

INTRODUCING MODERN REUSABLE NAPPIES INTO VANUATU

A TRIAL STUDY

January 2021


Plastic pollution is destroying our natural environment, contributing to the climate crisis, and damaging human health and livelihoods. Single-use nappies are a particularly problematic form of plastic pollution, as they cannot easily be recycled and - for the approximately 3 billion people who lack access to a formal waste management system - can become a vector for disease and a contributor to air pollution and climate change when burned. Modern reusable nappies present a solution that supports a sustainable circular economy, uses substantially fewer raw materials, and produces less carbon emissions and waste.

The Pacific island nation of Vanuatu suffers disproportionately from the twin emergencies of climate change and plastic pollution. Demonstrating global leadership, in 2018 the Vanuatu Government initiated a staged ban of several single-use plastic items, including single-use nappies.

Communications agency Savvy Vanuatu, social enterprise Mamma's Laef Vanuatu, and leading international

Single-use nappies make up

27%
OF VANUATU'S RUBBISH



reusable nappy company Bambino Mio came together to undertake a trial of reusable nappies created by Mamma's Laef specifically for Ni-Vanuatu families. Working in consultation with Bambino Mio, Mamma's Laef has designed, tested and manufactured modern reusable nappies that will meet the needs of the Vanuatu community and can be sold at an affordable price.

By producing modern reusable nappies, Mamma's Laef aims to help support the Government's proposed ban, meet the needs of local communities, reduce pollution, and save families money.




Vanuatu uses at least **7 million** SINGLE-USE NAPPIES PER YEAR



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The Mamma's Laef nappy trial ran in three communities on the main island of Efate. There were 59 participants who each received education and free nappy trial packs sufficient to cover the two-week trial period. Participants undertook a survey before and after the trial to assess their usage and opinions of single-use nappies and the modern reusable Mamma's Laef nappies.

Based on the results of this study, it's likely that Vanuatu is using at least 7

million single-use nappies per year, not including families that use single-use nappies part time or those brought in by tourists.

The vast majority of families liked the Mamma's Laef nappies and said that they would buy them. The most likely reason that people wouldn't buy them is the higher upfront cost of Mamma's Laef nappies compared to single-use nappies. However, participants acknowledged that reusable nappies are much cheaper over the long term. A few people also identified drying time as a problem, along with a handful reporting a poor fit on their babies. Low water access or increased washing time was not a significant problem in using Mamma's Laef nappies for most people, even in rural areas where water access can be poor.

This study suggests that introducing Mamma's Laef modern reusable nappies across Vanuatu would have the strong support of local communities. In so doing, the Vanuatu Government would be meeting their plastic pollution reduction aims, whilst also supporting the emergence of a home-grown



96%
OF PARTICIPANTS LIKED THE MAMMA'S LAEF VANUATU NAPPIES



85%
OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY WOULD BUY THEM

Project benefits

- Environmental**
- Reduction in the use of single-use plastics, resulting in fewer natural resources used and carbon emissions created during the manufacturing process
 - Reduction in the quantity of waste and plastic pollution produced

- Economic**
- Considerable financial savings for families and government
 - Creation of a home-grown manufacturing industry with products available locally
 - Job creation for local women

- Educational**
- Communities are educated on best hygiene practices
 - Greater awareness of sustainability issues
 - Improved financial literacy

industry, the creation of local jobs, and reducing reliance on foreign imports.

The replacement of single-use nappies with Mamma's Laef reusable nappies in Vanuatu would support 13 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and also aligns with *Vanuatu 2030: The People's Plan* policy goals and objectives.

Over the coming months, Bambino Mio will continue to work with Mamma's Laef and the Vanuatu Government to scale up and expand coverage of this project, to ensure that every family in Vanuatu has access to hygienic, affordable, and environmentally friendly nappies.

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