

SUSTAINABILITY BRIEF

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM COVID-19



The children vaccinated under the PICKids vaccination programme in Sabahmas, Sabah.

As the majority of countries move towards an endemic phase, governments and health authorities have worked to outline plans to transition to endemicity and return to normal life after over two years of battling Covid-19. One crucial step towards endemicity includes vaccination for vulnerable groups, which include children from the age of 5-years-old.

In Malaysia, vaccinations for children are on a voluntary basis with strong encouragement from the government and healthcare professionals. Wilmar collaborated with the respective district Health Departments in the states of Sabah and Sarawak under the Covid-19 National Immunisation Programme for Children (PICKids), which was launched in February 2022. The vaccination uptake for children was low in Malaysia nationwide, with Sabah being listed as having one of the lowest uptake rates at 21.8 per cent as of March, potentially due to the state's large rural population. Wilmar arranged for walk-in vaccination facilities along with transportation being provided for nearby communities in Sabah and Sarawak to be able to

get Covid-19 vaccines for children where we operate. This provided accessibility for the rural communities, including children, to be protected against Covid-19 and has helped to mitigate the negative impact of Covid-19 on children in rural areas.



Children from the surrounding community were included in the vaccination programme

The children's vaccination programme was organised in collaboration with local district health authorities and was open to the larger community near our plantations. The programme helped to safeguard local communities within the areas we operate in against the adverse impacts of Covid-19. We established temporary vaccination centres in our plantations for this purpose, especially after taking into account the children living in our plantations with their families and those from the surrounding communities.

In Sabah, in collaboration with the respective district health office, our Humana schools and community halls were converted into temporary vaccination centres during the weekends in Wilmar's Sapi, Sabahmas, Reka Halus and Ribubonus estates. The vaccination drive was open to the local community and

enabled about 1,900 children between the ages of 5 and 11 to be vaccinated, in addition to 840 children living in Wilmar's plantations. The second dose was completed by May 2022 for the children who got their first dose in March 2022.

Meanwhile in Sarawak, the vaccination programme was done with the health department at the Community Learning Centre where approximately 260 children were vaccinated from the surrounding communities, including 28 children living in Wilmar's plantations. The vaccination programme was done in five batches between March to May 2022 in collaboration with the local health authorities.

Besides the vaccination programmes, Wilmar continues to implement other standard operating procedures (SOPs) in our creches and schools, such as regular hygiene routines which include frequent hand-washing and maintaining social distancing. This has helped to keep the children living in our plantations healthy and safe. Based on our annual child safety assessment, these additional hygiene practices were some of the contributing factors to the decrease in incidences of child illnesses in Wilmar's plantation since 2020.



Children proudly posing for photographs after receiving their vaccination



The vaccination programme organised saw collaboration from Wilmar's management and staff as well as the authorities to vaccinate not just the children in our plantation but also from surrounding communities

Wilmar continues to collaborate with local governments, NGOs and other parties to improve the well-being of children in our plantations as well as in surrounding communities.