

PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF HIV/AIDS, STI AND TB PROJECT (2003 – 2006)

The profound political, economic and social transformations that have taken place in Armenia have created a complex situation. Several factors accelerate the spread of HIV, STI and TB and increase the vulnerability of the population, such as: social disruption, unemployment, low standard of living, migrant seasonal works in regions and countries with high level of HIV-infection, lack of health education, low access to quality condoms etc.

With funding from Norwegian Church Aid and MFA in 2003 -2004, UMCOR has been implementing the "Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS, STIs and TB Project" in Gegharkunik. Currently UMCOR is implementing the project in Armavir and Kotayk provinces.

The goal of this initiative is to reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS, STIs and TB among rural communities by promoting behavioral changes and strengthening the health care system's management of STIs and TB. The overall objectives of the project are:

- Raise awareness of HIV/AIDS, STIs and TB in the selected communities aiming at improving people's health seeking behavior and decreasing vulnerability to HIV.
- Increase the access of vulnerable groups to preventive and clinical services.
- Reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS, STIs and TB among the most vulnerable groups (women, youth, uprooted people).

The project is implemented in close collaboration with the National Center for AIDS Prevention, Medical-Scientific Center of Dermatology and STI of RA and Central Office of National Tuberculosis Program and aims at reducing the risk of STI and HIV/AIDS and TB, reducing stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS in selected rural communities by increasing their access to health information and services.



Project activities:

- * Development and printing of information materials: brochures, booklets, posters and leaflets.
- * Conducting baseline survey in selected villages, evaluating community members initial knowledge, attitude, behaviors and practices.
- * Training of Community Health Care Workers, which will disseminate information among community members (Peer Education), providing information materials (books, booklets, leaflets, posters).
- * Strengthen the capacity of local health providers to provide preventive and clinical services to their communities and high-risk groups by training of health providers in Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) on HIV/AIDS, Integrated Management of STI, Management and Prevention of TB.
- * Providing of clinical services in communities by Mobile Medical Team include a STI Specialist, TB Specialist and Laboratory Specialist in collaboration with local health providers in VCT, diagnostics and treatment of STI and providing condoms free of charge.



Tree Planting for the future generation

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UMCOR ARMENIA

Helping Armenians to help themselves
Օգնենք հայ ժողովրդին ձեռք մեկտեղելու միջոցով

Background

UMCOR NGO established offices in Armenia in 1994. Initially the office focused on the distribution of pharmaceuticals to health institutions and clinics. Gradually the organization transitioned from relief to more developmental activities, including the provision of medium-size agricultural loans, micro-credit and the provision of agricultural inputs. Major programs are currently being implemented by UMCOR-Armenia are to train farmers in modern and sustainable agricultural technologies, improve food security in local communities, provide necessary pharmaceuticals to vulnerable Armenians, assist farming communities in working together to expand their opportunities, provide start-up capital to low-income women entrepreneurs, raise awareness on human trafficking and support trafficking survivors, and to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections.

Mission

Assist eradicating poverty and socio-economic development during Armenian's transition to a healthy and wealthy civil society.

Anti-Trafficking
Informational
& Referral
HotLine:

0-800-50-558

Assistance to victims of trafficking

In order to prevent trafficking in Armenia, as well as to protect and restore the human rights of the victims, through the provision of complex assistance to victims UNDP and UMCOR in collaboration with Government

of Armenia and a local NGO in 2004 launched a new two-year program, UMCOR has signed MoU with RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA), RA Ministry of Health (MoH) and State Department of Migration and Refugees (DMR), created partnership between Consular department of MoFA, Visa agency, National Security Service, Ministry of Justice, Police and international organizations (OSCE and IOM), and is working on development of a mechanism of victim referral to UMCOR shelter.

Currently, using its successful experience in counter trafficking area in other countries, such as Kosovo and Afghanistan, UMCOR-Armenia is implementing the following activities in this project:

Activity 1: Capacity building framework for institutional strengthening and policy development – training for social workers and employment agencies, medical personnel and border guards, as well as the preparation of special manuals for other professionals in these areas.

Activity 2: Awareness raising – publication of information booklets, posters, demonstration of Public Service Announcements on local TV and the organization of seminars and information campaigns.

Activity 3: Victims assistance – operation of hot line and counseling center, as well as the reintegration of victims into society through legal, medical, psychological, employment and other types of counselling provided at the Rehabilitation and Assistance Center (shelter). The stay of victims in the shelter depends on the psychological and physical recovery of a victim and the time necessary to create a base for reintegration of the person into society (this work is done by the program staff in collaboration with the contracted local NGO). Ongoing contact with the victims and their families will be established in order to support and counsel them in the future.

Promoting Development of Dairy Production for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security

UMCOR has launched a new program entitled, "Promoting the Development of Dairy Production for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security," through funding provided by the Foods Resource Bank. The overarching goal of this new UMCOR program is to strengthen the capacities of targeted dairy plants located in Shirak marz, enabling them to expand their production, improve marketing with new product varieties, and improve their technical capacity providing grants and training. At the same time, the program will promote "corporate social responsibility" among the entrepreneurs; namely, dairy plant owners will provide dairy products to help feed the vulnerable people within their communities in exchange for grants to make necessary plant or processing renovations.

FOSPA

Nine Farmer Organizations have been established since 2003 as part of the Farmer Organizations Support Program in Armenia (FOSPA). This agriculture development program helps local farmers to work together to reach a greater share of the market through these organizations. All the cooperatives receive a wide range of specialized business services together with consultation, training and continuous technical assistance. Additionally, the Farmer Organizations provide farmers with agricultural support services and access to micro-credit. FOSPA provides economic benefits for farmers, but also promotes civil society by fostering the growth of non-governmental organizations and community development initiatives.



In-Kind

UMCOR's in-kind supplies come from United Methodist communities that assemble kits and send donations to the Sager Brown warehouse in Baldwin, Louisiana. At the warehouse, volunteers then inspect the kits and pack them into boxes. Finally, staff and volunteers work together to load the containers. These are subsequently dispatched to locations throughout the world.

Since 1995, UMCOR Armenia has been a recipient of in-kind donations, which are passed on to the needy throughout Armenia. Blankets, clothes, shoes, hygiene, layette, sewing and school kits have found their way to thousands of Armenian families, orphanages, boarding schools, nursing homes and institutions for physically and mentally handicapped. Often the distribution is organized with the assistance of local charities, which distribute the goods to their target groups.

During its tenure in Armenia, UMCOR has distributed goods with a value of more than USD 10 million.



Pharmaceutical Distribution

The Pharmaceutical Distribution Project provides access to free pharmaceuticals and medical supplies to 200,000 vulnerable persons in rural and urban areas across Armenia. Since its inception in 1994, UMCOR Armenia has distributed approximately USD 20 million worth of medicines, medical supplies, school kits, health kits, and quilts to primary healthcare facilities and charitable organizations that serve refugees, the elderly, children, pensioners, and other socially vulnerable groups. Moreover, UMCOR renovates the existing rural health facilities to insure proper conditions for providing quality health care services to the population.

Childhood Illnesses

The Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) program is training primary healthcare providers in treating the most prevalent diseases in children under five-years of age. Through this program, health facilities are also improved and community knowledge strengthened to improve child health. So far, 480 health care providers in three regions of Armenia have been trained in managing childhood diseases according to the IMCI strategy.

helping Armenians to help themselves

UMCOR Cheese Distribution Program

The United Methodists Committee on Relief (UMCOR) has been implementing one of its humanitarian assistance programs, namely its Cheese Distribution Program, since 1999. The main goal of this program is to combat hunger and support disadvantaged people living in state institutions (special/boarding schools for handicapped and socially vulnerable children, retirement centers, orphanages, mental hospitals, soup kitchens, and kindergartens for socially vulnerable children) and improve their daily diet.

