



MAMA+ Prevention of Abandonment of Children Born to HIV-Positive Mothers

MAMA+ Project Celebrates its Second Year of Operations with a 98% Success Rate Supporting over 280 HIV-Positive Mothers to Keep Their Children

Since its launch in January 2005, the MAMA+ Project of Doctors of the World-USA (DOW) has provided comprehensive psychosocial and material **support to over 133 HIV-positive women at risk of abandoning their newborn infants** in the St. Petersburg region of Russia. As a result of participating in the MAMA+ project, **97% of these women have kept their children** in their families.

The success of the MAMA+ model is dramatic. For example, in Russia, DOW works in two maternity hospitals for women with no prenatal care, at the highest risk of abandoning their children (Maternity Hospitals #15 and 16). From 2005 to 2006 alone, the annual child **abandonment rate for HIV-positive mothers in these hospitals was reduced** from 29% to 21%. In addition, four children were reunited with their families.

The MAMA+ model has also been successfully replicated in Ukraine, Since July 2005, over 150 HIV-positive Ukrainian women at-risk of abandoning their newborns have received MAMA+ support and 99% have been empowered to keep their children in their family homes.

Overview of the MAMA+ Model

DOW's MAMA+ project provides high-risk HIV-positive new mothers and pregnant women with services to empower them to keep their newborn children in the face of the many challenges ahead, including adjusting to their HIV-status, social discrimination, lack of family support, and difficult economic or other life circumstances. The MAMA+ project helps these often marginalized and disenfranchised mothers to gain the confidence, knowledge, skills, and other assets to retain guardianship of their children. By creating a stable, loving home, these new mothers can improve their children's prospects for a successful future. DOW also works to **build local systems, capacity, and commitment to keep children born to HIV-positive mothers in their birth family environment.**



Women enrolled in the project receive a **comprehensive set of services that meet their individual needs** and improve the quality of life of both mothers and children. Services include:



- Psychological counselling
- Social work support
- Material assistance
- Improved access to medical care, including ARVs
- Case management
- Regular home visits
- Counselling and workshops on topics such as parenting, health, self-esteem, safe sex, and relationships
- Employment training and job search coaching
- Peer support groups

A **MAMA+ Center** provides a central community, support, and services center for clients, including day care for infants while their mothers receive MAMA+ services or take care of personal matters such as legal appointments, vocational training, or job interviews. The MAMA+ Center in Russia has already hosted **over 500 client visits since it opened in St. Petersburg in March 2006.** MAMA+ also **reunited 10 abandoned children of HIV-positive mothers with their birth families.**

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Results to Date

- *During its first two years, MAMA+ Russia screened 254 women and enrolled 133 into project services.*
- *In 1.5 years, MAMA+ Ukraine screened 458 women and enrolled 153 into project services.*
- *98% of children of clients have remained in their birth family environment.*



The MAMA+ Approach

- **Early identification and screening of pregnant women** who are newly diagnosed with HIV enables MAMA+ to identify those who are most at risk and provide early and longer-term support to an expectant mother. Such crucial support helps each new mother to understand that she and her child can live a healthy life and that there are resources available to support her.
- **Local partnerships for community-based MAMA+ implementation**, such as with local maternity hospitals, women's clinics, children's infectious disease hospitals, AIDS Centers, and NGOs ensures that MAMA+ develops local roots to enable its continuation for the long term.
- **MAMA+ referral networks among service providers remove barriers to client care and diminish stigma among providers.** Each MAMA+ site cooperates with an average of 16 governmental and NGO service provider partners. These relationships integrate excluded women into local health care systems while they are clients in MAMA+ and after graduation.
- **Building the capacity of service providers** through training and partnership improves service practices and increases the potential of incorporating MAMA+ practices and principles into local policies. To date, 35 MAMA+ partners have been trained.
- **Integration of people living with HIV/AIDS** is a key component of MAMA+ success. In Ukraine, DOW co-implements MAMA+ with the All-Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS. This partnership strengthens services and employs MAMA+ case management team members from project communities. In Russia a volunteer/job training program provides basic services and support to new MAMA+ clients and client caregivers.
- **Stigma and discrimination are reduced** in state health and social services institutions, in the communities in which clients live, and in client's own families by the implementation of training activities, peer networks, support groups which accept family members and advocacy and networking initiatives.
- **Publication and dissemination of MAMA+ methodology** makes the model available to the maternal and child health professional community for replication and raises awareness of the value of integrating MAMA+ principles into service provision.

MAMA+ Sites

Russia	Ukraine
St. Petersburg (launched January 2005)	Kyiv (launched July 2005)
Gatchina (Leningrad Region) (launched September 2006)	Donetsk (launched July 2005)
Vsevolozhsk (Leningrad Region) (launched March 2006)	Simferopol, Crimea (launched July 2005)

MAMA+ Sponsors

In Russia, DOW's MAMA+ Project is sponsored by the World Childhood Foundation. Additional support is provided to MAMA+ program elements by the Assistance to Russian Orphans Project and PACT, via grants to Doctors to Children, DOW's local NGO partner. In Ukraine, DOW's MAMA+ Project is sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development, the World Childhood Foundation, and the Johnson & Johnson Corporation.

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