

# Contraception in Vanuatu

## Summary of Evaluation

May 2020



VANUATU



### Increasing access to contraception in Vanuatu - Evaluation published August 2018

#### Background

Access to contraception empowers people to decide if and when to have children. Contraception decreases unintended pregnancies and associated consequences, such as unsafe abortions, and can help to prevent maternal deaths. The availability of contraceptives has allowed families to make decisions on the size of their family, whether that be large or small.

There is a need for increased family planning services in Vanuatu. The country has high rates of teenage pregnancy, and

**ONLY 29% OF WOMEN USE MODERN CONTRACEPTION**

There is limited education about, and awareness of, sexual and reproductive health including family planning, contraception and sexually transmissible infections in Vanuatu. There are also often poorer sexual and reproductive health outcomes for young people, especially those who live in rural communities and have lower educational levels.

#### Increasing Access to Contraception

Family Planning NSW partnered with Vanuatu Family Health Association (VFHA) to implement the *Increasing Access to Contraception* project that ran from June 2014 - June 2018. The project was funded by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). It included provision of contraceptives at fixed and mobile clinics and community engagement and education activities to increase access to family planning services and information for young people aged 14 to 25 years in Vanuatu. Contraception was supplied to all ages.

#### Provision of Contraceptives

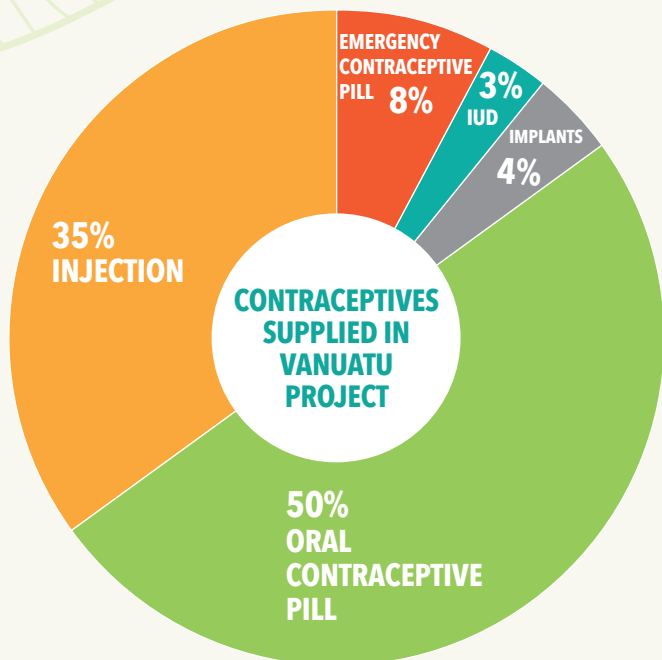
The project delivered a consistent supply of contraception, information and clinical services to over 12,000 people on seven islands in Vanuatu.

VFHA improved the reliability of access to contraception by providing a constant supply to the Central Medical Stores (CMS). Before this intervention, there were periods when limited or zero stock of contraceptives were available. Usage of the emergency contraceptive pill increased over the duration of this project due to its increased availability.

VFHA also introduced the first available long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) to Vanuatu. During this project, 650 women in Vanuatu adopted the LARC implant Jadelle. Jadelle was a particularly suitable option for women in rural areas with minimal or no health facilities, as they are often not able to access a continuous supply of contraceptives due to staff and commodity shortages.

*"I have 3 children and I have started using family planning. But the distance to dispensary is not happy (far away from the community)... I will talk to my husband to have Jadelle at dispensary... because it is for 5 years and I am very interested in using it"*

*- 24 year old woman from Metkun village*



### Capacity Building, Raising Awareness and Increasing Acceptance

The project was successful in collaborating with local NGOs and the government to develop and deliver accurate and consistent messages about contraceptives and family planning for young people. Youth programs, musical festivals, and information, education and communication (IEC) materials, such as posters, were designed with young people in mind to promote the idea that family planning is for everyone, not just married couples.

*"I am the boss of my body and life. Thank you to Family Health Association for coming to rescue young girls like me,"*

*- 17 year old girl receiving Jadelle*

To normalise contraception use among young people and raise awareness of sexual and reproductive health, a youth peer program was introduced as part of the contraception project. Fifteen peer educators, including two people with a disability, were trained to build capacity and skills to deliver sexual and reproductive health education to communities and schools. The *Reggae Faea Music Festival*, which promotes sexual and reproductive health messages, attracted over 7,000 young people in 2016 and 2017, including hard-to-reach populations such as those who have dropped out of school. Posters designed by VFHA have been used by the Ministry of Health in outreach activities after the completion of the project.

*"Young people love music – it's another way of learning. When they sing along with the lyrics, they know about what they are saying. This is how they get educated through music,"*

*– Youth Project Coordinator and Reggae Faea founder*

Previously, the majority of patients at VFHA Port Vila clinic were married women. However, as acceptance and awareness was growing, girls, boys and young couples are encouraged to access contraception.



**CONSEQUENTLY,**  
**3,000**  
**YOUNG PEOPLE**  
**RECEIVED CONTRACEPTIVES**  
**FROM PORT VILA CLINIC**  
**through the project**

### Sustainability

A donation of a four-year supply of contraception enabled more than

**12,000** 

**TO ACCESS FAMILY PLANNING RELIABLY,  
PREVENTING MANY  
UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES**

The project recommended that the Ministry of Health prioritise procuring a suitable and consistent supply of short and long acting contraceptives.

Family Planning NSW acknowledge that peer educators need to be involved in planning activities, to be kept engaged, and be mentored to remain engaged with the Youth Peer Program which enabled increased contact with hard-to-reach communities.

### Conclusion

The *Increasing Access to Contraception* project successfully implemented outreach and education programs, and improved access to contraception and family planning services for young people in Vanuatu.

*Note:* data and information in this report taken from the August 2018 “Evaluation: Increasing access to contraception in Vanuatu” covering the period 2014-18.