

# Delivering innovations in healthcare in Pakistan

 [blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2016/01/22/delivering-innovations-in-healthcare-in-pakistan/](https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2016/01/22/delivering-innovations-in-healthcare-in-pakistan/)

2016-1-22

*Pakistan currently has just 5,600 primary healthcare facilities to serve a population of 180 million people and the government spends just 1% of its GDP on healthcare. As a result, the country faces severe health-related challenges. In this blog, **Fayeeza Naqvi**, Co-founder and Chairman of the Aman Foundation Pakistan, discusses the problem, and introduces the [AmanClinics Accelerator](#) competition which aims to foster innovative ideas to produce efficient and low cost healthcare clinics.*



Pakistan is a country of contradictions. Home to nearly 200 hundred million people, it is brimming with mysterious beauty and promise whilst at the same time rife with poverty and despair.

Most prominently, it faces severe health-related challenges including the high prevalence of both communicable and non-communicable diseases, high maternal and child mortality, and widespread malnutrition (particularly amongst women and children). More specifically:

- Pakistan has the highest infant mortality rate in the world (200,000 newborns die each year)
- Globally, 1% of all deaths of children under the age of 5 occur in Pakistan
- In Pakistan, 48% of births occur without qualified birth attendants
- Pakistan has a very high maternal mortality rate – 276 deaths per 100,000 live births (women frequently die in childbirth, unassisted by medical professionals, and in perilous conditions)
- Malnutrition rate in Pakistan is one of the highest in the world – 32% of children are born underweight

Despite these dismal figures, healthcare, particularly for women and children, is not given much attention and Pakistan spends less than 1% of GDP on healthcare – the lowest in the South Asian region. I personally find this unacceptable.

From a global perspective we can look at maternal and children's healthcare as a critical health issue, as an economic issue, which is heartbreakingly visible around the globe, but most importantly we should look at it as a human rights issue. Clearly, there are serious voids in the system and these conditions require our care and attention.

It is these startling voids in the healthcare system in Pakistan that prompted Arif Naqvi and I to establish the [Aman Foundation](#) in 2008. The Aman Foundation is a not-for-profit social enterprise, focusing on improving Pakistan's healthcare and education. We strongly believe that three things are required to solve the challenges that face Pakistan today, namely that (1) **Pakistanis** must take the **lead** in solving Pakistan's problems; (2) **innovative** solutions are key to solving our social challenges (3) all solutions must be **sustainable**.

Based on these key precepts, the Aman Foundation's mission is to champion dignity and choice for the underserved with an emphasis on health and education through direct interventions. Today the health-related programs are accomplished under the auspices of the larger [AmanHealth](#) eco-system, which includes Advanced Emergency Medical Services, a Tele-health network, Community Clinics, Mental Health literacy and advocacy, the Community Health Worker program, and the Sukh Initiative (a joint family planning initiative in partnership with the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Aman Foundation).

At the end of 2015, the Aman Foundation also launched [AmanClinics Accelerator](#), a social venture competition aimed at stimulating innovative ideas to produce efficient and low cost healthcare clinics in Karachi. Pakistan currently has just 5,600 primary healthcare facilities to serve a population of 180 million people. We are therefore

reaching out to teams of public health professionals and students in major universities all over the world in an effort to develop a blueprint for scalable primary care clinics.

The winning idea will be awarded with funding with the aim to establish 2 to 3 clinics in Karachi by the end of 2016 and the vision is to roll out more across the city and the country in the upcoming years. Registration closes 31 January, 2016 and the final date for submissions is 16 April, 2016. We hope that the competition will generate new ideas and models and with partnerships across governments, philanthropic and the private sector organizations we aim to eventually export this model globally.

My ultimate hope is that these efforts will make a significant, positive contribution to the healthcare ecosystem in Pakistan and go a long way towards delivering on its commitment to its people.

*Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of the South Asia @ LSE blog, nor of the London School of Economics. Please read our [comments policy](#) before posting.*

### **About the Author**

**Fayeeza Naqvi** is an LSE alumna and Co-founder and Chairman of the Aman Foundation, the largest private philanthropic trust in Pakistan founded by Fayeeza and her husband Arif Naqvi. Aman Foundation focuses on the key pillars of education and health and is dedicated to transforming lives by enhancing dignity and choice for the underserved. Fayeeza recently accepted the prestigious BNP Paribas annual Grand Prix award for philanthropy. She serves as trustee of the British Asian Trust and is also the founding partner of LSE's South Asia Centre Board.



- Copyright © 2016 London School of Economics