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The Farm to Hospital Initiative – Driving change through collective action; Sanma Province, 2022

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Abstract

Background: Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in Vanuatu severely impact health outcomes and livelihoods. Approximately three-quarters of deaths in Vanuatu are caused by NCDs. A major contributing factor is lifestyle and unhealthy eating practices. Through the Sanma Skills Centre, the Skills for Health workstream implemented a Farm to Hospital (F2H) initiative in partnership with the Northern Provincial Hospital (NPH) in Sanma in July 2022. The objective of the F2H initiative was to support the NPH to create a sustainable farm to supply organic food and protein to the hospital kitchen which is then used to feed patients while reducing kitchen expenditure.

Methods: A collective action partnership was built between the Sanma Provincial Government, NPH, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and the Sanma Skills Centre. A poultry farm, fishponds and vegetable plantation were established at NPH. Training was provided to hospital personnel in farm and production upkeep and to hospital kitchen staff in the use of the new food sources in the preparation and presentation of healthy meals for patients. A communications and advocacy campaign is currently underway. Evaluation criteria for the first three months of implementation included - quantity of new high protein/nutrient food sources provided to the hospital, savings in food expenditure accrued to NPH, and NPH patient and hospital staff feedback.

Results: In the first three months of implementation, two tilapia fishponds were populated with 2,250 tilapia fish, 210 chickens are producing 60 eggs/day, 8 new types of vegetables have been grown and harvested, 180,000 VUV saved on vegetables alone by NPH and there has been high levels of patient and hospital staff satisfaction

Discussion: This initiative shows how cross-sector collaboration with a shared vision and resource pooling is supporting health outcomes, while also informing similar projects across other locations, including a Farm to School model.