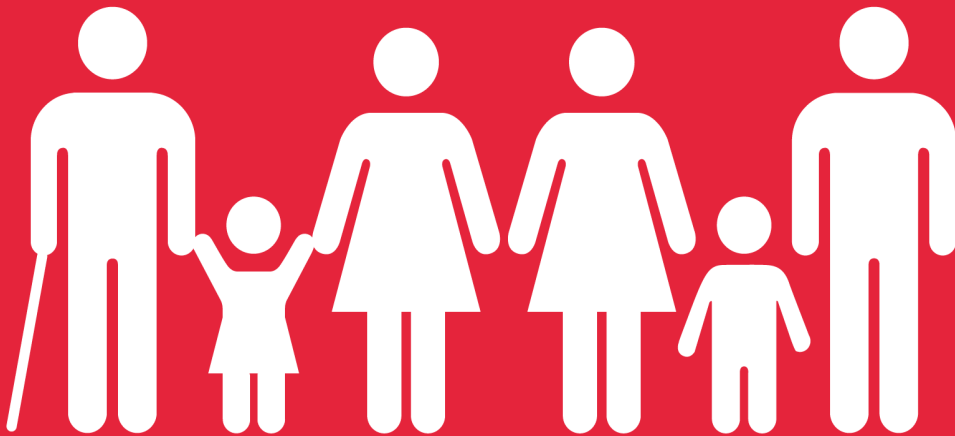


# Goal 1

## No Poverty

**1** NO  
POVERTY



## Country Context

Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the fifth largest population on the planet with 213.6 million people,<sup>1</sup> is a sovereign state situated in a geo-strategic location at the junction of middle East and central Asia. Bereft of Quaid's dream for a welfare state, social development has been off the mark with 22.4 million Out of School Children,<sup>2</sup> 56.3% Out of Pocket Expenditure in health,<sup>3</sup> and 29.5% population living below poverty line.<sup>4</sup> Exclusionist policy patterns marginalizing governance has led to country ranking at 147<sup>th</sup> out of 188 in Human Development Index<sup>5</sup> and 143<sup>rd</sup> out of 144<sup>th</sup> in Global Gender Gap Index.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, marginalization of key strategic sectors has led to funding diversions away from social development, barely allocating 3% of the GDP each for Education, Health and Social protection.<sup>7</sup>

With a GDP of \$279 billion (2017 est.),<sup>8</sup> Pakistan is categorized as a lower middle-income country. Economic stability has been a constant uphill battle with public debts and liabilities escalating up to 74% of GDP.<sup>9</sup> The country is ranked at 171 out of 188 countries in terms of GDP per capita (PPP) of \$5,400 (2017 est.)<sup>10</sup> while unemployment stands at 6% without factoring in statistics from informal economy which employs almost 70% of the country's workforce.<sup>11</sup> Gini index estimates 30.7% inequality with disparities as wide as the income share held by the lowest 10% at 4% against that of the top 10% at 26% (2013 est.)<sup>12</sup> in Pakistan.

In hindsight, political institutions in their formative years - mainly adapted from the colonial rump - were barely able to withstand extraconstitutional maneuvers<sup>13</sup> in the absence of a strong nation-building consciousness. This resulted in successive instability of civilian governments followed by political proxies and status-quo representatives, beguiling under democratic pretexts. Weak democratic structures led to the absentia of populace from democratic processes and crippled country prospects in socio-economic and political spheres with implications long into its future. This is evident of the country rankings at 110<sup>th</sup> in Democracy Index<sup>14</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> among Failed States rankings in 2018.<sup>15</sup> Fret over it not though, for Quaid's optimism guides our course:

*The story of Pakistan, its struggle and its achievement, is the very story of great human ideals, struggling to survive in the face of great odds and difficulties.<sup>i</sup>*

Amid international isolationism, national calamities and social fragmentation, democratization of state and social institutions is the moral and political imperative. It is essential that we promote critical education and discourse to bring forth analysis that helps adequately influence policy mandates for a just, peaceful and prosperous Pakistan.

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<sup>i</sup> M.A. Jinnah, Address to the people in Chittagong, March 23, 1948

## Poverty

Standard of living, measured in terms of real income per capita, access to essential services and poverty rate,<sup>ii</sup> approximates the quality of life available to people of a specific socio-economic class or a geographic area.<sup>16</sup> One measure of Standard of Living is the United Nation's Human Development Index (HDI) which covers life expectancy at birth, education and income per capita where the country stands at 147<sup>th</sup> out of 188 countries in 2017.<sup>17</sup> Amid acute poverty and inequality traps, there is little hope that poverty alleviation strategies offer for the people deprived of basic human, physical and productive assets and restricted access to essential services. World Bank concluded that the country's safety net programs are fragmented; have a limited coverage of approximately 2-3% against a poverty rate above 25%; and, the implementation and evaluation capacities are inefficient across institutional set-ups.<sup>18</sup> This is compounded by ad-hoc poverty alleviation programming to satisfy international donors,<sup>19</sup> clearly indicative of the lack of political will for poverty eradication in Pakistan. It is also indicative of the allocations of PRK. 121 billion to BISP, 2.1 billion to social protection, 6 billion to Bait-ul-Maal, and, 2 billion for Pakistan Poverty Fund - accumulating only 2.5% of the overall budget for 2017/18.<sup>20</sup> The situation urges the need for pro-poor growth policies to be consistent, cross-cutting across strategic sectors, and, regulated by effective governance to reach the most marginalized for poverty eradication.

- 1. Multi-sectoral social protection framework should be strategized and implemented backed by serious political will for poverty eradication.**
- 2. Universal easy access to essential services, especially health and education, should be ensured for strategic gains in raising the overall standard of living.**
- 3. The coverage and efficiency of social protection programs must be improved. Poverty eradication initiatives need to be extensive reaching the poorest with sufficient allocations for beneficiaries.**
- 4. The orientation of such programs should be converted from charity to development approach focusing on micro-finance, micro-credit and employability training and avenues to lift people out of poverty.**
- 5. Energy crisis should be addressed through hydro-electric dams, wind and solar energy plants, with special emphasis on green energy initiatives.**
- 6. Equitable access to clean energy and natural gas should to be ensured to meet provincial needs as a priority.**

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<sup>ii</sup> Along with measurement of gross domestic product, gross national income, political and cultural freedom, environmental conditions, safety and security.

7. **Transportation systems in the Urban centres, especially Karachi, need to be improved through infrastructural upgrades.**
8. **Indigenous and marginalized segments of the society should be mainstreamed across development initiatives to further social cohesion.**

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