

# UNICEF Myanmar

NEWSLETTER

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UNICEF has been operational in Myanmar for over fifty years providing technical support in key areas of child survival and development. The current five year programme of cooperation with focus on child protection, quality basic education, primary health care, controlling malnutrition, water, sanitation and environmental hygiene is expected to contribute to reducing infant and child mortality, promote quality education and provide a protective environment for children to grow as responsible adults. UNICEF appreciates its close collaboration with various government departments and NGOs partners. Through this bulletin, UNICEF would like to keep the general public and our patrons informed of all our activities. This bulletin covers October to December 2008.

UNICEF-Myanmar

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# Health and Nutrition

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Due to the emergency response to the Cyclone Nargis, the regular program activities were suspended for four months except essential and ongoing activities. Routine activities of all Health & Nutrition projects were back to full swing in mid September. UNICEF Health and Nutrition section is preparing for the transition from emergency relief in the affected areas to more long-term support by integrating into a regular program.

## EXPANDED PROGRAM OF IMMUNIZATION Elimination of maternal and neonatal tetanus

Elimination of maternal and neonatal tetanus is one of the main objectives of immunization programme. Efforts have been made since 1999 and series of Supplementary Immunization Activities



(SIA) has been completed, giving tetanus toxoid to women of child bearing age. More than five million women were immunized by the government since the inception of the initiative.

A joint external WHO/UNICEF review took place in February 2007 to take stock of the situation. Sixty townships were considered in need of one additional round of SIA while 27 townships, mostly

in hard to reach areas require a three-round of SIA. These additional campaigns took place in February, March and October of 2008. For the 60 townships requiring single round, target population was around 2 million women of child bearing age and for the 27 townships to be covered by three rounds, the total target was around one million. Achievement of TT immunization was over 90 per cent. Review exercise took place during recent MNTE workshop in Bangkok and identified seven townships which will need one booster dose by March 2009.

## Nutrition

To support iodine deficiency disorders elimination (IDDE), commercial analysis of salt industries by international consultant was conducted from 29 September to 17 October 2008. Based on the recommendation of the consultant, UNICEF supported Myanmar Salt and Marine Chemical Enterprise to set up model salt farms in Laputta and Ngaputaw for training salt farmers and salt pan workers.

With the objectives of reviewing activities conducted before November 2008 and discussing and planning activities to be conducted in next quarter, states and divisions



nutrition team review meeting were conducted in November 2008 in Naypyitaw. UNICEF staff, Officials from national nutrition center and team members from 17 states and divisions nutrition team attended, discussed and developed action points to be conducted in next quarter. This kind of meeting will be conducted regularly in order to improve the coordination and collaboration within teams as well as efficiency and effectiveness of the nutrition programme.

## WOMEN AND CHILD HEALTH DEVELOPMENT

Planning meeting for Child survival forum was held in October, at Nay Pyidaw. The rationale for formation of the forum is to accelerate the reduction of under five mortality in Myanmar by establishing coordination within partners for Child Survival. It is also aimed to prioritize interventions based upon evidence and standardization of implementation, and scaling up. In addition terms of reference and core team members for establishing child survival forum were confirmed. Training of Trainers for hospital staffs and Basic Health Staffs from 12 new townships were done at Napyidaw during October and multiplier trainings



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were done at the respective townships during November. In addition, Training of Trainers for Auxiliary Mid-wife was also able to organize during December. Kachin Baptist Convention in partnership with UNICEF also organized Women and Child Health Development clinic staff training to 50 health workers at Myitkyinar in November.

## HIV/AIDS PREVENTION AND CONTROL

In October, PMCT implementation was expanded to 10 new townships out of which five were cyclone affected area. Training of Trainers was conducted in collaboration with NAP (National AIDS Control Programme), 40 participants were Township Medical Officers, Medical officers, Nurses and Health Assistants.



## Prevention through Life Skills based Peer Education

Life skills based peer education training reached through coordination between UNICEF/MANA(Myanmar Anti Narcotic Association) field staff, local ethnic and faith based organizations to remote ethnic regions: Wan Ku Thit, Ah Khar ethnic group village in Keing Tong and Kyauk Talongyi, Pao ethnic group village in Taungyi. Training is to equip young people with correct information on HIV, STIs and reproductive health together with essential skills so as they can not only prevent themselves from HIV, STIs and unwanted pregnancy but also disseminate knowledge and skills gained to their peers.

UNICEF supported National AIDS Control Programme and NGOs to commemorate World AIDS Day with a theme of "Stop AIDS, Keep the Promises- Scaling up Prevention, Care and Support with special emphasize on children and AIDS". Through collaboration with NAP, Central Health Education Bureau, and Myanmar Radio and Television, special quiz program was arranged in November 2008, which was aired on first and seven of December. Young people from Eastern Shan, Ayerwaddy, Bago and Yangon were selected through State and Division level quiz contest and invited to Yangon for final competition.



## Education

In the last quarter of 2008, School Self Assessment/School Improvement Plan was implemented in 756 schools with communities and children in 15 townships. In reviewing these schools' improvement plans it was noted that the priority areas for school improvement identified by communities focused more on 'physical' aspects of schools such as access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities, better buildings and playgrounds. This is most probably because they never had opportunity to participate in decision making processes of school. However, it was encouraging to see some communities started a child protection network for safety and protection of their children and some wanted support to send their children to school.



In supplementing this effort, UNICEF supported revision of the orientation manual for PTA trainings, which will further promote the role of families and communities in schools and help them to get more involved in 'software' component of school such as school management and planning. In 2008, more than 12,000 PTA members were trained on mobilizing communities to promote Child Friendly Space approach.

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion

In the last quarter of 2008, trainings for in-service primary school teachers were organised in 3 townships, namely Kawhmu, Kungyangone and Bogalay on the use of Hygiene Promotion Kit.

In July 2008, an orientation training/workshop was conducted in Education College in Yangon where 80 educators participated to learn on how to use the Hygiene Promotion Kits. Comments and suggestions were given during the workshop, as a result, the content of Hygiene Promotion Kit is modified accordingly. These 80 educators from 20 Education Colleges who have been trained at Yankin Education College, have already retrained 4126 pre-service teachers in their respective Education Colleges.

The teachers were also supported with a Hygiene Promotion Kit each at their graduation ceremony with the instruction that they will apply these tools in their newly assigned posts/schools. Later, feedback will be collected from teachers and educators with regard to appropriateness, applicability and effectiveness of Hygiene Promotion Kit in respective schools and will be modified as required.



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## Child Protection



### Strengthening community based alternative care

UNICEF in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare has initiated the piloting of two group homes for children living in institutional care who cannot be reintegrated with their families and communities for various reasons. The project is supporting the transition of 17 children between 15-18 years from institutional life to independent living by providing guidance, counselling and practical assistance. The project is aimed at building the government's capacity to implement community-based alternatives for separated children.

### Towards juvenile justice and legal protection for children

UNICEF collaborated with the Myanmar Police Force and an International Police Expert to develop child friendly police training manual that has been integrated into the curriculum of the Police Training Academy. Two training of trainers courses were conducted for trainers at the academy as well as police officers from selected locations during this quarter. A plan has also been developed for issuing the child-friendly police procedures as a directive as well as their piloting in Yangon and Mandalay police units and selected anti-trafficking task forces in 2009.

UNICEF has also pioneered agreement with the Supreme Court and the General Administration

Department to develop child friendly court procedures and guidelines for community based dispute resolution for minor offences, respectively.

## Building a protective environment for children

UNICEF leadership and advocacy led to the agreement between DSW and UNICEF to pilot township child protection service delivery, coordination and referral mechanism in 5 townships (Dallh, Kungangone, Shwe Pyi Thar, Laputta and Naung Oo) and the deployment of social workers in these areas. The aim is to facilitate linkage between community based child protection interventions with township level service providers by building the capacity of social workers and mobilising key government and I/NGO stakeholders to support vulnerable children and their families and coordinate appropriate referrals to meet their needs. The project will be supporting UNICEF Myanmar's current country programme strategy to build the capacity of the Department of Social Welfare to take the central coordinating role in social welfare provision for children.



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## Capacity building for improved service delivery

In October and November, UNICEF organised a series of workshops to strengthen understanding and skills in child development, protection as well as social work. The workshop facilitated by an International Social Work Expert and attended by 130 government and NGO staff members is hoped to improve case management and service delivery in the field. A team of trainers have also been formed in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare for ongoing capacity development for field practitioners.

## Program Field Support

UNICEF field officers returned to their regular duty stations at the end of September, five months after rushing to Irrawaddy Delta to set up and manage emergency offices, organize life-saving relief supplies with partners, and contribute to inter-agency coordination.

During the final quarter of 2008, the field officers prioritized field support on health and nutrition activities, including monitoring the reach of major inputs at various levels of the government health system, and supporting the Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus Elimination campaigns in selected townships. A renewed effort was made in supporting the promotion and advocacy for DevInfo (a management information system to track the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals) use at sub-national levels in Myanmar, as an entry point for promoting the local ownership of data on children and the use of such data to inform geographically-disaggregated decision making on key issues affecting children. The field officers participated in coaching sessions around various State/Divisions, and advocated for a commitment to collect child indicators and to use the DevInfo database for the advancement of locally appropriate children's issues.



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## Social Policy



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UNICEF hosts a first three-day national seminar on social protection focusing on vulnerable children in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. It was attended by more than 70 participants from government ministries, community-based organisations, national and international NGOs and UN agencies. The seminar was an introduction of general concepts of social protection, as well as giving opportunity for participants to discuss specific social protection strategies and approaches to vulnerable children in Myanmar. It was facilitated by experts from both Myanmar and abroad.

## Communication

In October 2008, a workshop on AI risk communication was conducted in Nyaung Shwe Township, Southern Shan State which is close to a wetland wildlife sanctuary located on a major north-south migration path for birds. The workshops aimed to enhance communication skills and efficiency of participants in disseminating key messages. More than 60 health, livestock professionals and front line communicators who will make a significance contribution towards combating the threat of bird flu in an area that is at high risk for a potential outbreak attended the workshop.



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Following the training, an awareness-raising talk on prevention of avian and pandemic influenza was held at the heart of the Inle wetland. More than 400 people attended. Such public talks significantly enhance the dis-

semination of prevention messages to communities. Posters in local ethnic languages, pamphlets, booklets for children, and TV and radio spots on key messages have also been produced and distributed to help prevent bird flu in Myanmar.

As an integral part of the AI communication strategy, an assessment of the approaches, outputs and outcomes of its implementation are being undertaken.

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