

## **Pakistan at 2047: Opportunities & Challenges for Today's Youth and Future Human Capital**

*In collaboration with UNICEF*

With a population of [241 million growing at 2%](#) - higher than the [regional average of 1.2%](#) - Pakistan is projected to reach [380 million by 2047](#). If current trends persist, this rapid growth will pose significant challenges. Currently, [two-thirds of the population is under 30](#) representing a dynamic and innovative potential workforce. However, the gap between labour demand and job opportunities threatens to undermine this human capital, leading to underutilisation and wasted potential. Addressing this disparity is crucial for harnessing energy of the youth and steering the country toward sustainable progress.

Pakistan's high birth rate is also straining health, nutrition, and education systems, limiting the potential of today's children and youth who may underperform in contributing to growth over the next decades. Gender and regional disparities further hinder progress, with [29% of girls](#) married by age of 18, leading to higher rates of stunting and school dropouts. These adolescent girls, if trends continue, will be unable to make decisions about marriage, pregnancy, or family size, perpetuating poor health outcomes for future generations. Women's empowerment and investment in early childhood development are critical to enhancing human capital and driving progress towards 2047.

Pakistan ranks [3<sup>rd</sup> globally in pollution-related premature deaths](#) and [5<sup>th</sup> in climate change vulnerability](#). Predicted increases in heatwaves, shifting disease patterns, and more frequent climate emergencies, combined with rapid demographic changes, disproportionately impact the poor and marginalised, who lack the information and resources to cope. Insufficient, non-consultative policies fail to address the needs of the most affected, such as women, youth, ethnic minorities, the disabled, and those living in poverty. This exclusion deepens social, economic, and political marginalisation, hindering these groups' ability to build resilience and improve their quality of life.

As demands of the modern work environment evolve, youth need soft skills, digital literacy, and entrepreneurial abilities to contribute effectively to human capital and climate action. Traditional education must be complemented with vocational training, soft skills, and digital education to enhance self-employment opportunities, improve access to international and high-skilled markets, and equip young people for the future of work. Key to human capital development are financial investments, robust data management (e.g., socioeconomic registries), and adaptive social protection systems for cross-cutting interventions.

This panel will explore the future of human capital development in Pakistan, both under current trends (business as usual) and with targeted interventions. Discussion will focus on population dynamics, gender disparities, and the youth bulge, with cross-cutting themes of health, nutrition, child protection, education, WASH, and social protection. It will also address barriers to healthcare access for adolescents and youth, particularly regarding age and gender differences.

### **Panel Organisers**

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