



# PSRH Newsletter July 2025



## BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO ACCESSING ANTENATAL CARE BY WOMEN IN SAVAI'I-SAMOA

Presented by **Logomai Feterika Lualua**,  
Registered Midwife, Samoa  
Host: **Litiana Tatukivei** - PSRH VP  
Midwifery.

*FREE webinar but  
registration is essential,*

**[CLICK HERE](#)**

Certificates of attendance are sent once  
evaluations are completed



**Thursday,  
July 17, 2025**

5pm AU (AEST)  
5pm Port Moresby  
6pm Vanuatu &  
Solomon Islands  
7pm Auckland & Fiji  
8pm Tonga & Samoa

# Profile

## Dr Sylvie Taribiti

Country Coordinator Vanuatu



Following my graduation from the Latin American School of Medicine in 2015, I progressed to a medical officer role in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology (O&G) department in 2019. Furthering my education, I obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in O&G from the Fiji School of Medicine in 2024. I am now working as a Junior Registrar in the O&G department at Vila Central Hospital and intend to pursue a Master's degree in the near future.

Although this role is new to me, I am committed to learning extensively, particularly concerning reproductive health and the unique challenges it presents in the Pacific region, with a specific interest in the context of Vanuatu. I aim to identify pathways for addressing these challenges.



The fact that reproductive health is often considered a taboo subject in homes and public spaces in Vanuatu presents a major obstacle. This stems from a lack of understanding and widespread misconceptions. Overcoming this will be challenging, but I believe that through education and by empowering women with essential knowledge, we can enable them to make sound and safe choices regarding their health.

My work has been predominantly clinical, occupying almost all of my time on the clinical floor, so I haven't had direct involvement in any projects, I look forward to further opportunities.

Reproductive health is a challenge in our society but together let's empower our women with the necessary knowledge so they can make right and safe decisions for their health.

*If you would like to contact me please email me at: [vuccoordinator2@psrh.org.nz](mailto:vuccoordinator2@psrh.org.nz)*





# Profile

## Meet Susan Tavimele Wokeke Vanuatu Country Coordinator



As a registered nurse midwife with 16 years of experience in a remote health facility, I have witnessed numerous challenges faced by women, children, and young people. Issues such as unintended pregnancies, complications from underweight deliveries, and preventable maternal deaths due to home births have highlighted the need for improved reproductive health. Rising teenage pregnancy, primarily linked to arranged marriages, and increased cases of STIs and cervical cancer have also emerged as significant concerns. To address these challenges, I implemented community education programs focusing on sexual and reproductive health, presenting health data to leaders to overcome traditional taboos. This approach has led to a reduction in teenage pregnancies, increased family planning use, and improved women's health. I have served as the provincial Reproductive Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) supervisor in Sanma Province since 2019, where I recognized the broader reproductive health challenges that have motivated me to pursue a Master's in Health Service Management, aiming to enhance RMNCAH programs at both provincial and national levels.



I have experience in remote health nurse-midwifery for 16 years, and have observed significant reproductive health challenges (unintended pregnancies, underweight deliveries, preventable maternal deaths, rising teenage pregnancy due to arranged marriages, increased STIs/cervical cancer). I started community education and presented data to leaders, resulting in reduced teenage pregnancies, increased family planning, and improved women's health. As provincial RMNCAH supervisor (since 2019), these broader challenges motivated the pursuit of a Master's in Health Service Management to enhance RMNCAH programs provincially and nationally.



# Profile Continued:

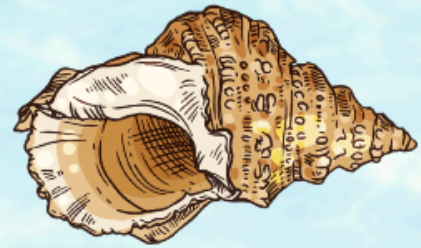


Vanuatu faces critical reproductive health challenges: limited access to healthcare (especially remotely), high unintended pregnancies, pervasive gender-based violence hindering care-seeking, and limited sexual and reproductive health education contributing to high teenage pregnancy rates. The Pacific Sexual and Reproductive Health (PSRH) initiative could help by enhancing healthcare access, developing educational resources, and promoting community awareness of family planning and maternal care, ultimately improving reproductive health outcomes.



Two of the initiatives I have been involved with include:

1. The Vanuatu Family Health Association's "Planem gud family blong yu" Project, my first in a remote health facility, focused on family planning education and improving access to contraceptives in remote communities. This initiative successfully decreased unplanned and teenage pregnancies within the target population through community workshops and outreach, empowering individuals to make informed reproductive health decisions.
2. As Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Chairlady following Cyclone Harold, I led efforts to maintain reproductive health service access. Our team conducted mobile outreach and education, providing antenatal care, family planning, and education on the impact of gender-based violence (GBV) on mothers and children, while also emphasizing mental health and early childhood development. This aimed to lessen the long-term effects of the disaster on vulnerable populations by ensuring essential care and support for mothers and their children.



As the new PSRH Country Coordinator, I'm eager to collaborate with you. Having worked on reproductive health challenges in Vanuatu, I believe regional partnership is key to impactful change.

My focus includes improving healthcare access, promoting comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education, and addressing unintended pregnancies and gender-based violence. To achieve this, I invite all PSRH members to join me. Your expertise and resources can significantly boost our initiatives. Whether by sharing best practices, partnering on outreach, or supporting research and advocacy, every contribution counts.

Together, we can build a healthier future for women, children, and young people in the Pacific. Let's connect, share ideas, and strengthen our collective efforts for lasting community impact.

I look forward to our collaboration!

**Contact me at:**  
**[vuccoordinator1@psrh.org.nz](mailto:vuccoordinator1@psrh.org.nz)**





# PEMNeT Vanuatu



## ***Building National Momentum: Vanuatu's Strategic Rollout of PEMNeT***

In late April 2025, Vanuatu reignited its national PEMNeT (Pacific Emergency Maternal and Neonatal Training) programme with a focused 'Train the Trainer' workshop hosted in Port Vila. Supported by the Ministry of Health and funded under NZMTS-SCC, the training aimed to revitalise and embed PEMNeT across all six provinces.

Held in the newly launched Pacific SMILE simulation lab at the Vanuatu College of Nursing Education (VCNE), the workshop equipped a new cohort of Ni-Vanuatu facilitators with skills in adult learning, simulation, and emergency team response. Many had travelled from remote islands, underscoring the country's commitment to reaching underserved areas.

A key outcome was the development and endorsement of a refreshed national workplan for 2025–2026. Facilitators presented tailored provincial rollout strategies, with clear plans for reintroducing PEMNeT as routine in-service training.

Recommendations included rebuilding emergency boxes, improving audit feedback loops, and aligning in-service training with midwifery education.

What made this effort stand out was its forward planning. The training wasn't just a one-off workshop—it represented a national shift toward sustainable, locally led emergency training that responds to the real challenges in Pacific settings.

The PSRH Secretariat congratulates the Vanuatu team for their leadership in revitalising PEMNeT. Their strategic, country-owned approach offers a model for other Pacific nations to follow.







## From the Heart: Faculty Reflections on Vanuatu's PEMNeT Revival

When the PSRH PEMNeT faculty travelled to Port Vila earlier this year, they were met with a team of midwives and doctors whose energy and determination left a lasting impression. The five-day training, part of the NZMTS Strengthening Country Capacity programme, focused on upskilling Ni-Vanuatu health professionals as facilitators of obstetric emergency team training. For many, it was the first in-person training since COVID-19, multiple cyclones and earthquake. While the Pacific SMILE simulation lab added value for scenarios, most sessions were conducted through interactive, peer led learning in regular teaching spaces – underscoring that strong facilitation and robust content remain the foundation of PEMNeT delivery across diverse Pacific contexts.

Dr. Sharron Bolitho, team leader for the training, shared: “We were thrilled with the level of engagement and excited by the enthusiasm and passion of the local team. The Ni-Van facilitators are confident and keen to run the programme in their provinces.”

The final two days saw the newly trained facilitators run a PEMNeT course for their colleagues at Vila Central Hospital. Participants praised the practical skills, communication tools like ISBAR, and emergency checklists that they could take back to their facilities.

The success of the training was made possible by tireless local coordination from Harriet Obed and support from PSRH's long-serving faculty members. The heartfelt thanks expressed by participants—all of whom came in on a public holiday—captured the spirit of Pacific solidarity. This was more than a workshop. It was a recommitment to saving mothers and babies, led by those closest to the challenges.





# Thank You

To RM Harriet Obed for sharing her knowledge skills and expertise at the June PSRH webinar. Thank you to PSRH VP-Midwifery RM Litiana Tatukivei for hosting this insightful session.



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