



UNICEF Pacific in Vanuatu

Partner Update
March–April 2017

unicef 

Children are excited to return to home and resume school after taking refuge during Tropical Cyclone Cook, which hit Vanuatu on 8–9 April, in a church and playing in a child-friendly space provided by Save the Children Credit: @ UNICEF Pacific/2017/Olul.

HIGHLIGHTS

UNICEF and other development partners signed a Joint Partnership Arrangement with the Government of Vanuatu to support the Vanuatu Education and Training Sector Strategy.

8 provincial supervisors of the national immunization programme were upskilled on supportive supervision and data management, including use of electronic tools uploaded onto tablets using the open source software AKVO Flow.

12 national obstetrics and neonatal health care experts provided feedback to strengthen National Maternal and Newborn Care Guidelines.

Training of trainers on Maternal Infant Young Child Feeding and Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition, which included nutrition in emergencies, was delivered to a total of **48 health professions from 6 provinces** who work in hospitals, health centres, dispensaries and nongovernmental organisations.

Draft minimum quality service standards for early childhood care and education centres were developed with UNICEF support through a workshop that brought together the Ministry of Education and Training and other partners.

50 participants were trained during the reporting period bringing the total reached to **350 people** trained on the UNICEF-supported child protection community facilitation package known as “Children are Our Future,” which aims to prevent child abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Two fully equipped boats and **two quad bikes** with accessories provided by UNICEF were handed over to the Government to support monitoring and field visits by Penama Provincial Education Office staff and Civil Registry and Vital Statistics Committees in Torba, Malampa and Tafea Provinces.

Overview

Support from UNICEF to both the Vanuatu TC Pam National Recovery Plan and longer term development activities has been embedded into the 2017 business plans of respective Ministries to reinforce Government systems and ensure support is ‘on plan and on budget’. Benefits of this approach include improved ownership, mutual accountability, transparency and stakeholder commitment to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Health, Nutrition, Education and Child Protection.

TC Cook made landfall on the weekend of 8–9 April, bringing destructive winds, rough seas, heavy rainfall and flash floods to northern, central and southern islands of Vanuatu. More than 1,000 children and their families from communities around Port Vila were formally evacuated to 13 centres by the Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), with support from the Vanuatu Mobile Force and community leaders. All evacuees had returned home within three days of the cyclone. The Government of Vanuatu activated the national emergency fund but did not request assistance from the international community.

The Vanuatu 2030 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is expected to be finalized by the Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination, with technical support from the UN Development Programme, by May. In view of the launch of the new national framework, a Sustainable Development Goals localization workshop is being planned by the UN Joint Presence Office (UNJPO) in concert with the validation of a complementary UN Pacific Strategy (UNPS).

The Vanuatu NDMO, with support from the International Organization for Migration, has initiated discussions on a national displacement policy with provincial partners in Shefa Province, including the UN, World Bank and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

UNICEF continues to work closely with respective partners to answer queries and implement recommendations that arose from independent audits completed in 2016 related to the harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT), which is practiced by multiple UN agencies.

United Nations Pacific Strategy (2018–2022)

A first draft of the UNPS has been circulated internally among UN agencies in Vanuatu to garner feedback prior to wider distribution of the draft to Government and other partners. In recent months, the UNJPO has solicited feedback from all UN agencies based in Vanuatu on the UNPS and associated documents, including the UNPS results framework, Vanuatu country profiles and standardized messages on the UNPS. Validation of the UNPS is tentatively scheduled for May and will take place after the Vanuatu 2030 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework has been finalized.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)



A partnership with the NGO CARE to complete a Water for Life project on Tanna Island is progressing with funds from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and UNICEF. The project has achieved the following results across eight communities: construction of 48 toilet slabs and seat risers; completion of training sessions on participatory hygiene and sanitation; mapping of water systems and water quality; training of trainers on drinking water safety and security plans (DWSSP); and launch of community DWSSPs.

CARE also is on track to complete, by the end of April, the rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure in 19 schools and four health care facilities on Erromango, East Tanna and Aniwa. CARE also is producing, with support from UNICEF, a video on knowledge, attitudes and practices related to menstruation and the link between menstrual hygiene management and school retention rates among girls. The project is funded by MFAT recovery funds.

World Vision has nearly completed water projects on South Tanna and Oxfam is concluding WASH-related activities on the Islands of Epi and Emao in Shefa Province. Both projects are being implemented with UNICEF/MFAT funds under Department of Water Resources (DoWR) contracts.

UNICEF continues to support the DoWR's sector strengthening programme. After World Vision identified a need for additional funding for the MFAT-funded East Malo water project, the DoWR, MFAT and UNICEF agreed to a cost variation to the contract. Similar negotiations are under way between ADRA and UNICEF, DoWR and MFAT on a cost variation to the UNICEF-funded DoWR contract for the Lamap water construction project. UNICEF also is supporting the rehabilitation of the DoWR's drilling yard in Port Vila.

The design of the West Ambae water pumping station was finalized and the DoWR will tender the project. Meanwhile, hydrogeological surveying is underway by the Pacific Community, which has provided a drilling rig to the DoWR to drill bore holes in West Ambae as required by the UNICEF-funded project. Vanuatu Agriculture Suppliers have completed the delivery of materials to Walarano for use by DoWR.

A WASH in early childhood care and education centres (ECCE) pilot, funded by Dubai Cares, has commenced in Penama Province. Teams from UNICEF's WASH and Education Sections are collaborating on the transition of the pilot from design to implementation and a survey of ECCEs is to be completed with this aim. Complementary to this initiative, a WASH in Schools (WinS) project in Penama Province has been designed and a proposal submitted to MFAT via the UNICEF New Zealand National Committee. A consultant has been recruited whose responsibilities will include activities related to WASH in ECCEs and WinS.

The first draft of a WASH policy, developed with the support of a UNICEF technical advisor, was circulated to stakeholders for feedback and discussions are under way with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to develop a matching hygiene and sanitation policy. The MoH is interested in exploring the viability of privately-operated concession-based water supplies and having an asset management entity manage urban and peri-urban water supplies.

UNICEF continues to support efforts by the DoWR to strengthen information management. A UNICEF partner – the University of North Carolina – is reviewing the role of data in a National Water Policy that is currently under development with a view to enhancing evidence-based decision-making.

Health and Nutrition



Training was provided to eight provincial supervisors of the Expanded Programme on Immunization from six provinces on supportive supervision and data management, including supervision for quality. The training covered a tablet-based electronic checklist that uses the open source software AKVO Flow, which has been used successfully by the WASH sector for data collection and monitoring during regular surveys and emergency assessments. The checklist is meant to support supervisors in carrying out supervision in cold chain and vaccine management, vaccination coverage and safe injection. The training strengthened the data management skills of supervisors, who learned how to use new templates, collate data into Excel spreadsheets and analyse basic data.

The Innovation Unit at UNICEF headquarters approved a funding proposal from UNICEF Pacific to support the Vanuatu MoH and Civil Aviation Authority of Vanuatu in implementing the first phase of an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle trial for vaccine delivery. An operational plan for the trial is currently under review by the Council of Ministers (CoM) and contingent on their endorsement, the trial is likely to be formally launched before the end of April 2017, with the first phase of activities under way by August.

Twelve national experts on obstetrics and neonatal health care provided feedback on new National Maternal and Newborn Care Guidelines at a three-day validation workshop facilitated by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). The guidelines were developed with technical assistance from UNFPA as part of the UN Joint Programme (UNJP) on Reproductive Maternal Neonatal Child Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) and are based on current international best practices, including new World Health Organization recommendations on antenatal care. Once finalized and approved, a training package to orient health care workers on the new guidelines will be developed and delivered nationwide later this year.

National guidelines also were developed as part of the RMNCAH programme on Maternal Infant Young Child Feeding (MIYCF) and Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) with technical assistance provided from UNICEF. Training of trainers (ToT) on MIYCF was delivered to 22 health care workers from hospitals, health centres, dispensaries and NGOs representing all six provinces. The trainers will ensure health care workers have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the newly developed national nutrition guidelines by delivering training on MIYCF in their respective provinces. ToT on IMAM that included nutrition in emergencies was delivered to 26 health workers from all the country's provinces. IMAM training is to be rolled out to provinces to ensure health workers have the necessary skills and knowledge to manage cases of children presenting with acute malnutrition at health care facilities. To complement the ToT of health workers, 25 Peace Corps volunteers who support health care facilities in their designated communities were oriented on the MIYCF and IMAM guidelines.

Implementation of the UNJP for RMNCAH at the national level and in pilot provinces has continued in despite of an audit that was triggered due to challenges to a direct payment modality that is in place to provide direct cash advances to the MoH. Programme progress was reviewed at a quarterly RMNCAH coordination meeting, which highlighted achievements and proposed recommendations to address delays.

During the reporting period 1,387 adolescents and youth from 10 communities in Sanma Province were targeted with critical Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) messages spread through sports, music and other positive activities. Information education communication (IEC) materials on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV; reproductive health and family planning; teenage pregnancies; and violence against women and girls were disseminated to 2,923 adolescents and youth. Community leaders also were engaged in these campaigns, which have resulted in an increase of 378 clients, mostly youths, at the Luganville Northern Care Youth Centre Clinic.

Two HIV/STI and ASRH workshops were conducted for 20 community leaders from the Islands of Ambae, Maewo and Pentecost in Penama Province. Nurses and community leaders engaged for the first time in joint planning on how to target youth in communities and schools with key ASRH messages. More than 180 IEC materials were distributed during the joint planning sessions to complement awareness-raising activities. Two workshops were held for health facility committees on the importance of early health-seeking behaviour and the role of health facility committees in improving early health-seeking behaviour by encouraging access to RMNCAH services. RMNCAH services include early antenatal care visits; health facility visits well in advance of delivery dates; care for sick babies; exclusive breastfeeding; and, family planning. Training of community leaders on HIV/STI and ASRH and the role of health committees in improving early health-seeking behaviour has reached 8 of 10 health zones in Penama Province.

In Shefa Province, 53 young people (including 26 females) between the ages of 13–24 from 18 rural communities on Epi Island and seven urban communities from Port Vila participated in three workshops on subjects related to youth-friendly sexual reproductive health. Facilitation support was provided by Vanuatu Family Health Association peer educators and volunteers from the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Information on sexual reproductive health was shared with young people with the aim of helping them make healthy choices and it was the first opportunity for many of the workshop participants to discuss matters related to ASRH.

A student health magazine published by the Malampa Provincial Health Team and UNJP on RMNCAH is providing lifesaving information to and promoting health-seeking behaviours among secondary school students in Malampa Province. Copies of the magazine will be distributed through school health clubs and programmes. Long-term family planning methods also were promoted in the province through the UNJP for RMNCAH, which benefited at least 283 women of reproductive age who were implanted with the modern contraception jadelle following the delivery in 2016 of training on the device to nurses in 2016. To date, 656 women, men and youth, together with 16 health committees, have been reached with messages on STIs/HIV with IEC materials during soccer and volleyball tournaments in communities in Malekula, North Ambrym, Lamap, and West Ambrym. Immunization activities supported through outreach visits to remote and underserved health facilities have reached 698 children in 2017. Preparations by MoH officials, provincial teams and UNJP partners are ongoing for a UNJP for RMNCAH midterm review that is scheduled to take place in May.

Education



A two-day workshop on minimum quality service standards (MQSS) for early childhood care and education (ECCE) was conducted on 30 and 31 March in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET). Attendees included representatives from the Ministry of Justice and Community Services and NGOs such as World Vision, Save the Children, Live and Learn and Oxfam. A set of 25 standards and 50 indicators were selected during the workshop and subsequently field-tested on 3 and 4 April. The next step will be to conduct a pilot ECCE MQSS baseline survey in Penama Province in early May. Once finalized, these standards and indicators will be endorsed and launched by MoET, likely by midyear.

In addition to the implementation of the MQSS for ECCE, UNICEF and MoET are collaborating on the implementation of a WinS programme, teachers' code of ethics and a parenting support programme in Penama Province. UNICEF is developing baseline survey questions for the WinS initiative in consultation with the DoWR, MoET and MoH. Baseline survey questions for the other two initiatives are being developed by UNICEF, MoET, Vanuatu Teacher's Union and Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MoJCS).

UNICEF provided a 7-metre fully equipped boat to the Government in March that will be used by staff from the Penama Provincial Education Office to carry out activities such as field monitoring.

UNICEF and education development partners signed a Joint Partnership Agreement (JPA) with the Vanuatu Government, represented by the MoET, on 12 April in support of the Vanuatu Education and Training Sector. The Chief of the UNICEF Vanuatu Field Office, Andrew Parker, was asked to speak on behalf of development partners at the signing of the JPA. The terms of reference of the JPA specify UNICEF's role as "managing entity" of the Global



Development partners in Vanuatu, including UNICEF, the Minister of Education and Training, Hon. Jean Pierre Nirua, signed a Joint Partnership Arrangement on 12 April 2017 in support of the Vanuatu Education and Training Sector. Credit: © UNICEF Pacific/2017/OLul.

Partnership for Education. The Vanuatu Education and Training Sector Strategy for 2017–2018 and the Child Safeguarding Policy were launched by the Minister of Education and Training, the Honourable Jean Pierre Nirua.

UNICEF expanded its Education Section team in Vanuatu during the reporting period, with recruitment of an education consultant, an ECCE education consultant and a WinS consultant.

Child Protection



Following the endorsement of a revised 2016–2017 Vanuatu Child Protection Workplan by the Government and UNICEF, UNICEF facilitated a meeting with implementing partners in March to confer on progress achieved on the Workplan during the first quarter and activities for the second and fourth quarter. It was agreed that quarterly meetings serve a valuable purpose, allowing child protection partners to update one another, share successes and challenges and identify areas of possible collaboration.

To ensure the national registration system continues to be sustainable for children and their families, the national Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Committee approved a workplan to finalize the National CRVS Policy by the third quarter of 2017. The State Law Office is in the process of finalizing the first draft of amendments to the Civil Status Act that will complement the National CRVS Policy. The CoM has deemed the amendments to be priority legislation that ought to be submitted to Parliament before the end of 2017. UNICEF handed over to the Government in March a 7-metre fully equipped boat and two quad bicycles and accessories to support the work of the CRVS Committee in Torba, Malampa and Tafea Provinces. UNICEF is supporting the MoJCS in refurbishing the National Civil Registry Office in Port Vila, which houses all registration archives and serves as the operational base for registration and passport services.

Roll-out of the UNICEF-supported community facilitation package known as “Children are our Future” continued with more than 50 participants attending three workshops on Erromango and Tanna, bringing the total to 350 of parents, caregivers, teachers, youth, and community and church leaders who have been reached. The package aims to prevent child abuse, exploitation and neglect. Trained facilitators and representatives from MoJCS, Ministry of Youth Sports Development and Training (MoYSdT) and UNICEF will review the package and make plans for the second phase of its roll-out at a meeting in May.

A UNICEF-supported child protection baseline study carried out in three communities on north Pentecost in anticipation of the launch of a child protection pilot revealed a need to improve knowledge about, attitudes towards and practices of child protection among parents and caregivers and to develop clear referral systems in response to child protection cases. The baseline study report underscored the following areas of concern: the lack of time caregivers spend with children; low participation of children in discussions and decision-making; an overwhelming reliance on family members by parents and caregivers to support children’s care and protection; and, alarming attitudes towards physical punishment and physical abuse. The pilot will convene multidisciplinary stakeholders in addressing these issues to reduce high rates of physical and emotional abuse of children.

Following the launch of the National Child Protection Policy in 2016, UNICEF has continued to support the MoJCS and other child protection partners in developing child protection legislation and reviewing the Policy. Consultants will be engaged to begin working with the MoJCS on the legislation and Policy in May.

Operations

The UNICEF Vanuatu Field Office received contingency supplies to replenish stocks for WASH and health activities during the reporting period.

A consultant has been identified to explore UNJP housing options and a contract with the State Law Office is expected to be signed in April to provide the CoM with options for the Government of Vanuatu to meet hosting commitments for UN agencies.

Valid financial microassessments have been completed to meet HACT requirements for the following partners: MoH, MoJCS, MoYSdT, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Climate Change, DoWR, ADRA, CARE and Save the Children.

Funding

UNICEF Pacific and its field office in Vanuatu appreciate funding received in 2015–2016 from Andorra, Australia, Estonia, France, Japan, Lithuania, New Zealand, Russia, the United Kingdom, the Oceania Football Confederation and the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. As per donor intent and conditions, some funds were used for cyclone relief and other funds continue to be used for recovery and longer term development work. Contributions from thousands of people to UNICEF National Committees for Australia, France, Hong Kong, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America were crucial to the TC Pam relief and recovery effort. Contributions from donors who have permitted flexible reorientation of funding to address current El Niño challenges are highly appreciated. The Japanese Committee for Vaccines is a critical long-standing partner. UNICEF Pacific also is grateful to donors who contribute every year at the global level to UNICEF Global Strategic Plan core resources and thematic areas.

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