

PNG rapper, Sprigga Mek, recording the COVID-19 awareness song ['Wok Bung Wantaim'](#) that promotes national unity to fight COVID-19



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OVERVIEW

More than 100 days have passed since Papua New Guinea started its health sector preparedness and response to the coronavirus disease. Earlier on May 8 also, the country marked the first 100 days since the World Health Organisation declaration of COVID-19 as a public health emergency of international concern. To date, Papua New Guinea's eight confirmed cases have all recovered.

UNICEF in collaboration with the Government and through the generous and timely support of donors and contributors, continues to support the COVID-19 response with a focus on rebuilding systems for the longer period and working to promote sustainable behavior change.

HEALTH

- More than 670,000 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including examination gloves, N95 masks, surgical face masks, protective goggles, face shields, long sleeve gowns and coveralls

worth over K2 million will be available for distribution by the government to health facilities in the country when they arrive in the country at the end of June.

- UNICEF has finalized agreements with a highlands-based NGO to provide essential training on the use of Infection, Protection and Control supplies, Contact Tracing, Risk Communication and Community Engagement and Case Management for Health Workers and Health Managers in the seven highlands provinces over three and a half days in June as part of the COVID-19 response.

CHILD PROTECTION

- UNICEF provided technical support for the national Child Protection emergency preparedness and response strategy that has been officially approved by the National Executive Council. With this official endorsement, the National Executive Council recognized that the Strategy complemented the National Emergency Response Plan where children's issues were concerned and directed the Department of Treasury and Finance to release the funds approved for the implementation of the strategy.
- More than 400 U-Reporters including 94 parents with 208 children were engaged in quizzes on good parenting tips that UNICEF shared on UNICEF's U-Report platform, a social messaging tool for youth to speak up on the important issues that affect them. Almost half of the U-Reporters (49%) who participated in the quizzes, which highlighted the **family violence counselling helpline 7150 800**, did not know where to get help for children who did not feel safe at home. More than a thousand more people were reached with good parenting tips on Facebook. The total number of U-Reporters increased by 50 per cent and reached 3990 as almost 2000 young people joined U-Report in May 2020.
- The Child Protection sub-cluster remains active and now includes the Department of Education. This cooperation has enabled the Office of Child and Family Service and Department of Education to jointly deliver training sessions on Mental Health Psychosocial Support involving Child Protection Officers.
- Two hundred and thirty participants including the police, army, community leaders, youth and women groups from four electorates in Port Moresby were amongst the first batch of people to be trained on protection and health related issues through a series of community engagement COVID-19 training sessions that UNICEF, through World Bank support, facilitated over a 10-day period towards the end of May.



UNICEF Child Protection Officer, Hennie Kama addressing community leaders during the training.

- In partnership with Child Fund Helplines, UNICEF provided support to 53 children (26 boys and 27 girls aged 11-16 years) and 150 adults (31 males and 119 females) with crisis counselling, psychosocial support and referral to crisis and emergency services. Sixteen children (12 girls and 4 boys) aged 3 -11 years affected by violence were supported with referrals to essential services.

EDUCATION

- UNICEF, in close collaboration with key partners including the National Department of Education (NDoE), Government of Australia, PNG Partnership Fund (PPF), PNG Disability Sector Coalition, PNG Council of Churches and with financial support from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and technical support from Save the

Children, supported an Education Needs Assessment that was completed by inspectors and guidance offices through telephone interviews in more than 400 schools across the country. The results of this assessment that were used to develop a national COVID-19 [Emergency Education Response and Recovery Plan](#) that is now available on the NDoE [website](#). (Click on link to access Plan).

- UNICEF, Save the Children and PPF successfully supported the NDoE in submitting a funding application to GPE for the implementation of the national COVID-19 response and recovery plan. On 28 May, GPE approved funding of over K30 million (USD 9 million) for the PNG Education emergency and Recovery Plan.
- UNICEF continued to support over 300,000 elementary, primary and secondary school including 135,931 girls through digital, radio and television home-based language, mathematics and science lessons before schools re-opened on 4 May 2020. Attendance is not compulsory and not all students can attend classes every day as a result of the New Normal Guidelines, so it is expected that a number of students will continue a blended approach to learning where 2-3 days per week are spent in schools and the remainder of the week at home through radio, television, internet and working on worksheets on non-contact days. Through UNICEF advocacy and financial support from Australia, the recording of sign language for education programs on television, to cater for the learning needs of deaf students, has commenced by Callan Services for Disabled Persons National Unit.

WASH

- The construction of handwashing points in 44 National Capital Schools to provide clean water and hand washing facilities continues to make impact. To date, more than 37,000 students (Girls: **18437** and Boys: **18775**) in **23 schools** in the National Capital District have access to clean water and handwashing points.
- Up to 382,000 people are exposed to hygiene promotion messages that UNICEF developed through funding support from the European Union. These messages are featured on 28 city buses that service all city routes daily including routes outside the city.



- UNICEF supported rapid WASH assessments in 44 selected schools this month. These schools also identified focal WASH teachers and formed hygiene clubs comprising up to 10 student members who will be trained on how to promote good hygiene practices within the school calendar of activities.



- With support from DFID and in partnership with the National Department of Health, UNICEF worked with popular PNG rapper, Sprigga Mek and local artists, Cammy Bee and Brady Skate to compose a COVID-19 Awareness Song, [Wok Bung Wantaim](#), which is now airing on 6 PNG radio stations reaching over 4 million listeners across the country. More than 78,000 people were reached through a Facebook post promoting the song.

RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Through funding support provided by the World Bank and in partnership with the Government, UNICEF has embarked on a national mass media COVID-19 awareness campaign. Four major media channels - *NBC TV*, *Radio Wantok (Light)*, *Radio Maria* and *FM100* – are reaching up to 95 percent of the population including rural listeners in 27 towns across the country with public service announcements promoting awareness and protection measures
- UNICEF is supporting ongoing media sensitization and advocacy on the protection of the most vulnerable children from primary and secondary impacts of COVID-19 – both from the virus itself and the response put in place by the state of emergency and lockdown. With funding support provided by World Bank, UNICEF also contributed to a UN and media collaboration on May 12 by observing Media Freedom Day with a workshop attended by Government and UN representatives and members of the PNG media. The theme of the workshop was ‘Reshaping news coverage in PNG’ with a special focus on health emergencies.
- If you missed it, [click on this link to watch EMTEK’s COVID-19 documentary](#) that aired on EMTV last month that also featured the UN’s support to the country’s COVID-19 response.



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