



## What we do in Pakistan

- We're making sure more than 30,000 working children get an education
- We've built 200 schools attended by more than 12,000 students
- We've helped save the lives of nearly 22,000 newborn babies
- We helped 299,000 children forced to leave their homes by armed conflict



Pakistan's economy is growing and the government is spending more on education and healthcare. But the gap between rich and poor is widening and the proportion of the population who live on less than US\$1 a day is rising. Only 50% of adults in Pakistan can read and write, and far fewer women than men. Every year at least 15,000 women die from complications during pregnancy and childbirth and one in ten children dies before their fifth birthday.

Out of a total population of 160 million, nearly half are under 18 years of age. Many children and young people don't have enough to eat, don't attend school and cannot get treatment when they are ill. Many have to earn money to help support their family.

Pakistan is prone to natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods, landslides and droughts. A democratically elected government came into power in April 2008, but the political and security situation remains volatile and unpredictable.

### Save the Children in Pakistan

We started working in Pakistan in 1979, when thousands of people from Afghanistan took refuge there after the Russian invasion of their own country. Until 1995, we ran projects focusing on health, education and improving people's lives in the countryside. Today, we work in partnership with local agencies and organisations to improve children's experience of

school and to keep them healthy and safe from harm. We also respond to emergencies such as earthquakes and floods. We use our experience of working with and learning from children to campaign for changes to national policies and legislation that affect young people. Overall, last year we reached nearly 92,000 children through our work.

## **Key areas of work**

### **We're protecting children from harm**

We helped to draft a Child Protection Bill for Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and also lobbied the government to improve national child protection and children's rights legislation. In October 2008, we helped to organise a week-long campaign calling for an end to violence against children.

Pakistan's Labour Law forbids any child under the age of 14 to work or be employed in any establishment in the country. However, it's estimated that at least 8 million children work – half of them aged between five and nine years – and often for long hours and in dangerous conditions.

In Sindh, Balochistan and North West Frontier Province, we've supported 36,000 children to stop working and go to school. In Sindh, we've provided credit facilities and business advice for 42,000 parents. We've also supported 115 families in Azad Jammu and Kashmir so that their children no longer have to work.

In October 2008, we helped to organise a week-long campaign calling for an end to violence against children. And with our partners, Plan Pakistan, we launched the '20 to 20' campaign calling on the Pakistani government to approve and implement new child protection legislation by 20 November 2009, the 20th anniversary of the UN Convention on Rights of the Child. The proposed Bills will help to protect children across Pakistan by abolishing laws permitting corporal punishment, raising the age of criminal responsibility from 7 to 12 years and establishing a National Commission on the Rights of Children which will provide a clearer legal definition of sexual abuse and exploitation.

### **We're helping children get a good education**

Today there are 3 million more pupils in primary school than there were in 2001, but roughly half of all children still don't attend. Far fewer girls than boys go to school, especially in the countryside, and drop-out rates for both are high. Even where schools are available, many low-income families see little value in sending their children there when they could be earning money to help the whole household.

In Balochistan and North West Frontier Province, we've helped more than 14,000 children who've missed the start of primary school, or who have dropped out after they enrolled. Together with local agencies, we've set up 43 non-formal education centres, with flexible opening hours where 1,300 children – mostly girls – can come to catch up. They also have the chance to spend time with others of their own age. Many of the younger children have

been able to move on to formal school to continue their education. Older children can also get training in skills that will enable them to earn a living. By the end of 2009 we'll have set up 83 non-formal education centres in Sindh.

Through our 'Towards Joyful Learning' project, we've also upgraded two girls' primary schools to middle schools in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, by training and providing additional teachers. We've improved the infrastructure in another ten. In 59 schools – with more than 12,000 children – we started innovative 'treasure box' school libraries, each with 1,001 books, as in the *Arabian Nights*.

We've built 200 schools attended by 12,000 pupils in areas affected by the 2005 earthquake. We're also part of a children's rights coalition that has campaigned against the burning down of girls' schools by the Taliban in North West Frontier Province.

### **We're helping to save the lives of mothers and newborn babies**

As part of Save the Children's global Every One campaign, we're working with the district health authorities in AJK and DG Khan Province, Punjab, to prevent the deaths of mothers and newborn babies. In 40 villages, local health committees have encouraged four times as many mothers to give birth in the health clinics, and three times as many to bring their newborn babies for treatment there. The project has already benefited more than 21,730 babies and their mothers.

### **We've helped children caught up in natural disasters and conflict**

When a series of earthquakes shook the flood-prone province of Balochistan in October 2008, 10,000 people lost their homes. Many schools and health centres were damaged or destroyed. We immediately provided food, tents, warm clothes and quilts for nearly 3,000 children. We followed this up by helping to repair water systems, get schools reopened and restore the health service. Overall, we helped 27,650 children and their families recover from the floods.

When counter insurgency bombing forced 2.3 million people in North West Frontier Province to leave their homes in early 2009, we immediately provided shelter, healthcare and other emergency items for 296,440 children.



Save the Children UK  
1 St John's Lane  
London EC1M 4AR  
Telephone +44 (0)20 7012 6400  
Fax +44 (0)20 7012 6963  
**[savethechildren.org.uk](http://savethechildren.org.uk)**

Registered charity England and Wales (213890) Scotland (SC039570)