

Grow Healthy, Grow Strong

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Photo: Health workers and members of the Provincial Health Authority at the 'Challenge and opportunities' training workshop on August 27th



COMING NEXT MONTH

After a busy few months, September will be a month of routine and maintenance. Our health workers will be visited by our staff who will continue to observe and provide feedback while addressing any concerns. Community engagement will be underway in Kokopo district as we provide orientation training to the Community Nutrition Advocacy Group there, just as we had done with the Sinivit Local Level Government.

Our Senior Project Officer, Onawuta Kesuwao, will be making an oral presentation at the annual PNG Medical Symposium. He will be sharing the GROW project findings around improved father involvement seen as a result of our parent group discussions.

GROW PROJECT UPDATE

This month, we would like to invite you into the internal workings of our project, where we demonstrate how we give and take on feedback to ensure our work is dynamic and engaging for all those involved.

As part of routine project monitoring and evaluation, our team have been able to receive feedback from our stakeholders and adapt to the needs of the community. This month, we held a reflective health care worker training to discuss the challenges and opportunities. There was great feedback received, one of which relates to documented reporting.

Normally, project staff visit each health facility and complete an internal monitoring form. This form contains general feedback from the project to the facility and vice versa in order to troubleshoot and streamline better nutrition practices. Recently, the health facility staff, the Provincial Health Authority of East New Britain, and the GROW project staff were able to agree that better accountability will be achieved if the documented action points were shared. This agreement consolidates the commitment from each participating facility as we 'grow' in the project together.

Similarly, many lessons were learnt during our parent group discussions through our community engagement work. We are now taking this into the next district, Kokopo, where we hope to bring the learnings and share the knowledge gained from our past experiences. For example, we go into Kokopo with a trialed and tested booklet of key nutrition messages to guide each session. The community leadership are also keen to trial a very large poster with all the key topics on it so that participants can follow content easily.

A STORY FROM ST MARY'S VUNAPOPE HOSPITAL

Written by: Anita Owa

Augusta Beta is a very passionate community health worker who works at the paediatric ward of the St. Mary's Vunapope District Hospital.

Before the introduction of the GROW project, Augusta normally used the length-board, which is a bulky and heavy equipment for measuring length/height of children admitted to the ward for stunting or malnutrition.

When the GROW project was implemented, the digital measuring device was introduced as a portable and convenient tool to make work easier for the health care workers when measuring length/height. Augusta was excited to use the device after receiving the device and training from the GROW project. However, when she returned to the paediatric ward and started using the device, she learnt that the device kept giving reading errors that indicated that all children measured were stunted. As a result, she completely stopped using the digital measuring device and advised other HCWs in the ward to go back and use the length board.

On August 2nd 2024, GROW Senior project officer Anita Owa visited the paediatric ward and asked Augusta to measure the length of a baby while she observed. Anita discovered that the technique used all these times was incorrect thus error reading was displayed every time the device was used. Anita then demonstrated to Augusta the correct way to handle the child and the device in the correct environment. With that correction, the reading displayed was accurate. It corresponded with the length-board. Augusta found this new technique interesting and was very happy that she called on the other health workers and immediately showed them how to correctly use the device and the length board was put away.

Ever since that day, Augusta and her co-workers measure and record length/height of every child that is sent to the paediatric ward using the Grow digital measuring device. She acknowledged that the tool is easier and faster to use compared to the length-board. She also stated that because every child is measured now, stunting is detected in children who had their length/height over-looked by the doctor prior to admission to the paediatric ward. She then reports this to the doctor so that the children are correctly treated for both their illnesses and stunting/malnutrition. Augusta appreciates the digital measuring device and thanked the GROW project for making her work very easy.

