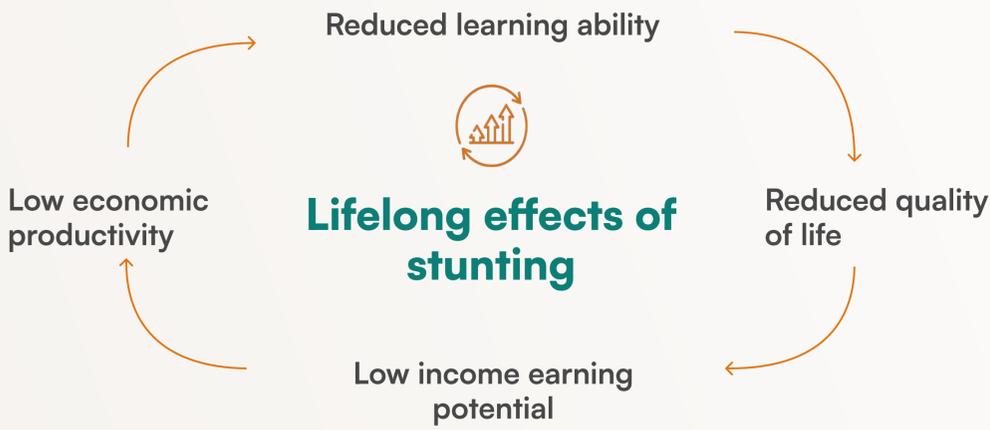
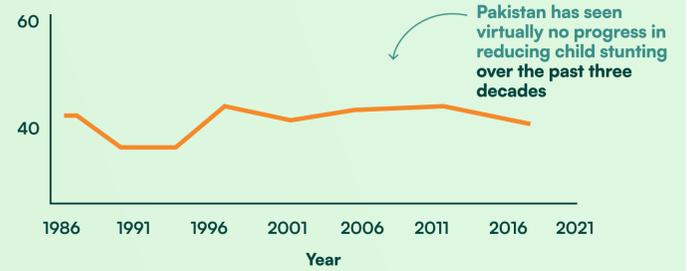


Pakistan's Child Stunting Problem

Forty percent of children under five suffer are stunted



Prevalence of stunting, height for age (% of children under 5)



Pakistan has seen virtually no progress in reducing child stunting over the past three decades

Why is Pakistan among the few countries in the world where stunting rates remain this high?

Policy response must become more holistic

Stunting is a multidimensional challenge, requiring multi-sectoral policies. A host of critical environmental factors underlie the biological drivers of stunting.

Biological Factors



Child Malnutrition

Child malnutrition contributes to **45%** of child deaths among children under 5. **But it is just the tip of the iceberg.**

Environmental Factors



Absence of Investment in Sanitation

- Diseases impacting immune functions, particularly **environmental enteric dysfunction (EED)**, are causes of physical and mental stunting
- Chronic infection and inflammation, exposing a child to EED, **is endemic across Pakistan**
- There is a lack of public investment in sanitation, safe drinking water, and high exposure of infants to animal waste

Possible Contaminants in Water

- Bacteria
- Animal waste
- Nitrates from chemical fertilizers



Rapid Population Rise

- Environmental contamination, coupled with rapid population rise have increased levels of diarrhea and stunting in even the wealthiest urban areas of Pakistan.



Climate Change and Agri-food Challenges

- The combined impact of climate change and environmental degradation is affecting the nutritional value of food, and further impeding access for vulnerable segments

How can we address the challenges of child stunting?

- Adopt a revised theory of change that includes all critical drivers of stunting
- Implement a sustained, high visibility nationwide behavior change campaign to create awareness
- Operationalize and adequately empower federal and provincial bodies to address child stunting
- Focus on areas and populations that are most deprived
- Address implementation bottlenecks

To learn more, read the World Bank Pakistan Discussion Note, Reducing Child Stunting, 2023