

SHIRAK HEALTH PROGRAM

MULTI-COMPONENT HEALTHCARE SERVICES
IN SHIRAK'S VULNERABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES:

- HOROM & PEMZASHEN (2022-2023)
- JAJUR & AKHURIK (2023-2024)

FIDECARMENIA, 2024



Shirak Marz

Armenia's Shirak Marz (province) is located in the north-west of the country, bordering Turkey to the west and Georgia to the north. It covers an area of 2,680 km² (9% of total area of Armenia).

Shirak's capital and largest city is Gyumri, which is the second largest city in Armenia. The province has 3 urban and 116 rural communities.

The climate is characterized by extremely cold snowy winters and mild summers.

It has the highest poverty rates in the country (42%).



Shirak Marz Communities' Current Health Status

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- The absence of a preventive culture and limited access to health services due to economic barriers are reflected in:
- low utilization of preventive health services in the community (48% only use them once a year); and
 - a growing increase in the levels of chronic diseases and associated mortality
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- The Basic Health Benefits Package offered by the government free of charge to groups with greater socioeconomic vulnerability covers few medications and some basic health services, which are not sufficient to meet the population's needs.

FIDEC's Shirak Health Survey

It was conducted in March 2020, conducting face-to-face interviews with health authorities and healthcare professionals from 16 healthcare centers with varying levels of complexity in the Shirak province, with the aim of determining the most prevalent health issues in the community.



FIDEC Armenia's Survey Revealed Most Common Health Problems in Shirak



Cardiovascular diseases, including:

- 1.1. hypertension
- 1.2. coronary heart disease
- 1.3. stroke



Diabetes



Cancers, including:

- 3.1. breast cancer (women)
- 3.2. gastrointestinal cancer (men & women)
- 3.3. prostate cancer (men)
- 3.4. lung cancer (men)



Thyroid diseases, including thyroid cancer



Anemia



**Unplanned pregnancies,
resulting in abortions**



**Sexually transmitted
diseases (STDs)**



Helminthiasis in children

Target Population & Program Objectives

Shirak Communities: Key Objectives

-  Provide the rural population of the communities of **Horom, Pempashen, Jajur, and Akhurik** with all necessary medical services to diagnose and treat the most prevalent health problems in the region, free of charge. – **480 adults aged 40-75**
-  Improve family planning practice and decrease the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases associated with high rates of labor migration – **120 adults younger than 40 y.o.**
-  Contribute to children's health by diagnosing & treating helmenthiasis among **100 children of 3-10 y.o. in Horom and Pempashen.**
-  Promote prevention of cardiovascular diseases and diabetes through health education and provision of self-control tools, such as digital blood pressure monitors and glucometers.



Shirak Health Program

Horom & Pemzashen | 2022-2023

Akhurik & Jajur | 2023-2024

Health Program Interventions in Shirak: 2022-2024



Location: Shirak Marz,
Artik and Akhuryan regions

Sponsor: The Armenian
community in Argentina
and Uruguay.

Horom & Pempashen: 2022-2023

Beneficiaries: 568

Budget: 115,952 USD

Akhurik & Jajur: 2023-2024

Beneficiaries: 528

Budget: 119,875 USD

**Shirak Medication project w/
Fondo Armenia, Argentina:**

4 communities, 1,200
chronic patients, 6 months
in each community

-  Detection and treatment of cardiovascular diseases (such as arterial hypertension and coronary artery disease); education on the prevention and control of hypertension; provision of digital blood pressure monitors and medication
-  Education and training to optimize the management and control of diabetes; delivery of digital glucometers for self-monitoring of glucose levels
-  Screened for gynecological, gastrointestinal, prostate, thyroid, and pulmonary conditions.
-  Screened for iron-deficiency anaemia
-  Provision and placement of intrauterine devices (IUDs) as a method of family planning.
-  Screened for Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
-  Additionally, thanks to the collaboration of the Armenia Fund of Argentina, provision of medication to program beneficiaries during its implementation was expanded to include 1200 beneficiaries who received anti-hypertensive and cholesterol-reducing medication, and provision was extended for an additional 6 months.

Results: Coronary Heart Disease, Arterial Hypertension

Diagnosis

Horom and Pemzashen:

70% high blood pressure
(20% first-time diagnosed)

50% hypercholesterolemia
(35 % were unaware)

Akhurik and Jajur:

67% high blood pressure
(40% first-time diagnosed)

41% hypercholesterolemia
(55 % were unaware)

Treatment & Control

Provision of medication to patients with hypertension and hypercholesterolemia for their treatment. Delivery of 96 digital blood pressure monitors for self-monitoring of blood pressure

Education

All patients with high blood pressure were **trained** on hypertension **control** and **healthy** lifestyle.



Results: Diabetes Monitoring

Diagnosis



Horom and Pemzashen

18 diabetic patients,
2 newly-diagnosed



Akhurik and Jajur

65 diabetic patients,
5 newly-diagnosed



Treatment & Control

240 digital glucometers
and 240 packs of strips
distributed to all diabetic
patients.



Education

98 diabetic patients
received training on
diabetes control,
healthy diet and care.



Results: Women's Health

Diagnosis



Horom and Pemzashen

40 % women needed anti-inflammatory treatment

10% - medical interventions



Akhurik and Jajur

34% women needed anti-inflammatory treatment

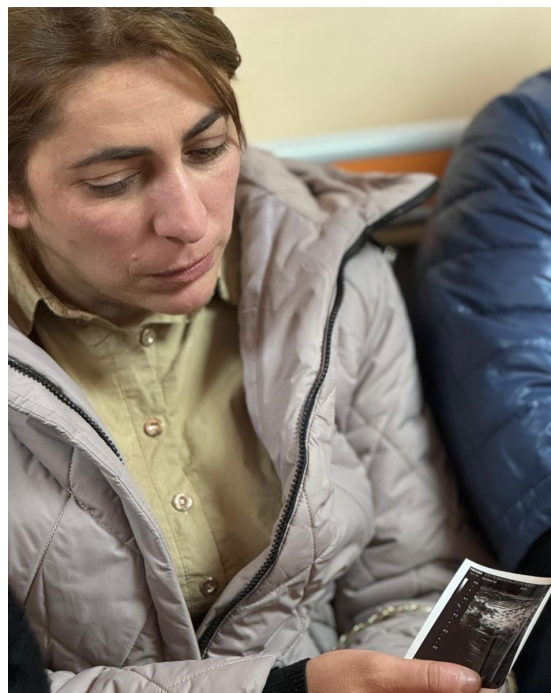
16% - medical interventions



Treatment

Anti-inflammatory medication provided to treat colpitis, cervicitis.

Medical interventions included colposcopy, polypectomy, hysterectomy (3 surgeries), biopsy, etc.



Education

Individual counseling on benefits of early diagnosis and treatment.



Results: Cancer Screening, Treatment, and Prevention

Diagnosis

Initial evaluations were conducted for the detection of **breast, colorectal, prostate, and thyroid cancer** with the following results:



Horom and Pemzashen:

Colorectal: 13 patients had occult blood in stool

Mammography: 2 women had abnormal results

Prostate: 12 men with abnormal results; 2 cancer cases

Thyroid: 40% abnormal blood and ultrasound tests.



Akhurik and Jajur:

Lung: 11 people at high risk of cancer underwent chest CT scans

Colorectal: 6 patients had occult blood in stool.

Mammography: 3 women had abnormal results

Prostate: 7 men with abnormal results; 3 cancer cases

Thyroid: 50% abnormal blood and ultrasound tests.

Treatment

Beneficiaries with abnormal findings in the conducted studies are referred to specialized doctors in:

Gastroenterology

Oncology

Urology

Endocrinology

This referral is made for further investigations, finalizing diagnoses, and prescribing necessary treatments.



Results: Family Planning & STDs treatment

Objectives



Raise awareness on **family planning** methods, decrease the incidence of unintended pregnancies and sex-selective abortions;



Decrease the prevalence of **sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)** among the male population through laboratory examinations and treatment.

Interventions

Family planning: 40 IUDs were provided, all interested young women were referred to Artik Maternal Hospital for insertion.



Education

Counseling on family planning and safe contraception methods



Results: Iron Deficiency, Helminthiasis, Vitamin D3 prophylaxis



Screening for Iron-deficiency anemia revealed very low incidence among beneficiaries.



Few cases of helminthiasis were revealed in screening of 100 children aged 3-10 y.o.. The low incidence resulted in discontinuing this intervention and redirecting resources.



240 project beneficiaries in Horom and Pemzashen villages received Vitamin D3 capsules in prophylactic doses for 6 months.



Shirak Health Program: Follow-up and Next Steps

-  Analyze and present the Program results to Armenia's Ministry of Health and Shirak's regional health authorities.
-  Define prevalent health problems for the region and advocate for considering the recommendations in the country's primary healthcare reforms, health policy changes, and MoH interventions.
-  Extend the provision of medication for an additional 6 months to additional chronic patients with hypertension and high cholesterol levels in the communities of Akhurik and Jaju
-  Based on the results of the experience and results of Shirak Health Program, design a customized health program for Artsakh refugees settled in rural communities of Armenia's Ararat and Armavir Marzes.



LET'S HELP ARMENIANS PRIORITIZE AND ACCESS HEALTHCARE!

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