

IMPROVING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Everyone has the right to enjoy reproductive health, which is a basis for having healthy children, intimate relationships and happy families. Reproductive health encompasses key areas of the UNFPA vision – that every child is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect. But reproductive health problems remain the leading cause of ill health and death for women of childbearing age worldwide.

Reproductive health commodities are just as important to sexual and reproductive health as vaccines are to child survival. Yet, reproductive health services and supplies remain out of reach for too many people.

Today, **every single minute:**

- 190 women become pregnant with a pregnancy they do not want or did not plan – *and which contraceptives could have prevented.*

Today, **every single minute:**

- 650 people contract a sexually transmitted infection and nearly 10 infected with HIV – *all avoidable with condoms.*

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS: The issue of the importance of Reproductive Health has been reflected in the provisions and articles of a number of international documents. Among these the most prominent is:

- **International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (1994)**
- On the national level the major guiding document in meeting Armenia’s national obligations in the field of Reproductive Health is the **National Strategy, Program and Actions Timeframe on Reproductive Health Improvement, 2007-2015.**

“Unless people have access to contraceptives, condoms and the drugs and equipment that are needed for maternal health, HIV prevention test kits and other reproductive health supplies, the right to sexual and reproductive health will not be realized.”

- **Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, UNFPA Executive Director**

FACING THE CHALLENGE

CURRENT SITUATION: In spite of significant improvement in the area of RH over the past decade, especially after implementation of the National Reproductive Health Program (1996-2000), the data from 2000 and 2005 Armenia Demographic and Health Survey and from the 1997 RH Survey, indicate that the status of the population, including women and children, is poor and utilization of RH services is low. Armenia is still much below the average European levels. The maternal, perinatal, and infant mortality rates exceed that of the developed countries. The incidence of sexually transmitted infections has reached alarming levels. With the intensifications of the emigration process and an increasing infertility level as a background, the birth rate has severely decreased. The incidence of cervical and breast cancer is continuously increasing, turning into a huge medical and social problem.

ENTRY POINTS: The key priority issues in reproductive/maternal/child health in Armenia currently are expressed in the following terms:

1. **Increasing mortality and morbidity rates of reproductive cancer;**
2. **Increase in the incidence of low birth weight infants;**
3. **High frequency of infertility, specifically, secondary infertility ;**
4. **Increasing prevalence of HIV, including among women and young people;**
5. **Insufficient inter-sectoral and international collaboration in the implementation of maternal/child health care programs.**

REACHING OUT

ACTION: The goal of the UNFPA Strengthening SRH services project is to improve the reproductive and sexual health status of the population of Armenia and to provide Armenian citizens the opportunity to exert their reproductive and sexual rights all their lives, in order to:

- ✓ reach a healthy sexual development and maturity and to have the capacity of having equitable, responsible relationships and of knowing sexual fulfilment;
- ✓ have the desired number of children, in safe and healthy conditions, if and when they want to;
- ✓ prevent reproductive and sexual illnesses and benefit from high quality health care, when they need it;
- ✓ avoid being subjected to violence and other reproductive and sexual abusive practices.
- ✓ Implement sample surveys, researches, studies and in-depth analysis in order to obtain reliable and accurate data in the field of RH.

PROJECT COMPONENTS: ARMENIA

- COMPONENT 1: CAPACITY BUILDING;
- COMPONENT 2: AWARENESS RAISING;
- COMPONENT 3: LEGISLATION & POLICY;
- COMPONENT 4: RESEARCH/SURVEYS;
- COMPONENT 5: COORDINATION & INTER-COUNTRY COLLABORATION.

PARTNERS

INTERNATIONAL:

The project will build on the existing expertise and experiences in the field through promotion of synergies and cooperation with other international actors in Armenia including:

UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNHCR, UNDP), NOVA, WHO, UMCOR, World Vision, and others.

NATIONAL:

National Institutions:

Ministry of Health of RA, Yerevan State Medical University, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the RA, National Statistical Service of the RA, as well as

NGOs including:

RA Association of Obstetricians/Gynecologists and Neonatologists, Maternity Fund of Armenia, "For Family and Health Pan Armenian Association", and others.

For more information please contact:

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