

SUSTAINABILITY

What community needs will your project address and how were these needs identified? Provide any relevant data or survey results

As mentioned above the prevalence of adverse birth outcomes is high in Suriname and interventions to improve health and care for (pregnant) women/couples and their babies are needed. In 2015 sustainable development goals (SDGs) were established to continue the work started through the millennium development goals (MDGs), including reduction of child mortality (MDG 4) and improvement of maternal health (MDG 5). The SDGs provide an overarching umbrella under which decades of work in maternal and newborn health come together and strategic objectives to end preventable maternal and newborn mortality including strengthening health systems and reaching every woman and newborn. In addition, Rotary makes high-quality-healthcare available to vulnerable mothers and children so they can live longer and grow stronger. They expand access to quality care, so mothers and children everywhere can have the same opportunities for a healthy future.

In Suriname, the foundation for Perinatal Interventions Suriname (Perisur) develops and implements intervention-based-activities to improve health and care for (pregnant) women and their babies (see <https://perisur.org/>). With funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Perisur developed and implemented preconception care, group prenatal care (SamenZwanger) and perinatal audits in three hospitals in Paramaribo.

Perisur was the main implementer of the Preparing for Life Rotary Global Grant project in Suriname (GG1412976), a project that developed and implemented an interactive educational program for secondary schools in Suriname focusing on sexual resilience and on high rates of teenage pregnancies and impact of teenage motherhood on well-being and future of teenagers. In addition, a pregnancy book for pregnant women/couples participating in group prenatal care in Suriname was developed. This project was initiated by the RC Leiden (The Netherlands), supported by the RC Paramaribo Residence (Suriname) and co-funded by The Rotary Foundation.

Detail how your project will address these community needs.

Many of the factors that contribute to adverse perinatal outcomes are preventable during (early stages of) pregnancy and by intervening before pregnancy (during the preconception period) and thus removing risk factors before a pregnancy is conceived and the embryo is at its most vulnerable. Vulnerable women/couples that are at higher risk of having adverse perinatal outcomes will be identified and offered interventions to improve health and care before, thus before pregnancy.

Health workers will be trained in identifying and modifying preconception risks through preconception counseling. The first step will be a risk assessment using a structured form completed during the interview with women/couples. This will be followed by health information (healthy diet and life style, avoid smoking/alcohol/drugs, avoid harmful medications, avoid toxic substances), interventions (folic acid use, optimal weight) and specified counseling if needed (e.g. for women/couples with chronic diseases who use medications that can be harmful for the vulnerable embryo).

Preconception care is therefore the focus of this project. From 2015, almost 400 women/couples received preconception counselling in Suriname. Despite the fact that preconception care was successfully implemented and is ongoing, the majority of women receiving this type of innovative care are from the urban cities Paramaribo or Wanica, who have better access to the healthcare systems and are higher educated.