

Support to Social Protection - Social Health Protection

Social protection for sustainable socio-economic development in Pakistan

Context

Social protection refers to a set of policies and programmes aimed at protecting all people from poverty and social exclusion throughout their lifecycles, with a particular emphasis on the most vulnerable groups.

The majority of people in Pakistan are at chronic risk of falling into the poverty trap, making a living without protection against life-cycle risks such as illness, inability to work, poverty in old age and property loss. Health problems without social health protection pose a real threat of impoverishment: poor health impairs employability and productivity, while treatment expenditure depletes disposable income.

Despite a strong constitutional commitment to provide social protection, the current social protection programmes mostly provide social assistance for the officially registered poor, covering only a fraction of the Pakistani population. Social protection is fragmented, with numerous programmes all over the country that are neither coordinated nor regularly monitored.

While the current system of social assistance mitigates the existing poverty, population-based access to an evolving system of social protection will keep people out of poverty in the advent of shocks. The current system has already embarked on positively impacting the level of education and promoting good health. As it evolves further, it will contribute significantly towards a strong foundation for the country's sustainable economic development.

Objective

Improved access to social protection services targeted towards people living in poverty and those at risk of falling into poverty.

Project name	Support to Social Protection - Social Health Protection
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces, Federal regions, Pakistan
Partners	Economic Affairs Division, Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Department of Health - Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Department of Planning and Development - Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab Social Protection Authority
Duration	28.07.2016 - 30.09.2023 (Current commission: 22.06.2020 - 30.09.2023)

Approach

The project assists social protection and social health protection initiatives by Pakistan's Federal Government, and the provincial Governments of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Support measures include strategy development for policy makers, capacity development for implementing organisations, and structural improvements that contribute towards sustainable solutions. The project operates in three fields of work:

- **Improving evidence-based decision-making by relevant stakeholders in the area of social protection.** An important prerequisite for the further development of social protection systems is the ability of the institutions to generate evidence of the functionality of system processes and of the utilisation and effectiveness of services.



Left: A father is updating his son's beneficiary information to access social protection services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Right: Beneficiary receiving a Sehat Sahulat Program (SSP) card at the enrolment centre in Lahore, Punjab



Dr Franz von Roenne
franz.roenne@giz.de

Left: A social health protection programme beneficiary family takes a sigh of relief after their newborn daughter's treatment at a local health facility

Right: Potential beneficiary seeking information on his eligibility for social protection services

A research hub is being set up for evidence-based operational research for policy makers in social protection including social health protection, linking academia and the practitioner level more effectively and enabling decision-makers to have dialogues on the strategic development of social protection systems.

- **Building better capacities for effective coordination of social-protection programmes in partner provinces.** To improve coordination of social protection programmes, the responsible institutions are supported in adapting and expanding the IT systems and solutions required. IT-based coordination and management mechanisms and improved technical skills will make it easier to monitor and analyse system processes for maximum impact.
- **Institutionalising capacity development for social health protection implementers.** In the domain of social health protection, the project supports both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federal Government in their expansion of the ambitious Sehat Card Plus (SCP) and Sehat Sahulat Program (SSP) respectively. Improved SOPs for core processes, communication plans to sensitise stakeholders, and institutionalised training offers will enable institutions to optimise system processes, keeping track of requirements as the number of people with coverage grows.

Results

Access to medical services for the population has been improved through the Governments' introduction of the social health protection programmes. The fully subsidised card covers in-patient services at over 500 private and public hospitals. Since their launch in 2015, the Government is scaling up these initiatives with the aim of covering the entire population in

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces as well as federally administered regions.

Data driven decision-making and an enhanced practice of risk management are enhancing the financial sustainability of the initiatives. By providing a platform for policy makers to deliberate in consultation with technical experts, partners have been supported to draft a legislation aiming towards institutionalisation of SSP at the federal level and in Punjab. In order to better inform SSP for negotiating the premium with the insurance company, experts from the ILOs Impact Facility were commissioned for the second time to conduct an actuarial analysis. Raising awareness is key to improve beneficiaries' utilisation of services. Knowledge, attitude and practices studies carried out in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the federal region are informing communication activities being piloted in five districts of the programmes.

Cooperating closely with other development partners, the project has developed a specific social protection policy for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Based on this, support is extended to the development of a social protection strategy. The first social protection system database, complete with a monitoring framework, has been established jointly with the Public Policy and Social Protection Reforms Unit. The monitoring framework is based on international standard parameters and allows the Department of Planning and Development to take stock of activities being undertaken by various provincial entities and inform a continuous high-quality reforms process.

Together with the Department of Zakat, Ushr, Social Welfare, Special Education & Women Empowerment Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a Social Welfare - Persons with Disabilities Registration Application has been developed. The App captures data including essential demographic information, socio-economic profile of registered individuals and type of assistance needed. Since its launch in 2021, over 100,000 persons with disabilities have been registered in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, one-fourth of which are women and girls.

Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany
GIZ Office Pakistan
Level 2, Serena Business Complex, Khayaban-e-
Suhrawardy, Sector G-5/1
Islamabad, Pakistan
Phone: +92 (51) 111 489 725
Fax + 92 (51) 2656 376
giz-pakistan@giz.de
www.giz.de

As at

July 2022

Design

Natascha Ahmed, Islamabad

Text

Dr Franz von Roenne, Natascha Ahmed

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of

Federal Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)