

Vanuatu



Photo: IWDA

Community based reproductive health care

'Kam Pussum Hed' literally means come stick your head in (and have a look!) in Bislama, the language of Vanuatu. And this is the name of the country's only free reproductive health clinic, established with the support of IWDA.

The Kam Pussum Hed (KPH) clinic's two nurses see an average of 20 to 35 people each day – for counselling, advice, family planning and tests. Many more visitors, particularly young people, drop by the clinic to watch the educational videos which screen throughout the day.

A key success of KPH is its community outreach program. Over the last year, eight peer educators reached an average of 400 people per month with their walkabout program. Of those people who went on to be tested for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), 32 per cent were found positive and received treatment.

Between the clinic and outreach work, an average of 6000 condoms are distributed each month by KPH.

KPH's outreach program means women have access to information on reproductive health, that would otherwise be out of their reach. Vanuatu remains primarily a subsistence based society, resulting in a limited cash economy. Even the VT100 (AUD\$1.20) bus fare into the clinic is often not possible for women.

With nearly 42 per cent of Vanuatu's population under 15 years of age, KPH wants to make sure their message is getting out to young people. That's why KPH has helped form a number of small community youth groups, to encourage further peer to peer education. By providing sports equipment KPH has been able to give groups a focus for gathering, meaning the message can be regularly reinforced.

Despite the rising threat of HIV/AIDS in the Pacific, only 26% of women in Vanuatu currently use modern contraception methods – such as condoms – compared to 72% of women in Australia.