UNICEF PACIFIC – VANUATU UPDATE

May – June 2016

Family in Itaita Village, Tanna Island taking time out to play traditional games © UNICEF Pacific/November 2015/Josh Estey

UNICEF Pacific in Vanuatu
Partner Update
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Highlights

- Preliminary results of the national immunisation coverage survey show evidence of improved immunisation coverage since 2013

- The refurbished National and Shefa Provincial Vaccine Storage facilities opened - facilities now meet WHO international standards

- Training for health workers on vaccine management, disease surveillance and health education on immunisation rolled out across Vanuatu

- Education in Emergencies train-the-trainer workshop held to build capacity for effective education in emergencies response

- Child Protection in Emergencies training events held for staff from government, NGOs and for community leaders

- Training on Drinking Water Safety Planning conducted on Tanna island

945 people provided access to safe water in 10 communities on Epi Island

20 child-friendly, gender segregated toilets built in schools on Epi Islands

7,700 people reached with water, sanitation and hygiene messages

57 teachers and 40 principals trained on effective teaching strategies and lesson planning

182,327 people benefited from mobile birth registration campaign since Cyclone Pam, including 57,231 children and 125,096 adults
Overview

May and June brought welcome widespread rain across most of Vanuatu, benefitting food production and alleviating water shortages caused by months of El Niño-related conditions. The UNICEF-funded water delivery to the small islands in the Shepherds group has transitioned from regular deliveries to a ‘call down’ basis as determined by the Department of Geology, Mines and Water Resources (DGMWR).

Vanuatu experienced a series of large earthquakes during the last two months. The latest was on 19 June, when a 6.3 magnitude earthquake was felt in many islands of Vanuatu, with its epicentre near Lenakel, Tanna. Fortunately none of these earthquakes triggered tsunami alerts and no serious injuries or major damage was reported by the National Disaster Management Office.

A number of emergency preparedness activities took place in May and June. UNICEF and Save the Children supported the Ministry of Education and Training to deliver an Education in Emergencies workshop that covered emergency preparedness, effective education in emergencies response and a smooth transition into early recovery. UNICEF and the Ministry of Justice and Community Services held two Child Protection in Emergencies training events to equip child protection focal points from government, NGOs and communities with the knowledge and skills to identify risks that children face during emergencies, develop emergency preparedness plans and comprehensive response and early recovery plans.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) conducted a joint exercise on Mass Evacuation in Natural Disasters to analyse gaps and identify plans for mass evacuation in the event of volcanic eruptions on the islands of Gaua, Tanna and Ambryim. The three-week exercise coincided with the release of the National Guidelines for the Selection and Assessment of Evacuation Centres, which explains how to identify and select evacuation facilities, and links national guidelines with international standards.

UNICEF continues to support the Vanuatu National Recovery from TC Pam Plan as well as longer term development partnerships with Ministries. Joint UNICEF and Government work plans are being implemented in Water, Sanitation and Health, Health, Nutrition, Education and Child Protection. All of UNICEF’s work is based on national priorities of the Government and supports implementation of sector-specific plans and policies. Each work plan is gender-sensitive, targets reducing inequity and incorporates activities that build resilience to disasters and climate change.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Widespread rain has alleviated water shortages on the small islands in the Shepherds group. UNICEF funded water delivery by Kaleva Yachting Services to these islands is now being done on a ‘call down’ basis determined by the Department of Geology, Mines and Water Resources (DGMWR) and the National Disaster Management Office.

UNICEF provided financial and technical assistance to Oxfam to support the repair of 36 latrines and 50 bathing enclosures in Epi and Efate. Safe water has also been provided to 945 people in ten communities in Epi through the installation of a direct gravity feed water system, construction of 10 hand dug wells and the completion of two rain water harvesting systems. Through this same partnership, 20 child friendly, gender-segregated toilets were built in schools on Epi and Efate islands.

As part of disaster and climate change resilience activities, training on Drinking Water Safety Planning was conducted in Tanna, through a UNICEF partnership with CARE International. Through this same agreement CARE International is also rehabilitating damaged water systems, including the repair of two school water systems on the island of Erromango, and providing ‘quick fixes’ to damaged water systems in communities.
UNICEF facilitated a two-day ‘WASH in Schools Call for Action’ Workshop in May, with participants from DGMWR, Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), Ministry of Health (MoH) and NGO partners. Outcomes from the workshop included recommendations and activities that will be implemented by the MoET, with support by partners. On behalf of the government, UNICEF is currently seeking funding for these activities. WASH in Schools offers a ‘whole of government’ approach that can deliver benefits across health, nutrition, gender, menstrual hygiene, attendance and long-term behavioural change.

ADRA, with UNICEF funding, developed a set of WASH in Emergency information, education and communication (IEC) materials, including a WASH music video, which was played during a government ‘IT’ event attended by 7,700 people.

The development of a National WASH strategy has been prioritized as part of the Government’s National Strategic Development Plan. As part of this plan, UNICEF has agreed to support the deployment of a WASH Specialist who will support Government with the development of a national WASH policy, strategy and provincial implementation plans. UNICEF is also providing funding and technical support to the DGMWR for preparation and submission of a Business Plan for the 2017 fiscal year, which will include lessons learnt from TC Pam and El Nino and aim to build resilience to disasters and climate change.

Health and Nutrition

The newly refurbished National Vaccine Storage facility and the Shefa Vaccine Storage facility were formally handed over to the Ministry of Health on 10 June. These facilities were damaged last year by Tropical Cyclone Pam and have been upgraded to meet World Health Organisation global standards for safe vaccine storage. The Maternal Child Health clinic attached to the National Vaccine Storage facility, which serves more than 23,000 children under 5 every year, was also refurbished to improve accessibility for persons with disability. The refurbishments were funded by the Government of Japan and the Government of Australia.

Preliminary results of the national Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) coverage survey indicate improvement in vaccine coverage compared to the 2013 Demographic Health Survey data: Measles coverage has increased from 52 per cent to 86 per cent; diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DPT3) has increased from 55 per cent to 76 per cent; and the percentage of fully immunised children has increased from 33 per cent to 64 per cent. These results are evidence that efforts to improve routine immunisation coverage is paying off, but continued investment is needed to consolidate and sustain these gains and further increase vaccine coverage.

The annual national EPI review meeting also convened to discuss key priorities for 2016-2017, including increasing efforts to reach underserved communities, continuing work to improve efficiency and effectiveness, including higher through rates of full immunisation coverage and strengthening data collection and data management.

UNICEF facilitated a series of trainings for health workers to increase their knowledge on effective vaccine management, improve vaccine protection practices, support disease surveillance and strengthen their interpersonal communications skills to support effective health education on immunisation. Participants from six provinces included health workers from hospitals, health centres, provincial health management offices and dispensaries.

Vanuatu’s National Nutrition Policy and Strategic Plan 2016 -2020 has been adopted and launched. The priorities are: strengthening infant and young child feeding practices; reducing malnutrition; addressing non-communicable diseases; and establishing a nutrition surveillance and monitoring system. Policy development was led by Ministry of Health with technical support from WHO, UNICEF and World Vision.
The National Reproductive Maternal New-born Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) Coordination Committee held a one day meeting for provincial RMNCAH coordinators and programme partners to reflect on progress, challenges of implementation, lessons learnt during the first quarter and agreement on standards for quality assurance that align with UN and government planning, reporting and finance procedures. The National RMNCAH Coordination Committee also undertook a mapping exercise of partners that support RMNCAH-related activities at the national and provincial levels, which is being used to improve coordination between organisations and strengthen information flow between provincial and national levels. RMNCAH work is part of a joint Government budget and plan, with contributions by the UN funded by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand and by donors who contribute to core global UN funds.

**Education**

Unfortunately, many children continue to attend schools in tents provided as temporary learning spaces by UNICEF and other partners after TC Pam. Reconstruction challenges, including funding, are serious and need to be addressed. UNICEF met with the Minister of Education and Training (MoET) to highlight concern that the tents, meant for temporary learning spaces, are unlikely to withstand a second academic year of sun, rain, wind and heavy use. UNICEF is working with the MoET to find another short term solution, including the possible redeployment of 90 tents distributed to schools on Tanna by the Tafea Provincial Education Office, which are currently not being used.

UNICEF facilitated a one-day instructional leadership training for 40 primary school principals, four curriculum advisors, one provincial trainer and the curriculum coordinator from Penama province. The workshop aimed to strengthen teaching and learning practices in primary schools and provided a platform for participants to share their instructional leadership experiences and best practices.

A school-based in-service teacher training module was also rolled out to 57 teachers, 40 principals, four curriculum advisors and the curriculum coordinator in Penama province. The module focuses on lesson planning, effective teaching and learning strategies. Principals were provided with advice on how to monitor the implementation of this eight-hour self-learning module and create a community of self-led professional development. The self-learning module will also support the rollout of the new Grades 4-6 syllabus in Penama Province.

UNICEF, in partnership with Save the Children, supported the MoET to deliver a train-the-trainer Education in Emergency workshop, for national and provincial focal points. The workshop taught trainers about how to facilitate adult learning and also about how to strengthen emergency preparedness, build capacity for effective education in emergencies response and ensure a smooth transition into early recovery. Education in Emergencies focal points will roll out education in emergencies training to other education cluster members in the coming months.

**Child Protection**

Fourteen senior police officers participated in a workshop in May to review the findings of the evaluation of the police capacity building programme. The final report was circulated by UNICEF to heads of the Vanuatu Police Force other child protection partners and its recommendations will guide measures to strengthen child protection service delivery and inform additional capacity building programmes for police and other professionals in the law and justice sector.

UNICEF and the Ministry of Justice and Community Services held two Child Protection in Emergencies trainings in June. The trainings brought together stakeholders from government, NGOs and community leaders who will be key actors in responding to the next emergency in Vanuatu. The training equips child protection focal points with the knowledge and skills to identify risks that children face during emergencies, develop emergency preparedness plans and comprehensive response and early recovery plans.
Following the mass birth registration campaign for the provinces of Sanma and Torba, data entry is ongoing and expected to be complete in early July. To date, a total of 182,327 people have been registered in the mobile registration campaign since TC Pam, including 57,231 children and 125,096 adults. A total of 38,281 children have so far been issued with replacement birth certificates throughout the six provinces (original target of 6,400) while 18,950 children were newly registered and issued with birth certificates. A total of 88,563 adults were issued with replacement birth certificates and 36,533 were registered for the first time.

Operations
The UNICEF warehouse, provided by the MoH, was refurbished during the reconstruction of the National Vaccine Storage Facility, which has enabled UNICEF to close its TC Pam rented facilities and consolidate all UNICEF warehousing in a single, cost effective facility. Replenishment of emergency contingency stocks, released to Fiji as part of the TC Winston response, is underway and will include Health, Nutrition, Education, Child Protection and WASH supplies for up to 5,000 people.

Funding
UNICEF Pacific and its field office in Vanuatu are very grateful to have received 2015-2016 funds 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 are still being used for recovery and for longer term development work. The contributions of thousands of people to UNICEF National Committees for Australia, France, Hong Kong, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the USA were crucial to Cyclone Pam relief. Donors who have permitted flexible re-orientation of funding to address the current El Nino challenges are highly appreciated. The Japanese Committee for Vaccines is a longstanding and critical partner. UNICEF Pacific is also grateful to donors who contribute every year at the global level to our core resources and to thematic areas within the UNICEF Global Strategic Plan.

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