



ChildFund Papua New Guinea Response to earthquake, February 2018

Psychosocial support through the 1-Tok Kaunselin Helpim Lain (Port Moresby based hotline)

Papua New Guinea, five provinces across The Highlands

Background

- ▶ On 26 February 2018, an earthquake measuring 7.5 hit The Highlands region of Papua New Guinea
- ▶ The earthquake affected approximately 544,000 people across five provinces
- ▶ A total of 160 people were killed and many others were injured
- ▶ Most urgent needs of the displaced populations were water and shelter (54,260 households) as well as kitchen utensils and food
- ▶ Objective of the government: ‘address psychological trauma’
- ▶ Several severe aftershocks occurred, and the disaster occurred in areas known for tribal violence, complicating the response

The ChildFund hotline in normal times

- ▶ 1-Tok Kaunselin Helpim Lain is a partnership between national and international actors, supported by the New Zealand Aid Programme and USAID
- ▶ has been operating in PNG since August 2015
- ▶ established as a service to provide information, telephone counselling and referral options to survivors of gender-based violence
- ▶ trained counselling staff have the capacity to provide other forms of psychosocial support

Project details

- ▶ UN Women approached ChildFund and a local partner to support: promotion of the helpline to earthquake affected areas
- ▶ Conceived as part of a broader earthquake response project led by UN Women and funded by the Australian Government
- ▶ ChildFund provided 9 counsellors
- ▶ Key activities included:
 - ▶ Trauma counselling and psychological first aid;
 - ▶ Printing and distribution of wallet cards and brochures;
 - ▶ Auto messaging;
 - ▶ Weekly SMS blasts to 4,000 phones;
 - ▶ Radio announcements in the initial days after the earthquake.

Key achievements

- ▶ Approximately 1820 calls were received from earthquake affected areas (vast majority of callers male)
- ▶ Needs reported were categorised according to cluster through an IOM developed website. Clusters would then receive a report so as they could act
- ▶ Common causes of distress requiring PSS included:
 - ▶ Continued confusion and misconceptions about the cause of the earthquake;
 - ▶ Request for on-the-ground counselling services, particularly for children;
 - ▶ Children experiencing anxiety and fear. Some schools reopening but many children afraid to go back;
 - ▶ Older school children distressed that their schools were closed and that they had lost their opportunity to finish/further their education.

Lessons learnt

- ▶ For isolated people who were affected by the Earthquake in multiple ways - not only psychologically - the 1-tok Kaunselin Helpline turned out to be a:
 - ▶ needs reporting platform;
 - ▶ and a beneficiary response mechanism.