

# Taking Another Step on the Climb to Ensure Lifesaving Vaccines Reach all ni-Vanuatu Children

**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** partners from the Japan Committee Vaccines for the World's Children (JCW), were on a field mission to Vanuatu from September 1-7, 2019.

JCW, a nonprofit organisation established in 1994, supports immunisation of children in a number of developing countries worldwide, including Vanuatu. For 25 years, UNICEF has had a longstanding global partnership with JCW to ensure lifesaving vaccines reach all children.

"UNICEF's partnership with JCW supports government efforts throughout the Pacific to ensure children under five receive all essential vaccines," said UNICEF Pacific Representative, Sheldon Yett. "Field visits provide opportunities to highlight results for children as well as provide a window on the challenges faced by small island nations like Vanuatu," explained Mr. Yett.

During the field mission, JCW and UNICEF staff visited immunisation outreach sites run by Vanuatu's Ministry of Health where they observed results of the work supported by the generous funding of the Japanese people. Health staff and front-line nurses on Efate and Santo Islands highlighted achievements of, and challenges faced by, the Government's Expanded Programme on Immunisation.

"We are proud to contribute to supporting Vanuatu reach

key immunisation milestones for eight years now," stated Director General of JCW, Okudera Noriho. "Investing in immunisation of all children is a cost effective public health intervention that JCW will continue to support."

Despite significant increases in coverage rates achieved through Vanuatu's Expanded Programme on Immunisation with third dose of diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus coverage increasing from 55.1 per cent to 89.9 per cent between 2013 and 2018, challenges remain. These relate to human resources, geography, and remoteness of rural communities that mean at least one in five ni-Vanuatu children do not have reliable access to vaccines.

JCW and UNICEF team members discussed and



Through UNICEF JCW provides support to Vanuatu's Expanded Programme on Immunisation to ensure nurses like Nurse Practitioner Maie Paul and Registered Nurse Dominic do not have to make the 5-hour trek to Tingswewe Village, east Pentecost, as often as they did in the past as they now have a solar powered refrigerator to keep vaccines at the right temperature to serve the children in a hard to reach part of Vanuatu. ©UNICEF Pacific/2018/Chute

explored with government strategic areas of future support towards immunisation

of Vanuatu's children throughout the mission. JCW and their donors,

through UNICEF, contributed US\$1,438,051 (approx. VUV170 million) from 2011

to date giving Vanuatu's children the best start in life with vaccines.



JCW team together with UNICEF and Ministry of Health team during the visit to the National Vaccine Store where all vital vaccines are stored prior to making the journey to provincial and island level distribution stores. ©UNICEF Pacific/2019/Chute

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Support from the Japan Committee, Vaccines for the World's Children mean that nurses like Midwife Roslinda are able to make the almost 4 hour trip to Ngala Village, Epi Island, to ensure 1-week old baby boy, Obed received his vaccines and his mother, Lily Moses, received key information on caring for him. ©UNICEF Pacific/2018/Chute



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