

# ARMENIA:

## SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT HIV AND AIDS

**HIV and AIDS have become common terms throughout the world since the virus' outbreak some 30 years ago. For volunteer health workers fighting this deadly disease, HIV-related stigma and awareness travel a common path.**



In Armenia, since 2008, some 950 trained community health volunteers have provided peer education to more than 16,290 neighbors through the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund–supported Lasarat Ambulatory Clinic. Staff and volunteers work together to decrease stigma and discrimination, and to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases among at-risk populations. They accomplish this through HIV testing, word of mouth, printed materials, and more.

Most of the community health volunteers are traditional Caucasus women. Although sometimes they face challenges communicating to men the importance of HIV testing and the need to understand health risks, the women feel empowered by the knowledge that they are saving lives. Volunteers hope more men will get involved in HIV education, as men reportedly account for 74 percent of cases in Armenia.

“In places where these projects have been implemented, there is more awareness now of HIV issues and more tolerance toward people living with HIV,” says Viktoria Avakova, UMCOR Health coordinator in Armenia.

**World AIDS Day is December 1.**

Help projects like this one gain ground in the fight against HIV/AIDS, by supporting the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund, **UMCOR Advance #982345**. Learn more at [www.umglobalaidsfund.org](http://www.umglobalaidsfund.org).



[www.umcor.org](http://www.umcor.org)

Community health volunteers in Armenia share with UMCOR their experiences spreading the word about HIV/AIDS in their communities.

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