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# ROTARY GIVE EVERY CHILD A FUTURE NEWSLETTER

August 2023

Welcome! With the travel restrictions imposed by COVID, aspects of the project had to be adapted, put on hold, or cancelled altogether. A team visit to view the project in one of our 'fully funded' islands was long overdue.

In June, shortly after Rotary Convention three RGECAF Rotarians, UNICEF Australia and UNICEF Aotearoa members and our Technical Cadre Advisor Dr Noel Alidio accompanied by UNICEF Pacific Islands staff, visited Rarotonga.

It was very satisfying for us to see all the hard work of the last eight years being delivered! This edition will focus on that visit from various perspectives.

On a personal level it was so nice to finally meet face-to-face with team members whom we have only seen on a screen, every two months since 2020.

It's not too late to be part of this amazing project. Just [click here](#)



*Cook Island local public health staff deliver life-saving vaccines, provided by UNICEF and Rotary, to infants at risk of disease at Rarotonga Hospital.*

# UNICEF Rarotonga field trip report

In June, UNICEF Pacific Health and Nutrition Specialist, Dr Frances Vulivuli, hosted a visit for Rotarian Supervisory Committee members James Allen, Michelle Tanner and Christine Hurley, and Rotary Cadre Advisor Noel Alidio, to see the impact of the Rotary Give Every Child a Future project in Rarotonga, in the Cook Islands. The group were also joined by James's wife Belinda and Christine's husband Nick. Belinda Lauria and Leisel Collins represented UNICEF Australia and Fran Wells represented UNICEF Aotearoa.

The group visited Rarotonga hospital to see first-hand babies being vaccinated, thanks to funds raised by generous Rotarians in Australia and New Zealand. At visits to the pharmacy and the vaccine storage facilities they heard from the Ministry of Health's National Immunisation Coordinator, Rufina, about how she and the team are delivering the project. Rufina explained that overall parents want their babies vaccinated. She shared some of the communications materials supporting and promoting vaccine uptake, such as the Child Health Handbook, and explained that TV adverts are run during Immunisation Week in April. Her team also work hard on effective vaccine management through a 'last in, first out' process to reduce vaccine wastage. There is also a focus on ensuring vaccines remain at the required temperature as they are transported by plane or boat to more remote islands.



The group were lucky enough to be invited to join the New Zealand High Commissioner, Tui Dewes, at the New Zealand High Commission for morning tea. Tui was impressed with the Rotary Give Every Child a Future programme and the impact it's having in the Cook Islands.

A highlight of the trip was visiting Api Avarua School. The delegation was welcomed with a traditional dance ceremony performed by senior students. Then the entire

school joined in with beautiful music, singing and dance (and members of the delegation joined in the fun too)! Speeches were made by the School Principal, the Ministry of Health Permanent Secretary, Bob Williams, and James Allen. The group was treated to a banquet of local fruits – showcasing the school's 'fruit eating day', an initiative to boost healthy eating in the school community. Each child had brought in a fruit from home and the spread included coconut, bananas, mango and many other colourful, delicious and nutritious treats.

The visit concluded with a meeting between the delegation and the Ministry of Health Permanent Secretary, Bob Williams, Dr Frances and Rufina.

Dr Frances shared a slide showing rates for the new vaccines and how these compare with other vaccine uptake in the Pacific. She also shared that child mortality rates are already improving, and it seems likely that the RGECAF programme is playing an important part in this. Bob Williams ended the visit by thanking Rotary for helping to strengthen their national vaccine policy, improve national health capacity and support caregivers to understand the importance of vaccines. All these improvements ultimately protect babies and teenage girls, giving them the best start in life.



*Children of Api Avarua Primary School enjoying local fruits. The students each bring a fruit each week to school. The aim is to encourage children to develop a love for nutritious foods.*



# Director's update

Recent months have seen some significant developments for Rotary Give Every Child A Future. In March, the RI President, Jennifer Jones visited Kiribati with a team from Rotary and UNICEF to experience what was happening on the ground. It was a great opportunity to demonstrate the impact of this program on the lives of the people in the Pacific.

In May, the final global grant was approved for introduction of human papillomavirus vaccine (HPV) into Kiribati. This was the 23rd global grant of the project. A huge milestone as The Rotary Foundation has never approved this many grants for one project in its history. Of course, the 'projects of scale' grants did not exist when RGECAF started.

The Rotary International Convention in Melbourne in May gave some significant exposure to the project. I participated in a break-out session with UNICEF which used this project as a case study for how to build a cooperative partnership with UNICEF. Our organisations have much in common in terms of our mutual objectives. Rotary has partnered with UNICEF on the polio campaign for 30+ years and this project is a great example of what else we can do together. Networking at the Convention also resulted in us being invited to present RGECAF at some district conferences. In October RGECAF again has a session at the (virtual) Zone 8 Conference.

The closing ceremony of the Melbourne Convention provided very positive endorsements for RGECAF. Jennifer spoke of it in her closing remarks and Mike Sheldrick, co-founder of Global Citizen, who are cooperating with Rotary in a number of areas, including polio. Over the last 10 years it has raised hundreds of millions of dollars for different causes, largely through the organisation of large music concerts in different parts of the world. In his keynote address he talked at some length about his visit to Kiribati with Jennifer Jones in March which had clearly been a very interesting and positive experience for him.



*Rotarians, UNICEF and school staff members at Apii Avarua Primary School, Rarotonga*

In June, facilitated by UNICEF, several members of the Supervisory Committee visited the Cook Islands to see the project in action. We visited the hospital in Rarotonga, observed children being vaccinated, had meetings with Ministry of Health officials and engaged with members of the local Rotary Club of Rarotonga. It was a very worthwhile experience and a great opportunity to highlight the role of Rotary in its support for the introduction of these vaccines into the Pacific.

In the meantime, the implementation of the Rotary Give Every Child A Future project is proceeding well. The three vaccines have now been introduced in all nine countries with the exception of HPV in Kiribati which should commence later this year. Financially the project is effectively fully funded with only a small amount still to be found (approximately USD 6,700) out of a total of USD 3.9 million.

Thank you again to everyone who has supported this project which was set up to celebrate the centenary of Rotary in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. The impact that this is having and will have on communities in the Pacific, for generations to come, is amazing.

For more information, please visit [everychildafuture.com](http://everychildafuture.com).  
James Allen, Project Director

# Here’s how we have raised US\$3.9 million

District Designated Funds	806,900	TOTAL RAISED	3,900.029
Clubs and Rotarians	988,292	TOTAL BUDGET	3,906,704
Foundations	264,343	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	1,598,704
Australian Government	859,473		
Global grants matching funds	981,020	<b>BALANCE NEEDED</b>	<b>6,675</b>

## Rotarians re-visit a Rotary health project



While in Rarotonga, RGECAF member Christine Hurley arranged to see how the islands Rotary-funded, mobile health clinic was operating. As members of the RC Rarotonga in 2015-16 Christine and husband Nick identified the need for upgrades to the twelve community health clinics on the island. The final result was a \$170,000 global grant project supported by Districts 9920, 9970, 9860 and 9940, the Rotary Foundation, multiple Rotary clubs (most notably the RC South Masterton and the Transitz Group in New Zealand. In 2018 a fully equipped mobile health clinic was delivered, providing the island with support for primary health care across the island. At the time of the visit, it was being utilised for cardiac echograms at Api School to screen for rheumatic heart disease.

## What is a Technical Cadre Advisor?

Dr Noel Alidio, a general practitioner in the Philippines, is RGECAF’s Technical Cadre Advisor. But what is this role and what do they do? The Rotary Foundation’s **Cadre of Technical Advisors** is a group of volunteer Rotarians who provide technical expertise and advice to Rotarians planning and carrying out Global Grant projects around the world. Cadre members serve in districts other than their own and conduct on-site project visits for two to three days with written reports upon their return. Noel has been an advisor for seven years and advised and reported on projects on malaria in Timor Leste, heart surgeries for congenital heart disease in Manila and vaccination rollouts in Mongolia to name a few projects. He says of RGECAF “It’s an outstanding project reaching out to these Island Nations, protecting children from vaccine preventable illnesses. It is highly commendable for its sustainability and expected long-term outcomes”. The Cadre’s reports are important to demonstrate that Rotary Foundation projects are transparent, financially efficient and sustainable. Factors that groups like Charity Navigator use to rate charities.





## WE DID IT!

In the last few days, Rotary Give Every Child A Future, received that magic contribution that took us to USD 3.9 million, our project target. Our fundraising task is complete!

This is fantastic news and a credit to everyone who has worked towards this objective over the last six years. On behalf of the families and children of our project's Pacific Island countries, thank you for your support.

We will continue to work with UNICEF, our implementation partner, to finalise the project. Our aim has been to fund the expensive implementation phase of vaccine rollouts and allow countries time to embed the vaccines into their routine childhood immunisation programs. Money saved on treating children with rotavirus and pneumococcal disease can now be used to fund the continued delivery of the vaccines into the future.

We will continue to keep you informed of our progress on this journey over the next couple of years. Each country has funding from RGECAF for three years, by which time these vaccines will be a standard and sustainable part of each country's immunisation program.

Stay tuned for our further newsletters, probably now on a six-monthly basis.