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PUBLIC EVIDENCE SERIES

UNICEF in Pakistan, 2000 to 2025, Volume IV: Protected & Included

Child Protection, Civil Registration, Social Protection and Public Finance for Children. Twenty-Five Years for Children in Pakistan: An Independent Assessment

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Independent study. Not commissioned, requested, reviewed or endorsed by UNICEF.

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About the Public Evidence Series

This knowledge product was independently initiated by the Centre for Social Analytics and Development Support (CSADS) under its Public Evidence Series. It was not commissioned, requested, reviewed or endorsed by any organization it covers and is not an official position of any of them. Drawing on public sources, it synthesizes what the evidence says about its subject, identifies where the evidence is too limited to support stronger claims, and considers implications for future policy, programming and planning. The Series offers briefs, reports, scorecards and notes that separate evidence from judgment. AI tools supported research and drafting, every statistic is traced to a cited source, and all content was reviewed by the principal investigator.

About this volume

Supporting documentation. Detailed technical evidence studies, analytical files and source level verification materials are maintained as supporting documentation and are available on request.

Volume IV consolidates the verified evidence from the longer technical study Protected and Included in Pakistan, 2000 to 2025. It is designed as a concise decision oriented product for senior programme, evaluation, government and development partner audiences. The central question is not whether UNICEF was active across protection and inclusion, but where its contribution can be demonstrated with sufficient confidence to inform future planning.

The volume gives highest evidentiary weight to digital birth registration, where a formal summative evaluation documented programme design, UNICEF/government/NADRA roles and a mixed method approach combining contribution analysis with a quasi experimental component. Other areas, child protection policy, child labour evidence systems, humanitarian protection, nutrition sensitive social protection and public finance for children, are assessed mainly as policy, system or catalytic contributions. National trends in child marriage, violence, labour and poverty are treated as contextual outcomes unless stronger causal evidence exists.

This revised edition rechecked the headline statistics against current official and harmonized sources in October 2026. Outcome claims remain bounded to 2000 to 2025. Where a source published after 2025 is used, it is identified as such and it describes a 2025 or earlier observation.

How to use this volume

Table 1 How to use this volume

Reader	Decisions this volume can inform	Start with
UNICEF child protection, social policy and public finance specialists	Where legal identity, protection systems, social protection and budgeting work is best evidenced, and what claim language is defensible	Key messages, Executive Summary, Sections 21 to 23
Provincial protection bureaux, labour and local government departments, NADRA, BISP	Which system reforms have documented effects and which depend on workforce, financing and last mile implementation	Sections 9 to 17 and Section 20
Development partners and evaluators	How to read the digital birth registration evaluation as a standard for evaluability, and what evidence other pathways still need	Sections 3, 9, 18 and 19; Annex A

Source: Author compilation

Abbreviations

Table 2 Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
CPWB	Child Protection and Welfare Bureau
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
DBR	Digital Birth Registration
FCDO	UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
NSER	National socioeconomic Registry
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
PDHS	Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey

Source: Author compilation

Executive Summary

KEY MESSAGES

- Digital Birth Registration is the best evidenced contribution (Grade A), based on a formal summative evaluation of nine programme districts; it should not be read as an explanation of national birth registration, which was 42.2 percent for children under five in 2017 to 2018.
- Punjab approved the first provincial Child Protection Policy on 3 June 2025 with UNICEF and FCDO support, but policy adoption is not yet service delivery impact.
- Child labour, child marriage and violent discipline remain serious: Punjab violent discipline moved from 81 to 83 percent between 2018 and 2024 even as child marriage and child labour fell.
- Large government platforms such as BISP and NSER are not UNICEF results; UNICEF's defensible role is child sensitive design, evidence and the nutrition link through Benazir Nashonuma (Grade B, shared).
- For 2026 to 2030, the priorities are universal free legal identity, a financed protection workforce and case management, action on child labour evidence, tracked public finance and evaluation built into programmes.

Between 2000 and 2025, Pakistan's protection and inclusion architecture became substantially more institutionalized. Birth registration shifted from largely paper based and locally fragmented systems toward digital and increasingly interoperable models; social protection expanded from limited targeted assistance toward large national platforms; provincial child protection laws and policies developed after devolution; and administrative and survey evidence on child labour, child marriage and violence improved. At the same time, major protection risks remained persistent. Child marriage continued in pockets of high deprivation, child labour remained widespread in several provinces, violent discipline and abuse remained serious concerns, and case management and referral systems were uneven in coverage and quality.

The strongest UNICEF contribution evidence lies in Digital Birth Registration. The 2017 to 2021 summative evaluation identified nine programme districts, set out the roles of UNICEF, government and NADRA, and used contribution analysis together with a quasi experimental component. This supports a Grade A judgement for UNICEF's contribution to the evaluated DBR model and implementation system, while stopping short of attributing national birth registration gains to UNICEF alone. The next phase, health interoperable birth registration, shows promising recent institutional development, but evidence is still dominated by output reporting and needs longer term functionality and universalization data.

UNICEF's contribution to Punjab's first Child Protection Policy is also relatively well documented. The provincial Child Protection and Welfare Bureau requested UNICEF support in 2022, and UNICEF, FCDO and OPM supported policy development and multisector consultation. This is a substantial policy development contribution, but policy adoption is not yet evidence of improved service delivery or reduced violence.

Child labour survey and evidence systems represent another important pathway. Provincial survey work has improved the information available to government, although staggered survey years prevent a single national trend line. The appropriate UNICEF claim is therefore contribution to evidence generation and policy use where its role is documented, not a claim of reducing child labour prevalence.

Social protection presents a different attribution problem. BISP and the NSER are major government platforms whose scale and poverty effects cannot be attributed to UNICEF. UNICEF's more defensible contribution lies in helping make social protection more child- and nutrition sensitive, particularly through evidence, system linkages and partnership around Benazir Nashonuma. UNICEF reporting documents partnership with WFP on scaling nutrition responsive social protection, while later process evaluation material identifies UNICEF as a key social and behaviour change partner. This supports a shared Grade B contribution, not programme ownership.

Humanitarian child protection is also a substantial contribution area. Across major emergencies, UNICEF supported case management, psychosocial support, family tracing/reunification, referrals, safe spaces and coordination. Yet emergency reach should not be treated as durable system impact. The sustainability question is whether emergency capacities become embedded in provincial protection systems, workforce arrangements, financing and interoperable information systems.

The core strategic lesson for 2026 to 2030 is that UNICEF's comparative advantage is strongest where it links legal identity, protection systems, social protection, evidence and public finance. Future programming should prioritize universal legal identity, interoperable but privacy protective data systems, government financed case management, stronger social service workforce capacity, better implementation of protection policy, child sensitive shock responsive social protection, and a results architecture that measures service quality and child outcomes rather than policy adoption or beneficiary reach alone.

Executive Contribution Ledger

Table 3 **Executive Contribution Ledger**

Outcome / system	Pakistan trajectory	UNICEF pathway	Grade	Sustainability	Main caveat
Digital birth registration	Improving but incomplete	Digital model, local government capacity, demand creation, CRVS support	A	Moderate to High	Do not generalize evaluated programme effect to national coverage
Health interoperable birth registration	Rapid recent development	Integration with health platforms and NADRA	B	Promising	Recent outputs; long term functionality untested
Punjab Child Protection Policy	First provincial policy approved in 2025	Technical/financial support, advocacy, multisector consultation	B	Too early	Policy adoption ≠ service delivery impact
Child labour evidence system	Much stronger provincial evidence	Survey support, technical collaboration, policy use	B/C	Potentially high	Different survey years prevent national trend estimate
Child marriage prevention	Long run decline with persistent pockets	Evidence, social norms, policy support	C	Mixed	Large socioeconomic/legal drivers
Violence prevention	Risk remains high	Prevention, social norms, system strengthening	D/E for population outcome	Low to Moderate	Population outcome remains adverse/mixed
BISP/NSER child sensitive linkages	Large government platform	Child poverty evidence and technical linkages	C	High for government system	BISP scale/poverty effects are not UNICEF results
Benazir Nashonuma	National nutrition sensitive platform	UNICEF technical/SBC partnership with BISP/WFP	B	High/expanding	Shared contribution
Public finance for children	Growing analytical attention	Child responsive budgeting and evidence	C	Moderate	Influence on actual allocations needs stronger proof

Outcome / system	Pakistan trajectory	UNICEF pathway	Grade	Sustainability	Main caveat
Humanitarian child protection	Repeated large emergency response	Case management, MHPSS, referrals, coordination	B/C	Variable	Emergency reach ≠ durable system impact

Source: Verified Master Claim Evidence Contribution Ledger, Tier 1 verification pass

Part I: Framing Protection and Inclusion

IN THIS PART

1. Why protection and inclusion should be analysed together

2. Research questions and claim boundaries

3. Methodology and evidence hierarchy

1. Why protection and inclusion should be analysed together

Protection risks rarely occur in isolation. Lack of legal identity can restrict access to education, social assistance and justice; poverty can increase exposure to child labour or early marriage; violence can be intensified by displacement, disability or household stress; and social protection systems can either reduce or reproduce exclusion depending on registration rules, coverage, benefit adequacy and referral linkages. For this reason, civil registration, protection services, social protection and public finance should be analysed as connected parts of a child protection and inclusion architecture.

This systems perspective also changes how UNICEF contribution should be assessed. Direct case management support is a service contribution; support to a provincial policy is a policy contribution; strengthening a digital birth registration platform is a system contribution; and helping connect nutrition sensitive transfers to child health and behaviour change services is a catalytic contribution. Population outcomes such as child marriage or child labour sit further downstream and require stronger causal evidence.

2. Research questions and claim boundaries

The assessment asks what changed in legal identity, child protection and social protection between 2000 and 2025; what UNICEF supported; where contribution can be demonstrated; where evidence remains insufficient for attribution; and what should inform the next planning cycle. National trends are treated as context unless a specific UNICEF supported mechanism, geography and plausible scale can be established.

UNICEF annual and programme reports are used primarily to identify what the organization reports having done. Government data, laws, policies, household surveys, joint reviews and formal evaluations carry greater weight for sector outcomes. Where evidence is incomplete, grades are deliberately conservative.

3. Methodology and evidence hierarchy

The study combines portfolio reconstruction, longitudinal trend analysis, theory based contribution analysis, process tracing, policy genealogy, systems analysis, equity analysis and selective geographic comparison. The unit of analysis varies by claim: the country or province for population indicators, the programme district for digital birth registration, the institution for policy and systems reforms, and the household or beneficiary platform for social protection. No quasi experimental claim is made unless the underlying evaluation or dataset supports the required design assumptions.

Contribution claims were assessed against seven dimensions: temporal fit, geographic fit, causal mechanism, scale, independent corroboration, alternative explanations and sustainability. The method explicitly distinguishes national change from UNICEF action. A national fall in child marriage, for example, establishes context; it does not establish UNICEF impact. Stronger contribution requires evidence that UNICEF worked on a relevant determinant before the change, at a meaningful scale, through a plausible mechanism, with corroboration from government or independent sources.

The period is divided into six phases: 2000 to 2004, 2005 to 2009, 2010 to 2014, 2015 to 2018, 2019 to 2021 and 2022 to 2025. These phases correspond broadly to shifts in Pakistan’s governance and social policy architecture: early rights and welfare approaches; humanitarian system building and the emergence of a national social safety net; post devolution provincial institution building; accelerated digital and legal reform; Ehsaas/COVID era social protection and protection system legislation; and post flood resilience, national survey completion and greater interoperability.

The source hierarchy prioritizes government surveys, legislation, policies, administrative statistics and budget documents; independent evaluations; harmonized international datasets; peer reviewed research; official World Bank, ADB, ILO, WHO and UN evidence; UNICEF evaluations; then UNICEF programme documents and annual reports. UNICEF annual reports are treated as authoritative evidence of what UNICEF reports having supported, but not as independent verification of population impact.

Protection data are particularly difficult to compare. Violence and exploitation are underreported; administrative case counts may rise because reporting improves; provincial child labour surveys were conducted in different years; legal definitions and age thresholds changed; and devolution created different institutional structures across provinces. The study therefore avoids constructing synthetic national trends where the underlying measures are not comparable. In child labour, for example, the recent combined provincial estimate is explicitly not treated as a single 2024 national prevalence because fieldwork spans 2019 to 2024.

The study also lacks internal UNICEF workplans, full expenditure series, beneficiary level databases, staff interviews and field verification. These constraints matter most for judging implementation fidelity, unit costs, comparative partner contribution and sustainability below provincial level. Accordingly, some findings are graded as plausible even when the underlying policy logic is strong.

> Claim boundary A policy, registry, case management platform or transfer can be an important system achievement even when population outcomes remain mixed. This volume therefore distinguishes institutional contribution from child outcome attribution.

Evidence published after 2025 is used only to describe observations that refer to 2025 or earlier. The June 2026 child labour synthesis is one such source and is labelled where it appears.

Part II: What Changed for Children?

IN THIS PART

4. Birth registration and legal identity

5. Child marriage

6. Child labour

7. Violence, abuse and justice

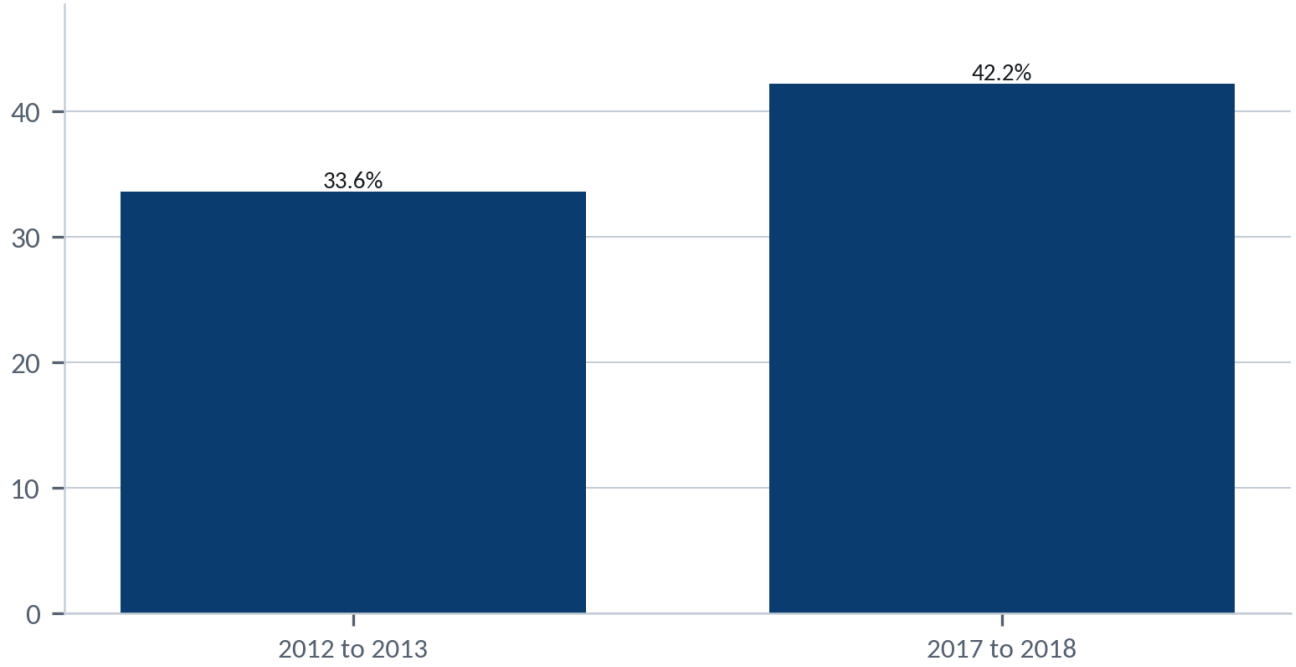
8. Poverty, deprivation and exclusion

4. Birth registration and legal identity

Birth registration is both a right and enabling infrastructure. It establishes legal age, supports school enrolment and identity documents, and strengthens safeguards against child marriage, labour and inappropriate treatment in the justice system. National PDHS evidence shows that registration among children under five was only 33.6 percent in 2012 to 2013 and 42.2 percent in 2017 to 2018, with significant provincial and rural and urban disparities (National Institute of Population Studies and ICF 2013, 2019; UNICEF Data 2026). These national changes predate and overlap multiple government reforms and cannot be assigned to a single programme.

The more persuasive UNICEF contribution story is narrower and better evidenced: selected provincial digital models reduced transaction costs, created mobile registration channels, strengthened local government workflows and connected demand generation with administrative reform. Later integration with health services potentially addresses a key timing problem by linking registration to a near universal contact point around birth and early childhood. The remaining challenge is to ensure that digitalization does not reproduce exclusion for remote, undocumented, poor or digitally disconnected families.

Figure 1 Birth registration among children under five, PDHS 2012 to 2013 and 2017 to 2018



Source: National Institute of Population Studies and ICF (2013, 2019). Definitions and survey timing should be checked before direct trend interpretation.

5. Child marriage

Child marriage has declined over the longer term, but remains uneven by province, wealth, education and rurality. PDHS 2017 to 2018 found that 18 percent of women aged 20 to 24 had married before age 18 (National Institute of Population Studies and ICF 2019), while broader adult cohorts reflect substantially higher historical exposure. The decline is consistent with rising girls' schooling, urbanization, changing aspirations, legal reform, advocacy and socioeconomic change. It is therefore inappropriate to attribute the national trend to UNICEF programming.

UNICEF's plausible contribution is concentrated in evidence generation, policy advocacy, social norm work and the design of prevention approaches that engage both girls and influential adults. Recent Punjab evidence cited in the province's Child Protection Policy brief reports a decline in child marriage from 19 percent in 2018 to 15 percent in

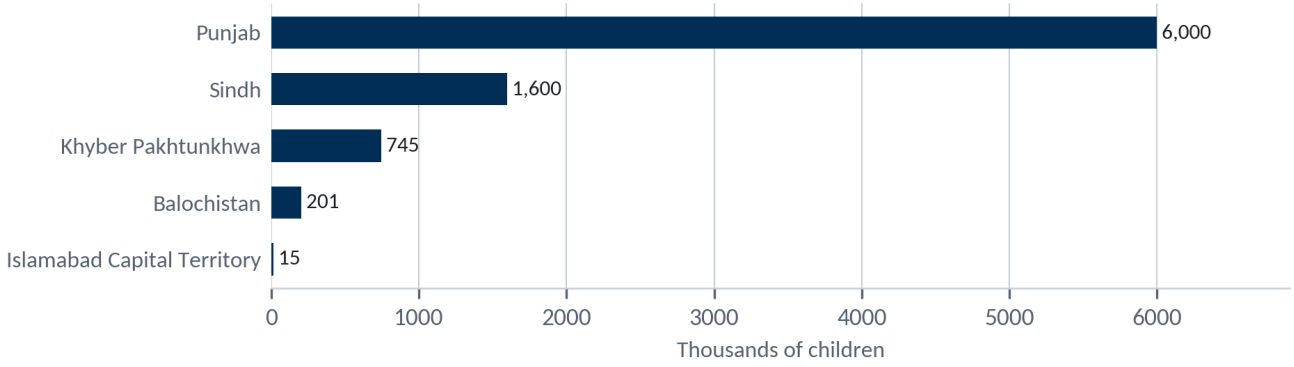
2024 (UNICEF Pakistan 2025a). This is encouraging but should be interpreted alongside changes in schooling, poverty, marriage registration, legislation and enforcement. In protection terms, the relevant question is not only whether prevalence falls, but whether girls at imminent risk can access credible prevention, legal and social services.

6. Child labour

Pakistan's evidence base on child labour improved markedly near the end of the study period. For decades the 1996 national survey remained the principal statistical reference. Provincial surveys conducted between 2019 and 2024 now provide district level evidence and show substantial variation. The Punjab Child Labour Survey 2020 puts child labour at 13.4 percent among children aged 5 to 14, and Punjab's 2024 household survey reports a fall in child labour from 13 percent in 2018 to 9 percent in 2024 (UNICEF Pakistan 2025a). Agriculture dominates, but domestic work, street work and hidden labour remain difficult to capture.

A synthesis report published in June 2026 by the National Commission for Human Rights and UNICEF, after the study window, consolidates the provincial surveys and estimates about 8.6 million children in child labour and 6.6 million in hazardous work, with about 6 million of the total in Punjab (National Commission for Human Rights and UNICEF 2026). Because the surveys were fielded in different years and under province specific definitions, the figures are not a single point in time national prevalence estimate. This caution should become standard practice in future UNICEF and government communication. The institutional achievement is therefore twofold: the scale of the problem is clearer, and government now has a stronger empirical basis for district targeting and costed action plans. Population reduction will depend on poverty reduction, adult employment, schooling quality, enforcement and social protection, not labour policy alone.

Figure 2 Children in child labour by province, provincial surveys 2019 to 2024



Source: National Commission for Human Rights and UNICEF (2026), synthesis published after the study window. Province specific definitions and different survey years apply, so provinces are not strictly comparable.

7. Violence, abuse and justice

Violence remains one of the clearest areas where system development has outpaced population outcome improvement. Punjab evidence cited in the 2025 policy brief indicates violent discipline increased slightly from 81 percent in 2018 to 83 percent in 2024 (UNICEF Pakistan 2025a), even while birth registration, child marriage and child labour indicators improved. This is a useful counter finding because it demonstrates that policy progress should not be confused with protection impact.

Violent discipline is difficult to address through case management systems alone because much of it occurs within families and is socially normalized. Prevention therefore requires parenting support, social and behaviour change, school safeguarding, accessible reporting, workforce capacity and credible legal/institutional responses to severe

abuse. UNICEF has invested in knowledge, attitudes and practices research and social norms programming, but the current public evidence does not support a claim that these efforts have reduced population prevalence. The appropriate contribution grade is consequently cautious.

The period saw stronger federal legal frameworks for juvenile justice, trafficking and missing children. The Juvenile Justice System Act 2018 established a modern legal framework for children in conflict with the law (Government of Pakistan 2018), while the Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act 2020 formalized alert and coordination mechanisms for missing and abducted children (Government of Pakistan 2020). Implementation depends on legal awareness, diversion, probation, legal aid, specialized courts, age determination and coordination with provincial protection services.

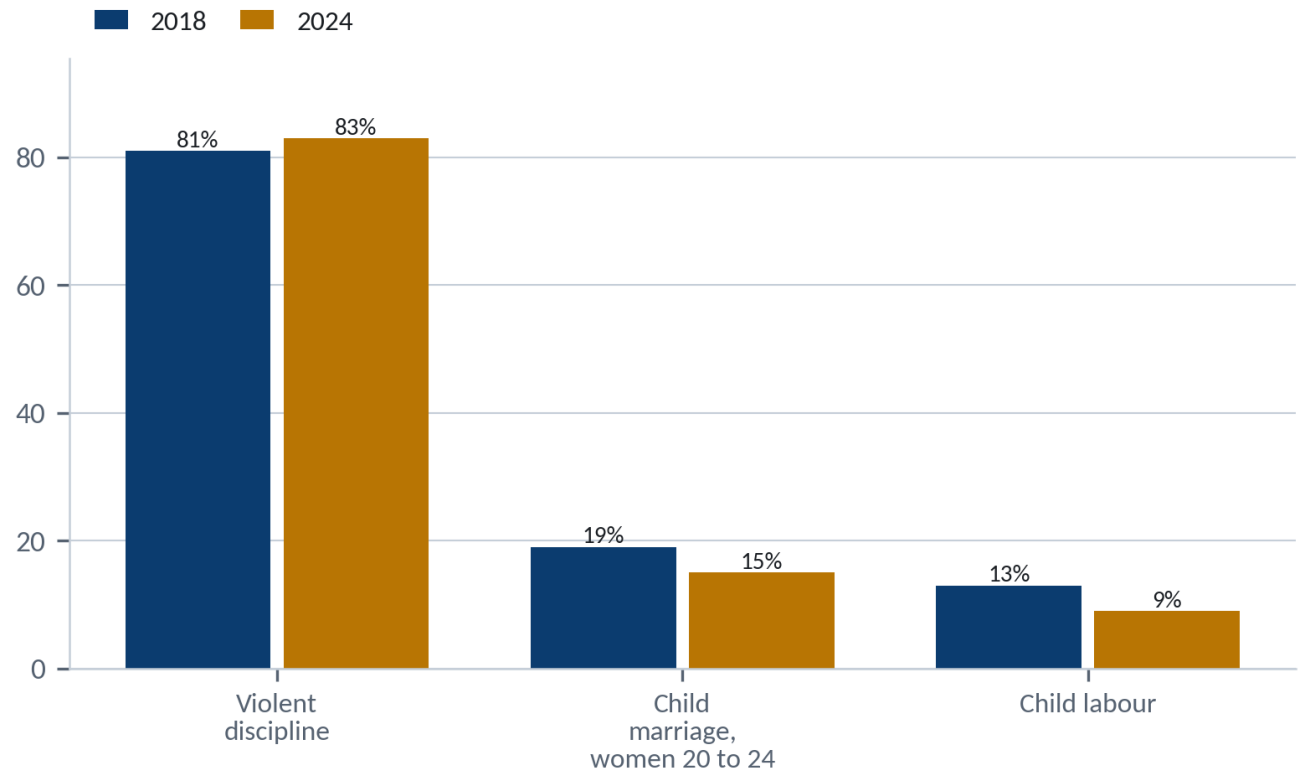
Children on the move, including internally displaced children, Afghan migrants and forcibly displaced populations, face heightened documentation, trafficking, family separation and service access risks. Recent evidence generation by UNICEF and national partners helps make these groups more visible, but administrative systems remain challenged by mobility across jurisdictions. The protection implication is that case records, CRVS and social assistance need interoperability and portability, rather than being designed solely around settled households.

8. Poverty, deprivation and exclusion

Child protection cannot be separated from material deprivation. Poverty increases the probability of child labour, school withdrawal, early marriage, unsafe migration and harmful coping strategies, while disability, gender, displacement and geography compound exclusion. UNICEF supported multidimensional child poverty work is valuable because monetary poverty alone does not capture simultaneous deprivation in education, health, WASH, housing, nutrition and protection.

Social protection has expanded, but child coverage is hard to determine because schemes are fragmented and classified inconsistently. BISP’s allocation reached PKR 716 billion, a 20 percent increase on 2024 (UNICEF Pakistan 2026), but a larger budget does not automatically demonstrate adequacy for children. A child sensitive public finance lens asks who benefits, whether transfer values maintain purchasing power, how spending reaches underserved provinces and districts, and whether protection services themselves receive sufficient recurrent financing.

Figure 3 Selected protection indicators in Punjab, 2018 and 2024



Source: UNICEF Pakistan (2025a), Punjab Child Protection Policy advocacy brief, citing Punjab household survey results. Indicators are not interchangeable: each has its own definition and denominator. These are context indicators, not UNICEF attributable outcomes.

Part III: What Did UNICEF Contribute?

IN THIS PART

9. Digital Birth Registration: strongest empirical case

10. From DBR to CRVS and health interoperability

11. Child protection policy and system strengthening

12. Child labour evidence systems

13. Case management and social service systems

14. Social protection, NSER and child sensitive linkages

15. Benazir Nashonuma

16. Public finance for children

17. Humanitarian child protection

9. Digital Birth Registration: strongest empirical case

The DBR programme provides unusually strong public evidence for a protection intervention. Implemented in two phases from 2017 to 2021, it covered nine districts: Bahawalpur, Pakpattan, Thatta, Badin, Naushahro Feroze, Lahore, Multan, D.G. Khan and Karachi. Its theory of change addressed both supply and demand barriers: digital tools and local government capacity aimed to simplify registration, while community outreach sought to increase awareness and uptake. (UNICEF Pakistan 2022b)

The summative evaluation used a theory based, participatory mixed method design, including contribution analysis and a quasi experimental component for demand side interventions. It involved 864 household survey respondents, 37 key informants and 288 focus group participants and reviewed 174 documents. Findings supported the programme's relevance and coherence with provincial and national CRVS priorities, while identifying weaknesses in fees, registration/certification separation, interoperability and results frameworks. This combination of programme exposure, mixed methods, independent evaluation and explicit limitations justifies Grade A evidence of UNICEF contribution to the DBR model. (UNICEF Pakistan 2022b)

The case also illustrates why "impact" should be specified carefully. The evidence supports contribution to registration uptake and system reform in programme areas; it does not establish that UNICEF caused the national increase in birth registration. Sustainability depends on government financing, system interoperability, elimination of fees and integration with routine health and local government processes.

> Contribution judgement, A Strong evidence supports UNICEF contribution to the evaluated DBR model and implementation system. The finding should not be generalized to national birth registration gains without separate evidence.

10. From DBR to CRVS and health interoperability

The contribution pathway after DBR is increasingly systemic. UNICEF supported an inclusive child sensitive CRVS strategy, provincial birth registration strategies and later interoperability with health services and NADRA. Integrating registration with health contact points reduces dependence on parents making separate visits to local government offices and may improve timely registration of newborns. Recent annual reporting records about 600,000 births registered in health facilities in 2024 (UNICEF Pakistan 2025b) and 110,000 children registered through health interoperable systems supported with NADRA in 2025 (UNICEF Pakistan 2026). The two figures use different definitions and should not be added together.

The policy genealogy is therefore: evidence of low registration and barriers → digital demonstration → provincial strategies and process reform → wider institutional partnerships → health/NADRA interoperability → moves toward fee reduction and universalization. The strongest next evaluation question is whether these systems continue to generate timely registrations at high completeness after external implementation support declines, especially in low coverage districts.

Birth registration should be understood not as a narrow administrative output but as foundational public infrastructure for children. A verifiable legal identity improves age determination, can simplify school and benefit enrolment, supports passport and national identity processes, strengthens the integrity of child marriage and juvenile justice safeguards, and gives government a more accurate denominator for planning. This makes CRVS one of the few protection investments capable of generating benefits across health, education, social protection and justice simultaneously.

The public evidence also clarifies the barriers that any scale up must solve. Earlier systems imposed travel, paperwork, fees and multiple administrative steps; awareness was uneven; local government capacity varied; and digital systems were not always interoperable with NADRA. The DBR evaluation identified precisely these design issues, including the distinction between registration and certification and the persistence of fees for certificates or delayed registration. A technology intervention that leaves institutional fees and duplicate data entry intact will therefore deliver less than its potential.

The next generation of CRVS monitoring should focus on timeliness and completeness, not simply counts. A province can report hundreds of thousands of registrations while still missing a high share of newborns in low coverage districts. Performance indicators should measure the percentage registered within 30, 90 and 365 days; geographic and wealth gaps; the share initiated through health facilities; average processing time; rejection or correction rates; and the proportion of cases completed without informal or formal fees. These measures would help distinguish expansion of administrative volume from progress toward universal legal identity.

UNICEF's planning role could be strongest in the remaining exclusion frontier. National and provincial averages should be used to identify districts and population groups with persistently low registration, followed by barrier analysis that differentiates distance, awareness, gender norms, local government functionality, migration and documentation problems. Resources could then be targeted according to the actual bottleneck rather than assuming one digital solution fits every context.

There is also a governance case for linking birth registration to social protection without making benefits conditional on documentation in ways that punish the unregistered. A more rights consistent model is to use contact with BISP, schools or health facilities as an opportunity to facilitate registration, while preserving access to essential services during the process. This turns administrative systems into inclusion pathways rather than gates.

11. Child protection policy and system strengthening

UNICEF's protection strategy increasingly focused on the enabling environment: laws, policies, case management standards, referral mechanisms, government capacity and social service structures. The 2025 Punjab Child Protection Policy is a recent example. UNICEF reports a three year period of technical and financial engagement, together with FCDO, leading to cabinet approval of the first provincial child protection policy in Pakistan. The policy potentially affects a very large child population because Punjab is the country's most populous province.

The evidence supports a substantial contribution to policy development, but the outcome horizon is still too short for population impact. A policy only becomes protective when budgets, institutions, workforce, procedures, information systems and accountability mechanisms operate. The appropriate sustainability test for 2026 onward is whether policy commitments appear in departmental budgets, district service expansion, case management statistics, workforce deployment and measurable improvements in access and prevention.

Protection policy is unusually vulnerable to implementation gaps because outcomes depend on many agencies acting in sequence. A missing child alert requires prompt reporting, data entry, police action, cross jurisdictional coordination and family support. A child labour case may require inspection, withdrawal from hazardous work, school placement, household income support and follow up. A child marriage prevention case may require age verification, legal intervention, family engagement and a safe alternative for the girl. Failure at any link can neutralize an otherwise strong law.

This suggests that future monitoring should move beyond counting policies, trainings and institutions. Implementation fidelity indicators should measure whether prescribed processes occur: time from report to assessment, proportion of cases with a documented plan, referral completion, repeat victimization, safe family reintegration, and beneficiary experience. For prevention programmes, exposure and dose should be recorded so that changes in norms or behaviour can be related to actual programme contact.

UNICEF can help governments develop these fidelity measures and use them for management rather than only evaluation. Doing so would also make future contribution claims more credible, because analysts could show not merely that UNICEF supported a model but that the model was implemented as designed and produced intermediate results before population change was assessed.

> Contribution judgement, B UNICEF's contribution to policy development is well documented. The external claim should remain about policy and system development until service coverage, quality and child outcome effects are measurable.

12. Child labour evidence systems

UNICEF's support to the recent provincial child labour surveys represents an important form of contribution that is often undervalued because it does not directly deliver services. Pakistan lacked updated evidence for nearly three decades. The new surveys, developed by provincial labour departments and statistical bureaus with UNICEF support, provide district level data on prevalence, hazards, sectors, education, health and drivers. UNICEF's 2024 annual reporting also links survey completion to the development of policies and costed action plans in Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan (UNICEF Pakistan 2025b).

The causal pathway is evidence → targeting → policy/action plan → budget/enforcement/social protection → lower child labour. Only the first parts of that chain are currently well documented. This deserves Grade B/C for evidence system contribution, but not a claim of reduced child labour nationally. The stronger accountability question is whether governments now use survey results to prioritize high burden districts, enforce hazardous work restrictions, expand school/social protection responses and fund rehabilitation and prevention.

The new child labour surveys substantially improve Pakistan's ability to act, but survey publication is only the beginning of the policy cycle. The evidence shows that child labour is concentrated in particular economic sectors, increases with age, is frequently hazardous and is closely related to household poverty and schooling. A successful response therefore cannot be owned by labour departments alone. It requires labour inspection, education reentry, household income protection, adolescent skills pathways, employer accountability and community level prevention.

District level data create the possibility of differentiated strategies. A rural district where child labour is concentrated in agriculture requires different instruments from an urban district dominated by workshops, trade, domestic work or street based activity. Programme design should combine prevalence with information on hazardous conditions, school attendance, household poverty, gender and local labour demand. UNICEF can contribute by ensuring that district action plans are child centred rather than enforcement only and by connecting survey evidence to education and social protection systems.

The relationship with BISP and NSER deserves particular attention. If households with working children are economically vulnerable, targeted income support and education linked benefits can address part of the supply side pressure. But cash alone will not reduce labour where schools are poor quality, employers demand cheap labour, adolescents see little return to education or social norms treat work as preferable to schooling. An integrated response therefore needs both household incentives and improvements in services and labour market regulation.

For evaluation, phased district action plans offer an opportunity to create stronger evidence. Districts could be grouped by baseline burden and intervention intensity, with repeated measurement of child labour, hazardous work, school return and household income. Where rollout timing differs, matched comparison or event study approaches may be possible. This would make it feasible to test whether the post survey policy response actually changes outcomes rather than assuming that better evidence automatically produces better protection.

UNICEF should also maintain the caution already embedded in the recent survey publication: because provincial surveys occurred in different years, combined numbers should not be presented as a single point in time prevalence. This is a good example of methodological transparency that strengthens credibility with government and technical audiences.

13. Case management and social service systems

UNICEF's own child protection overview has acknowledged a central structural weakness: Pakistan has lacked a nationally coordinated public child protection case management and referral system aligned with international standards. Provincial authorities and bureaux have developed, but systems vary in mandates, geographic reach, staffing and data. This makes case management a critical test of whether policy translates into protection.

UNICEF's technical role in standards, workforce capacity, referral models and interagency coordination is plausible and important, particularly in emergencies. Yet public data are insufficient to compare case timeliness, service quality, referral completion or recurrence across provinces. The study therefore grades the contribution cautiously and recommends that future cooperation make case management quality and workforce density measurable results rather than mainly institutional outputs.

No child protection system can function without a professional and sufficiently distributed workforce. Social workers, probation officers, psychologists, legal aid providers, labour inspectors, local government registrars, police focal points, helpline operators and case supervisors all perform different parts of the protection chain. Pakistan's institutional reforms have created mandates faster than the public evidence demonstrates corresponding workforce density, supervision and quality.

A workforce strategy should begin with role clarity. Case managers need competencies in assessment, case planning, child participation, safeguarding, referral, documentation and closure. Supervisors need manageable ratios and authority to address quality problems. Labour inspectors require child sensitive referral procedures, while police and justice actors need age appropriate interviewing and diversion knowledge. Training is necessary but not sufficient if roles, caseload and institutional incentives remain unclear.

Workforce monitoring should include staff numbers, vacancy rates, geographic distribution, caseload, turnover, supervision frequency and continuing professional development. These indicators would help distinguish a nominally established institution from an operational system. They also create a basis for fiscal planning because workforce is a recurrent cost that must be financed domestically for sustainability.

UNICEF frequently contributes through training and technical standards, but training counts are among the weakest proxies for system impact. A stronger future contribution narrative would show that UNICEF supported competency frameworks were adopted, that trained staff remained in relevant roles, that supervision improved practice, and that service outcomes changed. This would shift capacity building evidence from inputs toward institutional performance.

The protection workforce is also a resilience asset. During floods, displacement or public health emergencies, trained staff and interoperable case systems can identify unaccompanied children, support family tracing and manage referrals. Building routine workforce capacity therefore reduces dependence on parallel emergency structures.

14. Social protection, NSER and child sensitive linkages

BISP is one of Pakistan's most consequential social policy institutions of the period. Launched in 2008, it evolved from an unconditional cash transfer into a platform incorporating the NSER, education linked transfers, nutrition sensitive assistance and shock response. The NSER's first nationwide exercise collected information on about 27 million households and has since become infrastructure used by multiple programmes. By the mid 2020s BISP reported supporting around 9 to 10 million families. (Benazir Income Support Programme 2025)

This achievement is government led and strongly supported by development partners including the World Bank and others. UNICEF's contribution is better identified at the child sensitive margins: multidimensional child poverty evidence, public finance analysis, advocacy around social protection floors, nutrition system links through Nashonuma, and civil registration/identity connections. The report therefore does not credit UNICEF with BISP's overall reach or poverty effect. Instead, it asks whether UNICEF helped make a large household platform more responsive to children's specific deprivations.

15. Benazir Nashonuma

Benazir Nashonuma extends social protection into maternal and child nutrition and health. Since 2020, the programme has linked vulnerable BISP households to nutrition and health services through a large network of facilitation and stabilization centres. UNICEF participates with BISP, WFP and WHO in the partnership. The programme demonstrates a mature form of child sensitive social protection in which a cash transfer platform becomes an entry point for services and behavioural support rather than only income smoothing. (UNICEF Pakistan 2022a; Benazir Income Support Programme 2025)

Because WFP, BISP, WHO and government health systems are major actors, contribution must be shared. UNICEF's strongest claim is technical and systems contribution related to child nutrition/health services rather than ownership of the social protection platform. This case is assessed more fully in the Nutrition volume, but it matters here because it illustrates the strategic direction of integration: registries, transfers, service referral and child outcomes increasingly sit within one delivery ecosystem.

16. Public finance for children

Public finance is one of the less visible but strategically important UNICEF contribution pathways. The 2014 child responsive budgeting work in Punjab, subsequent child poverty analysis and advocacy around social sector expenditure seek to change how government understands and allocates resources for children. This is a classic catalytic pathway: UNICEF does not control public budgets but can influence classification, evidence, expenditure analysis and policy dialogue.

The public evidence supports Grade C rather than a stronger rating. Pakistan's budgeting systems do not routinely make it easy to trace expenditure from child relevant allocations through release, utilization, geographic distribution, service quality and child outcome. Future PF4C work should therefore move from descriptive budget shares toward expenditure incidence, execution, unit costs, equity and results. The most powerful evidence would show that analysis led to a documented budget decision and that the financed intervention reached previously underserved children.

Pakistan's fiscal constraints shape every protection recommendation. Laws and policies create mandates, but a protection system requires recurrent spending on social workers, probation, shelters, helplines, case management technology, supervision, legal aid, community prevention and monitoring. These functions often compete poorly

against more visible infrastructure and politically salient transfers. Public Finance for Children therefore needs to illuminate the recurrent cost of a functioning protection system, not simply the share of the budget labelled “social protection.”

BISP’s growth demonstrates that large domestic allocations are possible when a programme has political legitimacy, administrative infrastructure and measurable beneficiaries. Child protection has generally lacked an equivalent financing constituency because benefits are less visible and target populations are heterogeneous. One strategic opportunity is to quantify the economic and social costs of violence, child labour, early marriage and lack of identity, while costing a minimum package of district protection services. This could convert broad rights commitments into a more concrete fiscal proposition.

Expenditure quality matters as much as allocation. A budget may be approved but not released, or funds may concentrate in provincial headquarters while districts lack frontline staff. Future PF4C analysis should therefore follow five steps: allocation, release, execution, incidence and result. Linking these data to district protection indicators would create a stronger evidence base for accountability and would make UNICEF’s public finance contribution more demonstrable.

17. Humanitarian child protection

Humanitarian crises repeatedly tested protection and social protection systems: the 2005 earthquake, 2009 displacement, 2010 floods, COVID-19, the 2022 floods and later climate shocks. UNICEF’s direct contributions included protection coordination, safe spaces, psychosocial support, family tracing and reunification, GBV and child protection referrals, documentation support and community engagement. In parallel, BISP and NSER increasingly provided a government platform for rapid cash assistance.

The main evaluative distinction is between emergency reach and durable impact. Temporary safe spaces or case services may be lifesaving without producing a permanent system change. Stronger long term contribution exists where humanitarian experience changes standards, referral protocols, workforce, registries or contingency planning. The 2022 floods reinforced the need for portable identity, mobile case management and shock responsive social protection systems capable of following displaced families across jurisdictions.

Part IV: Attribution, Sustainability and Learning

IN THIS PART

18. Government and partner contribution

19. Structural constraints and shocks

20. Sustainability and implementation fidelity

21. What UNICEF can reasonably claim

22. What remained mixed or insufficient

23. Priorities for 2026 to 2030

18. Government and partner contribution

Government is the principal duty bearer and the dominant driver of system level change. Parliament and provincial assemblies enacted laws; ministries, local governments and NADRA operate civil registration; BISP built the national cash transfer and registry architecture; provincial labour departments implemented child labour surveys; social welfare and child protection authorities deliver services; and finance departments determine domestic allocations. UNICEF's contribution should be understood as supporting, influencing or strengthening these systems, not replacing government agency.

This distinction matters for institutional acceptance. When a provincial government waives registration fees, creates a protection authority, scales a digital workflow or allocates billions of rupees to social protection, UNICEF may have provided evidence or technical support, but the government decision is itself a central causal factor. Recognizing this makes contribution claims more credible and creates a better foundation for partnership oriented learning.

World Bank support has been central to BISP and social safety net reform; ILO has long supported child labour standards, surveys and policy; WFP is a core partner in Nashonuma; FCDO has financed child protection and birth registration initiatives; Telenor participated in DBR; and a wide range of NGOs, UN agencies and provincial actors have delivered services and advocacy. Protection outcomes are therefore products of a dense partnership environment.

For this reason, the contribution framework asks whether UNICEF had a distinctive role, for example, child rights standards, convening, evidence, behaviour change, cross sector integration or technical design, rather than assuming that partnership results can be allocated to one organization. Where partner roles are inseparable, the report uses terms such as "joint contribution" or "UNICEF supported" rather than "UNICEF achieved."

19. Structural constraints and shocks

Urbanization, demographic growth, women's education, labour market change, inflation, remittances and household income influence virtually every protection outcome. Higher girls' schooling may reduce child marriage; economic shocks can increase child labour; urban migration can both improve service access and create informal settlement vulnerabilities; and inflation can erode the real value of cash transfers. These factors can move outcomes independently of protection programmes.

The implication is methodological humility. Longitudinal national trends should be presented as the context within which UNICEF and government programmes operated. Stronger attribution requires programme exposure, timing and counterfactual evidence. The DBR evaluation comes closest to this standard; most other protection pathways are better assessed through contribution analysis and process tracing.

Pakistan's protection trajectory is punctuated by shocks that can alter both outcomes and measurement. Floods displace families, destroy documents, interrupt schools and livelihoods, increase child labour and marriage risk, and overload local services. Conflict and displacement create risks of family separation and recruitment and complicate jurisdiction. COVID-19 combined school closures, income losses and service interruption, making protection and poverty risks more interdependent.

These shocks are not merely confounders to be controlled away; they are part of the policy environment UNICEF must help systems manage. A credible future protection architecture therefore needs shock responsive registries, emergency case management protocols, portable benefits, remote reporting channels and local contingency financing.

20. Sustainability and implementation fidelity

Sustainability differs sharply across contribution types. Legislation can persist but remain weakly implemented; digital platforms can endure if embedded in government budgets and interoperable systems; social norms require sustained community and institutional reinforcement; humanitarian services may disappear when funding ends; and cash transfer platforms can be highly durable if backed by domestic political commitment and administrative infrastructure. The assessment below therefore considers institutional ownership, financing, routine integration and evidence of continued operation.

Many of the strongest protection reforms ultimately depend on local implementation. Birth registration is processed through local government; child marriage prevention depends partly on marriage registrars, age documentation, police and local courts; labour inspection and school referral operate locally; and protection cases require accessible district services. National or provincial policy can therefore fail if frontline institutions lack staff, transport, digital connectivity, authority or operating budgets.

The DBR programme succeeded partly because it engaged concrete frontline actors, union council secretaries, nikah registrars and community registrars, and simplified their workflow. This is a transferable lesson. System reform should identify the last mile transaction that prevents a right from being realized and redesign that transaction around users and frontline workers. For case management, that could mean one referral protocol, clear response times and transport support; for birth registration, a single free process linked to health contacts; for child labour, a defined pathway from inspection to schooling and household support.

Future UNICEF support should consequently track district readiness and service density, not only national policy milestones. A province may have an excellent policy while large geographic areas remain functionally unserved. Mapping distance, caseload, staff to child ratios and referral completion would make this implementation gap visible and guide equity focused investment.

21. What UNICEF can reasonably claim

UNICEF can reasonably claim strong contribution to specific digital birth registration models and their evaluation; substantial technical and catalytic roles in selected protection policies and evidence systems; meaningful support to social norms, humanitarian protection and CRVS reform; and a complementary role in making social protection systems more child sensitive. It can also credibly claim that its comparative advantage often lies in connecting sectors, identity with health, social protection with nutrition, labour evidence with education and poverty policy, and humanitarian protection with routine systems.

UNICEF should be more cautious about claiming that it caused national reductions in child marriage or child labour, that protection laws have already produced population impact, that increased reported cases necessarily mean deterioration, or that BISP scale and poverty effects are UNICEF results. Those outcomes are shaped by government action, other partners, socioeconomic change and data limitations. Explicitly stating these boundaries strengthens accountability rather than diminishing the value of UNICEF’s contribution.

22. What remained mixed or insufficient

Violent discipline remains the clearest warning against equating institutional progress with child level protection. High prevalence persisted in Punjab despite broader reform. Child marriage has declined but remains significant; child labour remains widespread and often hazardous; and public case management coverage remains uneven. These outcomes demonstrate that law, awareness and technical systems are necessary but insufficient when poverty, gender norms, labour demand and weak local service capacity remain powerful.

Another mixed area is public finance. UNICEF helped place child responsive budgeting and child poverty on the analytical agenda, but public evidence rarely shows a continuous chain from analysis to allocation to expenditure to service improvement and child outcome. Strengthening this chain would make future PF4C work much more evaluable.

The persistence of violent discipline despite improvements in several other Punjab protection indicators is analytically important. It suggests that formal system reforms may have limited reach into everyday family practices unless prevention is sustained at household and community level. Unlike birth registration, which can often be improved through an administrative redesign, violent discipline involves beliefs about authority, obedience, gender, stress and acceptable parenting. Its causal pathway is therefore slower and less directly controlled by public institutions.

Prevention requires a layered strategy. Parenting programmes can offer nonviolent alternatives and stress management skills; schools can establish safeguarding standards and positive discipline; media and community interventions can shift perceived norms; social protection can reduce some sources of household stress; and case management systems must provide credible responses when violence crosses into abuse or severe neglect. These components need to reinforce each other rather than operate as isolated campaigns.

Monitoring also needs care. Administrative reports of violence may rise when reporting channels improve, which can represent better detection rather than worsening prevalence. Household survey measures of violent discipline therefore remain essential for population trends, while administrative data should be used for service demand, response time and case outcomes. UNICEF should clearly distinguish these measures in reporting so that increased reporting is not misinterpreted as programme failure and falling case counts are not automatically treated as success.

An evaluable prevention portfolio would identify intervention communities, track exposure and use repeated standardized survey questions on discipline and attitudes. Where services are introduced in phases, comparison designs may be feasible. Qualitative research should examine why caregivers adopt or reject alternatives and whether economic stress, disability, household composition or gender affects response. This kind of mechanism evidence is necessary before UNICEF can make stronger claims about contribution to reduced violence.

The accountability implication is direct: violence prevention should remain a priority precisely because other system achievements can coexist with stagnant household behaviour. A mature contribution assessment must preserve this counter evidence rather than allow legal and policy milestones to dominate the narrative.

23. Priorities for 2026 to 2030

1. Make universal legal identity a foundational child rights objective. Pakistan should aim for birth registration that is free, timely, interoperable and automatically linked where appropriate to health and social protection contacts. UNICEF can support standards, low coverage targeting, interoperability and monitoring of completeness rather than parallel registration systems.
2. Move from fragmented protection institutions toward an integrated public case management and referral architecture with defined service standards, workforce competencies, digital case systems, supervision and district coverage. A national framework can allow provincial variation while maintaining minimum standards and data interoperability.
3. Use the new child labour evidence to prioritize districts and connect labour enforcement to education, household livelihoods and social protection. The objective should be fewer children in hazardous work, not only more inspections or plans.
4. Deepen child sensitive social protection by measuring child outcomes, adequacy and equity rather than household coverage alone. The NSER and BISP platforms could support referrals to birth registration, school reentry, disability services and protection case management while maintaining strong data protection safeguards.

5. Institutionalize public finance for children. Budget analysis should track allocation, release, execution, incidence and result. For child protection in particular, provinces need recurrent funding for workforce, case management, shelters and prevention, areas that can be crowded out by visible capital programmes.
6. Build evaluation into programme design. Major system interventions should establish baseline conditions, exposure data, comparison strategies where feasible and explicit sustainability follow up. UNICEF's DBR evaluation demonstrates that stronger evaluative designs are possible in Pakistan and should become more routine.

The evidence supports a practical systems roadmap. The first pillar is universal identity: every birth should be registered free of charge, as close to the birth event as possible, with interoperable but privacy protected links to NADRA, health and local government. The second pillar is an integrated protection response: provincial case management systems should use common minimum standards, trained workforces, digital records, referral agreements and measurable service quality indicators.

The third pillar is prevention through household resilience and social norms. BISP and NSER provide a platform for identifying economically vulnerable households, but protection sensitive referrals should be carefully designed around consent and safeguarding. Education retention, parenting support, adolescent opportunities and livelihood measures should complement legal enforcement in child labour and child marriage. The fourth pillar is evidence: repeat child labour and MICS measurements, routine administrative indicators and transparent evaluation should allow progress to be assessed by district and equity group.

The fifth pillar is financing and accountability. Provinces should define and cost a minimum protection service package, protect recurrent frontline spending and publish basic performance information. UNICEF's role should focus on standards, evidence, innovation, interoperability, capacity and independent learning, functions where its contribution is distinctive and scalable. The final pillar is resilience: protection and social protection systems must function during displacement, floods, epidemics and economic shocks, with portable benefits and mobile case management.

If these pillars are implemented together, the next phase can move beyond a system defined primarily by laws and programmes toward one judged by whether vulnerable children are identified early, receive effective support and remain protected over time. That is the institutional transition the 2000 to 2025 evidence suggests is now both necessary and possible.

Action matrix by time horizon

The matrix translates the six priorities and the roadmap pillars into sequenced actions. Grades are those of the underlying pathway in the Executive Contribution Ledger.

Table 4 **Action matrix by time horizon**

Priority	Lead actors	Immediate (next 12 months)	Medium term (1 to 3 years)	Longer term (3 to 5 years)	Evidence grade
1. Universal legal identity	NADRA; local government; health departments; UNICEF	Remove fee and certification barriers in low coverage districts	Scale health facility registration and track timeliness and completeness	Free, timely, universal registration	A (evaluated model); B (health interoperability)
2. Integrated case management	Provincial protection bureaux; social welfare; UNICEF	Agree minimum standards, caseload and referral time indicators	Finance the workforce and digital case records	Interoperable data across provinces	B/C
3. Child labour evidence into action	Provincial labour and education departments; BISP	Rank high burden districts using survey data	Link inspection, school reentry and income support	Evaluate phased district action plans	B/C

Priority	Lead actors	Immediate (next 12 months)	Medium term (1 to 3 years)	Longer term (3 to 5 years)	Evidence grade
4. Child sensitive social protection	BISP; WFP; UNICEF	Measure child outcomes and adequacy, not only coverage	Referrals to registration, school and disability services with consent safeguards	Evaluate integrated effects	B (Nashonuma); C (BISP, NSER)
5. Public finance for children	Finance departments; UNICEF	Cost a minimum district protection package	Track allocation, release, execution, incidence and result	Protect recurrent frontline spending	C
6. Policy into services	Child Protection and Welfare Bureau; Home Department; UNICEF; FCDO	Reflect the Punjab policy in departmental budgets and district plans	Report case management coverage and quality	Assess prevention and service outcomes	B
7. Evaluation by design	UNICEF; government; evaluators	Set baselines and exposure data for new system interventions	Use comparison designs where feasible	Follow up sustainability	A (DBR precedent)

Source: Author synthesis of the evidence reviewed in this report

Conclusion

Pakistan entered the twenty first century with fragmented child protection institutions, weak civil registration coverage and limited national social protection. By 2025, the architecture was significantly more developed: digital identity systems, national social protection platforms, provincial protection policies, better survey evidence and more formal emergency protection mechanisms were all visible. Yet institutional development outpaced child outcome improvement in several areas. Violence, child labour, early marriage and exclusion remained major challenges, while protection service coverage and quality remained uneven.

The evidence supports UNICEF most strongly where its role is traceable to system design, technical support, evidence generation, policy development or humanitarian service delivery. Digital Birth Registration is the clearest example. Other areas merit more cautious claims because government ownership, partner overlap and weak outcome data limit attribution. The planning implication is therefore not to retreat from systems work, but to make systems work more evaluable: define who is exposed, how services change, whether government finances and sustains them, and whether child level risks actually decline.

Annex A: Contribution grading summary

Table 5 Annex A: Contribution grading summary

Grade	Meaning
A	Strong contribution evidence
B	Substantial contribution evidence
C	Plausible contribution
D	Activity documented; outcome contribution uncertain
E	Mixed or contrary evidence

Source: Author synthesis of the evidence reviewed in this report

Status of the verification gate. Of the six Tier 1 protection and inclusion claims in the cross series ledger, four have cleared the external use gate with calibrated wording (digital birth registration, the Punjab Child Protection Policy, Benazir Nashonuma and humanitarian child protection) and two are conditional on pinning exact source locations

(health interoperable birth registration and the child labour evidence system). Child marriage, case management, BISP and NSER linkages and public finance are Tier 2 claims used as context or plausible contribution only, and violent discipline and the education linked transfer are Tier 3 claims not used as headline findings.

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Ahmad Nadeem is a development professional with 25 years' experience in programme implementation, communication, resource mobilization, research and AI integration. He has led donor funded projects, helped organizations secure funding and advised on implementation. His work has involved the World Bank, European Commission, ILO, UNICEF, UNDP, UN Women, OHCHR, USIP, GCF, KfW, Government of Italy and the Canadian High Commission. At the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund and the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy, he engaged, advised and supervised a wide range of development sector organizations, including charities, microfinance institutions, private universities, NGOs and INGOs, and worked with government bodies such as the Federal Board of Revenue, NACTA and social welfare departments. He has also worked on projects involving parliamentarians, law enforcement agencies, the National Police Bureau, police training colleges and churches. He is visiting faculty at Quaid-e-Azam University and SZABIST, holds an MPhil (Gold Medal, Iqra University) and a certificate (LUMS, McGill), and leads CSADS and Manāra.

Centre for Social Analytics and Development Support (CSADS)

The Centre for Social Analytics and Development Support (CSADS), established in 2023, is a research and advisory centre that uses artificial intelligence to generate evidence for informed policy, programme and strategic decisions. It serves public institutions, private sector organizations, UN agencies, INGOs and other development stakeholders, and makes research accessible to the media, students, parents and communities. It also helps organizations adopt AI responsibly, combining credible sources, transparent methods, human expertise and ethical safeguards. Within the Series, CSADS leads research design, source verification and final quality assurance. www.csads.org

Manāra Policy and Practice

Manāra is a strategic design and advisory practice that bridges evidence and action across critical development and institutional challenges. It works globally at the intersection of government, development organizations and the private sector, where efforts converge to generate social impact, mobilize capital and advance equity. Through policy analysis, systems thinking, strategic design, development finance advisory and public communication, it delivers solutions grounded in rigorous research, contextual realities and international best practices. www.manarapolicy.com

CivicFrames

CivicFrames is a creative knowledge communication initiative founded by Danyal Nadeem, a student of media sciences and an aspiring storyteller. It translates credible research into accessible creative forms, bridging the gap between data and public understanding. It explores how evidence can reach people through music, poetry and stories. Danyal intends to learn how creative formats can help evidence travel. Within the Series, it helps make findings easier to understand and share. www.civicframes.org