LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

A snapshot of UNICEF’s work for Pacific Island children
2015-2016

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Looking back at 2015, there were many ‘firsts’ worthy of celebration throughout the Pacific region. This included the introduction of inactivated polio vaccine and rotavirus vaccine in some countries; the launch of an integrated Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) national approach and UN partnership in Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; the ratification of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Optional Protocols 1 and 2 in Kiribati and the Federated States of Micronesia and progress towards CRC implementation and reporting in Nauru, Kiribati, Fiji and Samoa. UNICEF helped introduce the first national survey module on disability and produced a Vanuatu disability report. Successful UNICEF Pacific ‘firsts’ for disaster response in Vanuatu included: mobile birth registration; unconditional cash transfers to schools; ‘solar suitcases’ for safe birth delivery; and use of Akvo Flow software for rapid disaster assessments.

We also saw the transformative power of collaboration and synergy in 2015. Our WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) in Schools (WinS) work is scaling up, showing what is possible when we forge alliances across Ministerial sectors and encourage local creativity. For example, we saw a flourishing of local designs for Tippy Taps (for handwashing) throughout Tarawa, Kiribati, starting at schools and spreading to health clinics and households. The Health and WASH teams also came together to advocate on the importance of incorporating menstrual hygiene management into plans and projects in the areas of WASH, health and education. Three different Ministries and the Just Play Programme joined our child protection team to increase birth registration in Vanuatu from 56% to 80% in just a few months. Clearly, when we plan and work together in innovative and strategic ways, we have a bigger impact.

UNICEF Pacific and our partners started the year with strong plans to implement our shared development and disaster resilience agenda, but then came Cyclone Pam.
– affecting Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Kiribati and the Solomon Islands. Shortly thereafter, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) was hit by multiple typhoons. We mounted a strong and effective Cyclone Pam response, especially in Vanuatu where we provided extensive support in child protection, education, WASH, health and nutrition. Unfortunately, resource constraints prevented us from contributing as much in FSM, but we were able to provide health and nutrition supplies, water quality testing kits and expertise on immunisation. Through lessons learned and after action review exercises, our staff and partners documented what went well, and also what we learned, including areas where we will do even better next time. It is important that we provide more technical assistance to the particular needs of children affected by both the adverse impact of climate change and sudden onset emergencies, including in the Micronesian countries.

As the El Niño-related drought continued to cause hardship, hunger and disease, especially among those already hit by a cyclone or typhoon, we were reminded of the critical importance of reinforcing our work on disaster risk reduction, including preparedness measures. Flexible and collaborative approaches allow us to support rapid response and community-led recovery, including with children’s participation. We took these messages to the Pacific consultations for the World Humanitarian Summit in New Zealand and to the Pacific Humanitarian Partnership meeting in Suva, Fiji. Nine-year-old John from Tanna Island in Vanuatu also advocated for child-centred emergency preparedness and response, speaking to 200 emergency experts, including to Princess Sarah Zeid of Jordan, and through three widely-watched videos viewed by people across the world.

UNICEF Pacific’s impact in 2015 through advocacy was clear:

• Shifts in policy and commitments by government to strengthen child protection systems after our regional Conference on Ending Violence Against Children, boosted by a visit from the Special Representative to the UN Secretary General on Violence Against Children;

• Substantive engagement in the climate change discussions at COP21 in Paris;

• Notable milestones on Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) reporting and compliance;

• Favourable changes in public financing for children in Fiji;
• Increased recognition of the importance of family, community and public support for early childhood development;

• Executive Board approval for the continuation and expansion of the Vaccine Independence Initiative, including introduction of additional vaccines in national protocols;

• Inclusion of undernutrition and micronutrient deficiency in the Pacific-wide non-communicable diseases agenda.

Our advocacy drew on compelling and robust evidence generated by our research and knowledge, including primary data collection, analysis of the bottlenecks that reduce equity in service delivery, and evaluations of projects to determine the worthiness of additional investment and replication in other places.

So how are we moving forward in 2016?

2015 was busy, but 2016 promises even more! In this 70th Anniversary Year for UNICEF, we are working with partners towards integrating the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into our programmes in every country. We are participating in a UN Pacific evaluation and assessment, which will lead to a new Pacific Strategy for the UN for 2018-2022. Contributing to that, UNICEF is leading a consultative, pan-Pacific process to develop a Report on the Situation of Children in the Pacific. This analysis, and alignment with SDGs, national and regional priorities, will inform development of a new UNICEF Multi-Country Programme for 2018-2022.

The first quarter of 2016 brought new cyclones and tropical depressions to the Pacific while, at the same time, critical drought and water shortages brought hardship to other Pacific Island nations. Cyclone Winston was the worst experienced by Fiji and the Pacific in decades. 2015 was the hottest year recorded in human history and 2016 is likely to be the same or even hotter. While the Pacific nations championed and then signed the new global agreement on climate change mitigation, it is clear that strengthening resilience must be second nature for everyone in the Pacific; development gains will otherwise be eroded along with shorelines, homes, livelihoods and infrastructure.

When we look back on 2015, it is clear that we made a real difference for children. When we look forward to the remainder of 2016, it is clear there is more to do! We will continue to combine our global, regional and national expertise with outreach, listening and participation to understand the best ways to support national systems
that serve children and their caregivers. Our programme areas for 2016-2017 are Child Protection, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Child Survival and Development (Health, Nutrition, HIV and AIDS), Early and Primary Education; Social Policy and Communication for Development, including through sports. Our key cross-cutting goals are to reduce inequity, including for children with disabilities, and reduce gender-based inequality. We will continue to support strengthened resilience against climate change and disaster, and be active in emergency preparedness and response across all programme areas.

I am proud of what we accomplished in 2015; grateful for the wonderful UNICEF staff and committed partnerships that made the achievements possible; and excited about our movement forward in 2016 on our shared agenda with, and for, the children of the Pacific.

Karen B. Allen

Dr. Karen B. Allen

UNICEF Representative, Pacific Island countries: the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu
Overview

*UNICEF promotes the rights and well-being of every child, in everything we do* - maternal and child health, nutrition, HIV and AIDS, child protection, education, water, sanitation and hygiene as well as policy, advocacy, communication for development, planning and evaluation.

Our multi-country programme and office located in Fiji covers the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. These 14 Pacific Island countries are home to 2.3 million people, including 1.2 million children and youth, living on more than 660 islands and atolls stretching across 17.2 million square kilometres of the Pacific Ocean, an area comparable to the entire South American continent. Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu are classified as Fragile States according to World Bank/OECD criteria.
2015 presented both challenges and opportunities in our work to support children, delivered in partnership with governments, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), schools, communities, young people and children themselves. The following provides a snapshot of just a few achievements from the past year.
Child Protection
In 2015 we made significant advances in our work to protect children from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation, by gathering evidence for action, strengthening child protection systems and advocating for change.

Gathering Evidence for Action

UNICEF and UNFPA published a joint report *Harmful Connections: Examining the relationship between violence against women and violence against children in the South Pacific* that provides evidence of the prevalence of violence against women and children and its impact on the well-being of children and their families. This report is proving to be a strong tool when advocating to governments for strengthened laws and policies that protect children from violence.

Read the report: [http://uni.cf/201k8ix](http://uni.cf/201k8ix)

UNICEF also undertook a comprehensive assessment and review of the child protection systems in Fiji, Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and published country reports, as well as a multi-country comparative analysis of the child protection systems of the four countries. These reports provide a robust body of evidence to inform changes to laws, regulations and policies, and supports advocacy efforts for strengthened child protection systems. The Global Indicator Framework for Monitoring and Measuring Child Protection was used to support the assessment and analysis.

Read the Regional Overview: [http://uni.cf/1Yzlrp0](http://uni.cf/1Yzlrp0)

Strengthening Child Protection Systems

UNICEF worked with government partners across the Pacific to strengthen and improve legal and regulatory frameworks for child protection. This included working with governments to harmonise family safety and protection laws, which focus on response to domestic violence, integrating child protection law. With support from UNICEF, legislative reform is happening in the Cook Islands (Family Law Bill), Kiribati (Juvenile Justice Act), Republic of the Marshall Islands (Disability Act), Samoa (Child Care and Protection Bill), and the Solomon Islands (Child and Family Welfare Bill) while Fiji and Vanuatu have both made progress in developing child protection policies.
**Kiribati:** The Government of Kiribati passed the Juvenile Justice Bill which ensures child-sensitive justice procedures for child victims, witnesses and offenders. The new legislation establishes a separate juvenile court, limits detention of children and mandates the separation of children from adults in custody. Kiribati also ratified two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to increase protection of children from sexual exploitation (including the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography) and protect children from involvement in armed conflict. Kiribati now has one of the strongest legal frameworks for child protection in the Pacific.

**Fiji:** Significant progress was made in 2015 to strengthen partnerships and coordination to reach children and protect them from harm. Guidelines were developed to support health workers with recognising, responding to and referring child protection cases for appropriate social welfare services. Similarly, inter-agency guidelines were developed for coordinating and referring child protection cases. The child protection policy in schools was also rolled out to include all early childhood education centres. These new policies and guidelines increased the number of child protection cases reported to the Social Welfare Department of the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and enabled more children requiring support to be reached with protection services. During 2015, Fiji also launched a Child Helpline, which received 6,704 calls within the first ten months of operation. Child Helpline staff identified 544 cases that required child protection services and referred them to counselling and social welfare services.
Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu: During 2015 more children had their births registered than ever before in Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Mobile campaigns targeting far-away communities, decentralised service delivery and new partnerships between civil society, health, education, local organisations and faith-based organisations contributed to the successful extension of birth registration coverage. The resilience of the birth registration system was tested in Vanuatu, where, in response to Tropical Cyclone Pam, a total of 22,150 children were registered in the affected provinces, including 11,828 children who were issued with replacement birth certificates for lost or damaged certificates. In the Solomon Islands, the roll-out of a birth registration system expanded from four to eight provinces. As a result, birth registration coverage has increased from less than one% in 2012 to 40% in 2015. Governments in both Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands increased funding for civil registration offices and, in the Solomon Islands, the Government developed and endorsed a five-year investment plan for the civil registration system. In Kiribati, birth registrations in rural areas increased from 68% to 89% following a UNICEF-supported mobile birth registration campaign in the outer islands.

Advocating for Change

As many as 7 in 10 women and 8 in 10 children in the Pacific experience violence or abuse at some point in their life. Physical or corporal punishment of children is widely accepted in the Pacific and remains the most common form of disciplining children. Furthermore, only 10% of children in the Pacific are fully protected by law from corporal punishment.

UNICEF hosted the first Pacific Conference on Ending Violence Against Children in Nadi, Fiji. The conference brought together representatives from 13 Pacific Island governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organisations and faith-based organisations to understand the underlying factors and consequences of violence against children and find ways to prevent and address it. The United Nations Special Representative to the Secretary General
on Violence against Children, Marta Santos Pais, also attended the historic conference. The conference aimed to build capacity and understanding of violence against children, share best practices in order to strengthen responses to ending violence against children. It also aimed to secure renewed commitment from Pacific Leaders to end violence against children, including ratifying, implementing and enforcing international human rights instruments such as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The conference also aimed to contribute to the global call to end violence against children and for governments to place children at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Learn more about the conference: http://uni.cf/1tDUg2v

Fiji: UNICEF is taking an holistic approach to address family violence by addressing the root causes of violence against children, preventing children from becoming future victims of violence and perpetrators of violence in adulthood. In Fiji, UNICEF supported the Ministry of i-Taukei Affairs to launch the community facilitation package “Children are a Precious Gift from God”, which promotes positive parenting, community action for child protection and positive traditional practices. This approach aims to improve parenting and caregiver skills and knowledge about child protection to promote positive behavior change. A similar approach promoting positive parenting is also being rolled out in Kiribati and Vanuatu.

7 in 10 women
8 in 10 children
in the Pacific experience violence or abuse at some point in their life
Maternal and child health and nutrition
Improving the health of children is one responsibility among many in the fight against poverty. Healthy children become healthy adults: people who create better lives for themselves, their communities and their countries.

Wide disparities in child survival exist between and within countries in the Pacific. Demographic health surveys from different Pacific Island countries confirm that children living in low-income households experience a higher risk of mortality before age 5, with neonatal complications, pneumonia and diarrhoea among the leading causes of death.

Protecting Children from 
Vaccine-preventable Disease

Pacific: The number of children dying before their fifth birthday has declined in the Pacific with support from strengthened immunisation programmes that include supplementary measles campaigns and child health days. Vaccination is one of the most cost-effective health interventions. For young and old alike, immunisation offers the greatest protection from preventable diseases like diphtheria, hepatitis B, measles, rubella, pneumococcal disease, polio, rotavirus, diarrhoea and tetanus. The introduction of new vaccines such as Rotavirus vaccine help to prevent diarrhoea, Pneumococcal vaccine helps to protect against pneumonia and Human Papillomavirus vaccine helps to protect against cancers caused by the human papillomavirus. In the Pacific, UNICEF procures and delivers vaccines and equipment in 13 Pacific Island countries, maintains buffer stocks for unforeseen campaigns and shortages and helps to build a cold chain that reaches out to remote locations. UNICEF also assists governments to integrate immunisation services with maternal, neonatal, child health and nutrition interventions.
Vanuatu: In 2015, UNICEF Pacific provided Vanuatu with intensive support to respond to a measles outbreak that began in January. Support included tracing people who had been in contact with a person diagnosed with the virus, selective immunisation for those who missed routine vaccination and social mobilisation. The response was effective in mitigating a more widespread outbreak. Efforts to improve routine immunisation coverage also continued with a nationwide measles and rubella vaccine campaign that reached more than 104,000 children. The campaign was integrated with delivery of the oral polio vaccine, vitamin A supplementation and deworming tablets to support children’s resilience to childhood illness.

Improving newborn, child and maternal health

Pacific: UNICEF worked with partners to strengthen national capacity to deliver quality, timely newborn and maternal health and nutrition interventions at health facility and community levels. UNICEF developed a Pacific framework that focuses on the well-being of the whole child, which, at the health facility level, promotes the identification of childhood illness and referral of appropriate treatment. In the home it promotes care-seeking behaviour, improved nutrition, preventative care and correct implementation of prescribed care. Newborn baseline assessments were undertaken in Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and were used to inform government plans to scale up newborn and maternal health interventions and services. After Tropical Cyclone Pam, UNICEF provided 60 health facilities in Vanuatu with newborn health kits and facilitated a workshop for health workers to enhance knowledge and skills on delivering essential health care services for newborns.
Tackling Malnutrition

Pacific: The Pacific is facing a double burden in relation to nutrition, with under-nutrition co-existing with obesity. At the present time, however, young children are most affected by under-nutrition, which increases their vulnerability to infections and threatens their development and cognitive function, particularly when it occurs in utero and during the first two years of life. Micronutrient deficiencies (such as vitamin A, iron and zinc) are also common across the Pacific.

The Pacific faces a ‘double burden’ of under-nutrition co-existing with obesity

UNICEF Pacific undertook a number of activities in 2015 to address high levels of malnutrition, including focusing on micronutrient deficiencies and prevention of mortality due to severe acute malnutrition. UNICEF co-hosted a regional meeting with WHO on the double burden of malnutrition. Representatives from the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu participated in the meeting and contributed to the development of a draft plan of action to address malnutrition. The plan includes improved support for maternal nutrition, strengthened counselling on infant and young child feeding, and prevention and treatment of malnutrition, including the distribution of micronutrient supplements, Vitamin A and deworming tablets. The plan focuses on the first two years of life, which is a critical time for growth and development of children.

UNICEF provided the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Palau and Vanuatu with a range of nutrition supplies including vitamin A, deworming tablets, iron-folic acid tablets, micronutrient powder, therapeutic foods and growth monitoring tools such as height boards, scales and mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) tapes. UNICEF also supported Fiji to adapt global training modules and guidelines on facility-based management of severe acute malnutrition.
Sexual and Reproductive Health, including HIV and AIDS
Although HIV prevalence remains low there are serious gaps in sexual and reproductive health services in the Pacific Islands, including limited HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI) services. Pacific Islanders have limited access to information and knowledge related to sexual and reproductive health. This, in combination with low condom use and high rates of forced sex, means that STIs remain endemic in the region, with chlamydia infection rates among the highest in the world. Poor risk perception and limited health services are additional factors that indicate that the spread of HIV in the Pacific region remains a serious threat.

Pacific: In collaboration with regional, UN, bilateral and national partners, UNICEF worked to integrate HIV, STI and sexual and reproductive health programmes in the Pacific. UNICEF supported the development of a regional approach and operational plan for the Pacific Sexual Health and Well-Being Shared Agenda (2015-2019) that has a comprehensive approach to sexual and reproductive health. The plan provides countries with guidance on how to develop and implement integrated sexual and reproductive health programmes and increase coordination of resources. The plan also provides guidelines to improve universal HIV testing of all pregnant women, eliminate parent-to-child transmission of HIV and expand HIV-prevention programmes for high-risk adolescents. In order to support sustainable HIV-prevention programmes, UNICEF developed minimum standards for youth-friendly health services that support health workers with providing confidential and appropriate sexual and reproductive health services to adolescents and youth.
Solomon Islands: UNICEF and the Government of the Solomon Islands conducted an assessment and mapping exercise of youth-friendly health services. A plan was developed to support nine youth-friendly health centres with HIV testing and counselling supplies. UNICEF supported the development of health education materials on sexual and reproductive health, life skills and STI/HIV prevention. UNICEF also supported 35 health facilities in the Solomon Islands to roll out point-of-care HIV rapid diagnostic testing and is working to expand access to HIV rapid diagnostic testing to other facilities across the Solomon Islands. This will increase the number of people who receive their results and reduce wait time for HIV test results.

Fiji and the Solomon Islands: UNICEF provided support to Fiji and the Solomon Islands to develop annual HIV work plans for 2015-2016 and worked with Ministries of Health to introduce early infant diagnosis of HIV to help ensure HIV-positive babies are started on life-saving treatment as soon as possible. Previously, blood samples were sent overseas for testing, which caused significant delays in treatment and had detrimental effects on the health of the child. The introduction of early infant diagnosis is an important step in the HIV response in the Pacific and will be closely monitored to inform future roll out in other Pacific Island countries. UNICEF also supported Fiji and the Solomon Islands to introduce HIV viral load testing, which is important for making decisions about pregnancy and birth, as well as for making decisions about the effectiveness of antiretroviral treatment.

Preventing Parent-to-Child Transmission of HIV

Kiribati: UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health in its efforts to integrate prevention of parent-to-child transmission services with maternal and child health services. The integration of these services is well advanced in South Tarawa and UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Health to expand the use of point-of-care rapid HIV diagnostic tests that will help improve the quality and coverage of services.
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
Access to safe drinking water and good sanitation can mean the difference between health and sickness for entire communities. Open defecation rates are high, especially in rural areas of Kiribati (49%) and the Solomon Islands (65%). Access to water and sanitation in schools varies widely among Pacific Countries, from 100% in Niue and Palau to just 2% in Kiribati. There is also increasing evidence linking poor water, sanitation and hygiene access to life-long growth stunting, beginning when children are very young. Safe drinking water and clean toilets at schools are extremely important for children’s health, to prevent diarrhoea and other diseases, and for providing an environment that is motivating for students, teachers and staff. We know also that clean water and sanitation facilities improve attendance and even learning outcomes for boys and girls. UNICEF’s WASH in Schools programmes aim to provide improved access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools. This includes training for teachers on hygiene promotion that incorporates hand washing and menstrual hygiene management, while working with school committees and relevant authorities to develop minimum standards for WASH in Schools.
Kiribati: UNICEF supported the Government of Kiribati to improve water, sanitation and hygiene in 36 schools in four outer islands and 70 out of 142 communities on 16 outer islands. UNICEF also supported the Ministry of Education to develop and adopt a WASH in Schools policy that will pave the way for national minimum standards for WASH in schools. In North Tarawa the Three Star Approach for WASH in Schools was introduced to ensure that all students wash their hands with soap, have access to drinking water and are provided with clean, gender-segregated toilets at school.

Solomon Islands: UNICEF reached some 10,500 people in communities, schools and health centres with improved water, sanitation and hygiene activities and services in 21 communities in Guadalcanal, Malaita, Isabel and Makria Provinces, as well as Honiara City. Sanitation programmes reached 6,420 people including through Community-Led Total Sanitation approaches and communities are working towards ending open defecation. UNICEF also reached 6,940 students and 300 teachers through its WASH in Schools activities, including the establishment of WASH Clubs. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health and Medical Services to develop a national hygiene campaign that was launched on Global Handwashing Day and rolled out in 15 schools in Guadalcanal.
Education
Although school enrolment is high in the Pacific and most countries are on track to achieve universal primary education, access to schools in remote and isolated areas remains problematic. A lack of suitably-qualified teachers and inadequate instruction materials, limited infrastructure and sanitation facilities, combined with low levels of parent-community involvement are key barriers to improving primary education outcomes. Weaknesses in education management and information systems resulting in poor education planning and budgeting also impact negatively on primary education. Other key barriers include the absence of policies promoting multi-grade and mother-tongue teaching, and a lack of strategies to meet the needs of out-of-school children with disabilities.

**Strengthening Early Care and Education Systems**

Preschool attendance rates are low and, in most Pacific Island countries, fewer than half of all children participate in formal early learning. Providing high-quality care, development and education for children in their first five years of life produces significant immediate and long-term benefits for their holistic cognitive, health, physical, and social development and achievements.

**Pacific:** UNICEF prepared a regional report on Early Childhood Care and Education to measure the progress countries are making in improving Early Childhood Care and Education services in order to support advocacy efforts to promote quality early learning and development opportunities. UNICEF supported Kiribati and the Solomon Islands to develop draft Early Childhood Care and Education legislation, while in Tuvalu minimum quality service standards for Early Childhood Care and Education were endorsed and early learning and development standards were developed. These important steps will inform and improve early childhood care and education curricula.

**Solomon Islands and Vanuatu:** To help improve children's readiness for school, UNICEF continued its initiative to strengthen parent and family support in early childhood development. Children’s books that include key messages for parents were developed to support young children's early literacy and promote reading as an early learning activity between parents and children. In Vanuatu, the books focused on responding to young children’s psychosocial needs and disaster risk reduction in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Pam. A set of ten children’s storybooks, focusing on children under 8 years of age was developed and more than 2,000 sets were printed and distributed to families and early childhood care and education centres, reaching more than 5,000 young children.
Less than 50% of children participate in formal early learning in most Pacific countries
Strengthening Primary Education Systems

Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu: UNICEF supported teacher education and professional development opportunities for classroom teachers and head teachers to improve learning outcomes for children. In the Solomon Islands, UNICEF supported the development of the first school-based, in-service training module for teaching literacy and numeracy for early primary school teachers. In Vanuatu, a module for teaching literacy and numeracy was developed for Grade 4-6 teachers. In both the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, head teachers were provided with professional development opportunities on instructional leadership to improve their capacity to mentor and coach teachers. To improve learning outcomes for 1,100 children living in hard-to-reach communities in Kiribati, UNICEF supported the development and delivery of a multi-grade teacher training course and guidebook for 50 multi-grade teachers in 21 schools.
Vanuatu: UNICEF provided emergency support to primary schools in the most affected provinces of Shefa, Tafea and Penama following Tropical Cyclone Pam. School-in-a-box kits, recreation kits, teacher kits, tents and student backpacks with learning materials and stationary were provided to support temporary learning spaces. Across the three provinces some 23,900 children from 168 primary schools were reached through this support. A ‘tips for teachers’ book and student workbook were developed to help teachers address children’s psychosocial needs and support healing and resilience following the cyclone. Orientation and guidance on using the materials was provided to 1,400 education providers and caregivers who supported more than 30,500 children with these resources.

Tuvalu: Following Tropical Cyclone Pam, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to assess damage to schools and the impact of the cyclone on students and teachers. UNICEF provided school backpacks with stationary and learning materials to more than 800 children from nine schools and also provided nine early childhood education centres with learning materials, which benefitted more than 300 young children.
Humanitarian Action
Pacific Island countries and territories are among the most vulnerable in the world to cyclones, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, king tides, tsunamis and rising ocean levels. UNICEF supports National Disaster Management Offices and Government Ministries with disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response in order to reduce the effects and impacts of these events. UNICEF conducted early warning and preparedness activities in the lead up to the South Pacific cyclone season and pre-positioned emergency contingency supplies in Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

During 2015, a number of Pacific Island countries faced humanitarian challenges. Vanuatu was struck by Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Pam that caused wide-spread damage across the country and left 166,000 people (two-thirds of the population) in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, while people in Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu experienced flooding due to sea storm surges. The Federated States of Micronesia was hit by three super typhoons between March and May, which affected more than 25,000 people. Water shortages caused by the severe El Niño event also impacted parts of Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, with increasing impacts on the North Pacific into 2016.

After Tropical Cyclone Pam, UNICEF quickly responded by distributing pre-positioned contingency supplies including water, sanitation and hygiene supplies to prevent the spread of waterborne disease. UNICEF supported the Vanuatu Government with coordination efforts and provided financial and technical support to address needs in Child Protection, Education, Health and Nutrition and WASH. This included providing school-in-a-box kits, recreation kits and student backpacks with learning materials to support temporary learning spaces and help children return to school. UNICEF supported a number of initiatives to meet the psychosocial needs of children and support the healing process. UNICEF also supported the Government with issuing new or replacement birth certificates to ensure people affected by the cyclone had official identity papers so that they could access relief services. In Kiribati, the Solomon Islands
and Tuvalu UNICEF provided emergency WASH support to ensure children and women had protected and reliable access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.

**El Niño-linked water shortages** affected Fiji, Palau, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, with **increasing impacts** on the North Pacific into 2016

**Impact of El Niño:** UNICEF supported governments, through the Pacific Humanitarian Team, to develop early warning systems, preparedness measures and contingency plans, for most-at-risk countries including Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. Preparedness focused on water, sanitation and hygiene in addition to other critical services that were at risk of being impacted by drought conditions. Relief supplies were pre-positioned and coordination mechanisms were strengthened between relevant authorities in education, health and shelter. UNICEF distributed water containers to schools in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to support water collection from safe sources and ensure drinking water was available for children in classrooms. UNICEF also supported government efforts to identify and treat children with acute malnutrition and reduce rates of under nutrition by distributing micronutrients, high-energy biscuits, Vitamin A and deworming tablets.

In order to better protect children in emergencies, UNICEF launched a Child Protection in Emergencies Toolkit. The toolkit aligns with global Child Protection Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Action and includes guidance on coordination between actors responding to emergencies, and mechanisms to prevent and respond to violence against children in emergencies. The toolkit also provides tools on including child protection across all sectors of an emergency, as well as monitoring and evaluation resources.

Learn more about UNICEF’s humanitarian action: [http://uni.cf/1PBqIGW](http://uni.cf/1PBqIGW)
Social Inclusion
Across the Pacific, around one in four children and adults live below the basic needs poverty line, ranging from 13% in Vanuatu to 35% in Fiji. Coverage of social protection programmes in the Pacific is significantly lower than other regions, relying instead on fairly extensive informal traditional support systems, which only provide partial protection against hardship and are slowly being eroded. Governments are gradually stepping in to compensate for this loss of social protection with six Pacific Island countries maintaining non-contributory pension schemes for the elderly and two delivering disability benefits. Only Fiji and the Cook Islands have social assistance programmes targeting children.

The Pacific remains a particularly challenging region for isolated, vulnerable and marginalised groups. Limited infrastructure and large distances between islands and countries, combined with low rates of internet, TV and radio penetration, make it difficult for families to access the information, knowledge and services they need to ensure the health, safety and well-being of their children. Ensuring that these groups can access sustainable development opportunities remains a priority for UNICEF.

Gathering Evidence for Action

The first building block in promoting children’s rights is to identify those children who are most marginalised and disadvantaged. Many Pacific Island countries have limited capacity to monitor the situation of children and track progress against key development goals. National statistical systems in the Pacific are among the
weakest in the world and are chronically under-resourced. UNICEF is supporting governments to strengthen health and education databases and civil registration systems, improve coordination between government ministries and build capacity in collecting, analysing and interpreting data in order to support policy development.

**Fiji:** UNICEF continued to support the Fiji Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation to extend and improve Fiji’s child-sensitive social protection programme. Following an assessment of child poverty and review of the effectiveness and impact of the national cash transfer and food voucher programme for vulnerable children, known as the Care and Protection Allowance, a report was launched along with an advocacy campaign to highlight the findings and recommendations. The advocacy campaign included a video documentary, press releases, a factsheet, presentations and a cabinet paper to parliament and other government institutions. The advocacy efforts have proven to be successful and the Government of Fiji has shown commitment to improving the protection of children by adopting a number of recommendations from the assessment and by increasing the 2016 budget for the Care and Protection Allowance.

Read the evaluation: [http://uni.cf/1Ui24go](http://uni.cf/1Ui24go)


**Pacific:** A country’s budget is perhaps the most powerful tool a government has to implement its policies and advance the rights of children, women and persons with disability. Governments demonstrate their commitment to children by the amount and quality of resources allocated to improving children’s well-being and realising children’s rights. As part our Public Finance for Children initiative, UNICEF Pacific and the Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific launched a study to explore ways to establish a financial monitoring system for children in Pacific Island countries. The study will provide a tool for Governments, UNICEF and other stakeholders to regularly assess progress towards commitments included in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The study will also offer valuable lessons for child-related public budget planning, monitoring and evaluation.
Promoting the rights of people with disabilities

Pacific: UNICEF conducted an evaluation of the “Pacific Enable” project, which aimed to strengthen data and statistical collection systems and analysis and promote the inclusion of disability modules for planned national surveys such as Demographic Health Surveys. The project focused on activities related to employment conditions and opportunities for persons with disabilities, legislation and policy, data collection and early identification for children with disabilities. By improving access to reliable data, advocacy efforts are strengthened and evidence can be used as a catalyst for further work by governments to improve lives and opportunities of persons with disabilities.

Read the evaluation: http://uni.cf/1V9W8p7
Using sports to support children’s development

As part of the overall strategy to reduce vulnerabilities and address social issues affecting young people in the Pacific, UNICEF is using Sport for Development as a critical area of intervention. Through our partnership with the Oceania Football Confederation, UNICEF is helping children in Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to grow, learn and explore through sport. The Just Play programme helps children aged 6-12 years learn and practice good hygiene, healthy eating and other healthy lifestyle habits. It encourages gender equality, promotes social inclusion and gives children confidence in their abilities.

Following Tropical Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu, Just Play was expanded to support and encourage birth registration activity while also supporting children’s psychosocial needs and recovery by providing a safe space for children to share and reflect on the emotional impact that the cyclone had on them, their families and their communities. More than 10,600 children participated in Just Play activities in Vanuatu in 2015.

Read more about how Just Play supported children after Cyclone Pam:
http://bit.ly/1LsgG7V

10,600+ children participated in Just Play activities in Vanuatu in 2015
In 2016 we are continuing to work for the rights and well-being of all Pacific children through long-term and large-scale development commitments in Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. We are also engaging in advocacy and other communication, technical assistance, vaccine procurement and other selective interventions for both regional and national priorities for children in the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tokelau, and Tonga. By February 2016, we were already engaged in a large-scale emergency response in Fiji, and re-stocking contingency supplies in Fiji and elsewhere around the Pacific in preparation for any other disaster.
Child Protection

Community Facilitation Package for the Solomon Islands and Kiribati: A community facilitation package addressing parenting and community practices around violence will be developed for Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, based on a similar model successfully used by government and civil society organisations in Fiji. As part of this, a knowledge, attitudes and practices study will be undertaken to identify issues and formulate messages to reduce violence and corporal punishment.

Supporting Child Protection Legislative Reform: UNICEF Pacific will continue to support Governments in Nauru, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu with child protection legislative reform. In Nauru, UNICEF will support the Government to finalise and present the Child Protection and Welfare Bill to parliament. UNICEF will also support Samoa and the Solomon Islands with finalising Child Protection bills so that they can be presented to Parliament while, in Vanuatu, UNICEF will support Government with the consultation process and drafting of a child protection and welfare bill. Child protection legislative reform is important for domesticating the Convention on the Rights of the Child and provides children with legal protection against violence, abuse and exploitation.

Electronic Civil Registration Database System for Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu: With support from UNICEF, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu will have new and expanded electronic civil registration database systems that will register births and guarantee a more secure, centralised, reliable and transparent system for storing and maintaining records of birth. A priority for 2016 is to mobilise new parents to register births. Multimedia products are planned to raise awareness on the importance of birth registration, as well as high-level advocacy with government leaders.

Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition

Transition to a new polio vaccine: In 2016 all Pacific Countries must switch over from the trivalent to the more targeted and effective bivalent polio vaccine, a huge effort that UNICEF and the World Health Organization will support. UNICEF will support eight Pacific Island countries (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu) with the transition to bivalent oral polio vaccine. Comprehensive support will be provided to support countries with the effective management of the transition and ensure that public health and safety is maintained. The switch is part of the World Health Assembly’s Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan.
Improving maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health: UNICEF Pacific is working on a joint programme with the World Health Organization and UN Population Fund to improve access of pregnant women, mothers and children to life-saving vaccines, improve the nutrition status and health of newborns and strengthen public health service delivery including reproductive health, especially in hard-to-reach areas. The joint programme will see an acceleration of gains in the three key areas as it enters the second year of implementation. The emerging lessons for this new model of UN collaboration will also inform broader UN engagement in Vanuatu and support UNICEF and its partners to prepare for the new UN Strategy for the Pacific.

In 2016 all Pacific countries will switch to a more targeted and effective polio vaccine
Sexual and reproductive health, including HIV and AIDS

Gathering evidence for action: UNICEF, in collaboration with the UN Development Programme, will conduct a vulnerability assessment of key populations considered to be most at risk of contracting HIV in Kiribati, Samoa and Vanuatu. The study will inform the development of programmes and activities to strengthen HIV service delivery, care and support for women, their partners, children and adolescents. UNICEF will also support the Ministry of Health and Medical Services of the Solomon Islands to finalise and publish the Second Generation Sentinel Survey, which will inform the development of programmes and activities to strengthen HIV service delivery, care and support for women, their partners, children and adolescents.

Strengthening point-of-care HIV testing, counselling and prevention: UNICEF will continue supporting countries to ensure that guidelines on HIV testing, counselling and treatment are aligned with global recommendations and updates. Building on the gains made in South Tarawa in Kiribati, UNICEF will continue to support the Ministry of Health in its efforts to integrate prevention-of-parent-to-child-transmission services with maternal and child health services throughout the rest of the country. Investments will also be made in the Solomon Islands to update the prevention-of-parent-to-child transmission and antiretroviral treatment (ART) guidelines, as well as HIV testing and counselling policies, and expanded point-of-care rapid HIV diagnostic testing.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

Strengthening water, sanitation and hygiene in Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu: UNICEF Pacific will support Governments, NGOs and communities to develop and implement WASH sector policies and strategies to improve access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation in rural and peri-urban areas of Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Water safety will be promoted through appropriate technologies accompanied by water quality monitoring and drinking water safety measures. The eradication of open defecation and scale up of sanitation will be achieved through demand-driven, community-based sanitation approaches, combined with the introduction of new technologies, sanitation marketing, and development of appropriate incentive programmes that allow for national replication. Behaviour change will also be fostered through the introduction of participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation methods. UNICEF will document the environmental impacts and sustainability of its WASH programmes, which will inform the development of future strategies and will strengthen UNICEF’s expansion of WASH programmes in future years.
**WASH in Schools:** UNICEF Pacific will support Governments, NGOs and communities in the development of a programmatic approach to WASH in Schools. This will include training for teachers, hygiene promotion incorporating hand washing and menstrual hygiene management, development of minimum standards for WASH in Schools and construction of WASH facilities. Low-cost approaches focused on behaviour change, such as the Three Star Approach, will be expanded in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. The WASH programme with strengthen partnerships with Sports for Development programmes, providing further opportunity for children to learn and practice good hygiene.

**Education**

**Strengthening Teacher Education in the Pacific:** School-based, in-service teacher training using an integrated and self-learning approach, along with coaching from head teachers, will continue in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. This will include completing a baseline and self-assessment for teachers in Vanuatu to ensure systematic monitoring and evaluation of programme impact on learning and teaching practices. In Kiribati, UNICEF will support the Ministry of Education to integrate multi-grade teaching methodologies into the Kiribati Teacher College curriculum.

**Strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education Systems:** UNICEF will support the Government in Kiribati to finalise and submit the Early Childhood Care and Education Bill to Parliament, an important step in strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education systems.

**Early Childhood Care:** A parenting package will be developed to support an holistic approach to child development and will aim to strengthen links between health, nutrition, protection and school readiness through improved parenting. The programme will be developed using the results of the knowledge, attitudes and practices studies in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and will incorporate children’s books with key messages for parents that were developed by UNICEF in 2015.
Social inclusion

Improving data collection on children, women and men with disabilities in the Pacific: Building on initial work in Vanuatu, UNICEF Pacific is now included in a regional initiative to improve the quality of data collection efforts on disability, in line with international standards and best practices. Improved data collection will support advocacy efforts for the development of effective policies that address issues facing children, women and men with disabilities.

Expanding the Just Play programme: Building on the success of the Just Play Sports for Development programme, which engages children aged 6-12 years in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, UNICEF Pacific will expand its support to the Just Play programme to include a programme targeting adolescents. The new Just Play 13-16 year programme, will incorporate messages on healthy lifestyles, reproductive health and life skills, and will roll-out in pilot format in Fiji, Samoa and Tonga in 2016.

Child-centred programme development: In 2016, UNICEF will begin to review and develop its next five-year development programme. Comprehensive child-centred risk assessments will be undertaken to identify hazards and vulnerabilities of children and young people, with a particular focus on incorporating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaption throughout all programmes. UNICEF will be working closely with UN agencies and government partners to have a harmonised approach to development programme strategies and goals.

Climate and disaster risk resilience

UNICEF Pacific supports governments, NGOs and communities to build resilience to hazards and climate variability through better information, improved planning and smarter investments. UNICEF supports data analysis to inform planning and decision making, through mechanisms such as spatial child-centered risk assessments and community-level planning such as drinking water safety and security plans.
Photograph Captions

Cover Page: Namit, 7, from Vanuatu's Tanna Island takes time out to play traditional games with other community members.

Page 4: Two-month old Celeste is weighed by nurses at Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital in Apia, Samoa.

Pages 10-11: Kulau, 8, Lawrence, 9, and Shandrack, 7, play at a beach near Lord Howe Settlement in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Page 12: A student from the Solomon Islands listens attentively to his teacher during class.

Page 18: Tasillima kisses her 1-month-old son Mativa, born prematurely, in his incubator at Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital in Apia, Samoa.

Page 22: A child is screened for malnutrition as part of family health outreach services in Ra province, Fiji.

Page 24: 4-day-old Ronneta with her mother at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva, Fiji.

Page 28: Patty Patrick, 10, learns about hand washing and hygiene during a school workshop organised by UNICEF with support from the Red Cross in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Page 31: Vanka, 9, flushes her school’s new toilet in Guadalcanal Province, Solomon Islands.

Page 32: Hilson Toaliu from UNICEF Pacific’s Vanuatu office enjoys fresh lemonade made from a newly-restored water supply in Teoumaville community, which was badly affected by Cyclone Pam.

Page 34: 9-year-old Nilza and Anishka hold their new school bags packed with UNICEF school supplies, on their first day back at school after Cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu.

Page 37: A four-year-old girl takes part in an arts and craft class at the Early Childhood Centre in Colonia, Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia.

Page 40: Rachel, 3, stands on the wrecked foundation of a house swept away when a municipal water tank collapsed during the height of Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu.

Page 44: John, 15, sits with his friends in their village on Tanna Island, Vanuatu. John was carried to safety by his older sister when Cyclone Pam struck their village.

Page 49: Grace, 9, from Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia does her homework in Braille. Grace’s school is not equipped to teach children with special needs so her mother Rosie also attends school to help her learning.

Page 50: Henry, 12, practices his ball skills amidst the debris of Erakor School on Efate Island. The school was badly damaged by Cyclone Pam when it hit Vanuatu.

Pages 52-53: John, 9, lives at the base of an active volcano on Tanna Island, Vanuatu, which spews ash and acid rain on his community, making substance agriculture difficult. After surviving Cyclone Pam earlier in 2015, John’s community was also affected by severe water shortages linked to El Niño.

Page 61: A four-year-old boy at the Early Childhood Centre in Colonia, Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia.
Thank you to all of our Government counterparts, our multilateral and regional partners, civil society, academia and the private sector whose partnership in the Pacific leads to sustained achievement of results for children.

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- Other donors to UNICEF Emergency Thematic Funds
- Donors to UNICEF Core Funds and Thematic Funds in support of UNICEF’s Strategic Plan