

Vanuatu Health Research Symposium  
22-24 September 2021  
Port Vila, Vanuatu  
Hosted by the Vanuatu Medical and Dental Association



## Research Summary

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Category (clinical/public health):	Public Health
Data focus:	SANMA, SHEFA

**Title** First 1000 days End line survey results

### Abstract

The First 1,000 Days project was a four-year program (2017 – 2021) in Vanuatu funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and implemented by Save the Children with the goal of reducing stunting among children under two in 22 rural and urban communities in Shefa and Sanma Province. The two primary approaches of the project are use of peer support groups to promote optimal health and nutrition behaviors for mothers and young children, and a community action plan in which community committees select and implement nutrition-sensitive projects to benefit their communities.

An endline study was conducted to measure the program's progress against indicator targets, assess behavior change among the target population, and review effectiveness of program implementation. It included a quantitative household survey of mothers, fathers and caregivers of children under 2 to measure maternal and child health and nutrition behaviors, household decision making and support for caregiving, and program exposure. Qualitative data was collected via focus group discussions with project volunteers, community leaders, and government stakeholders, and project staff to assess reach, participation, and sustainability of approaches.

The program clearly improved nutrition in the target population based on the 7% point reduction in stunting among children under 2 (20.8 percent at baseline to 13.8 percent at endline), with improvements in child diet diversity, minimum meal frequency and continued breastfeeding at one year.

Overall, the key program approach of Peer Support Group (PSG) was well regarded. Mobilisation was seen as key in the beginning and facilitation was viewed as inclusive. Men's engagement was more challenging but most respondents felt they benefited from the Community Action Plans (CAP).

The sustainability of the project can be seen both in the local and government commitment to integrating and sustaining key approaches, and at the household and community level through the behaviour changes for, and in support of, young child health and nutrition.