



## Program Name

### Maternal and newborn health

**Funding Organization** SOAR Armenia

**Location of implementation** Armenia Lori region Vanadzor, Tigran Mets 16

**Implementation timeline** start of the program 20.04.2024, end of the project 30.06.2024

**Number of beneficiaries** 15 pregnant women

**RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROGRAM** ANI GABRIELYAN PRESIDENT OF LUSASTGH NGO

## Program Objective and Activities Undertaken

The goal of the project was to raise reproductive health awareness and promote health care among 15 pregnant women through training

### **Project Goal:**

The primary objective of this project was to enhance reproductive health awareness and facilitate access to healthcare services among pregnant women through specialized training sessions.

### **Participant Selection:**

Following recommendations from the SOAR Charity Foundation, we collected data on pregnant women, specifically focusing on those from Artsakh experiencing their first pregnancy. Out of 22 candidates, 15 were selected based on being in the early stages of their first pregnancy.

### **Needs Assessment and Information Provision:**

An initial assessment of the primary needs was conducted with the selected participants. They received detailed information regarding the organization and scheduling of the training courses.

### **Expansion During the Program:**

As the meetings progressed, the participant pool expanded to include first-time pregnant women from the Gugark region, further broadening the impact of the project.

Course topics and participation.

Meeting 1 overview

Overview Participants: The initial meeting was attended by the 15 beneficiaries, the program organizers, the program psychologist, and the lawyer from the Unified Social Service.

Duration and Schedule:

The meeting lasted for three hours, structured as follows:

15 minutes for introductions.

1 hour dedicated to a course by the psychologist.

15 minutes break.

1 hour and 30 minutes consultation with the Unified Social Service lawyer.

Psychologist. The topic "Pregnancy", at the meeting was discussed

The psychological stages of intrauterine development of the child

Unified Social Service lawyer

The lawyer presented information about the assignment of benefits for persons displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh, specifically about childbirth, and addressed questions from the participants. Key topics included:

Maternity Allowance: Detailed explanation of eligibility and application process.

One-Time Allowance at the Birth of a Child: Overview of how to access and the amount provided.

Child Care Allowance: Information on ongoing support for parents with young children.

Additionally, there was a focused discussion on the rights of pregnant women and workers who are caring for children under the age of 3, highlighting the legal protections and entitlements available to them.



### **Meeting 2 overview**

The meeting was attended by 12 participants, a psychologist, a social specialist, and a gynecologist.

### **Duration:**

The session lasted for 4 hours, incorporating discussions with integrated breaks for questions and answers due to the intensity of the topics.

### **Agenda and Discussions:**

#### **Topic 1: "The Influence of the Mother's Psychological State on the Child's Intrauterine and Later Life" (Psychologist - 1 hour)**

Effects of the mother's psychological condition on the child.

Potential postpartum issues in children.

Assessments of maternal readiness and capability to provide proper care.

Challenges women face during pregnancy.

#### **Topic 2: "Factors and Types That Ensure Family Harmony" (Social Worker - 1 hour and 30 minutes)**

The role of family planning.

The significance of free and responsible decision-making within the family.

Importance of the family as the primary environment for a child's development and growth.

**Topic 3: "Care for Pregnant Women" (Gynecologist - 1 hour and 30 minutes)**

Understanding self-care for pregnant women.

Different types of self-care.

Strategies to balance new and existing social roles, specifically transitioning into motherhood.

The meeting featured robust discussions, leading to a dynamic integration of breaks with an interactive Q&A session.

Meeting 3 overview

The meeting included 12 participants along with a psychologist, a social worker, and a gynecologist.

**Duration:**

This session spanned 3 hours.

**Agenda:**

**Topic 1: "Stress" (Psychologist - 1 hour)**

Exploring the causes of stress.

Strategies for managing stress.

**Topic 2: "Dental Care During Pregnancy" (Dentist - 2 hours)**

Discussing the proliferation of bacteria in the oral cavity and methods to combat them.

Addressing calcium deficiency and its relationship to caries.

Debunking the misconception that dental treatment is unsafe during pregnancy.

Emphasizing the importance of oral hygiene for newborns.

Identifying common oral cavity diseases in newborns.

Guidance on caring for the newborn's first tooth.

**Break:** A 10-minute break allowed participants to interact and share their personal experiences, facilitating a supportive community atmosphere.



Meeting 4.

The 12 beneficiaries of the program, a psychologist, a family doctor, and a therapist were present. The meeting lasted 3 hours.

Topic 1: Continuation of the topic "Postpartum stress, coping mechanisms" psychologist/ 1.30 hours

What causes stress during this period

Fears and anxieties that can cause stress

Physiological manifestations of postpartum stress

Topic 2. Therapist "What a pregnant woman complains about " 1.30 minutes

Pains, pricking

Gestational diabetes

Endocrine and joint diseases

Toxic diarrhea, vomiting, diagnosis, prevention, medical intervention

Allergies, prevention, treatment

The participants took a break for 15 minutes, then the topic continued with question and answer.

#### **Meeting 4 overview**

The session was attended by the 12 program beneficiaries, a psychologist, a family doctor, and a therapist.

#### **Duration:**

The meeting lasted 3 hours.

#### **Agenda:**

#### **Topic 1: "Postpartum Stress and Coping Mechanisms" (Psychologist - 1 hour and 30 minutes)**

Identifying causes of stress during the postpartum period.

Discussing fears and anxieties that contribute to stress.

Understanding physiological manifestations of postpartum stress.

#### **Topic 2: "Common Complaints of Pregnant Women" (Therapist - 1 hour and 30 minutes)**

Addressing common physical complaints such as pains and pricking sensations.

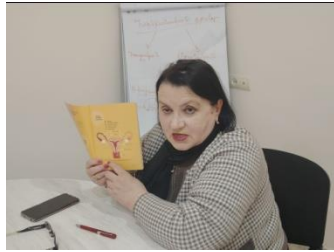
Exploring gestational diabetes and its implications.

Discussing endocrine and joint diseases in pregnancy.

Managing symptoms like toxic diarrhea and vomiting, including diagnosis, prevention, and medical interventions.

Handling allergies, including preventive measures and treatments.

**Break:** Participants took a 15-minute break for refreshments and casual discussions. The session then resumed with a question-and-answer period to delve deeper into the topics covered.



### Meeting 6 overview

The meeting included 12 participants, a psychologist, and a gynecologist.

**Duration:** This session extended over 4 hours.

### Agenda:

#### Topic 1: "Fears, Anxieties, and Coping Mechanisms" (Psychologist - 1 hour)

- Exploration of common fears occurring in children from 0 to 18 years.
- Understanding the norm and pathology of fear manifestations.

#### Topic 2: "Conflicts, Prevention, and Positive Socialization" (Social Worker - 1 hour and 30 minutes)

- Interactive exercise titled "Entering a New Family: Dreams, Expectations, Reality."
- Followed by a discussion and question-and-answer segment to address specific concerns and scenarios.

#### Topic 3: "Changes in a Woman's Body During Pregnancy" (Gynecologist - 1 hour and 30 minutes)

- Detailed discussion on the changes in the cervix during pregnancy.
- Examination of cervical growths and their implications.
- Guidance on how to prepare for childbirth effectively.

### Meeting 7 overview

The session was attended by 12 participants, a psychologist, a gynecologist, and a nutritionist.

### Duration:

The meeting lasted for 4 hours.

### Agenda:

#### Topic 1: "Fears Arising During Pregnancy and Childbirth" (Psychologist - 1 hour)

- Identification of risk groups and reasons for fear during pregnancy and childbirth.
- Discussion of coping strategies to manage these fears.

#### Topic 2: "Types and Indications of Childbirth" (Gynecologist - 1 hour and 30 minutes)

- Overview of natural birth and Cesarean section.
- Discussion on different modes of labor pain relief.

#### Topic 3: "Healthy Nutrition for Pregnant Women" (Nutritionist - 1 hour)

- Importance of including vegetables and legumes, especially peas, in the diet.
- Emphasis on consuming bread, cereals, milk, yogurt, or cheese.
- Importance of meat, poultry, fish, and their alternatives.
- Benefits of fruits in the diet.
- Guidelines on avoiding excess weight and allergenic foods.
- Information on breastfeeding, complementary feeding, and sleep patterns.

**Pre-Meeting Task:** A practical task assigned in advance by the trainer was discussed during this meeting, integrating learned concepts with real-life application.



### Meeting 8 overview

The meeting included 12 participants, a psychologist, and a gynecologist.

#### Duration:

This session lasted for 4 hours.

#### Agenda:

##### Topic 1: "Art Therapy" (Psychologist - 1 hour)

- Focus on motherhood: participants explored and expressed their feelings, fears, anxieties, and personal interpretations of motherhood through art.

##### Topic 2: "Fertility and Childbirth Preparation" (Gynecologist - 1 hour and 30 minutes)

- Discussion on the onset of childbirth.
- Techniques to assess the situation as labor approaches.
- Essentials to take to the maternity home.
- Considerations for the presence of the husband during childbirth.

**Pre-Meeting Task:** A practical task assigned in advance by the trainer was reviewed, providing a hands-on learning experience related to the discussed topics.

**Program Conclusion:** The program concluded with a gathering at a local cafe, where participants received certificates for completing the courses and gifts for mothers and children from the SOAR Charitable Foundation.



## **IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM**

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The initial impact of the program was assessed using evaluation sheets completed by participants, who indicated that the knowledge acquired would be beneficial throughout their lives. We plan to evaluate the long-term effects of the program three months post-delivery to further understand its impact.

## **COOPERATION WITHIN THE PROGRAM**

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The program involved collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund, which provided hygiene items to participants, enhancing the support provided during the courses.

## **LESSONS LEARNED WITHIN THE PROGRAM**

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Throughout the course, we learned the importance of allowing participants to suggest topics of interest. Additionally, the effectiveness of conducting sessions in specialist doctors' medical offices was recognized. These sessions not only facilitated discussions but also introduced participants to medical equipment, addressing a gap in awareness about screening studies in Armenia, where many women are unfamiliar with the purpose of these screenings.

## **THE CHALLENGES OF THE PROGRAM**

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One significant challenge was including participants from other communities who, due to lack of transportation options—a factor not initially considered—were unable to attend all sessions, thus missing the opportunity to receive a certificate of participation and special gifts.

## **CONCLUSION**

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The program highlighted a substantial need for ongoing education in maternal and newborn health. Many young women and mothers lack essential information and often do not know whom to ask or how to articulate their questions. The difficulty in parting with the experts at the end of the sessions underscored the value and impact of the interactions provided by the program.