



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://feedthefuture.gov/article/community-health-services-help-pregnant-women-and-young-children-tajikistan>

Community Health Services Help Pregnant Women and Young Children in Tajikistan



Mercy Corps

Community health educators trained through a Feed the Future-supported project give Tajik women the tools to keep themselves and their children healthy through good nutrition.

Marjona, a young woman who lives with her in-laws in Bokhtar district in southern Tajikistan, is nine months pregnant. Her husband, like many men in Tajikistan, works in Russia in order to make enough money to support his family back home. Marjona knew little about prenatal care during a prior pregnancy, which ended prematurely due to health complications.

"I lost my baby because I didn't know simple self-care during pregnancy," she says.

Health problems during pregnancy and among young children are often related to poor nutrition, which is why a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) maternal and child health project is helping Tajik women in 12 Feed the Future target districts in Khatlon Province learn skills and receive support to better care for themselves and their children before, during and after pregnancy. Nearly one third of children under five years of age in these Feed the Future districts are stunted, and many mothers and children are deficient in micronutrients like iron and vitamin A.

Feed the Future is addressing these challenges through community trainings about health during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period. Community health educators are also being trained to provide one-on-one prenatal and postnatal home visits. These sessions allow time for questions and to reinforce health and nutrition messages for mothers and other caregivers in the home.

Marjona feels she has gained an invaluable ally in Zarina, a health educator trained through the program, who provides advice on baby care, diet and nutrition during her regular home visits with Marjona. Although there is a health facility in the village where Marjona lives, the two health providers employed by the facility are overwhelmed by the number of patients in need of care.

Marjona is confident that the education provided by the program staff and community health educators like Zarina have prepared her to raise a happy and healthy baby.

"The project has influenced my life a lot; I have learned important skills that help me to take care of myself and my future child. Now my pregnancy is going well and I am attending prenatal care every month. Mothers' health and diet affect their babies. Therefore, a mother cannot know enough about how to take care of herself," she says. Marjona plans to continue

attending community health classes even after her baby is born to continue to build her knowledge of good health and nutrition practices.

Under the Feed the Future Initiative, USAID and Mercy Corps partner to improve the health and nutrition status of women and children under five and to improve the quality of maternal and child health services available in Khatlon Province, the Feed the Future geographical focus area. USAID's Maternal and Child Health project has assisted approximately 250,000 people to date in Tajikistan.