelve local labourers, we worked for eleven grueling days in sub-zero temperatures-sometimes dropping below -20°C . Despite the extreme conditions, we succeeded in constructing two fully functional artificial glaciers in Machulo.

After completing the glaciers, we turned our focus inward-on our own growth. We

participated in the Young Leaders Conference, an experience that strengthened our confidence, communication, and leadership skills. We also joined UNICEF's Social and Behaviour Change training, learning how to effectively engage with communities on climate action.

Empowered with this new knowledge, we held climate awareness sessions in nearby villages-sharing how climate change is already hurting us, and how we can fight back together, using our land, our traditions, and our ideas. We spoke about the role of artificial glaciers, and practical steps to sustain them through community ownership.

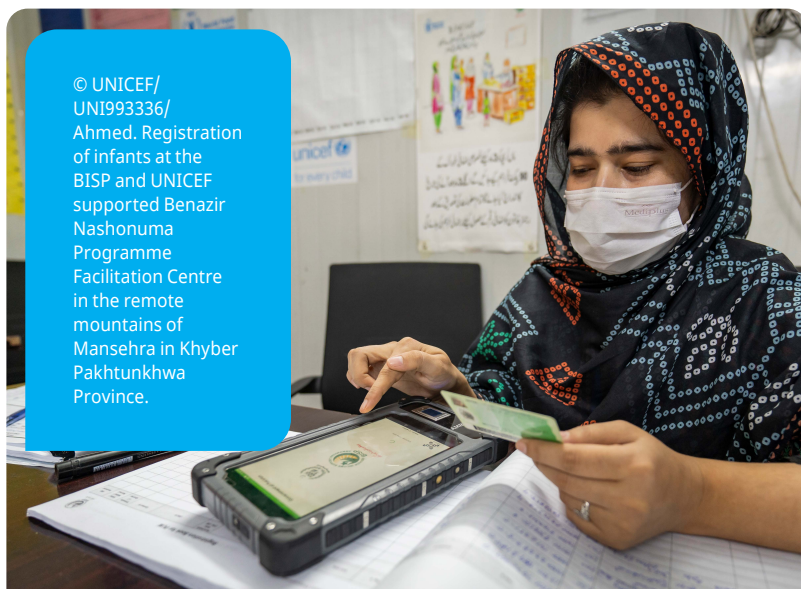
What started as an idea by a group of young dreamers in Skardu has grown into a full-fledged movement-one rooted in ancestral wisdom, driven by modern learning, and powered by the strength of community.

Goal Area 5

Every child has access to inclusive social protection and lives free of poverty

Multiple, intersecting challenges continue to limit children's access to opportunity and essential services in Pakistan. Digital exclusion is widening learning and information gaps, with only 57 per cent of the population having internet access and very limited use for education, particularly outside urban areas. At the same time, climate shocks-such as the 2025 floods-are repeatedly disrupting access to health, nutrition, education and protection services, disproportionately affecting the most marginalized children. These pressures are compounded by deeply rooted social and cultural norms that restrict girls' and marginalized groups' access to services, contributing to child marriage, school dropout, malnutrition and vaccine-preventable illness. While social protection remains a critical lifeline, existing financing is insufficient to fully offset growing climate, economic and social risks facing children and families.

Alongside strengthening social protection and financial inclusion at household level, UNICEF focused on improving the systems, financing and data needed to ensure child-centered investments are equitable, sustainable and responsive to growing risks. As a result:



© UNICEF/
UNI993336/
Ahmed. Registration
of infants at the
BISP and UNICEF
supported Benazir
Nashonuma
Programme
Facilitation Centre
in the remote
mountains of
Mansehra in Khyber
Pakhtunkhwa
Province.

PKR 716 billion
was allocated to BISP
(20 percent increase
compared to 2024)

253,000
beneficiaries were
reached with digital
and financial literacy
support

1 million
women were
supported through
the scale-up of
digital wallets for
financial inclusion

57
government officials
were trained in
multidimensional
poverty measurement
and evidence-based
planning

9,000
children were
screened for vision
and hearing
impairments

1,200
adults were trained
and 3,200 community
members were
reached through
disability inclusion
initiatives

A key priority was strengthening social protection. UNICEF's advocacy contributed to a 20 per cent increase in allocations to BISP, helping expand support to vulnerable households. At the same time, UNICEF supported efforts to make social protection systems more inclusive and responsive, including through the integration of nutrition and child-focused services.

Financial and digital inclusion were also expanded. More than 250,000 people were reached with digital and financial literacy support, helping families better access and use financial services. This contributed to the government's efforts to scale up digital wallets for one million women, promoting financial inclusion and economic empowerment.

Strengthening public finance for children was another key area of work. UNICEF supported evidence generation and policy dialogue to improve how resources are allocated and used. Public expenditure reviews and high-level advocacy helped inform budget discussions, while engagement with government counterparts strengthened the integration of equity and climate considerations into planning processes.

Data and evidence played a central role. UNICEF supported the development of the SDG Status Report and revisions to the national SDG framework, helping align national priorities with global commitments. Capacity building for government officials strengthened the use of data for planning and decision-making, improving the ability to target resources to those most in need.

Efforts also focused on inclusion. UNICEF supported disability screening for children and strengthened services for children with disabilities, while also advancing national efforts on sign language and inclusive policies. These initiatives aim to ensure that children who are often excluded are better able to access services and opportunities.

At the systems level, UNICEF supported the development of registries, research and data platforms, including the Research and Evaluation Dashboard, which consolidates evidence to inform programming and policy. These tools help improve transparency, coordination and accountability.



© UNICEF/UNI968976/
FahadAhmed. Rabia
learned how to prepare
nutritious meals for
her child through
counselling at a Benazir
Nashonuma Programme
centre supported by BISP
and UNICEF, bringing
life-saving nutrition
support to families in
the remote mountains of
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



© UNICEF/UNI972158/FahadAhmed.

Two young boys carry a UNICEF hygiene kit at a distribution point in Swat District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after the monsoon floods destroyed their village.

Delivering for children, at scale

Behind every service is a system that ensures essential and life-saving supplies reach children when and where they are needed. UNICEF's supply and logistics team works relentlessly behind the scenes to make sure contracts are in place, supplies are procured, quality is guaranteed, and products reach their destinations on time. Commodities such as vaccines, education materials, therapeutic foods, and even protective winter clothing are procured to support emergencies like floods and droughts, while strengthening national supply chain systems. Where possible UNICEF always procures goods locally, to ensure efficiency and to make sure the local economy benefits.

For example, in 2025, UNICEF procured and distributed winter kits to protect children and their families from the extreme cold. High in the mountainous areas of Balochistan, where winter arrives early and temperatures drop sharply, a simple delivery can mean the difference between hardship and hope. Through UNICEF's supply and

logistics operations, winterization kits reached children and their families in some of the most remote and hard-to-access communities. Packed with warm clothing, blankets, and other essential items, each kit carries more than materials; it carries reassurance that these children are not forgotten.

Behind every delivery is a carefully coordinated effort: forecasting needs, navigating difficult terrain, and ensuring supplies arrive on time, even in the harshest of conditions. For a child wearing a warm hat, coat, socks and tracksuit on a freezing night, this supply chain becomes something deeply personal – a moment of comfort, dignity and care.

This is the power of UNICEF's supply team. It turns planning into protection, logistics into lifelines, and distance into connection – reaching the last mile so that every child, no matter how remote their home, can feel the warmth of support when they need it most.

Becoming the Change

How financial literacy empowers women and communities across Pakistan

In a quiet community hall in Havellan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sundas, Sumaira, and Asiya sit together in animated conversation with other women—not about household chores or rising expenses, but about savings, budgeting, and digital banking. For many of them, this is the first time they've truly taken charge of their finances. These women, all beneficiaries of BISP, are participating in a Digital and Financial Literacy training programme supported by UNICEF and BISP.

The initiative is part of a broader social protection approach aimed at building the financial resilience of Pakistan's most vulnerable communities.

At its heart lies a powerful mission: to empower the most vulnerable community members with essential digital and financial skills, helping them achieve greater financial independence and resilience.

One of the most powerful takeaways for the women was learning how to open a bank account and use an ATM. This knowledge gave them a newfound sense of independence. "Now," shared Asiya, "no one can take our money without our permission. We feel safe and in control."



©UNICEF/UNI993923/Amnah Ali.

Sundas and Sumaira, beneficiaries of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), take notes during a Digital and Financial Literacy training programme supported by UNICEF with funding from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and BISP, Havellan, KP, June 2025.



Sundas

For 35-year-old Sundas Bibi, a mother of five, the training was nothing short of a life-changing experience. Her husband, a house painter, earned just enough to scrape by. With no financial planning skills and constant debt, Sundas often found herself struggling to put food on the table or pay for her children's education.

"I didn't know how to manage the little money we had. Everything seemed like a crisis," Sundas says. "But the training opened my eyes. I learned how to budget, how to save—even small amounts—and how to prioritize our needs."

Initially, her husband resisted the idea of her attending the sessions. **"He told me I was wasting my time,"** she recalls. But after she began applying her new knowledge at home, even he noticed the difference. **"Now, he trusts me completely with our finances. I've become the finance manager of our home."**

"I still remember my first two-day training. It was interactive, simple, and so empowering. If I had this knowledge a few years ago, I might have had my own home by now."



Sumaira

Sumaira had similar struggles. Her husband, a carpenter, often went without work, and their children's simple wishes remained out of reach. But after attending the training, her perspective changed.

"I learned that both parents have a role in raising children. I learned about equality, budgeting, and why early marriage harms girls," she says.

Today, Sumaira's home tells a different story. Her children are happier when they wear new clothes, attend school, and enjoy nutritious meals.

"I dream of seeing them grow up to become doctors and teachers. I've promised myself I won't marry them before they turn 25. I believe that educating a girl gives her the ability to live a better life," she adds.



Asiya

For Asiya, the training gave her the confidence to start a small livelihood venture.

“I saved some money and bought two goats,” she says. “We use the milk at home, and I plan to sell the goats for profit and buy more. This income will go toward my daughters’ education—something my husband doesn’t support, but now I can do it on my own.”

Learning how to open a bank account and use an ATM card was another milestone. **“Now, no one can take our money without our permission. We feel safe and in control.”**

The sessions are designed to be engaging and accessible, especially for women who may have little or no formal education. They use storytelling, hands-on activities, colorful visuals, and even a model ATM to make complex financial concepts easy to understand.



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A Digital and Financial Literacy training programme for women takes place in Havelian, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The ripple effect - women empowering women

The impact of this learning extended beyond financial skills. Asiya, Sundas, and Sumaira also learned about gender equality, parenting and climate-friendly practices.

UNICEF's partnership with BISP demonstrates that when women are given the tools and opportunities to learn, they unlock the potential to break cycles of poverty for generations. These are not just financial lessons—they are life lessons, creating a pathway from dependency to empowerment. Almost 250,000 BISP beneficiaries are gaining the knowledge and skills needed to achieve financial independence and enhance their financial resilience.

Sundas had a powerful message, "Many women still don't know about these valuable services. The programme has the potential to transform lives. This learning process should not end. This training gave us hope. It gave us a voice. And now, we're not waiting for change—we are the change."



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A Lady Health Worker conducts a nutrition awareness session for mothers and caregivers in Mirpurkhas, sharing guidance on infant and young child feeding practices to support the healthy growth and development of children.

Keeping Children Warm, Safe, and Ready to Learn in Balochistan

Quetta, Balochistan: Winter is a particularly tough time for the small community of 500 people in Kili Ahmed Khan, a settlement on the outskirts of Quetta, Balochistan, where temperatures frequently plummet below zero.

“It has been continuously snowing and raining in our area for many days,” says Awaiza.

“Going to school early in the morning is very difficult. While at home, we stay indoors and cannot even come out to play.”

In Pakistan, the winter season usually lasts from November to March. A severe cold wave swept across various parts of Balochistan this winter – in late 2024 and early 2025. Temperatures dropped to minus 8°C.

The extremely cold and dry weather posed a major challenge to communities, which are neither equipped with safe and sufficient heating systems nor have enough warm clothing.

A Warm Surprise in Store

Today is a festive day for the community, children are excited as they’ve been told that UNICEF is delivering special supplies for them. Among them are eight-year-old Awaiza and her twin brother, Afnan.

Earlier this morning, the twins walked to school with snow under their feet and a strong icy wind blowing in their faces, without warm clothes or winter shoes.

As a minivan pulls into the village and UNICEF cartons are offloaded, excitement builds among children and adults alike.

For communities living in areas that experience harsh weather and snowfall, UNICEF procures and distributes thousands of winter kits and blankets for children and families.

Winter kits contain woolen caps, jackets, gloves, socks, shoes, and more - items most needed by children during winter.



© UNICEF/UNI993897/Owais. Children watch excitedly as UNICEF winter kits are offloaded for distribution in Kili Ahmed Khan.



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A member of the UNICEF staff helps Awaiza (8) wear warm socks and shoes. Besides many other items, these are included in the winter kit received by every child.

Staying Warm, Staying in School

“There are more than 500 people living in this community, and most of them are children,” says Fiyaz Ahmed, one of the residents.

“Winter brings many difficulties for us, especially for children. They do not have warm clothing and often get exposed to the cold when going to school in the morning. They fall sick repeatedly, which impacts their education and learning,” Fiyaz adds.

As cartons are opened, children line up to receive their supplies - the winter kits. A member of the UNICEF staff ensures that each child receives an age-appropriate kit, helping them try on various items.

Brand-new jackets, socks, shoes, warm hats, and much more for the children, they are jubilant and eager to show every item to their mothers, who,

according to local cultural norms, remain indoors while visitors are in the village.

“We are a poor community. Mostly, men are involved in apple farming or work on daily wages. We don’t have heating systems or warm clothing to protect ourselves against the cold when temperatures drop. Even water freezes, and survival becomes difficult,” says Wazir Mohammad (65), a community elder and veteran humanitarian worker.

“The children can now go to school and play in the open without the fear of falling sick. For us, these items are a blessing, and we are grateful to UNICEF for this timely support,” he adds.

This year, UNICEF Pakistan procured and distributed over 10,000 winter kits and around 28,000 blankets to reach vulnerable children and families in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Partnerships

Aligning Investments, Delivering Results

Partnerships remained central to UNICEF Pakistan's ability to deliver results for children in 2025, particularly in a context of constrained resources and increasing pressure on multilateral cooperation. Working closely with government counterparts at federal and provincial levels, UNICEF supported the alignment of investments across sectors, helping ensure that health, nutrition, education, WASH and social protection systems work together to reach children more effectively. Engagement with International Financial Institutions and bilateral partners focused on identifying synergies between large-scale public financing and UNICEF-supported programmes, strengthening the integration of child-focused indicators and approaches within broader development investments. At the same

time, collaboration with civil society, UN agencies and the private sector helped extend the reach of services to underserved communities, while also supporting innovation and more sustainable delivery models.

UNICEF Pakistan expresses its sincere appreciation to its bilateral and multilateral partners, as well as private sector contributors, whose continued commitment, flexibility and trust made these results possible. These partnerships were not only instrumental in mobilizing resources, but in building shared ownership and coordinated action, recognizing that lasting results for children depend on collective efforts across systems and stakeholders.



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Children are playing and having fun in Sujawal, Sindh.

Thank you to our partners for change for standing with the children of Pakistan in 2025 and beyond.



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Wherever he lives.
Every child deserves a childhood.
A future.
A fair chance.
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And never give up.



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