USAID Project NOVA Quarterly Report

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October – December 2008: 1st Quarter FY09

This Quarterly Report describes the results of NOVA's programmatic activities during the period October 1 – December 31, 2008. The Project was in full-scale implementation of all marz and national-level interventions in Armenia in accordance with its FY09 workplan.

AREA 1: Improve RH/FP/MCH Provider Performance

Tangible Result: Providers' knowledge and skills improved

- During the period September - November 2008 Project NOVA continued its series of training courses on Quality Midwifery Care (aka Safe Motherhood Clinical Skills Training Expanded Role of Midwives). A four-day classroom style training covered a variety of evidence-based practices for midwives, including partogram use during labor and delivery, active management of the third stage of labor, management of preterm rupture of the membranes, breech delivery, prevention and management of shoulder dislocation during delivery and other relevant topics. A total of 73 midwives from Syunik, Vayots Dzor, Ararat and Armavir marzes currently working in inpatient settings have participated in the training. Results of the knowledge evaluation questionnaires before and after the training demonstrated that the overall knowledge of participants increased by 45% (See Table 1 below). This completes NOVA's training in improved midwifery care initiated in August 2008.

Table 1: Project NOVA Training Courses on Quality Midwifery Care (September – November 2008)

Marz	Venue	No. of Participants	Dates	Pre-test score	Post-test score	Knowledge Change
Syunik	Goris Medical Center	17	Sep 30-Oct 3	46%	98%	52%↑
Ararat	Artashat Medical Center	21	Oct 21-24	51%	95%	44%↑
Vayots Dzor	Yeghegnadzor Medical Center	15	Nov 4-7	52%	93%	41%↑
Armavir	Armavir Medical Center	20	Nov 18-21	56%	98%	42%↑
Total/Average		73		51 %	96%	45%↑

- The Project continued its series of training events on family planning/reproductive health (FP/RH) counseling and client-provider interaction skills for inpatient and outpatient health care providers from the northern marzes. A total of 98 obstetrician-gynecologists, midwives and nurses received the training in modern contraceptive technology and essential counseling/communications skills for FP/RH. The results of the training showed a mean knowledge increase of 55% (see Table 2 below). FP/RH counseling training for Tavush marz is scheduled for January 2009. This will complete the series of NOVA's training events for obstetrician-gynecologists, midwives and nurses in Northern Armenia. FP/RH training courses for family physicians and pediatricians are scheduled in the upcoming quarters of FY09.

Table 2: Project NOVA Training Courses on the FP/RH Counseling (October – December 2008)

Marz	Venue	No. of Participants	Dates	Pre-test score	Post-test score	Knowledge Change
Lori	Vanadzor Polyclinic	23	Oct 6--9	40%	97%	57% ↑
Shirak	Gyumri Maternity	27	Oct 13-16	39%	97%	58%↑
Gegharkunik	Martuni Maternity	24	Nov 10-13	36%	98%	62%↑
Kotayk	Abovyan Maternity	24	Dec 8-11	54%	98%	44%↑
Total/Average		98		42%	97%	55%↑

- In December following the Ministry of Health (MOH) approval of the updated training package, Project NOVA conducted a four-day training course on Integrated Management of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) for primary healthcare physicians from five Southern Armenian marzes – Armavir, Aragatsotn, Ararat, Vayots Dzor and Syunik. NOVA previously conducted this training in Armenia's four Northern marzes – Shirak, Kotayk, Gegharkunik and Tavush – involving 50 primary health care providers using the training package developed in 2003 under the USAID-funded PRIME II Project. For the most recent trainings, Project NOVA updated the existing training package based on state-of-the-art recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as national service delivery guidelines for STIs. The training is based on the Learning for Performance methodology of adult learning principles emphasizing interactive teaching and learning techniques. The updated training package includes key educational materials including situational cases, role plays, knowledge evaluation tests, and illustrated lectures. It contains a:
  - Training handbook on the Principles of Integrated Management of STI Illnesses for learners; and a
  - Trainer's guide on the Principles of Integrated Management of STI Illnesses for trainers.

  NOVA national experts, dermato-venerologists representing the Chair of Dermatology and Sexually Transmitted Diseases of the Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU) facilitated the trainings. A total of 22 healthcare workers from Armavir and Vayots Dzor marzes participated in the training demonstrating a mean knowledge increase of 16% (See Table 3 below).

Table 3: Project NOVA Training Courses on the Integrated Management of Sexually Transmitted Infections (November – December 2008)

Marz	Venue	No. of Participants	Dates	Pre-test score	Post-test score	Knowledge Change
Armavir	Armavir Medical Center	13	Nov 25- 28	74%	91%	17% ↑
Vayots Dzor	Yeghegnadzor Medical Center	9	Dec 18-23	77%	93%	16% ↑
Total/Average		22		76%	92%	16% ↑

- Project NOVA continued its routine monitoring and technical feedback visits to 1) evaluate providers' new skills and competencies on FP counseling; 2) identify any obstacles to the provision of quality FP services; and 3) help newly-trained healthcare providers overcome/solve problems identified. During the past reporting period, the Project conducted five monitoring visits to all five programmatic networks. In all of these sites, providers offer FP counseling services. Project NOVA reinforced some of the new approaches on FP counseling during these visits. Select healthcare facilities continue to have a shortage of FP commodities provided nationwide by UNFPA.

- The Project continued monitoring visits to Project-supported networks following implementation of the Mother and Child Health-related trainings. During October – December, the Project conducted monitoring visits to Talin, Armavir, Vedi, Vayk and Sisian hospitals on antenatal/postpartum care (ANC/PPC) and emergency obstetric care (EmOC). The hospitals have implemented most of the practices introduced by Project NOVA with the exception of the partogram application during the first stage of labor. The main problem is the absence of the order from the MOH to officially use the partogram in practice. All facilities, except Armavir, have adequate equipment and supplies to provide ANC/PPC and EmOC based on knowledge and skills gained by the staff during trainings. Project staff provided the needed technical support and feedback to aid further strengthening of evidence-based approaches in antenatal, intrapartum and postpartum care. Project staff also conducted monitoring visits to the Armavir, Talin and Sisian health networks on newborn and infant care principles. These visits reveal that physicians follow the new protocols on newborn and infant care except in Armavir where the physical conditions are very poor. Talin Medical Center hired a new neonatologist, and the new evidence-based approaches on newborn care and resuscitation were introduced to her separately.

Tangible Result: Training capacity strengthened

- In November 2008 Project NOVA formed two separate Working Groups from the Ob/Gyn and Family Medicine faculty of YSMU and Yerevan Basic and Erebuni State Medical Colleges. The working groups will integrate NOVA's postgraduate FP/RH counseling and client-provider interaction training package into existing undergraduate training curricula for both physicians and mid-level personnel. The expected deliverable of both Working Groups is the development of a standard undergraduate FP training package for state medical training institutions offering pre-service medical education. The members of the Working Groups met a number of times during November and December to discuss the anticipated scope of work, responsibility of the team members, technical content of the training, and expected outputs/timeframe for deliverables. Project NOVA provided technical guidance and leadership to both Working Groups on adapting and consolidating the training package using modern adult learning principles and methodology.

- On October 28, 2008 Project NOVA organized a Preconception Health Round Table with active participation from the MOH, leading obstetrician-gynecologists, pediatricians, family doctors and international organizations to discuss the possibility of introducing a preconception care program in Armenia as a means to reduce maternal and child mortality and morbidity. The round table presentations focused on trends in maternal and child mortality in Armenia, CDC recommendations for preconception care and maternal mortality surveillance approaches in Canada and the US. The participants accepted the immense influence of women's preconception health on maternal and infant health outcomes and unanimously agreed on the need to develop a national preconception health and healthcare program. This multifaceted national program put together under the guidance of MOH will cover policy, service delivery and community-level interventions addressing Armenia-specific geographical, cultural, and financial realities. The proposed activities may include active promotion of a healthy lifestyle, reduction of environmental hazards and management of chronic illnesses including cardio-vascular diseases, diabetes, and epilepsy. Addressing chronic illnesses, risky behaviors, exercise and nutrition, psychosocial factors and environmental hazards prior to conception will contribute to improved health outcomes for women and infants in Armenia.

- Following the Preconception Care Forum, a Preconception Healthcare Working Group was formed and approved by a special MOH Order as of December 18, 2009 (Order No. 1877-A). The Working Group is headed by the MOH representative and consists of four national experts and nine leading specialists - gynecologists, family doctors, pediatricians - including two staff members from Project NOVA. It is anticipated that during a four-month period, the Working Group will create a comprehensive program and a standard training package, including clinical and counseling management algorithms, clinical checklists, situational cases and role plays. The Working Group met two times in December to create a list of the topics to include in the training package, distribute the workload among members, identify the necessary resources and schedule meetings and deliverable deadlines.

- Based on ongoing discussions with the MOH, Project NOVA stepped in to support the MOH efforts for the development of National Standards of Care on Normal Childbirth. Project NOVA helped establish another Working Group, approved through Ministerial Order No. 1799 on December 9, 2008, to formalize direct involvement of ten national experts---both obstetrician-gynecologists and neonatologists. The national standards of care will serve as a normative document for obstetrical service delivery practices and approaches. They will also inform the implementation of future undergraduate and postgraduate training and quality assurance activities nationwide. Project NOVA's two obstetrician-gynecologists participate in the Working Group. The group expects to produce the standards by March 2009 for final review and approval by the MOH. The standards of care shall include, but are not limited to, the internationally-accepted evidence-based clinical practices previously introduced and promoted by Project NOVA in its training events, such as the use of partogram and standard implementation of active management of third stage of labor; anesthesia at birth; identification of the list of essential medicine used at delivery; necessity of using enemas, shaving and other practices; immediate breastfeeding;

Tangible Result: Healthcare facilities equipped and renovated

- In October 2009 Project NOVA completed renovation activities at the Women's Consultation Center (WCC) at Vedi Maternity of Ararat Marz. The WCC was also furnished and equipped with basic office and medical equipment. The renovated WCC coupled with the clinical training, basic equipment and supplies provided by the Project will considerably advance performance of healthcare providers and contribute to the improved quality of healthcare services. It is expected that the WWC will increase the use of antenatal, postpartum and FP services, thus leading to the reduction of complications during pregnancy and childbirth and healthier planning and spacing of pregnancies. In November the US Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch and the RA Minister of Health Harutyun Kushkyan cut the ribbon at a ceremony marking the opening of the WCC. USAID Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia Doug Menarchik and other high officials representing USAID, the MOH and Ararat Marz Government were present at the ceremony.

- In December, following the signature of the four-part Memo of Understanding between the British Embassy, Meditech, Vayk Medical Union (MU) and Project NOVA, the Project procured and delivered the intensive care newborn incubator to Vayk Medical Union using funds raised during the 2008 Burns Supper event in Armenia. In addition, Project NOVA provided comprehensive training on the proper and timely use and maintenance of the equipment to the Vayk MU staff.

- Initial assessments for the establishment of additional Schools of Motherhood (SoM) in the Northern marzes of Armenia were completed. Select healthcare facilities, specific premises and rehabilitation work was identified in the following healthcare facilities providing ANC in the northern marzes: Gyumri Maternity Hospital, Martuni Maternity Hospital, Abovyan Maternity Hospital, Ijevan Center on Primary Health Care Promotion and Vanadzor Polyclinic #4.

AREA 2: Strengthen Management and Supervision

Tangible Result: Quality assurance system at hospitals introduced

- During the period of October-December, Project NOVA conducted Marz Advisory Board meetings for Vedi, Armavir and Talin health networks. The meetings were conducted in collaboration with Marz Health Departments, officials from the Project-supported health networks and city municipalities, as well as local NGOs working in this area. The Marz Advisory Board meeting topics included: results of Project NOVA-conducted clinical training events; Quality Assurance (QA) Teams' achievements, including site-specific statistics; dissemination and results of the health education materials' presentation in rural communities; recent renovations and community-linked activities.

- As part of the QA initiative, in December Project NOVA organized a technical exchange visit to Vedi Maternity. Eleven members of multidisciplinary QA Teams from Vayk Medical Center and Armavir Medical Center visited the Vedi Maternity Hospital to learn firsthand about their achievements and progress made towards improved MCH services provision. Vedi Maternity personnel demonstrated healthcare services provided in the facility and the modern approaches and techniques applied as a result of collaboration with Project NOVA. The group visited Vedi WCC, Delivery, Neonatal and Postpartum departments of the maternity hospital; discussed infection prevention measures, patient education approaches, technical details of antenatal, intrapartum and postpartum service delivery, immunization and rooming in; and exchanged data on their key maternal and child health indicators. The visitors were impressed with the achievement reached and were inspired to make additional changes in their respective facilities.

- In collaboration with the MOH Project NOVA organized a refresher training on the requirements and approaches of the state-endorsed SoM. Twelve ob/gyns from five northern marzes of Armenia – Lori, Tavush, Shirak, Gegharkunik and Kotayk – representing service delivery sites identified by the Project for the establishment of additional SoM attended the training. The participants received an update on the key concepts of the SoM as well as the operational successes of the SoM in four southern marzes.

- The Project continued the implementation of its QA activities at five project-supported sites: Armavir Medical Center, Vedi Maternity, Vayk Medical Center, Sisian Medical Center and Talin Medical Center. As part of this initiative, facility-based QA teams continued analyzing site statistics and reviewed maternal and newborn "near miss" cases. Compared to the previous quarter, this reporting period results are as follows: the proportion of women registering during the first trimester of gestation increased from 37% to 48%, the proportion of women with at least four antenatal care visits stayed at high 84%, and the percentage of women with postpartum hemorrhage was further reduced to 0.5% from 1.4%.

AREA 3: Improve RH/MCH Policy Formulation and Implementation

Tangible Result: Evidence-based RH/FP/MCH service delivery promoted

- Project NOVA shared the following evidence-based medicine information in the monthly newsletters: bed rest is not proven to prevent preterm birth; timing of breast surgery in premenopausal breast cancer patients; and maternal caffeine intake during pregnancy and risk of fetal growth restriction. All evidence-based medicine updates along with relevant links are available on the Project NOVA website (www.nova.am) in English and Armenian.

Tangible Result: Best practices and messages documented and disseminated

- Project NOVA adapted WHO's Contraceptive Use Medical Eligibility Criteria Wheel for local settings and translated it into Armenian. Printing of the wheel is pending permission from WHO and approval by the MOH.

- Project NOVA prepared and disseminated a new Success Story highlighting the achievements of the Haykavan community nurse who provided EmOC in the community when the ambulance service could not reach the woman on time. The nurse managed to provide obstetric care due to the skills and knowledge obtained through NOVA's nurse training on Safe Motherhood Clinical Skills.

- Project NOVA continues to distribute monthly electronic newsletters to over 135 individuals from local and international organizations. The newsletters in both English and Armenian highlight key Project activities, including information on access to modern methods of contraception and republishing of health education materials. The newsletters also covered the ribbon cutting ceremony marking the reopening of the WCC at Vedi Maternity Hospital with the participation of the US Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch and the Republic of Armenia Minister of Health Harutyun Kushkyan. The newsletters also highlight the introduction of a new training package on Integrated Management of STIs and experience exchange among the Project's QA teams.

- The Project distributed an additional 100,000 copies of the health education materials (25,000 copies of each brochure: Antenatal Care and Healthy Pregnancy; 10 Things Women Need to Know after Having a Baby; The Future is in Your Hands; and Do You Know Your Contraceptive Choices?) throughout Armenia.

- Following its previous successes, NOVA continued the interactive presentation of it's health education brochures in six rural communities of the Vedi region. The presentation highlighted the brochures' main topics (RH/FP/MCH issues and the Basic Benefits Package) and was followed by extensive Q&A sessions known as the *Ask Doctor Gohar Initiative*. This approach is well

received and very much appreciated by the rural audience.

Tangible result: Knowledge management capacity improved

- Project NOVA has completed the translation of its MIS database from English into Armenian. It includes names of learners, training courses taken and other direct attributes related to healthcare providers such as marz, region, community and healthcare facility affiliation. This information was used in the design and development of specific Armenian language maps.

- The following GIS maps were developed/updated during this reporting period:
  - Project NOVA interventions maps for five health networks;
  - Project NOVA's National level interventions map;
  - Armenian language versions of the latest Project NOVA interventions maps;
  - Outline of interactive Quality of Care maps for five QA hospitals supported by Project NOVA in the southern marzes.

- Project NOVA routinely updated and fine-tuned its website including changes in layout design and graphical appearance.

- NOVA's staff continues to publicize its work in Armenia and internationally:
  - Project NOVA Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Zara Mkrtchyan conducted an oral presentation entitled "Improving Healthcare in Rural Communities of Armenia through Nurse Training and Community Partnership: Results of Project NOVA Evaluation" at the Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association in San Diego, CA, October 24-29, 2008.
  - EMG Development Specialist Katie Qutub's abstract "Linking Policy to Practice in Armenia" was accepted for a presentation at World Foundation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA) annual conference. The conference is scheduled to take place in Turkey in April 2009.

    Abstract: The "Innovations in Reproductive Health Project" aka USAID/Project NOVA aims to increase use of appropriate and safe Reproductive Health/Family Planning, Maternal and Child Health services and practices in rural areas of Armenia. Under the project, national Armenian RH/FP/MCH policies, standards and guidelines are reviewed through the lens of a "policy-to-practice/practice-to-policy" approach, which factors in program and service-delivery issues and uses evidence to continuously improve and refine policies based on the implementational experience. A number of indepth policy reviews and several reports have been undertaken to pave the way towards an improved regulatory environment in reproductive health. Informational posters developed, paired with interactive presentations of NOVA's health education materials covering topics such as Basic Benefits Package, antenatal care, postpartum and infant care, postabortion care and family planning in 39 rural communities reaching out to over 720 rural dwellers. Materials roll-out is consistently paired with a Q&A session with NOVA's medical staff. Project NOVA has established and produced three issues of the peer-reviewed Armenian Journal of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Neonatology in order to promote the use of evidence-based medicine in routine RH/FP/MCH practice. Job descriptions for rural community nurses have been developed and promoted. To ensure Policy is reflective of needs, NOVA has developed and continues to update Geographic Information Systems to input, store, retrieve, manipulate, analyze and output geographically referenced data to support planning, monitoring, decision-making and to solve complex problems. NOVA contributes to the development and/or implementation of the National Primary Healthcare Strategy, National Rubella and Measles Immunization Campaign and State Free Obstetric Care Initiative, including design of the national campaign's poster and certificate promoting free obstetric care.

AREA 4: Increase Consumer Demand for High Quality RH/FP/MCH Services through Community Education and Mobilization, Renovation and Equipping of Facilities

Tangible result: Better informed and mobilized community in RH/FP/MCH

- The Community Partnership for Health (CPH) initiative successfully continued its health mobilization and education activities in 60 rural communities of Armavir, Talin, Vayk, Vedi and Sisian health networks. The official opening ceremonies of the newly rehabilitated and furnished rural health posts took place in 10 communities of Vedi health network during October-November 2008. In addition to improving physical conditions of health posts, the supervisory link between the health posts and referral/supervisory facilities were strengthened and supervisory visits have been systematized.

- During this quarter the Project team carried out a number of follow-up visits to the rural communities where Project NOVA worked during the period of October 2004 - September 2006. Although NOVA worked in 60 northern communities, follow up visits took place in only a sample of rural communities. The Project team visited a total of 40 communities of Shirak, Tavush, Gegharkunik and Kotayk marzes. During these visits the team evaluated the current condition and maintenance of health post premises and furniture; the supply and availability of water, electricity and heating; and reviewed the activities performed by community Health Action Groups (HAGs) since completion of NOVA's CPH initiative. The major findings were as follows:
  - Effective partnership between local government, healthcare provider(s), namely health post nurses, and the supervisory health facility is institutionalized and continues to bear fruit in all communities visited. This change is credited primarily to the stewardship role of the Village Councils in the health of their residents.
  - Since completion of NOVA's interventions at the community level, two to three years ago, health post nurses continue to conduct health talks on a regular basis and register them in the special logs. Community health education became a routine task for rural community nurses and has become an integral part of their scope of practice.
  - Overall physical conditions of health posts and furniture are excellent. Health post nurses keep the health posts well maintained with financial and in-kind support from the local government.
  - In the vast majority of rural communities, HAGs established by NOVA for the purpose of CPH initiative were not operational. However, the Village Councils became very active in the health arena. They meet on a regular basis to discuss their community's current health and healthcare problems. In many rural communities, the health post nurses became an active member of the Village Council or the village mayors invited community nurses to participate in the Village Council' s meetings and discussions. The problems discussed during these meetings include health post's running water, roof maintenance, heating (gasification), planning and preparation for vaccination campaign, future plans and current community problems.
  - In almost all communities the supervisory healthcare facilities continued provision of essential PHC medicines to health posts at the nurses' request. HP received the medicines, on average, once a month.
  - For the most part, the physicians from supervisory health care facilities continued visiting the communities on a regular basis. In most cases a pediatrician and an internist visited the health post once a month. The narrow specialists visited almost each community twice a year (in some communities once every three months).

- Community nurses continued conducting health talks on a regular basis in 60 communities of Armavir, Talin, Sisian, Vayk and Vedi health networks.
  - During this quarter nurses conducted 260 health talks reaching 2,310 community residents with key RH/FP/MCH messages. The five main topics covered pregnancy and postpartum danger signs; healthy lifestyle during pregnancy; sick child care; infant feeding, including

exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months; and family planning during the postpartum and postabortion period.

- In order to commemorate the 16 days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign launched by UNFPA in November, Project NOVA contributed to the efforts in raising public awareness on gender and domestic violence by distributing Informational, Educational and Communications materials (developed by UNFPA) and conducting health talks in select rural communities of Armavir, Aragatsotn and Ararat marzes.
- On October 15 Project NOVA also celebrated Global Handwashing Day by organizing health talks in the Vedi and Talin health network rural communities. The talks emphasized the importance of frequent hand washing with soap – a simple yet effective remedy to prevent many infections and diseases.

- Project staff and a local NGO continued a series of Capacity Building training of HAG members initiated in April 2008. This three-day training reached 187 members of 22 HAGs established by Project NOVA in Talin (18) and Vedi (4) health networks. By the end of the training, participants were able to create a community budget, develop a community strategic plan, identify and prioritize existing problems in their community, raise funds to solve identified problems, develop a project proposal and apply for funding.

- During October - December 2008, a total of 18 rural communities of the Talin health network developed Follow-Up Action Plans to ensure sustainability of Project NOVA interventions at the community level. Overall, up to now 50 Follow-up Action Plans have been developed by the members of Health Action Group with facilitation from Project NOVA in Vayk, Sisian, Armavir and Talin health networks. Follow-up Action Plan items included further maintenance of rural health posts, overseeing supervisory visits, provision of primary healthcare medicines, additional renovation activities, solving internal road problems, construction of water pipes, gasification and others. Community members will implement their Follow-up Action Plans without any technical, financial support and/or facilitation from the Project staff. The development of the Follow-up Action Plans for 10 rural communities in Vedi health network is scheduled for a later time.

- With assistance from the Project, all 18 CPH rural communities in Talin health network completed the final round of healthcare services self-assessment exercises (baseline, midterm and final). CPH uses a simplified version of NOVA's Quality of Care framework reviewing only three dimensions of quality during its community self-assessment exercises: accessibility, responsiveness and environment. According to the members of the rural communities conducting self-assessments, on average the quality of healthcare services before and after Project NOVA interventions increased more than two-fold (from a 37% average score to 92%, a 55% increase). GIS maps have been developed to better visualize quality of care changes at the community level.

Tangible result: Local NGOs capacity strengthened

- Project NOVA has successfully completed its collaboration with the "Forum of Non-Government and Non-Trade Organizations of Aragatsotn" NGO contracted by Save the Children to assist with the implementation of community mobilization activities in Talin health network.

Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

- On October 13, Project NOVA organized a round table discussion on the availability and affordability of contraceptive commodities in rural and semi-rural areas of Armenia. The discussion covered strategies to improve the rural population's access to contraceptive services, including information-giving, counseling and method provision. Project NOVA and the UNFPA Armenian Office co-chaired the meeting and presented their experiences and lessons learned in Armenia which served as a starting point for the discussion. Project NOVA also presented its activities in FP and the results of the survey on Contraceptive Commodities Availability which inspired an ardent debate. Leading obstetrician-gynecologists and family doctors as well as representatives from the MOH, international and local organizations, and pharmaceutical companies attended the round table. The participants emphasized the need to organize a separate working group to address the problems existing in this sphere.

- This reporting quarter the Project developed a simple system to document FP client flow in order to monitor progress made at NOVA-supported facilities. User-friendly FP client flow forms were introduced at NOVA's target facilities for data collection in November. Client flow data will be collected on a daily basis by healthcare providers offering FP services at out-patient healthcare facilities and then reported to the project monthly. Following next quarter, Project NOVA will incorporate this data to its quarterly reports.

- More than 30% of married Armenian women rely on traditional methods of contraception. However, presently 43% of all abortions in Armenia are attributable to the incorrect and inconsistent use of traditional methods with only one out three women able to correctly identify their fertile period as occurring halfway between periods. This is especially true for rural women. In order to raise overall awareness on the correct use of fertility awareness methods in rural areas, which will ultimately contribute to the reduction of unwanted pregnancies and, furthermore, abortions, Project NOVA has developed an Armenia-specific fertility identification tool known as the Fertility Calculator. Knowing and understanding fertility period is important for women who are planning their pregnancy and those trying to prevent it. The Fertility Calculator will help women identify fertile and unfertile periods during their monthly menstrual cycle and to better understand their menstrual cycle. The use of this tool does not require any special knowledge or skills. It is user-friendly, simple and has no cost to women. In order to assure the feasibility of using the Fertility Calculator by rural Armenian women, the Project conducted a series of focus group discussions in rural communities. A total of 24 women of reproductive age participated in the pretest of the Fertility Calculator (or wheel). In general the wheel was well perceived by the women. Almost all women were able to utilize it after reading instructions for its use. Women reported that information presented was clear and understandable. Minor changes were introduced based on observations.

- Project NOVA continues monitoring compliance of healthcare facilities with USAID FP Compliance rules and regulations as part of routine training follow-up and monitoring of programmatic activities. During the period of October – December 2008 FP Compliance monitoring visits were conducted in four Maternity Hospitals in Sisian, Talin, Armavir and Vayk health networks. No violations of the USAID FP Compliance requirements have been recorded or reported at visited Maternity hospitals. The summary of FP Compliance monitoring visits is presented in Attachment B.

- The Project made progress on the PMP by contributing to the following indicators (See Attachment A for a complete table of updated progress indicators):
  - Number of people trained in MCH, RH/FP, and other areas (e.g. QI, IP, gender, GIS, etc.)
  - Number of health talks conducted
  - Number of follow-up action plans developed

Management, Collaboration, and Coordination

- **Progress on Annual Workplan:** Project NOVA successfully accomplished almost all activities planned for the 1st Quarter in the Annual Workplan. See the updated Annual Workplan report for the status of each activity.

- **Collaboration and coordination with MOH:** Informal and formal meetings with MOH representatives took place during this reporting period to enhance collaboration and coordination of Project NOVA activities.

- **Staff development:** Mariam Daldabanyan, Project NOVA Finance and Administration Director, and Artak Ordyan, Field Coordinator, attended global finance and administration workshop in Rwanda sponsored by IntraHealth International. The workshop covered QuickBooks training, procurement, grants management, compliance issues, closing projects and offices, asset registers, sub-recipient monitoring, severance, timesheets and selected human resource issues. Marina Vardanyan, Knowledge Management Program Officer, attended a Knowledge Management and Communications Workshop in Chapel Hill, USA also sponsored by IntraHealth International.

- **Coordination and collaboration with other international projects:** Project NOVA continued to collaborate with other international projects and organizations in Armenia to capitalize on their technical expertise, maximize the use of human and financial resources and avoid duplication of efforts. Project staff participated in a number of events organized by international and national agencies and organizations working in Armenia and worldwide in health, and other adjacent areas [e.g. Mobilize Action against Corruption (MAAC) Project, Regional Family Planning Activity Local Government Project Phase 3, UNICEF, UNFPA, Peace Corps, World Vision, etc.]. The following are major collaborations during this quarter:
  - In October NOVA's consultant Larisa Agababyan traveled to Georgia along with Project NOVA's FP Coordinator, Karine Abelyan, to participate in Regional FP Consultative Workshop. The workshop took place in Tbilisi, Georgia on October 22 – 24 under the auspices of a USAID-funded regional FP activity. The invitees included representatives from four Newly Independent States - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan - WHO, San–Francisco and Riga Medical Universities. The key objectives of the consultative workshop included FP situation analysis of the countries represented at the workshop; discussion of the rationale for the strengthening of pre-service medical education in FP, available resources as well as potential challenges; identification of the next steps needed to strengthen the FP component in pre-service medical education; preparation of country action plans; as well as distribution/sharing of key updates with local counterparts of each country upon return.
  - NOVA's collaboration with another USAID-funded Project lead by IREX in Armenia resulted in the training of local journalists on the importance of male involvement in sexual and reproductive health as well as consequences of STIs on maternal and newborn health. The October IREX workshop was designed to assist the journalists in developing story ideas on STIs/HIV/AIDS. Following the workshop newly trained journalists developed numerous articles for the production of the multipage newspaper supplement on Sexual Health in Armenia in Armenian, English and Russian. A total of 80,000 copies of newspaper supplements were printed and inserted in newspapers across the country, including all the major Yerevan and regional newspapers. In addition to training of journalists, NOVA served as medical editor and one of the major contributors to the supplement.
  - Project NOVA established virtual collaboration with USAID' Fertility Awareness Methods Project in order to explore the possibility of promoting natural methods of FP among the rural population. Virtual collaboration included development of Fertility Calculator and client-education materials on LAM and natural FP (as part of the FP/RH/MCH flipchart).
  - The Project contributed to the USAID's MAAC Project National Anticorruption Forum on the Government-Civil Society Cooperation Opportunities within the framework of the Obstetrics Certificates Introduction Process. The main purpose of the event was to initiate a dialogue between national and local state agencies and civil society on how to increase public participation and support to the newly introduced state health-related program.
  - Project NOVA held a series of meetings to share its experience with Millennium Challenges Account for Armenia in establishing an operational GIS/MIS.

Upcoming Major Activities

- Development of National Obstetrical Standards of Care for Normal Delivery
- Development of preconception health and healthcare program
- Continuation of STIs Integrated Management Training
- Continuation of FP/RH Counseling Training in Southern Marzes
- Development of pre-service family planning curriculum
- Establishment of additional Schools of Motherhood
- Production of MCH Flipchart
- Production of Armenian Journal of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Neonatology, Vol. 2, No. 2
- Production of Fertility Calculator (Wheel)
- CPH Follow up visits to the communities of Armavir, Vayk and Sisian health networks
- Development of Follow up Action Plans for 10 communities of Vedi health network
- Completion of HAG's Capacity Building Training in 10 communities of Vedi network.

Attachment A. Progress on Project NOVA Indicators for Q1 FY09

Project NOVA Progress Indicators	FY05 ACTUAL	FY06 ACTUAL	FY07 ACTUAL	FY08 ACTUAL	FY09 ACTUAL					Project TOTAL	FY09 Target
					Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total		
Number of people trained in MCH	229	259	430	176	85				85	1,179	180
Women	N/A	N/A	402	173	84				84	N/A	
Men	N/A	N/A	28	3	1				1	N/A	
Number of people trained in RH/FP	46	50	26	283	121				121	526	370
Women	37	41	24	274	111				111	487	
Men	9	9	2	9	10				10	39	
Number of providers completed management training	45	38								83	N/A
Number of people trained in other areas (e.g. QI, IP, gender, GIS, etc.)	123	153	202	351	187				187	1,016	-
Women	115	143	194	193	128				128	773	
Men	8	10	8	158	59				59	243	
Number of facilities (health posts) with basic equipment and supplies	105	73	31	68						277	N/A
Number of new RH/FP/MCH training packages developed & introduced	1	3	4	1	0				0	9	2[1]
Number of policy documents reviewed/prepared	2	2	3	2	0				0	9	1
Number of professional publications, presentations and posters presented and/or published	8	4	11	13	1				1	37	2
Number of client and provider materials developed, produced and disseminated			5	7	0				12	12	4[2]
Number of new approaches successfully introduced	0	1	1	1						3	N/A
Number of health posts rehabilitated	29	36	9	54						128	N/A
Number of higher level facilities rehabilitated	N/A	N/A	1	4	1				1	6	2
Number of Health Action Groups established	30	36	56	10						132	N/A
Number of follow-up Action Plans developed			0	61	18				18	79	10
Number of clinical training sites established	6	6	6							18	N/A
Number of health talks conducted by Health Post Nurses	600	423	1,097	1,303	260				260	3,683	-
Number of women giving births who received AMTSL through Project NOVA support			458	2,624	668				668	3,750	2,500
Number of new OC users				N/A	-				N/A	TBD	-
Number of new IUD users				N/A	-				N/A	TBD	-
Abortion rate per 100 births				11.0	8.5				8.5	N/A	-
Proportion of pregnant women with 1st trimester antenatal care (average)			41%	47%	48%				48%	N/A	-
Proportion of pregnant women with at least 4 antenatal care visits (average)			70%	77.5%	84%				84%	TBD	-
Number of new PHC facilities offering FP counseling				51	0				0	40	-
Number of FP referrals by pediatricians					126				126	TBD	-

[1] Preconception Care Training Package, Pre-service FP training curriculum
[2] 2009 Basic Benefits Package brochure, 2009 Basic Benefits Package poster, Preconception Care brochure, health talks job aid flipchart, WHO contraceptive eligibility wheel

Attachment B. Family Planning Compliance Monitoring Visits

During October – December 2008, Family Compliance Monitoring visits have been conduced in four maternities supported by the project. The summary of visits is presented in the table below.

1. Do you currently provide any family planning services?	4 out of 4 facilities surveyed provide family planning services
2. What type of family planning services does your facility provide?	4 out of 4 facilities insert/remove IUDs 4 out of 4 facilities prescribe pills 2 out of 4 facility administer Depo-Provera 4 out of 4 facilities dispense condoms and/or spermicides 4 out of 4 facilities provide individual counseling 4 out of 4 facilities provide emergency contraception 4 out of 4 facilities conduct family planning client routine check up
3. What family planning methods do you currently have available at your facility?	3 out of 4 facility have contraceptive pills 4 out of 4 facilities have condoms 1 out of 4 facilities has spermicides 3 out of 4 facilities have female condoms 1 out of 4 facilities have Depo-Provera NOTE: Although Project NOVA is not providing contraceptive commodities, in August 2008 free supply of condoms was delivered to all NOVA supported Maternities.
4. Do your providers use any financial or in-kind incentives to increase the number of family planning users?	No provider uses any financial or in-kind incentives for increasing the number of family planning users in 4 out of 4 facilities surveyed.
5. How are healthcare providers at your facility compensated for the provision of family planning services?	No special compensation for family planning services is offered in 4 out of 4 facilities surveyed.
6. Is there a particular number of family planning clients you must reach?	No special targets for FP clients are set in 4 out of 4 facilities surveyed.
7. What are the consequences of not meeting the quota?	N/A
8. Are family planning IEC materials visibly displayed and/or available to clients at your facility?	In 4 out of 4 facilities the family planning educational materials are visibly displayed.
9. What IEC contraceptive materials are displayed?	"10 things women need to know after having a baby" brochure is visibly displayed in 2 out 4 facilities "The future is in your hands" brochure is visibly displayed in 4 out of 4 facilities "Do you know your contraceptive choices" brochure is visibly displayed in 2 out of 4 facilities MSF leaflet on IUD is available in 1 out of 4 facilities World Vision FP Methods Poster (Armenian)/Do you Know Your Contraceptive choices (Russian) Poster are visibly displayed in 2 out of 4 facilities