



News Bulletin

April 2005

Mobile Medical Teams project spreads to Syunik and Tavush



Started: February 2004
Regions: Lori, Gegharkunik, Tavush, Syunik
Beneficiaries: 36,000 people in 61 rural communities
Funded by: US Agency for International Development and World Vision United States (10%)
Partners: Scientific Association of Medical Students of Armenia (SAMSA) and Support to Communities (STC) NGO.

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Since 2004, the Mobile Medical Teams (MMT) project has been working in Lori and Gegharkunik regions and in recent weeks the activities have spread to Syunik and Tavush. The project works to ensure access to primary health care for the people living in remote communities of Armenia, where there is an identified need for accessible and affordable quality healthcare services. The project is implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and includes establishing MMTs, strengthening community-based health structures in villages, creating revolving drug funds, increasing the access of vulnerable children and their families to a healthy and balanced diet, conducting health education and building a network to refer patients to local hospitals.

“Even minor investments in this area will result in significant changes for the people who live in the villages,” said Henrik Kochinyan, the governor of Lori region.

Presently, eight MMTs comprised of a family physician, pediatrician, gynecologist and ultrasound/laboratory specialists visit remote communities 2-3 times a month, providing quality health care services to the residents, including first aid, diagnosis and treatment of various illnesses, laboratory testing, antenatal care and monitoring of children’s growth and development.



“When my children were ill, we had to take them to the town of Vardenis. Sometimes we just couldn’t get there, especially in winter. Now my daughters visit a doctor when they need to,” Eugenia Nazaryan, Kutakan village, Gegharkunik

The MMTs contribute to the prevention of wide-spread diseases and promote the ideas of basic healthcare, hygiene and healthy lifestyle among the villagers.

With the aim of strengthening community-based health structures, 15 health posts have been renovated in the villages of

Lori and Gegharkunik in partnership with Support to Communities (STC) NGO. In 2005, twenty three more health posts will be renovated, including those in Tavush and Syunik. World Vision and SAMSA organize workshops and seminars aimed at building the MMT doctors’ professional skills and increasing the capacity to successfully implement the project. Training on primary eye care and screening was organized for 22 nurses at the local health posts.

“In recent years we learned how to work in hard conditions. Working in a nicely renovated and well-equipped health post will improve the quality of our services,” said Ruzanna Mkrtchyan, the MMT pediatrician.



Revolving drug funds established in 54 villages allow families to get access to medications available in the fund by regular payment of 2000 AMD (\$4) per quarter, which will provide a supporting mechanism later when MMTs are not in the villages.

As a part of the integrated nutrition and health promotion program, all children under 6 years old underwent an assessment of their health and nutritional condition, which revealed many cases of chronic malnutrition resulting in stunted growth, wasting, anemia and other health issues. Starting April, 2005, 934 children under the age of 3 and new mothers in Lori and Gegharkunik receive monthly food rations which will help to ensure proper nutrition. Approximately 125 people participated in seminars on nutrition and child upbringing. In the next few months this program will expand to the Tavush and Syunik regions as well.

A mechanism was developed by SAMSA to refer patients from MMTs to district-level care. World Vision and SAMSA continue to strengthen the capacity of local hospital and polyclinics in order to make the referral mechanisms more effective. This includes provision of material support and training. Partial renovation of 9 district hospitals is planned for 2005.