

PROGRESS REPORT 2013-2015

BIRTH REGISTRATION

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Results for children in Pakistan
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BIRTH REGISTRATION
EDUCATE ALL CHILDREN
ERADICATE POLIO

STOP STUNTING
IMPROVE ACCESS TO SANITATION
DECREASE CHILD DEATHS

FOREWORD

In recent years, the Government of Pakistan has demonstrated increased commitment to social sector development, consequently leading to some notable successes. In particular, the country is celebrating the recent achievement of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for sanitation, halving the proportion of the population without sustainable access to basic sanitation. Over the past two decades, the government has also made notable strides in combatting polio, increasing routine immunization and decreasing the number of out-of-school children.

UNICEF, along with its partners, is supporting the Government of Pakistan to achieve the MDGs and will continue to do so in the post-2015 era. More specifically, UNICEF is providing support to achieve the following results in Pakistan:

- **BIRTH REGISTRATION:** Achieve universal birth registration by 2024
- **EDUCATE ALL CHILDREN:** Provide access to improved education to more than 1.2 million children in Pakistan by 2017
- **ERADICATE POLIO:** Eliminate the disease by May 2016
- **STOP STUNTING:** 1.9 million fewer children with stunted growth and development by 2017
- **IMPROVE ACCESS TO SANITATION:** 10 million fewer people practising open defecation by 2017
- **DECREASE CHILD DEATHS:** Reduce newborn mortality from 55 to 20 live births per 1,000 by 2017, and have 90 percent fully immunized children (aged 12-23 months) by 2017

These progress reports take a deeper look into these issues, including the latest data and how government interventions have positively impacted children and communities in Pakistan. These reports also present key challenges, recent research, knowledge and evaluations, and strategic direction for the future.

Through these reports, we seek to foster productive collaboration, demonstrate the collective contribution of UNICEF and its partners, and reassert our commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Angela Kearney
UNICEF Representative in Pakistan



OVERVIEW

Birth registration, a fundamental right of all children and a basic function of all modern governments, is legal proof of a child's existence and identity. Made in accordance with the legal requirements of the country, it is a permanent and universal recording of a child's birth within the civil registry.

Birth registration provides a passport to protection: as an accurate record of age, it may help to prevent child labour, mitigate against child marriage and protect children from being treated as adults by the justice system. In times of disaster, undocumented children are at even greater risk if they are separated from their parents or caregivers.

Decision-makers also depend on sound and timely statistics for policy development. This means that reliable vital statistics on the numbers and distribution of births are required to inform social and economic planning across the public sector, including health, education, labour and employment, urban planning; finance and economic development, industry and trade, social insurance, environment and population.

Despite this, no large-scale comprehensive study on birth registration has been undertaken to date in Pakistan. However, the government is taking steps in the right direction, for example the development of a comprehensive multi-sectorial Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) strategy for the country.

As a member of the newly established National CRVS Steering and Coordination Committee, UNICEF has made a commitment to support the Government of Pakistan to achieve universal birth registration of children under five by 2024. This report provides a summary of the latest data, key successes to date, future challenges and areas of inequity related to birth registration in the country.

BIRTH REGISTRATION



“ Our region is taking an important step in the right direction for children.

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems ensure governments base their decisions on hard evidence, helping them uphold their responsibility to children and their rights. It is fundamental to fulfilling the transformative shift for children as we move towards more inclusive and people-centered development.”

Karin Hulshof
Regional Director, UNICEF South Asia

REGIONAL TARGET

Goal 1 of the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Framework 2014: Universal civil registration in Asia and the Pacific by 2024

UNICEF PAKISTAN TARGET

In accordance with Goal 1, the Government of Pakistan has committed to achieving universal birth registration by 2024. UNICEF in Pakistan will support the government to achieve this goal

Today, only 34 percent of children under the age of 5 in Pakistan are registered. This means that more than 10 million under-5 children are still not registered¹.

This number increases by about 3 million unregistered births every year².

A birth certificate can safeguard a child’s right to education, health, justice and protection from violence, early marriage and child labour.



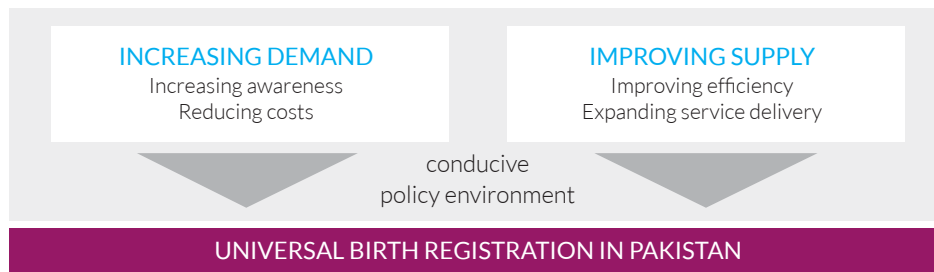
HOW UNICEF WILL HELP ACHIEVE RESULTS

Barriers to registering a child's birth exist both on the supply and the demand side.

On the supply side, there are serious structural barriers affecting the majority of Union Council offices, such as a lack of capacity, lack of incentives for staff, and technological barriers.

On the demand side, many parents simply do not see any benefit in registering their child at birth. Poverty, illiteracy and lack of services in rural areas compound this fundamental barrier, and for many, the costs of registration – fees, cost of travel and time away from work – are simply too high to make it worthwhile.

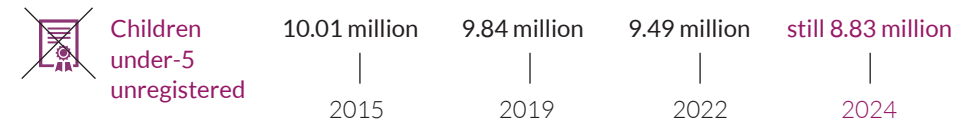
In Pakistan, UNICEF works to address barriers to universal birth registration on both the supply and demand sides. UNICEF's equity-focus ensures that the organisation's engagement with government and private sector partners also addresses barriers relating to gender disparities, distance, costs and cultural factors.



DATA PROFILE

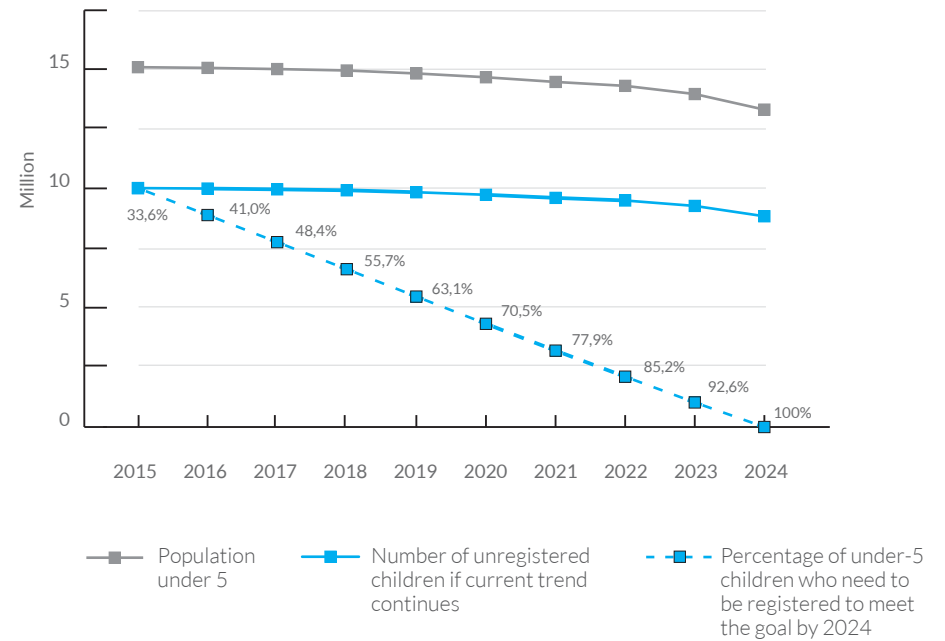
Current birth registration rates are not enough

If the 2012 registration rates of 33.6 percent continue, more than 8.8 million under-5 children will be unregistered by the target date of 2024.



Huge increases needed to reach the target

To reach the target by 2024, we need to increase progress by 7 percentage points every year. Based on global experience, it is more likely that larger gains will be made in the earlier years and smaller gains in later years as we get closer to universal registration.



Data source: United Nations Children's Fund Pakistan 2015, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting Section.

ACCELERATING CHANGE IN PAKISTAN

IMPORTANT ACTIONS

Supporting government strategies and systems

- Birth registration strategies, outlining clear actions to achieve universal birth registration by 2024 have been developed in Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Pakistan Administered Kashmir and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.
- In Balochistan, which has the lowest rates of birth registration in the country, UNICEF worked with the Department of Local Government and Rural Development and the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) to promote birth registration in 10 districts. The same model is now being replicated in a further 10 districts in the province.
- At the federal level, UNICEF collaborated with NADRA to promote a Civil Registration Management System and with the Ministry of Interior to strengthen hospital-based birth registrations.



Working with the private sector to reach the unreached

In June 2014, following the completion of a number of studies supporting the plausibility of applying mobile phone technology to increase new-born birth registration rates, UNICEF and mobile phone operator Telenor entered into a partnership with the Governments of Punjab and Sindh to utilize mobile technology to improve birth registration rates.

The “Telenor” approach identifies non-traditional “gate-keepers” – female health workers, marriage registrars and Telenor outlet staff – and trains them to record the fact of the birth of a child through completion of a birth registration application form using a web-based application on a mobile phone. Once completed, the form is transmitted directly to the respective Union Council Secretary to complete the registration process. To date, more than 30 Telenor outlet operators have been trained in Sindh.

Encouraged by early successes, the Government of Punjab has proposed to allocate PKRs 150 million (USD 1.5 million) to implement the innovative birth registration approach in three districts of the province with the lowest registration rates.

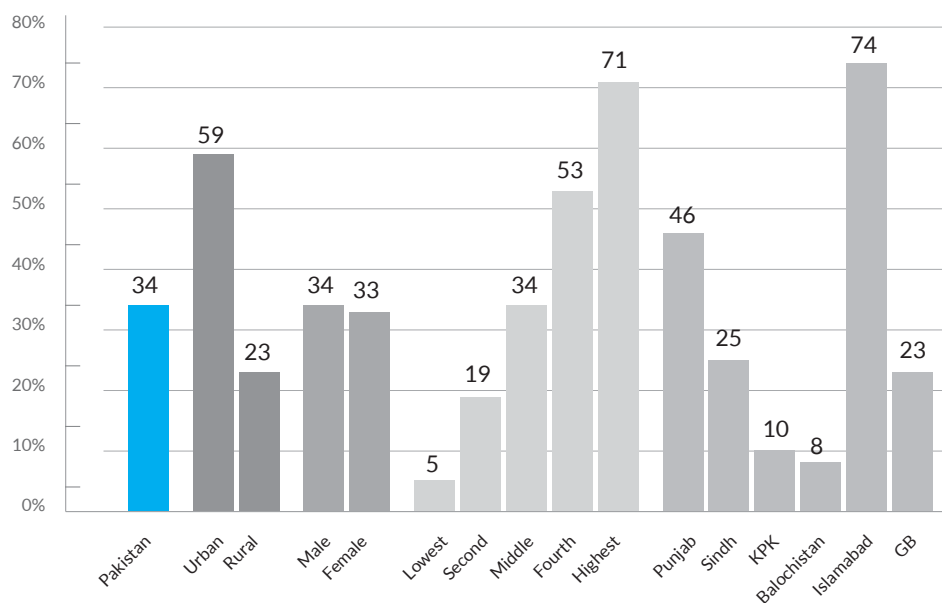
Promoting birth registration in the communities

Using the same methods as the highly successful COMNet Polio project, which utilizes more than 2,500 social mobilizers to implement the national polio program, UNICEF promoted the benefits of birth registration to some of the most vulnerable communities in the country.

UNICEF also supported a national campaign to motivate parents and other caregivers to register their child’s births. The initiative also included an advocacy component, and lobbying efforts to waive registration fees was successfully taken up in many parts of the country.

EQUITY

This data gives a small snapshot of varying birth registration rates among different groups:



Data source: Pakistan Demographic Health Survey 2012-2013.

This shows

- Clear disparity between lowest and highest wealth quintiles.
- Little differentiation between male and female registration rates.
- Large disparity between urban and rural.
- 66 percent difference between highest performing province (Islamabad) and lowest performing province (Balochistan).

LOOKING FORWARD

As a member of the newly-established National CRVS Steering and Coordination Committee, UNICEF continues to technically assist the Federal Government in the development of a comprehensive multi-sectoral Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) strategy for Pakistan.

The CRVS mandate is led by the Health Section of the Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms and this national identity management initiative is placed within the context of Pakistan's role in the development of the Asia Pacific Regional Strategic Plan and subsequent Regional Action Framework³.

With regard to the specific issue of birth registration, UNICEF will continue to support provincial governments to implement respective tailored birth registration strategies, primarily through the provision of technical capacity-strengthening assistance to develop appropriate and time-bound action plans for the achievement of agreed targets.

CHALLENGES

Registering a birth in Pakistan can be a cumbersome and involved process – especially for those families whose child is born at home. Presently, more than 50 percent of deliveries in the country take place within the home. In Balochistan, where the proportion of deliveries taking place at home is 83 percent, less than 8 percent of births are registered⁴.

Despite the existence of over 6000 administrative offices in the country mandated to process the registration of certain vital life events, challenges continue to be posed within the civil registration and national ID card systems, further exacerbated by the fact that Pakistan currently hosts over three million refugees. However, it is anticipated that the application of digital technology to established paper-based birth registration processes can address low birth registration rates in a cost-effective manner.



RESEARCH, KNOWLEDGE, EVALUATION

United Nations Children's Fund, **A Passport to Protection: A Guide to Birth Registration Programming** <www.unicef.org/protection/files/UNICEF_Birth_Registration_Handbook.pdf>, accessed July 2015.

United Nations Children's Fund, **Every Child's Birth Right: Inequities and trends in birth registration**, <www.unicef.org/publications/files/Birth_Registration_11_Dec_13.pdf>, accessed July 2015.

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Gelb A, Clark J. (2013). **Identification for Development: The Biometrics Revolution**. Center for Global Development Working Paper 315. <www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1426862>, accessed July 2015

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REAL LIVES, REAL CHANGE

A new start in life



Allah Dino is fifteen years old and for the first time in his life, his existence has been formally recognized by the State of Pakistan.

He lives with his parents and two younger siblings in Abulkhair Ghulam Hyder Chacharves, a small rural community of Gotki District, Sindh. Allah Dino had never attended school in his life, as it was considered, until very recently, to be more useful to help his father with the cattle and other farming chores.

In January 2015, things changed for Allah Dino, his family and most of his community. A mobile birth registration team came to their village for several days and organized social mobilization activities to raise awareness of the importance of birth registration.

Allah Dino's father visited the mobile team from whom he learned about the benefits of birth registration including access to a number of public services, which convinced him to eventually register the birth of his eldest son. The Social Welfare Department and NADRA officials assisted Allah Dino's father to complete the birth registration form and the child was registered on the spot without charge.

Meanwhile, Allah Dino, along with many other children in the village, enrolled in child-friendly discussion groups and recreational activities organized by the local administration with the support of UNICEF. A few weeks after taking part in such activities, Allah Dino asked his parents to allow him to go to school. His goal? To learn how to read and write.

Along with many other children of his village, he was enrolled in the first grade and an additional teacher was provided to accommodate the peak in new enrolments in the area. These days, Allah Dino helps his father in the fields on a "part-time" basis, when he is not in school.

Now his father proudly describes his son as growing to be a confident young man, one who is carving out a positive role within his family and community.

Allah Dino's education has not affected the family's capability to survive, as his father also benefited by signing up for a social safety net scheme funded by the Department of Social Welfare as part of the birth registration package.

Motivated by the positive changes experienced since the registration of the birth of their eldest son, the family is now planning to travel to their local Union Council office to register the births of Allah Dino's younger siblings.

Endnotes

- ¹ Islamic Republic of Pakistan, "Pakistan Demographic & Health Survey 2012-13", National Institute of Populations studies, <www.nips.org.pk/abstract_files/PDHS%20Final%20Report%20as%20of%20Jan%202022-2014.pdf>, accessed June 2015.
- ² United Nations Children's Fund Pakistan 2015, "Using Cellular Technology for Augmenting Birth Registration Rates in Pakistan, Pilot Sindh and Punjab: 6 months Progress Report".
- ³ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific 2015, <www.unescap.org/resources/asian-and-pacific-civil-registration-and-vital-statistics-decade-2015-2024>, accessed July 2015.
- ⁴ Islamic Republic of Pakistan, "Pakistan Demographic & Health Survey 2012-13", National Institute of Populations studies, <www.nips.org.pk/abstract_files/PDHS%20Final%20Report%20as%20of%20Jan%202022-2014.pdf>, accessed June 2015.

The maps in this publication are stylized and not to scale. They do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The dotted line between Jammu and Kashmir represents approximately the Line of Control agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the Parties.



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