

History of the AGBU Pregnant Care Women's Centers

Delivering adequate health care services to the people in Armenia crumbled after the independence of Armenia in 1991 and after the 1988 earthquake in Gyumri and Vanadzor, Armenia. The decline in quality health care combined with the country's poverty and unemployment put pregnant women at risk. The consequence? Malnourished pregnant women were having abortions because of lack of medical care. Moreover, pregnancy complications and infant deaths had increased. Infants born below normal weight were being abandoned and were handed to the care of "Mangadoons" (orphanages). Parents were giving up their rights as parents because they were unable to take care of them. The situation became dire as the birth rate in Armenia rapidly fell.

Watching the health system deteriorate, AGBU Hye Geen mobilized and established a plan to help from abroad. In June 2002, AGBU Hye Geen opened the doors to its first "Pregnant Women's Care Center" in the town of Gyumri, Armenia. The initial goal was to support a group of 20 married women throughout their pregnancy by offering much needed prenatal care, vital medical exams, personalized counseling, nutritious meals and guidance by highly trained professionals. The AGBU Hye Geen Committee in Southern California secured the financial support needed to operate this Center. Soon there after, the AGBU Young Professionals in New York City and San Francisco helped with additional financial support.

Encouraged by the success of the center in Gyumri, AGBU Hye Geen opened the second "Pregnant Women's Care Center" in the city of Vanadzor. While AGBU Hye Geen continues to supervise its management and reach, the Vanadzor Center has benefitted from funding by the AGBU London Trust since 2006. This joint effort has helped countless women and their families. As the medical conditions of the region and needs of the pregnant women in Gyumri improved, AGBU Hye Geen moved its initial Center to the region of [Talin](#) in 2008. Identifying a great need to assist one of the poorest regions in Armenia, the Hye Geen Committee proceeded with the Talin Center with the funds raised by AGBU Focus in 2009.

[The Nora Injijian Center](#) in Yeghvard opened in June of 2011 funded by the Injijian family in Pasadena California followed by the Arshagouhi Tavitian Center, which opened in Yerevan in August 2012.

The establishment and continuation of the Pregnant Women's Centers are essential to the health and future of Armenia. The goal is to improve the country's birthrate and help families raise healthy children. The Pregnant Women's Centers provide seminars with social workers, psychologists to educate women about basic child rearing and parenting skills and sensitive issues surrounding the role of the traditional Armenian family.