Case Management

UNICEF rolls out “remote” orientations with the Government of Myanmar, Civil Society Organizations and health personnel to protect children during COVID-19

UNICEF and Save the Children are providing training for frontline workers from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and the Department of Rehabilitation (DoR) on two child protection guidance notes. The guidance notes developed in collaboration with Save the Children and Myanmar’s Inter-Agency Case Management Taskforce, provide frontline workers in all settings with the tools they need to ensure children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect during the pandemic.

A total of 16 DoR and 203 DSW frontline staff received the orientation in the first two weeks of May including: 24 from Kayin, 15 officials from Mon and Thanintharyi, 11 from Chin, 13 from Kachin, 30 from Magway, 26 from Mandalay, 40 from Sagaing and 44 from Yangon. Orientation sessions are also on-going for frontline workers of child protection agencies at national and regional level including: 31 members of Myanmar’s Case Management Task Force, 53 members of the child protection sub-sector in Kachin, as well as 65 of UNICEF’s implementing partners. UNICEF’s Child Protection and Health teams are collaborating to expand orientations on the guidelines to health professionals working in quarantine facilities through partnership with the Myanmar Medical Association.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Virtual storytelling and audio programme to spread the messages of ‘My Hero is You’

In the first week of May, UNICEF, in collaboration with its MHPSS partner Metanoia, began the pilot of a series of virtual story-telling sessions via Zoom for children and their caregivers. So far, trained facilitators have conducted five sessions and feedback from children has been positive. The sessions which are split into three parts, run for 40 minutes each, allowing for plenty of question time. The virtual story telling is for all children across Myanmar and registration for the sessions was shared widely through UNICEF and Metanoia’s networks including via their social media platforms. If you would like to take part in a session, or know someone who
would, you can register here. This initiative is funded by USAID and the Government of Japan.

In addition, a child-friendly audio version of the story is currently in production. The script has been modified for the Myanmar context and six children have come on board to play the different characters of the story. The final audio version will be broadcast nationwide through Myanmar Radio Station. The story inspires every child to become a hero in the fight against COVID-19 by taking an active role in sharing information on preventing the spread of coronavirus. The story is currently available in both Myanmar and Rohingya languages and both versions can be found on the UNICEF website.

A Myanmar colouring book provides COVID-19 messages for children and adds to UNICEF’s growing MHPSS package

Children in Myanmar are impacted in different ways by COVID-19, whether they are staying in a quarantine centre, or learning to live with new social distancing measures at home. To support and stimulate children during this time, UNICEF is working on a set of activities that make up a MHPSS package. Adding to this package is a Myanmar colouring book which has been developed in collaboration between Myanmar’s Child Protection Working Group, Triangle, Raiki Community Development Foundation and UNICEF. The book provides an opportunity for children to learn about COVID-19 and how to protect themselves against the virus, at the same time as having fun, colouring in. Over 10,000 copies of the book are currently being printed, to be dispatched across the country, you can view the book online here.

Recreation kits “re-designed” to be COVID-19 safe for children

UNICEF and its partners have reviewed and redesigned the existing Child Friendly Space (CFS) Recreation Kit with the aim of making it COVID-19 responsive. Recreational activities in CFS are typically in groups, with little consideration for social distancing. These kits are for children who have been affected by COVID-19 in all settings and the activities are favourable for children to play on their own, or with only one or two other people. The kits contain 20 items including: drawing books, colouring pens and paper, Lego, Snakes and Ladder, puzzles and other games. The procurement of 5,000 kits is underway and will be distributed to UNICEF offices in Chin, Kachin, Mandalay, Rakhine, the South-East, Shan and Yangon. These COVID-19 sensitive recreation kits for children have been supported the Government of Denmark.
Parenting Tips
During COVID-19, children and their parents are adapting to the “new normal”, with school closures, working remotely and physical distancing. UNICEF at the global level teamed up with the Parenting for Lifelong Health initiative to bring parents and caregivers a set of handy tips to navigate through the challenges of day to day life. UNICEF Myanmar’s Child Protection and Education Programmes have translated all 12 tips into Myanmar language: Talking about COVID-19; One-on-one time; Keeping it positive; Get structured; Learning through play; Keeping children safe online; Family harmony at home; Keep calm and manage stress; Bad behaviour; When we get angry; Family budgeting in times of financial stress; Parenting in crowded homes and communities. The first five parenting tips are available in Myanmar language and other languages on Parenting for Lifelong Health’s website and the Myanmar translation of the whole set of 12 tips can be accessed on UNICEF’s website.

Support for Vulnerable Groups
Migrant workers return from China to Kachin State in Myanmar’s North
Historical migration trends show Myanmar migrants from Kachin State crossing the border into neighbouring China in search of work and higher wages. Now however, up to 18,000 migrant workers are expected to return to Kachin from China, with an estimated 3,800 already having returned between 22 March and 29 April. So far, UNICEF has received reports of over 600 children staying in quarantine facilities in the state, many of them with their families. There are however, a handful of children who were temporarily separated from their caregivers. One migrant worker, a mother of three, has recently returned from China and is staying in a quarantine facility in the state’s border region. Her children however, were living in an IDP camp in Hpakant township on their own. UNICEF, through its partner Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC), has provided support to the three children and arranged for them to stay with their uncle while awaiting for their mother to return home. With the help of camp volunteers, the children have kept in contact with their mother over the phone while she has been in quarantine.

COVID-19 IEC materials create behaviour change in Non-state actor (NSA) controlled area of Kayin state
UNICEF in collaboration with its implementing partner Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (KMSS) has provided COVID-19 information, education and communication (IEC) materials to an NSA controlled area of Kayin State. Kyainseikgyi Township, had previously received limited information about the pandemic and few preparedness measures were in place. COVID-19 awareness raising materials including child-friendly handwashing and social distancing messages have now been translated into two ethnic languages, Pao and Sakaw and distributed across the
township. KMSS community-based workers reported that they have seen an increase in understanding of how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among community members, as they have developed innovative ways to protect themselves against the virus, including fitting entrances to homes with makeshift water dispensers and soap for guests to use before entering. Through coordination with village leaders, KMSS has provided IEC materials to 410 households across the six villages of Kyainseikgyi Township.

**Children and Armed Conflict**

**Armed conflict continues to impact the lives of children**

Conflict in Rakhine and Chin States between the Myanmar Armed Forces and the Arakan Army has continued unabated during the COVID-19 pandemic. These two states have been overtly excluded from the unilateral ceasefire declared by Myanmar Armed Forces from May 10 to August 31. The intensifying fighting has taken a high toll on civilians including children, who are being caught in crossfire and killed or injured by landmines and other explosive remnants of war. The erosion of the protection of civilians has been of particular concern, as conflict comes amidst a reduction of humanitarian actors on the ground due to COVID-19. [UNICEF’s Mine Action in Myanmar Factsheet](#) for quarter one of 2020, echoes this alarming trend. Figures show the number of victims countrywide reaching more than 40% of the total annual cases for the entire year of 2019. The most notable increase is in Rakhine State which accounts for nearly 60% of those first quarter cases, an increase of 25% when compared with 2019 figures. With most group awareness raising activities on Explosive Ordinance Risk Education (EORE) suspended due to the pandemic, alternative ways to disseminate EORE messages through local radio, pamphlets and mobile applications are being explored. UNICEF’s mine action work in Myanmar is supported by USAID and the Government of Japan.

**Monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children**

UNICEF continues to support local monitors and community-based “eyes and ears” to operate the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations against children. COVID-19 pandemic control measures have affected many of those MRM monitors. In order to gain an accurate picture of the capacities on the ground, UNICEF, through its MRM partner, has reached out to 366 trained monitors in conflict affected areas, to determine whether they remain active and to receive an update on the situation in their area of coverage. Although the pandemic control measures and associated movement restrictions have affected many of the monitors, the vast majority of the 242 that could be reached, reported receiving and sharing information on grave violations through the use of messenger applications, and phone calls and texts in areas where internet is shut down. Monitors confirmed the escalation of conflict in Rakhine and Chin States but did not report a surge of recruitment and use in Kachin State which was feared due to the return of migrant workers from China. UNICEF and its partner are now attempting to contact those monitors that couldn’t be reached initially. An online training for new monitors as well as a refresher training is currently being finalised and will be delivered widely to maintain the network of active monitors and pass on key information on MRM. The work of the monitoring and reporting of grave violations has been supported by USAID.
Child Justice

Release from detention
At least 303 children, including 118 charged under immigration laws and 115 charged with drug related offences, were released from Department of Social Welfare operated training schools across the country on 17 April. These children were sent back to their state of origin which for the majority of them, was Rakhine State. UNICEF in Rakhine has been working closely with implementing partners to support those children and their parents. Children have been returned to the norther and central areas of the state by the government of Myanmar since mid-April. These children have been staying in quarantine facilities across the state and have now been released and reunited with their families. On 11 May in Maungdaw and Buthidaung Townships, 113 children were released and have now been reunified with their families or caregivers. Family tracing and reunification, mobile psychosocial support, messaging on COVID-19 and child protection supplies were provided to those children as part of the case management services offered by UNICEF’s implementing partners, Community and Family Services International (CFSI) in Northern Rakhine and Save the Children in Central Rakhine as well as Child Protection Working Group partners Danish Refugee Council and Plan International.

Diversion measures for children in breach of curfew
To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and ensure social distancing practices are adhered to, curfew orders have been put in place across the country. UNICEF is regularly advocating to the Government of Myanmar at both the national and regional level, to ensure alignment with Myanmar’s new Child Rights Law and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which outline the prevention of detention and the use of alternatives for children in contact with the law. Last week in Kayin State where curfew orders have been in place since 18 April, 23 children were apprehended for violating curfew. Instead of being detained, the children were subject to alternative measures in the form of community service. All children were later released to their parents. As of now, there are no reports of children in detention due to curfew violations.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
Between 5 and 11 May, UNICEF in close collaboration with the PSEA Inter-agency Network have trained 150 government officials from the Department of Social Welfare and the Department of Rehabilitation who are involved in COVID-19 response in States and Regions. Officials are largely from South East Region where over 30,000 migrant returnees from Thailand have been quarantined. This online Zoom training initiative will continue until the end of May.

For more information contact:
Noriko Izumi, Chief Child Protection
Email: nizumi@unicef.org