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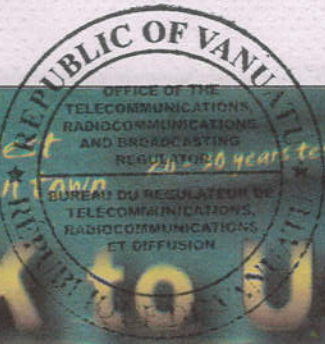
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Drone Delivery



Registered nurse, Miriam Nampil, 55 years, receives the first vaccine delivery from Swoop Aero drone in Cook's Bay, on 18 December 2018. Narai Harry, 32 years, registered nurse from nearby Ipota village assists Miriam. **Photo: Unicef**

STORY INSIDE

Drone Delivers Vaccine

Compiled by Anita Roberts

THE PEOPLE FROM COOKS Bay, a remote village in Erromango were the first to receive much needed medical supplies delivered by a drone after crossing 40km of rugged mountainous terrains from William's Bay, western side of the island.

The delivery by Australia's Swoop Aero took just 25 minutes, with the drone touching down at Cooks Bay at 7.25am after leaving Dillon's Bay at 7am.

This is what the future of vaccination in Vanuatu will look like.

Instead of having health workers walk long distances to reach children in challenging settings for immunization, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) have invested in drone technology to help cut distance and reduce expensive transport costs.

It is difficult to reach remote areas where there are no paved roads.

Drones can get medical supplies right to the clinics in underserved areas.

Residents of Cook's Bay on Erromango are scattered over a large area. It's one of the areas that is difficult to get vaccines to.

Some families traveled several kilometers to witness the drone-delivered vaccine in action.

Community members welcomed the drone as it landed with a cultural

dance, in the presence of government representatives from the Ministry of Health and Civil Aviation Authority including UNICEF.

The 55-year-old nurse at Port Narvin, Miriam Nampil, was really excited about the arrival of the drone.

One of the babies that was vaccinated was one-month Joy Nowai, from Ipota which is 4-hours walk and one hour boat ride away.

Her mother Hulie said: "I was worried when Joy didn't receive her fist vaccine as the nurses were away. I know it's important for her to be healthy.

"I am so happy the drone has brought the 'stik medicine' here (Cook's Bay) and I will not have to walk several hours to Port Narvin for her vaccines .

The vaccines Joy received were BCG and HEP B (tuberculosis and Heb B).

She was supposed to receive them within first 24 hours of birth but there were no nurses available during her delivery or afterwards and too far to walk to receive after.

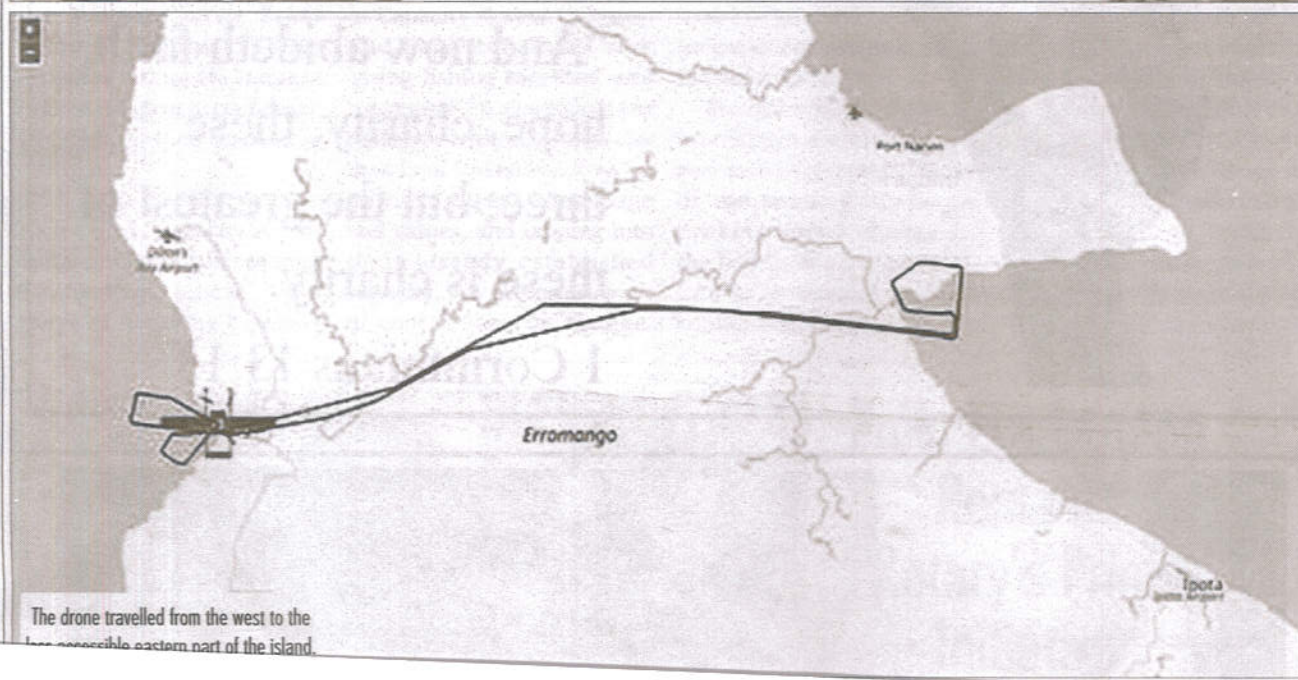
Apart from Erromango, the islands of Pentecost, Epi and Shepherds are also part of the Drone Project.

This is the first time globally that a government is contracting a commercial drone company to transport vaccines to remote areas

If it turns out successful, the drones can also be used in other sectors.



Registered nurse, Miriam Nampil, 55 years, receives the first vaccine delivery from Swoop Aero drone in Cook's Bay, Erromango, on 18 December 2018.



The drone travelled from the west to the accessible eastern part of the island.