

Give Every Child A Future - Our Australasian Centenary Project

STATUS REPORT

JUNE 2020

1. **BACKGROUND**

The key elements of this project can be summarised as follows:

- The Centenary of Rotary in Australia and New Zealand is in 2021.
- *Rotary Give Every Child A Future* is the key project launched by Rotary to celebrate the Centenary.
- Rotary is helping our South Pacific neighbours eradicate diseases to ensure generations of children and women are protected against cervical cancer, rotavirus and pneumococcal disease.
- Three new vaccines (HPV, rotavirus and PCV) for nine Pacific Island countries (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu).
- Working with UNICEF as our implementation partner.
- Complete program will cost approximately USD 3.9 million.
- Immunisation programs are the most cost effective and sustainable form of foreign aid that can be provided.

2. **ROTARY FOUNDATION**

Nine global grants, one for each country, covering the first year of the project were approved towards the end of March 2020. The combined value of the grants is approximately USD 1.3 million. When the grants were submitted there was a strong expectation the Australian Government would make a substantial contribution to the project. With the bushfire crisis late last year and more recently the Covid-19 pandemic, this potential support has evaporated. There was therefore a gap in the funding of these grants which needed to be filled. With additional DDF support from many Districts and further cash donations from clubs and individuals, this gap is close to being closed. Five of the grants have been fully funded and it is expected that the other four will be funded by the end of July.

The grants are being paid in two tranches and the initial payments from the Foundation totalling over USD 410,000 have been received which represent 50% (i.e. the first tranche) of the grants for Cook Islands, Nauru, Tokelau, Niue and Kiribati. This then allowed the first payment to UNICEF for the implementation of the project.

3. **IMPLEMENTATION**

UNICEF have advised that fortunately the Covid-19 caseload in the Pacific remains very low. However, the pandemic does have implications for the implementation of the project. UNICEF has noted two key challenges: first, the limitations on travel, which affect UNICEF's ability to bring in external technical assistance; and second, the additional pressures now being placed on the Ministries of Health in each country, which are making it difficult for government counterparts to dedicate time to this project and other essential services.

However, assuming the Covid-19 numbers remain stable, the situation appears to be manageable, with some areas of project implementation taking longer than anticipated but no serious interruptions. UNICEF reports that “while we do expect delays, we are working differently to keep things moving.”

Key points from UNICEF include:

- Orders for cold chain equipment have been placed. In-country deliveries were initially expected in Q2 but are now projected to take place in August/September due to global logistics disruptions.
- Sales orders for new vaccines for all nine countries were placed in May 2020 through the Vaccine Independence Initiative (VII). UNICEF Supply Division, based in Copenhagen, is currently in the process of placing Purchase Orders. In-country deliveries of vaccines are expected in Q4.
- At this time, remote training for the introduction of new vaccines is not being considered. UNICEF is still planning to conduct face-to-face, hands-on training, which is preferable from a programmatic perspective. However, UNICEF is providing remote support for health care workers on the Covid-19 response through an initiative called ‘Health Care on Air.’ Should the situation escalate in the Pacific, or extend for a prolonged period of time, some of the learnings from this initiative could be leveraged to support other projects.
- Technical assistance positions are being advertised, including for the development of communication strategies and materials, particularly as some components of the project can be pursued through distance learning and remote communication. For example, consultations with Ministries of Health can take place via videoconference, which will minimize delays in the development of policy and guidelines, training curricula and communication strategies. Where it is necessary for technical assistance to be in-country, longer delays are expected, potentially in the following areas:
 - Finalization of policy guidelines
 - Delivery of cold chain equipment, vaccines and devices
 - Effective Vaccine Management (EVM) assessments
 - Training of country-level health workers
 - Microplanning and supportive supervision
 - Finalization of the communication strategy for new vaccine introduction

4. THE FUTURE

Having started the implementation of the project, we are now looking to the future. This is a 3-4 year project. An additional tranche of global grants for the second and third years is being planned with the aim of submitting these for approval later this year. All districts in Australia and New Zealand have been approached to support this with commitments of DDF to these grants.

We have been successful in getting this important project underway. We now need to complete the task.

James Allen
Rotary Project Director
June 2020