



Mother and Newborn Health Project

Report for Phase 2

2024

Financing Organization: SOAR Armenia

Implementation Location: Vanadzor, Lori Region, Armenia

Duration: Start - September 2024, End - November 2024

Beneficiaries: 13 pregnant women

Program Responsible Person: Ani Gabrielyan, President of "Lusastgh" NGO



Project Goals and Activities

The project aimed to raise awareness among 12 pregnant women about reproductive health and support their health preservation through educational sessions.

Selection of Participants

After the completion of the first phase of the project, an information about its results posted on social media resulted in over 20 pregnant women registering for the next training session within a month. Since the priority was given to first-time mothers, only they were registered. Out of approximately 27 pregnant women, 13 participants were initially selected. However, during the sessions, most of them were irregular in attendance, so almost everyone from the list were included.

As a result, 10 sessions with a total of 22 participants were conducted, but only 13 completed the final stage.

Topics and Participation

The specialists for the training sessions were selected by the SOAR charitable foundation, but the topics were determined by the participants. After each session, when introducing the next meeting's speaker, the participants were asked what they would like the speaker to address.

The training sessions started on September 24 and concluded on November 21. The specialists were chosen from the Vanadzor Medical Center.

Each session lasted longer than the planned time—over three hours. There was a 15-minute break during each session, but even during the breaks, Q&A continued. Each meeting covered three topics.

During the meeting the director of the Unified Social Service spoke about state-provided benefits and programs available for mothers on maternity leave.



The psychologist conducted both individual services and group art therapy sessions during the seven meetings, addressing the high levels of psychological tension observed among the pregnant women. Discussions covered various stages of pregnancy, the psychological aspects of the baby's intrauterine development, and the impact of the mother's psychological state on the baby's prenatal and future life.



The sessions also addressed stress, outlining its stages and strategies for overcoming it. Group activities focused on self-awareness and self-esteem enhancement.

The social worker maintained constant communication with the participants, empathized with them, shared success stories, and facilitated the meetings. Topics presented to the pregnant women included “*Factors and Types of Family Harmony*” and “*Conflicts, Prevention, and Positive Socialization.*”

Interactive exercises were conducted on themes such as “*Entering a New Family: Dreams, Expectations, and Reality.*”

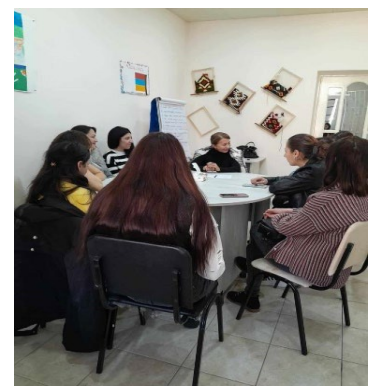


During six sessions, **the obstetrician-gynecologist** covered topics such as self-care for pregnant women, signs of labor, changes in the female body during pregnancy, cervical changes, cervical growths, preparation for childbirth, natural birth, cesarean section, and methods of pain relief during labor.

The pediatrician participated in one meeting, providing information on newborn care, the importance of vaccinations, timely feeding, and sleep routines.



The dentist participated in one meeting, presenting on the topic “*Oral Care During Pregnancy.*” The discussion covered bacteria growth in the oral cavity and ways to combat it, calcium deficiency and its link to cavities, oral hygiene for newborns, oral diseases in infants, and care for a baby’s first teeth.



The therapist met with the pregnant women four times, discussing the topic “*What Are the Complaints of Pregnant Women?*” and answering all their questions. The discussions covered pain, cramps, gestational diabetes, endocrine issues, and joint disorders.



The nutritionist attended all the meetings, conducting both individual and group sessions, and created personalized dietary plans. The topics discussed included healthy eating for pregnant women, avoiding excessive weight gain, allergic foods, the importance of breastfeeding, the use of supplements, and sleep routines.



The physiotherapist presented one topic, focusing on the importance of infant massage, demonstrating where and how to start the massage. The session also covered what clothing to dress the baby in for different seasons and the ideal temperature for keeping the baby comfortable. Additionally, the importance of bathing the baby was discussed.

The audiologist participated in one meeting, where the importance of performing newborn audiometry was discussed. This topic was emphasized during the sessions because many mothers in maternity hospitals avoid audiometry, which can lead to hearing issues in children later on. If the mother chooses to have audiometry done in the hospital, it can help prevent future complications.





The meeting with the **deaf education specialist** was held once. This meeting was also very important because it helped mothers understand when they should be concerned about their child's speech development. It also provided guidance on how they can check if the child has any developmental issues.

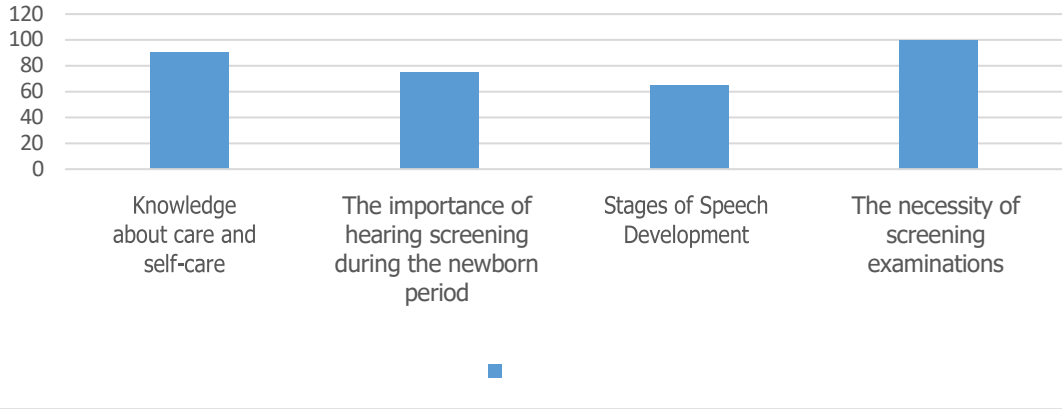
The program was concluded at a café, where participants were given certificates for completing the training sessions, and gifts were presented to the mothers and their babies by the SOAR charitable foundation.



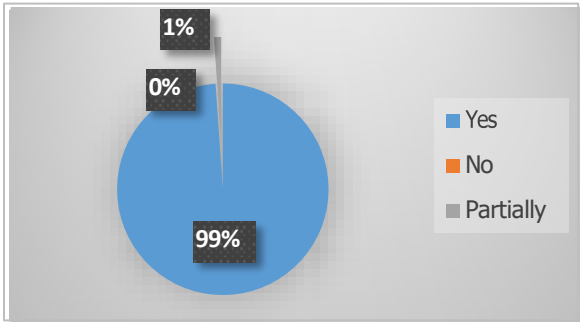
Project Impact

The impact of the project was assessed using an evaluation sheet. The final impact of the project will be evaluated three months after childbirth.

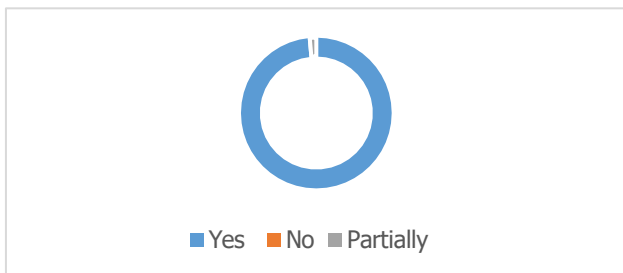
1. What new knowledge did you gain during the training



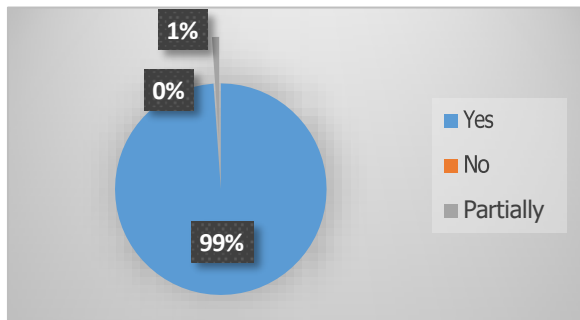
2. Did the selected topics meet your expectations? (If not, please provide details.)



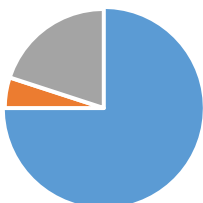
3. Were you provided with sufficient information regarding child and personal care?



4. Did the project meet your initial expectations?

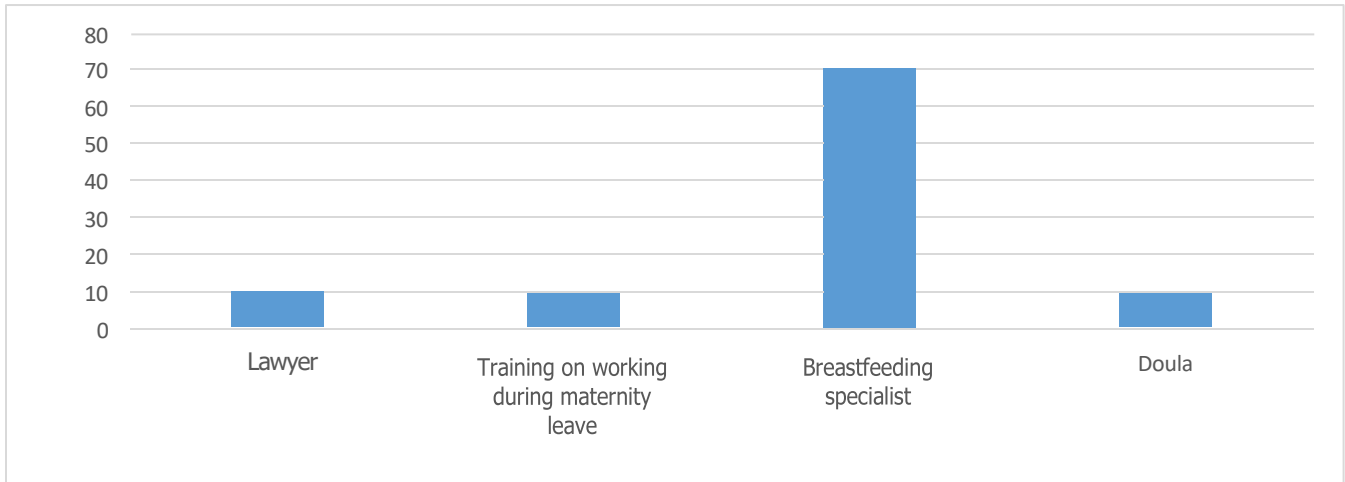


5. What topics would you like to hear that were not included in the training session?

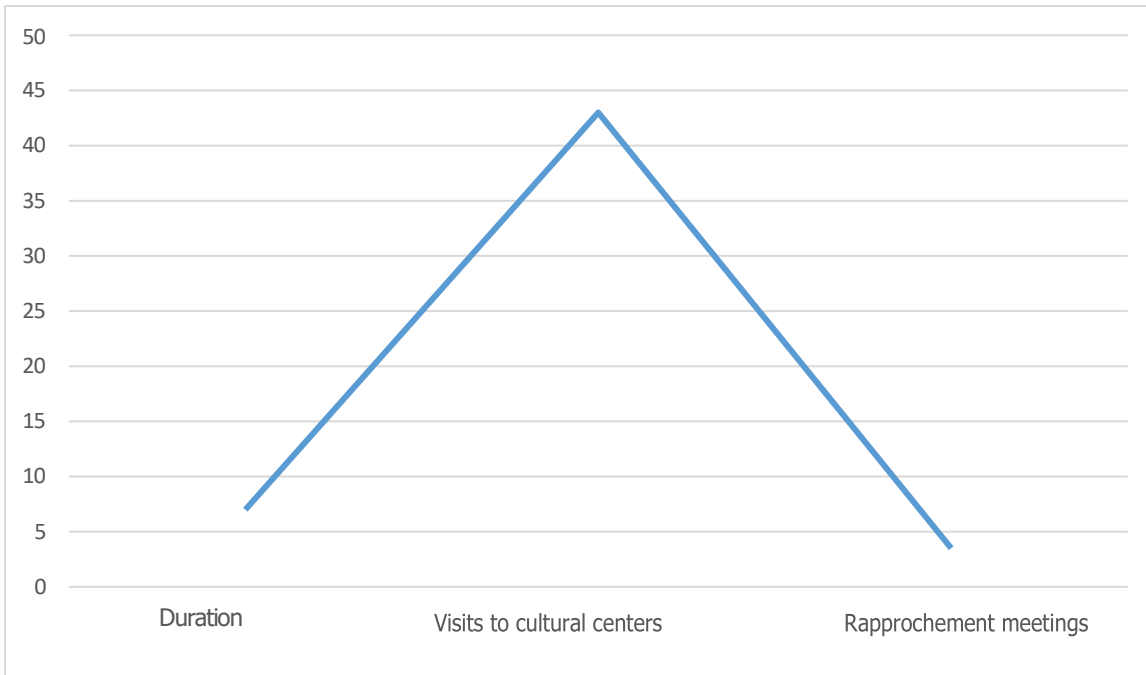


- The stages and rights of screening examinations.
- Consultations after childbirth
- On correct breastfeeding techniques

6. What type of specialists would you like to meet that were not included in the training sessions?



7. Your opinion about the program (what would you like to change or add to the program)?



Collaboration within the Project

The Project collaborated with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which provided our participants with hygiene supplies.



There was collaboration with the "Depi Hayk" organization, within which a volunteer nutritionist participated in six meetings. The nutritionist created personalized dietary plans for each participant and provided advice on infant nutrition.

Project Challenges

During the program, the pregnant women were supposed to attend around 8 meetings, but 10 meetings were held. In the first two sessions, our participants were very passive.

After two of them were removed for their lack of commitment, the remaining participants began to engage more actively in the sessions.

Conclusion

The project is critically necessary for communities like ours, which are very poor. First and foremost, the educational level of our women is very low, and they do not pay attention to their reproductive health. They only visit a doctor in extreme cases, get pregnant one after another without allowing their bodies to rest, and do not realize that they are harming their health.

As a result of the projet, pregnant women are given books, which are critically necessary for them. The second group of pregnant women has already received the book, and during feedback sessions, the first thing they mention is how useful and informative the book is.



Arpine, 22 years old

"The book is so good, it's always by my side. I always open it and read before going to bed."

Zoya, 30 years old

"This book has become an inseparable part of my desk; I always read it in my free time."

Գայանե Մովսիսյան

Հարուստ տեղեկատվությամբ գիրք է, որտեղ ամեն ինչ կա մեզ համար:

