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LOA MO SOSEL JASTIS TOKTOK

The newsletter from the Justice and Community Services Sector



Brought to you by:

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

JASTIS, SEFTI, DIGNITI, RISPEKT MO GUD FASIN BLONG EVRIWAN

IN THIS ISSUE

The purpose of this Newsletter is to share information, news and data among our Sector. You can keep up with more news at the Ministry of Justice & Community Services (MJCS) website and other Sector agencies websites.

encourage parents to ensure their children are safe and protected at all times - The Ministers of Justice and Community Services, Education and Internal Affairs

SECTOR UPDATES

National Children’s Day 2017

July 24th every year is national children’s day. This year July 24th 2017, saw parents, caregivers, teachers, Government Ministers, DGs and Directors, NGOs and members of the public join the children to celebrate the day. The day started with a parade from Fatumauri Bay to Saralana Park where the official program with many activities took place. There were booths set up by organizations to show case their work including fun games and quizzes for children.

The Organizing Committee appreciated very much the support and participation of everyone.

Child Desk updates

In June 12th - 23rd MoJCS in Partnership with the MoYDS and UNICEF organized and conducted 2 meetings (See next page)

Page 2

The theme for that day was the **Right of the Child to Safety and Protection at All times and At all Levels of the Society – Home, Community, Province and National,**

Children gave their speeches, asking parents and everyone to protect children at all levels.

The three Ministers who were present also gave speeches to

Mothers’ Tender Loving Care for Children with Special Needs & Abilities.

All too often we wonder how children or persons with profound irreversible disability can beat the odds and live healthy and long lives in their homes far from the nearest medical centres and the conveniences of a modern life.

Page 3



Parade march to Saralana park



Saralana stage with Children’s Day theme

Child Desk Updates



Santo Team discussions

From June 12th - 23rd MoJCS in Partnership with the MoYDS and UNICEF organized and conducted two meetings.

The first meeting was a Reflection meeting conducted from June 12th -16th 2017. The meeting brought together a total of participants from the three Child Protection Pilot Sites on Tanna, Erromango and Pentecost.

The purpose of the meeting was to share progress of the work done in each pilot site and to learn from each other and take back what they had learnt to implement in their pilot sites. In addition to sharing their learning and progress, they also reviewed their work plans to finalize plans for the period July – December 2017. The meeting took place in Luganville, Santo.



Tanna Team discussions



Pentecost Team discussions

The second meeting was held during the following week from June 19th – 23rd at Lonnoc Resort Hog Harbor. The purpose of the meeting was to review the Community Facilitation Package which was developed in 2015 and rolled out in 2016. The meeting brought together 20 participants, two rapporteurs and five facilitators.

The Community Facilitation Package has been developed to complement the Family and Traditional Child Protection System model developed by the Ministry of Justice & Community Services, which recognizes that good traditional beliefs and values are a solid foundation for sustainable community level child protection systems. It will give community and church leaders, chiefs, youth leaders, parents and caregivers the knowledge and skills to identify problems that children face and methods to work together to address those problems. The package will also support parents and communities to raise successful, respectful and healthy young people who will contribute well to the community.



Participants to the second meeting at Lonnoc



Participants preparing for their presentations

Mothers' Tender Loving Care for Children with Special Needs & Abilities.

All too often we wonder how children or persons with profound irreversible disability can beat the odds and live healthy and long lives in their homes far from the nearest medical centres and the conveniences of a modern life.

This writer found out the secret on a team visit by the Disability Desk from the MJCS and its dedicated partners to three special children in three communities of North Efate on the 27th of April, 2017. Below are observations and accounts from this trip.

The first community visited was Samma Village where we were privileged to meet 12 year old Esther Tarip. Esther has a special case, she was born with Hydrocephalus, a condition in which there is excessive accumulation of fluid or water in the brain. In infancy, the most obvious indication of hydrocephalus is often a rapid increase in head circumference or an unusually large head size while the body remains under developed as in Esther's case. When the team arrived at her home we were welcomed by her mum, a beautiful young woman with a smile plastered across her face. We soon were to discover that Esther's entire life is dependent on the tender love and care provided by her mum. It was evident from observing her immediate surroundings and external environment that much care and thought is put into making her surroundings clean, healthy and comfortable. The young mother was emotional when she thanked the Team for the encouragements and support from previous visits from the Disability Desk and Partners that helped her to understand the importance of keeping her daughter's environment hygienically clean so that she can continue to live a healthy life despite her disability.

The second child visited was 17 year old Mervlyn John of Takara Village. Mervlyn was born a normal child but suffered a serious condition called Cerebral Palsy when she was at the tender age of 8 months which left her seriously disabled. Cerebral Palsy is the result of a brain injury or brain malformation. An individual with the condition show signs of physical impairment, it affects muscles and a person's ability to control them. This was the sad condition we met Mervlyn in. She is her mum's very special child, for not only is she the youngest child in a family of five but she is also the only girl with five older brothers. Her mum lovingly stroked her head as she said '*Mervlyn hemi specel tumas, hemi las bon mo wan gel ia nomo*' ('Mervlyn is very special, she is the last born and the only daughter'). It was obvious from how her mother talked about her that she loved and cared for her daughter deeply. Some of the imminent motherly concerns she has are, will Mervlyn experience menstruation like other normal girls now that she is 17 years? How will she care for her daughter with the additional hygiene needs when the time comes? (Mervlyn at 17 wears diapers all the time). Her concerns extend to the safety of her daughter. She expressed that with many young boys smoking marijuana and hanging around the village, she fears for her daughter's safety and she has made a point never to leave Mervlyn unattended, always under the watchful eye of a caring adult.

We made our last stop at the third village by mid-afternoon. Epule Top is located some 20 to 30 minutes' drive inland and uphill from the main Epule Village on very rough roads and accessible only by 4 wheel drives. We were met by an excited mixed group of children and adults. Among them in his pram, the special person who was the reason for this visit, Berry Thompson. At 16 years, this young teenage boy is trapped in the body of a 6 year old and suffers from the same condition as young Mervlyn from Takara, cerebral palsy, crippling him permanently. Berry depends entirely on his carers, mostly his mum to wash, clean, change, and feed and move around. The remote location and difficulty in accessing health services meant that his mum has to take special care of her son's physical health so that he remains healthy. Friends Vanuatu generously gave some gifts-in-kind for Berry and among those, a basic health kit. The rough, bumpy drive paid off in the end when the visiting team left behind a serene Berry in his pram, his teary grateful mum and the same small group of smiley faces of children and adults.



Visit to 16 year old Berry (in his pram) surrounded by family and friends from Friends Vanuatu, VRSPD, physiotherapy Dept and Disability Desk/MJCS, Epule Top, May 27, 2017

This writer thought deeply about the experience, about what life would be like for the three special children if they did not have these 'angels' in the form of their mums with overwhelming love to care for them daily and silently pray that their children see one more sunrise tomorrow. I salute the three mothers in this story and all the beautiful hearted mothers and carers out there in our communities from North to South who give their all in caring for their children with disabilities and often doing so unnoticed.

The Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MJCS) through the Disability Desk is very grateful to the dedicated friends and partners who continue to show passion and commitment in their many engagements through gifts-in-kind, financial support, through time and effort, technical skills and advice to special children and people, their families and their communities. The three key partners who supported the Disability Desk team on this trip were Friends Vanuatu and the medical doctors who worked with them, the Vanuatu Society for People with Disability (VSPD), an NGO partner and the Vila Central Hospital (VCH) Physiotherapists. Many people with special needs and abilities have benefited from such assistance from our partners and donors and the MJCS would like to acknowledge such support. It is the Disability Desk's aim to continue harnessing and expanding these partnerships so that together we can reach across to many more

children and people living with disabilities in our beautiful country. And in doing so promoting and protecting their rights. We believe that each one of us is an agent of change in the lives of people with disabilities in our communities.



**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE &
COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Thank you for reading the July edition of Loa mo Sosel Jastis Toktok.

If you have any feedback for the newsletter please send to mjcs@vanuatu.gov.vu. If you have any information to share for next month's newsletter please also email us.

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