

2020



ASSOCIATION "HERA XXI" ANNUAL BULLETIN



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Foreword

Throughout the world, including Georgia, 2020 turned to be a major challenge for the health sector, in general, and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) sector, in particular, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Services decreased, which had a distinctly negative impact on vulnerable groups of population, in particular on young people living in rural and remote areas; girls and boys living in poverty; women of childbearing age; persons with IDP status, etc. A particularly vulnerable group - women and girls – were the ones who had to bear the brunt of the increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence. There appeared so-called “invisible victims” who could not be identified by law enforcements considering the reality. Vulnerable groups became even more vulnerable and marginalized.

These groups in most cases do not have access to the Internet or in case they have – it is of poor quality; they cannot afford modern equipment and lack the knowledge of how to use them; consequently, latest and up-to-date information is not available for them and they are excluded from education.



Ms Nino Tsuleiskiri, Director of the Association
“HERA XXI”

The Association “HERA XXI” has stayed determined and fully committed to ensure access to high quality Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services and comprehensive and reliable information, in a supportive environment, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, for all volunteers, members or beneficiaries of the Association (living in urban or rural areas), and to meet their needs.

Volunteers and the staff worked together to turn the challenges and obstacles we face due to the pandemic into opportunities to succeed and make progress. All the free services (provided by doctor-reproductologists, lawyers and social workers) have been and are still available (online, hotline/telephone services and continuous engagement with the community) to all, including to persons living in IDP settlements (Tserovani, Tsilkaani and Frezeti).

Uninterrupted programmes, jobs maintained, successful implementation of programmes, adaptation to crisis conditions, and the maintenance and enhancement of a sustainable, safe environment – all can be considered as our accomplishments and real achievements.

In the future, during the next stage of the pandemic, taking into account the challenges of 2020, we are strongly determined to follow the vision and the values of the Association and

continue to work towards improving Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and realizing relevant rights, ensuring gender equality, protecting women's rights and empowering young people.

Engagement of the population, at all stages, starting from emergency measures to strategic and long-term responses, will be of crucial importance.

We continue to move forward with some success stories of our beneficiaries, innovative ideas, support from volunteers and activists, in the search for new ways, active involvement and participation of the members of the community!

Advocacy

In the light of the pandemic conditions and challenges of 2020, it became important for the Association “HERA XXI” to continue to advocate for the Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), at the national and local levels, as well as at the international level.

Advocacy at the national level

- As a member of the State Youth Policy Monitoring and Development Working Group, the Association “HERA XXI”, in close cooperation with the Committee on Sports and Youth Affairs of the Parliament of Georgia and the Youth Agency, has developed the **Georgian National Youth Policy Concept for 2020 – 2030** and the **National Youth Policy 2025**, which reflect the reproductive health-related goals and objectives;
- As part of its advocacy for the inclusion of a Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for Reproductive Health (RH) in national anti-crisis management mechanisms and action plans, the Association has developed a position paper: [Ensuring the provision of reproductive health care in humanitarian settings](#).

Advocacy at the local level

- Youth groups from Khobi, Akhaltsikhe and Kutaisi, representing the Association “HERA XXI”, participated in regional youth forums organized by the Youth Agency for the purpose of enhancing cooperation with the municipalities and the youth sector;
- Within the framework of cooperation with the youth component and during a strategic meeting, an agreement was reached with Kutaisi City Hall on future cooperation and assistance in case of need; as a result of the meeting with the representatives of Tserovani, Tsilkani and Frezeti local councils and Tbilisi City Council (Sakrebulo), the needs of the municipality were identified.

Advocacy at the international level

- International instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) serve as the basis for the activities performed by the Association “HERA XXI”, and the Association is actively engaged in advocacy for the fulfilment of international obligations;

- Participating in the 3rd cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, the Association “HERA XXI” was actively involved in the process of joint advocacy led by both individuals and the civil society;

Within the frames of the 3rd cycle, the Association “HERA XXI” submitted one individual report prepared in collaboration with the Sexual Rights Initiative (SRI) and the Coalition for Reproductive Health and Rights, and two joint shadow reports prepared in collaboration with the platform for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). The reports submitted by the Association “HERA XXI” cover the following topics: [primary health care system and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights \(SRHR\)](#), [gender-based violence, access to safe abortion and family planning](#). Following the consideration of the State Report at the meeting of the Human Rights Council, Member States issued 9 recommendations on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH).

- The Association actively participated in the national pre-session organized for Georgia, where civil society representatives, led by the National Institute for Human Rights, presented reports on the human rights situation to representatives of the diplomatic corps; in addition the Association participated in bilateral and multilateral meetings with representatives of the diplomatic corps.

Education

One of the strategic directions of the Association “HERA XXI” is to promote education on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in both **formal** and **non-formal** settings in Georgia.

Non-formal education

- 41 young people from the municipalities of Georgia have been trained through online training webinars as part of a peer educator training programme, based on UNESCO's updated International Technical Guidance "Everything in One Course". In addition, 12 peer educators improved their coaching skills as part of the subsequent phase of the course;
- Due to the situation created by the COVID 19 pandemic, the information-educational sessions led by peer educators were conducted face-to-face as well as online. **10** peer educators representing the Association "HERA XXI" conducted **143** online and face-to-face information-educational sessions in **8** municipalities of Georgia.






- Journalists and social workers improved their professional competencies and qualifications through attending online seminars and being trained in the issues concerning Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH).

Formal Education

- Within the framework of the partnership established with the National Centre for Teacher Professional Development, a study of the needs of biology, natural sciences and civic education was conducted, and based on the findings of the study, the relevant national standard was developed and adapted.

Research

Research conducted by the Association “HERA XXI” in 2020 provides valuable data on the environment for vulnerable groups and young people in Georgia with regard to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and gender-based violence, as well as to the primary health care situation and the preparedness of the civil sector to respond to the challenges posed by the COVID 19 pandemic.

	<p>Study of the Experiences and Needs Related to Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV), Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), Termination of Pregnancy and Family Planning among Girls and Women of Childbearing Age Living in the Towns and Villages Adjacent to the Occupied Territories of Shida Kartli</p>		<p>Primary Health Care in Georgia - System Analysis and Recommendations for Real Changes</p>
	<p>Study of CSO Sector Resources and Needs in the Context of the COVID 19 Pandemic</p>		<p>Study of the Experiences, Needs and Attitudes related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of the Beneficiaries of Partner Organizations</p>

Gender-specific Approach

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the risks faced by women and girls, due to a lack of attention to the provision of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services, lockdowns and restrictions, and increased domestic violence.

It is essential for female survivors of violence to be aware of the existing safeguards offered by governmental and non-governmental organizations and of the availability of social and other types of support.

In this regard, the Association “HERA XXI” has introduced a legal service; a total of **170 counselling sessions** were provided to beneficiaries during 2020, the analysis of which revealed the following trends:

- One of the problems citizens face is **the lack of access to health services, in general, and reproductive health services, in particular, which meet quality standards, and access to information about their rights in this regard**;
- There is a high demand for legal counselling on the issues such as: **family planning, contraception, selective abortion, artificial insemination and sterilization**;
- Counselling mostly covers issues such as **domestic violence, psychological violence, and gender-based violence**. Legal counselling sessions can be grouped thematically: domestic violence committed in the presence of a minor and gender-motivated violence. In such cases it is necessary to separate the survivor from the abuser;
- Problems related to **medical facilities**.

IDP Settlements: Key Challenges and Needs

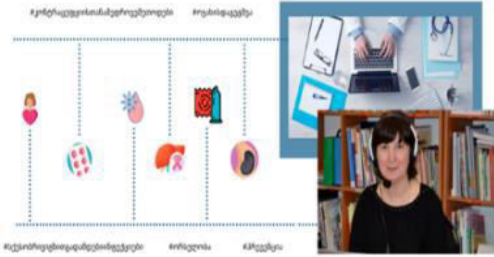
One of the target groups of the Association “HERA XXI” is the group of IDP women and young girls. In 2020, the work performed by social workers with the population of Tserovani, Tsilkani and Frezeti proved to be productive. First, the needs of and challenges faced by the population were identified through focus groups (through interviews with IDP women and young people from Tserovani, Tsilkani and Frezeti settlements for IDPs); in addition, a detailed study of the situation in the settlements in terms of existing infrastructure, education and public health was conducted.

Key challenges faced by women were **various forms of violence**: verbal, physical, psychological, sexual violence and neglect; additionally, women often experience gender-based violence, which is very common in the settlements, as well as **lack of trust in local health care facilities** (doctors’ qualification, lack of medical equipment, lack of access to confidential and anonymous space), **economic barriers** (poverty, poor and inadequate living conditions, and lack of personal hygiene and space).

The following needs were identified in the focus groups of young girls: lack of information on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) issues; **lack of information** on family planning, modern methods of contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs); **in terms of non-formal education**, young people in the settlements do not have access to sports and arts classes that are important and necessary for their development.

Regarding the provision of services, it is important to note that the social worker representing the Association “HERA XXI” has active communication with beneficiaries in order to identify their needs. After challenges faced by beneficiaries are identified, they are referred to specific services tailored to their needs. The Association “HERA XXI” offers free individual online counselling with a doctor-reproductologist and legal counselling provided to beneficiaries to facilitate their access to Reproductive Health (RH) services (family planning, modern methods of contraception, age-related changes in human body, safe sexual intercourse, sexually transmitted infections (STIs)) as well as to support them through legal counselling on issues related to human rights abuses (inequality between men and women, domestic violence, Sexual and Reproductive Rights, and informed choice). Services provided to young girls and women are tailored to their needs and interests. After counselling by a doctor-reproductologist, a social worker provides beneficiaries with contraceptives/or introduces monitoring on their use, as needed.

**Free Individual Online
Counseling with a Doctor-
Reproductologist**



**Free Online Counseling with a Doctor-
Reproductologist**

**Individual Online Legal
Counseling**

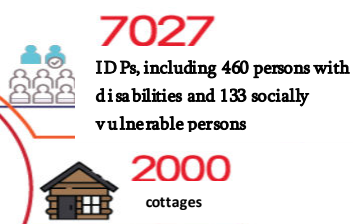


**Free Individual Online Telecounseling with a Social
Worker**



☎ 595 94 15 14

Tserovani



Education

- A school with more than 1000 students
- A nursery school with more than 500 children
- A public library, Youth House, a sports school

Infrastructure

- Roads are laid and paved on the outskirts of the settlement for IDPs
- Problems: no proper sewerage system & water supply schedule
- There is public transport available from Tbilisi to Tserovani, but no public transport in the settlement

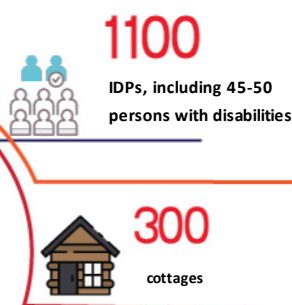
Public Health

The outpatient clinic and polyclinic are housed in a rented cottage. However, **the infrastructure of the medical facilities remains problematic.**

The municipal government allocates GEL 300-500 per capita for annual cost of medical care for IDPs living in the settlement.

The social package for IDPs includes various diseases; important component of the package is financing medical costs of childbirth in the amount of GEL 300 per newborn.

Frezeti



Education

- A school with 83 students
- A nursery school with 32 children

Infrastructure

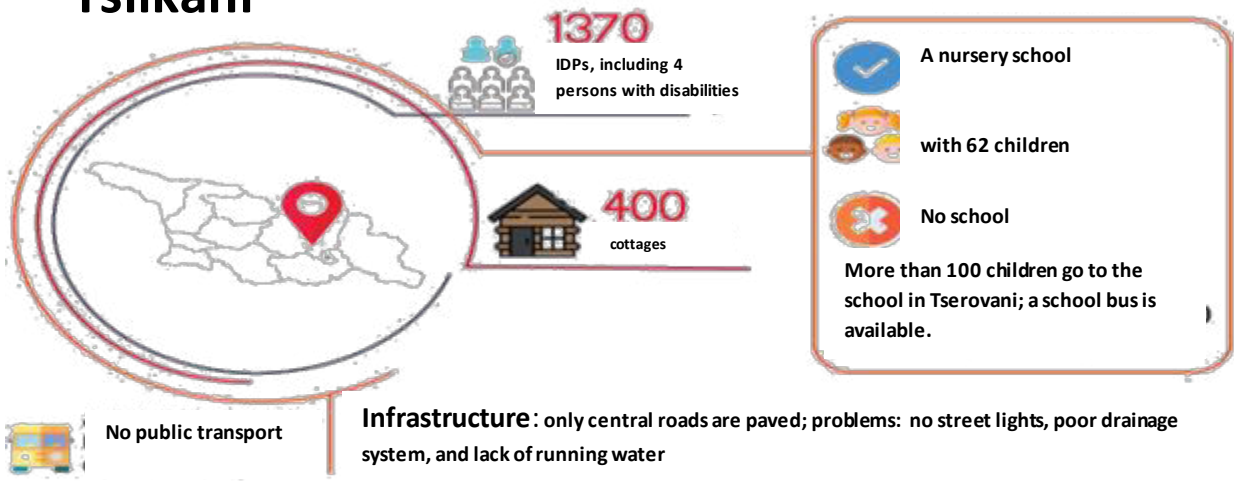
- Roads are not paved
- Problem: lack of running water
- A new nursery school is planned to be opened; there is a stadium, but in poor condition. There is a public garden with attractions

Public Health

- Emergency surgeries are financed in the amount of GEL 500.
- All IDPs receive financial assistance in the amount of GEL 45 per month.
- Teams from various clinics pay visits to provide services to the residents of the settlement.
- There is an urgent need for a pharmacy in the settlement.



Tsilkani



There is a polyclinic and a family doctor and a nurse in the settlement. The family doctor is male and female IDPs find it difficult to talk about Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) issues with the family doctor and have to go to the city of Tbilisi to receive relevant services.



There are reported cases of physical violence, and according to the governor, people are informed about how to behave and they call 112 in case of an emergency.



Empowering Young People



YOUTH GROUPS



Tbilisi, Akhaltsikhe,
Khobi, Kutaisi



65 members in
total
(9.4% - boys)

7 Leaders



5 large-scale
campaigns

About 472 new
volunteers



6 mentors



4 social media
assistants



Young people are actively involved in the activities performed by the Association “HERA XXI”.

In 2020, the Association “HERA XXI” introduced a Youth-Centred Approach (YCA), which aims to ensure participation of young people at all levels of the organization activities. Important steps taken in this direction include:

- Revised youth policy reflecting changes based on the specificities of the approach and the views of the volunteers;
- A mentoring programme has been introduced providing for the communication and sharing of best practices between experienced and new members of the organization.

Campaigns

In 2020, large-scale campaigns dedicated to international days were launched on the initiative of and support from the Association “HERA XXI”:

- **28 May** - On the International Day of Action for Women's Health, as part of a social media campaign, the Association expressed its support with the motto “I have the right”;
- **12 August** - The final event of the project “Leader Girls for Healthy Lifestyle” was held on the International Youth Day, which was preceded by **7 LIVE** sessions on the topic of healthy lifestyle. Live broadcast of each session was attended by an average of 97 people, and the posts were viewed by more than 10,000 people;

- **26 September** - On the World Contraception Day, 12 social workers upgraded their knowledge of modern methods of contraception;
- **28 September** - Infographics and articles were created to raise awareness and provide information, as part of the activities dedicated to the International Safe Abortion Day;
- **11 October** - As part of the event dedicated to the International Day of the Girl Child, a street painting event was held in Akhaltsikhe with the slogan: "Create your future without stereotypes"; a meeting was held with the young people from Tsilkani, Frezeti and Tserovani, which laid the foundation for the formation of a youth group of IDPs. The meeting held by the Kutaisi youth group aimed at motivating young girls;
- **25 November** - Volunteers collected stories of young people about their experiences of violence, the dissemination of which, through the page of the Association on the social network, helped raise public awareness of the challenges faced by today's young people;
- **3 December** - On the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), a reportage highlighting some changes faced by women with disabilities in isolation due to the COVID 19 pandemic prepared by the Association was presented to the public.
- **10 December** - The debate tournament initiated by the Youth Network of the Association, helped young people to raise

SERVICES & RESOURCES OFFERED BY THE ASSOCIATION "HERA XXI" IN 2020

CONFIDENTIAL & ANONYMOUS ONLINE COUNSELLING WITH A DOCTOR-REPRUDUCTOLOGIST	ONLINE LEGAL COUNSELLING
ONLINE COUNSELING WITH A SOCIAL WORKER	ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORM EHERA.GE
WWW.FORTEACHERS.GE	FORPARENTS.GE <small>Webpage & Mobile App</small>
<h2>YOUTHNET OF THE ASSOCIATION "HERA XXI"</h2>	

their awareness of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) issues.



Our Volunteers and Activists



“Hera XXI is my second home. Here, we have the opportunity to identify our strengths and weaknesses; we are always in search of something new and useful. The Association has shown us how important it is for both ourselves and those around us to be an active citizen and to initiate changes.

“HERA XXI” - is an association where you realize that you are an individual able to find your place in the society.”

Maka Kobakhidze, Khobi Youth Group Leader

“The mentoring project turned out to be one of the most interesting and productive. Even though I was tired of other online trainings and thought I lacked the motivation, this project once again gave me the strength to overcome this difficult period by working on myself. While studying mentoring, I thought not only about building relationships with mentees, but also about what kind of communications I preferred in general. Mentoring has become another challenge for me, which has given me more enthusiasm.”

Tatia Tatoshvili, Young Mentor of the Association “HERA XXI”



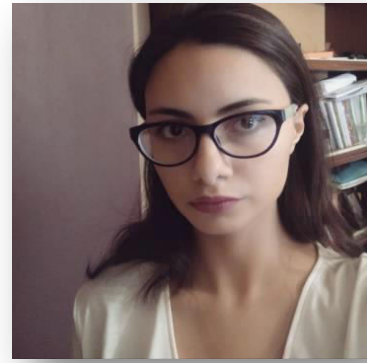
“HERA XXI youth groups from different regions held numerous events throughout the year. Personally, I led some information-educational sessions with young people online. It turned out to be very interesting and productive for me – firstly, I gained knowledge and experience through the Training of Trainers (TOT) programme and thematic sessions, and secondly, I had an opportunity to share my knowledge and experience with my peers. I worked with at least 30 young people during information-educational sessions. I think I have had significant achievements as a peer educator. ”

Soso Pkhakadze, Peer Educator of “HERA XXI”

"I have been administering the Facebook page of the Association "HERA XXI" Youth Network since the day of its creation. Over the course of time we have published a number of materials of both educational and informational nature, as well as materials describing our activities and aiming at empowering young people.

Managing the social media page of the Association "HERA XXI" has been a challenging experience for me. In addition to being able to import existing projects, programmes and campaigns I have been involved in so far into online space, it was important to collect, process, analyze and visualize various data related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and import them to social media."

Barbara Janashvili, Social Media Assistant



Positioning on Social Media

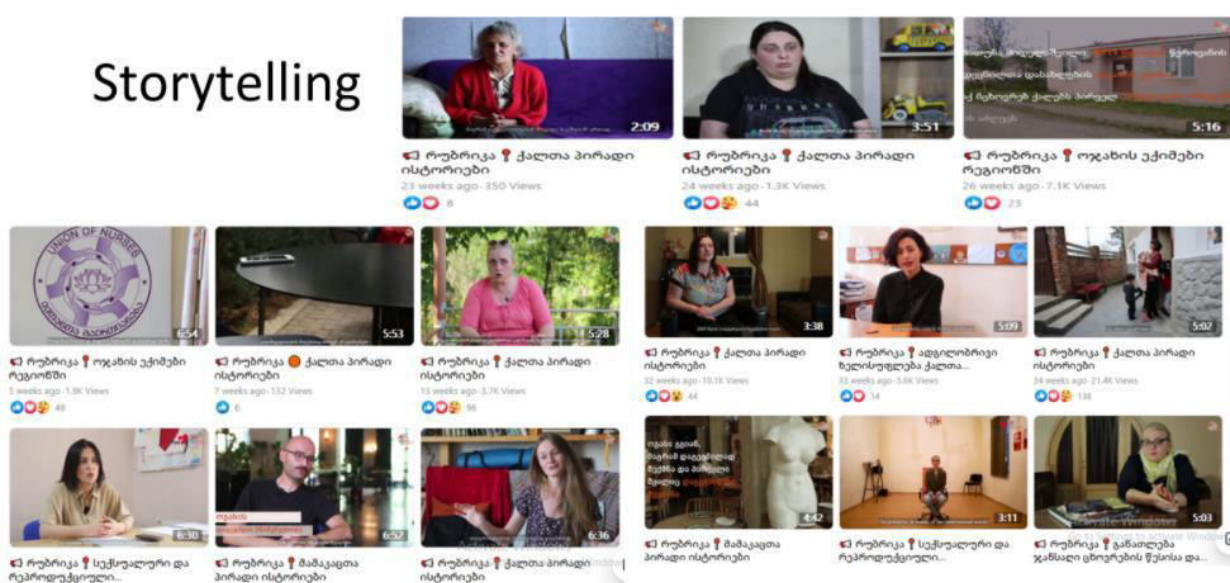
The Association “HERA XXI” has an [official website](#), [a website for parents](#), [a website for teachers](#), and [an innovative mobile application for parents](#). In addition to these websites and the mobile application, the Association “HERA XXI” uses social media channels such as [Facebook](#), [Linked-In](#), [TWITTER](#) to effectively achieve its goals.

In 2020, [the Facebook page](#) of **the Association “HERA XXI” Youth Network** was established with the aim of sharing news in the youth field, information about current events and experiences, and strengthening support for young people. The page is managed by representatives of a specially trained youth group. They acquire professional skills necessary for their career growth and development.

Throughout the 2020, mentors representing the Youth Network shared their experiences with mentees and other young people; covered ongoing campaigns in Akhaltsikhe and Kutaisi; youth group leaders were enabled to make their voices heard; social networking assistants created infographics to make the main findings of the research conducted by the Association “HERA XXI” visible for a broader audience.

The “HERA XXI” Youth Network platform is constantly open to innovative initiatives and is always ready to encourage young people to make their voices heard.

Storytelling – True life stories were told on a variety of topics, including gender-based violence, family planning, the lives of women with disabilities, and more. These are the stories of people living around us, and our main task is to increase the responsibility of the society for these issues by sharing stories.



COVID 19-related Challenges and Needs

The crisis caused by the COVID 19 global pandemic affected all areas, and its impact on formal and non-formal education and service delivery also posed some challenges that required timely action to ensure that education and health services were not completely disrupted. In particular, it became necessary to conduct activities in the virtual world and to switch to online activities while focusing on the timely delivery of services in order to create a safe environment for women.

The Association “HERA XXI” had an experience in using online channels or platforms for the implementation of the activities, so it was not difficult for the Association to ensure effective functioning and performance under the conditions of COVID 19 in 2020. In this regard, the Association “HERA XXI” managed to achieve the following:

- 41 young people attended thematic webinars on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) issues;
- 12 participants from different municipalities of Georgia attended trainings on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) issues and became peer educators of the Association “HERA XXI”;
- 10 peer educators conducted face to face and online information sessions on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) topics, using the platform ZOOM, with a total of 263 young people attending the sessions;
- A training course on research tools was attended by youth group members, mentors and peer educators representing the Association “HERA XXI”.
- 6 young people acquired knowledge and improved their skills in mentoring, after which they used the platform of the Association “HERA XXI” Youth Network to share their knowledge with others;
- 4 young people attended training in social media management;
- Individual online counselling with a doctor-reproductologist and a lawyer was offered on a weekly basis;
- The Association “HERA XXI” provided free contraceptives to vulnerable groups;
- The Association “HERA XXI” strengthened its partnerships with clinics in four regions of Georgia to ensure the sustainability of service delivery.

საჭიროებათა კვლევა
(ფოკუს ჯგუფები)

ბუნებისმეტყველება,
ბიოლოგია, სამოქალაქო
განათლება

- თბილისი 6
- გორი 3
- რუსთავი 3
- ქუთაისი 6
- ახალციხე 6
- ზუგდიდი 6

სულ - 256 მასწავლებელი
Teams - ონლაინ
31.08.2020 – 14.09.2020
ასაკი: 26 წლიდან 71 წლამდე.

თბილისი, 15.12.2020



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