Case Management

UNICEF and Save the Children, with support from the Government of Canada, have partnered up to provide technical guidance to frontline workers

With the rapid spread of COVID-19 across Myanmar, many children and caregivers are required to stay in quarantine centres, in isolation and in hospitals and special consideration for these settings is required to ensure children have necessary care and protection. Child abuse and gender-based violence (GBV) occurs despite COVID-19 and this requires continuity of case management to provide lifesaving services in both every-day and humanitarian contexts.

UNICEF Myanmar and Save the Children as co-chairs of the Myanmar Inter-Agency Case Management Task Force along with its organization members, developed and launched two guidance notes to address these special circumstances for children: (i) one on adapting case management in the context of COVID-19; and (ii) another, on key considerations for children and caregivers in quarantine, isolation and hospitalization due to COVID-19. The guidance notes which aim to complement the Standard Operating Procedures on Quarantine, issued by the Ministry of Health and Sport (MoHS) and other recently adopted guidelines, provide technical direction and practical tips for frontline health professionals and child protection practitioners.

Technical support for Medical Social Workers

Last week a group of five social work professionals including UNICEF’s Child Protection Officer and qualified Social Worker Nu Sung, began technical supervision (via Zoom) of Ministry of Health and Sport medical social workers who are supporting COVID-19 affected patients in various quarantine facilities. Supervision was provided to medical social workers from five hospitals in Shan State, Magwe Region, Chin State and Yangon. Further plans to provide technical supervision to medical social workers and Department of Social Welfare case managers who are engaged in direct service provision to COVID-19 affected children and families are underway.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

MHPSS Hotline

On 13 April in partnership with Metanoia, UNICEF launched a helpline which provides mental health and psychosocial support services for children and caregivers during COVID-19 called “Khan Sar Chat Lay Myar”. With school closures and social distancing measures in place, children are at risk of feeling isolated in their confinement and it is crucial they have access to services during this time.

The service was tested by Yaw Ying, a UNICEF staff member from Lashio who called the hotline. Yaw Ying stated “I am taking care of my nephew – who is staying with us, very bored at home due to restrictions to go outside. My experience was good, seemed the operators were trained well”. Further discussions have
begun to provide hotline services in other ethnic languages. The helpline has been established with support from the government of Japan and USAID.

**My Hero is You!**
UNICEF, with support from the government of Japan and USAID, has translated the new children’s book ‘**My Hero is You!**’ into Myanmar language. The new fictional book developed by and for children aims to help families understand and cope with COVID-19. The book has been developed by children and caregivers from 104 countries around the world. The story aims to answer some of the questions children have about the pandemic and provide a platform for caregivers to talk to their children about it. Plans to further translate the book into other ethnic languages are underway.

**Support for Vulnerable Groups**

**Children on the move**
Labour migration between Myanmar and Thailand is common. In an attempt to control the spread of COVID-19, more than 40,000 Myanmar migrants including children, returning to Myanmar from Thailand have been quarantined in the border region between the two counties.
UNICEF with funding from the government of Japan and USAID, has supported the work of Kayin State, Department of Social Welfare (DSW) with ‘child protection kits’ for those currently staying in the 18 quarantine centres along the border.
Essential items such as clothes, shoes and personal hygiene products were provided and additional supplies for frontline workers will be dispatched soon.

**COVID-19 IEC materials and supplies**
Risk reduction communication and community engagement is a key strategy to combat COVID-19 transmission. UNICEF, with support from the government of Japan and USAID, has provided Department of Social Welfare Offices across the country with COVID-19 Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials including 6,780 educational posters in six different ethnic languages (Kachin, Mon, Myanmar, Poe Kayin, Sagaw Kayin and Shan) and audio messages in 14 languages (Akha, Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayan, Kayin, Lahu, Mon, Pakanaw, PaOh, Rakhine, Shan, Zawtnak Kong and Myanmar). All 244 state-run residential care institutions which include training schools, children’s homes and monasteries, have also received IEC materials along with personal hygiene supplies such as soaps, sanitizers and masks.
**VAC, GBV and PSEA**

Youth take the lead on communicating the risks of gender-based violence during isolation

UNICEF has teamed up with Plan Myanmar, supported by the Government of Canada, to launch a virtual, youth led education and protection campaign. The campaign aims to empower adolescents and youth to take control of the situation and become leaders in educating their peers and communities about COVID-19 and its subsequent risks including physical, sexual and emotional abuse. The campaign will provide a virtual platform for youth to support and protect each other during social isolation.

The campaign is being launched by youth leaders in Kachin and Mandalay region with potential for expansion to Rakhine, Kayin and Yangon.

**Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) training for Civil Society Organizations**

The implications of COVID-19 and the subsequent isolation it imposes creates increased risk of sexual exploitation and abuse. In response to this, the PSEA (inter-agency) National Coordinator is delivering online PSEA training for frontline workers in Myanmar language. The online training has received an overwhelmingly positive response, with 350 participants from 13 Civil Society Organizations from across the country signing up for the training so far. Plans to deliver the training to quarantine centre workers are also underway.

You can register for the training by completing the Google Form at the following link – [https://forms.gle/MYs5a4Te8WXHd5cCA](https://forms.gle/MYs5a4Te8WXHd5cCA)

**Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC)**

UNICEF’s support for newly displaced population in Rakhine

Intensified fighting in central Rakhine since February this year has created serious protection concerns for children. Over 3,000 individuals, many of them children, have fled their homes, finding refuge in local monasteries, creating temporary displacement sites in Sittwe and Pauktaw Townships. The number of new displacement sites and affected populations is still on the rise. Due to the developing situation of COVID-19, accessing the affected children and families in these areas has been extremely difficult.

Nevertheless UNICEF, through an implementing partner and local CSO responded rapidly, distributing 702 Child Protection Kits to 11 new displacement sites; organizing psychosocial support activities for children such as toys, playing games, painting, discussions and singing songs; and mobilizing COVID-19 awareness raising materials.
SRSG-CAAC Gamba calls for protection of children
The Country Taskforce on Monitoring and Reporting of Grave Violations against Children (CTFMR) has been working closely with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAAC) on joint advocacy on the CAAC agenda. During the first quarter of 2020, the CTFMR recorded the alarming increase in child casualties resulting from an unprecedented escalation in fighting between Government forces (the Tatmadaw) and the Arakan Army. The SRSG-CAAC, Virginia Gamba, released a statement calling on all parties to conflict in Myanmar to protect children from hostilities. The SRSG called on the government to strengthen its collaboration with the United Nations in finalising a joint Action Plan to end and prevent the killing and maiming of children and sexual violence against children, two violations the Tatmadaw are listed for in the Secretary General’s Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict.

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