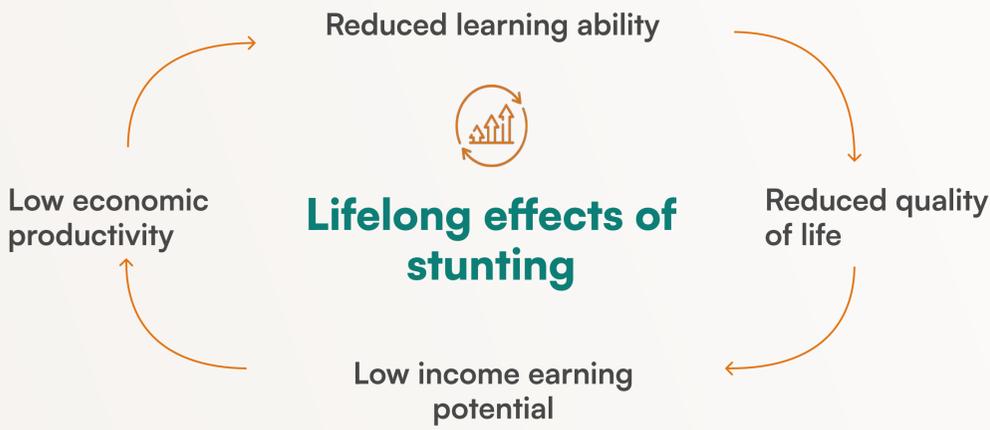
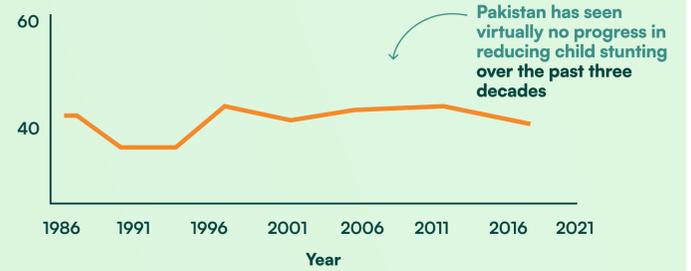


# Pakistan's Child Stunting Problem

**Forty percent** of children under five suffer are stunted



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



Source: World Bank-World Health Organization. National Nutrition Surveys (Pakistan)

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