



Photo: WFP/Henriette Bjorge

WFP & Gender

Contributing towards gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan

In partnership with the Government of Pakistan, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has initiated several humanitarian and development programmes to support gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan. Some of these programmes specifically target women and girls in responding to major gender gaps in education, nutrition, early recovery, and disaster risk reduction. The objective of these activities is to reach food and nutrition security for all, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. WFP is helping empower women through the following initiatives in Pakistan:

Livelihood Support to Women Workforce

While women and girls constitute 49% of Pakistan's population, they represent only 25% of the labour force. This low female participation represents a major loss of

potential productivity. Female participation is even lower at 6% in the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (KP), where most women do not participate in labour outside of their homes. Some of the reasons behind this low rate are cultural norms, household responsibilities, and the lack of education and knowledge regarding opportunities.

To build the capacity of vulnerable groups including women in Pakistan, WFP is carrying out a livelihood support programme. Through this programme, targeted groups receive cash or food transfers conditional upon participation in community rehabilitation activities and trainings, including carpet weaving, food preservation, poultry management and kitchen gardening. The support not only helps women meet their immediate food needs, but also empowers them to establish sustainable livelihoods. Women's participation is ensured through joint decision making, particularly for the activities which have direct impact on women lives.

“Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow”

	BENEFICIARIES	FEMALE	MALE
GENDER RATIO	1,047,891	62%	38%

Stunting Prevention and Feminizing Social Protection

Pakistan is facing a major challenge to meet the food security and nutrition targets of Sustainable Development Goal 2- Zero Hunger by 2030. The National Nutrition Survey 2018 showed that in Pakistan, over 40% of children under the age of five were stunted, a prevalence considered ‘critical’ by WHO’s thresholds. In addition, 17.7 % in this age group were wasted (the highest level of wasting in the country’s history) and 28.9 % were underweight.

To overcome this undernutrition crisis in Pakistan, WFP has initiated several nutrition-focused programs:

Ehsaas Nashonuma

To reduce high levels of chronic malnutrition in Pakistan, the Government of Pakistan and WFP jointly launched in



Photo: WFP/Saiyna Bashir

August 2020 the **Ehsaas Nashonuma’** programme, a nationwide programme for stunting prevention. The programme is linked to the country’s largest social safety net, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), to reach the most vulnerable women and children in the country. In December 2021, WFP and the Government of Pakistan signed a MOU to expand the Ehsaas Nashonuma programme across the country over the next three years.

“The commitment is the largest single deal WFP has signed with a host government and the largest nutrition project in a single country. The money, to be spent over three years, expands the current Ehsaas Nashonuma Programme from 15 districts to all 146 districts across the country” - Chris Kaye, WFP Pakistan Country Director.

The programme targets marginalized pregnant and breastfeeding women and children aged 6-24 months across Pakistan, through four interventions provided at facilitation centres: awareness sessions on health and hygiene, provision of specialized nutritious foods (SNF), routine child growth monitoring and immunization, and conditional cash stipends. To encourage the participation of girls in the programme, each girl child receives a cash stipend of PKR 2,500 as compared with a boy who receives PKR 2000. All facilitation centres are equipped with breast feeding corners, waiting areas and information on services for preventing and getting support for gender-based violence.

KP SPRING Programme

In parallel, *the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Stunting Prevention Rehabilitation Integrated Nutrition Gain (KP SPRING)* programme, another stunting prevention initiative of WFP in Pakistan, is being implemented in four districts of KP, including Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, Nowshera and Bannu, through a multisectoral approach. This programme is co-funded by the Government of KP and WFP. It provides pregnant and lactating women and children aged 6-24 months with locally produced specialised nutritious food to enhance their dietary intake and reduce the incidence of chronic and acute malnutrition. Deworming and iron and folic acid tablets are also provided under the initiative. So far, 21,512 women and children have been supported through the programme. Out of total assisted beneficiaries, 81 percent were women and girls.



Photo: WFP/Saiyna Bashir

Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM)

WFP is also continuing its Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) programme in Pakistan. Through this programme, children under five and pregnant and lactating women suffering from moderate acute malnutrition receive specialised nutritious food. Sensitisation sessions on good health and hygiene practices are carried out for caregivers. Local health care workers (women and men) take part in trainings on managing acute malnutrition. The women who graduate

80% of beneficiaries of the CMAM programme were women and children.



30 Transgender community members in KP received cash transfers during COVID-19.

from the CMAM programme also receive a one-off unconditional cash stipend of 15000 PKR. This is for nutritional support to beneficiaries for up to four months and also can be put towards initiating income generating activities which enables mothers to revitalize their livelihoods. Out of the 203,664 malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women targeted under this intervention in 2021, 80 percent were women and girls. The programme was recently concluded in Umerkot district in Sindh province and is now being expanded to nine

vulnerable districts of KP and five districts of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK).

Empowering Girls through Education

Education is a major factor for eliminating gender inequality. The Government of Pakistan has highlighted that nearly 22.5 million children, predominantly girls, are out of school in the country (Pakistan Education Statistics, 2018). The situation is grimmer in NMDs, where only 5% of girls have completed their secondary education. To incentivize the enrolment and continued attendance of girls in schools in NMDs, WFP carried out an education support programme where adolescent female students received a monthly cash stipend of PKR 1,000. The programme was initiated in October 2020 and concluded in August 2021. A total of 16,233 female students were assisted through the programme, including a small number of Afghan refugee girls.



Photo: WFP/Saiyna Bashir

Positive trends have been noted on increased enrolment and retention of girls in schools, particularly during crisis periods. Teachers in the region reported that many girls have re-joined schools after becoming aware of the programme. 74% of the parents confirmed during an assessment that the cash stipends were used to meet the educational needs of their daughters.



Photo: WFP/Saiyna Bashir

Women and Resilience Building

Disasters and the impacts of climate change can magnify existing inequalities between men and women, especially in a country like Pakistan where women already have limited access to opportunities and resources. To improve access by vulnerable groups including women, WFP is engaged in innovative work for community infrastructure development across Pakistan. In 2021, WFP constructed 24 wells for irrigation/livestock use and 24 animal shelters, created 495 kilometres of footpaths, walking tracks and trails, and donated 47000 tree seedlings. These initiatives aim to create job opportunities for women, and reducing their burden with daily chores such as fetching water, feeding animals and fruit picking. Following the completion of these assets, men and women reported a reduction in

“I have bought socks, a school bag, notebooks and a new school uniform with the money we received from WFP. I am very thankful for this support which made it possible for me to go back to school”.

Dil Nihar, 15, Orakzai district, KP.

time spent traveling to fetch water, as well as a decrease in the costs of transportation.

One of the key resilience building activities benefitting women was the creation of seed storage units in Mirpur Khas and Sanghar districts in Sindh province. WFP trained 1123 women and men in the community on how to construct seed storage units, 94% whom were women. Thanks to this training, 576 storage units have been constructed by the participants.

ACHIEVEMENTS 2021

	CASH-BASED TRANSFERS	CAPACITY STRENGTHENING TRAINING	PERSONS WITH DISABILITY BENEFITTING
	509,282	141,739	99,000
GENDER RATIO	51% female 49% male	90% female 10% male	49% female 51% male

