

Medica Kosova



The mission is improvement of physical, mental health and living conditions of war traumatized Kosovar women with special focus on assisting women and girls who survived sexualized violence. Reduction of symptoms will enable integration of these women in the society.

1. Short history of Medica Kosova

- Established by medica mondiale e.V, Dr. Monika Hauser in July 1999
- Registered as National NGO in October 2003
- 35 staff members until end of 2005
- Currently 25 staff members (20 women and 5 men)
- 3 Departments (psychosocial, gynecological and legal) working in interdisciplinary way
- Starting in 2006 with income-generating activities in the sector of agriculture
- Over 8.000 women and girls supported by all mK services since 1999
- Actually supporting 488 women and girls through all services
- 93 outspoken survivors of wartime rape. 150 other women with clear symptoms



2. medica Kosova's work and projects

Empowerment and support of widows in rural areas through:

- Individual psychosocial counselling and support, and establishment of self-help counselling groups
- Counselling during mourning processes for women with war missing family members
- Counselling and support to minorities
- Gynaecological control in the mobile and center ambulance
- Legal counselling and representation in the local courts
- Supporting women to develop group and individual agricultural activities (agricultural products, honey and milk)
- Establishment of a Dairy plant for supporting 120 women farmers
- Supporting networking of women at the local level
- Lobby and advocacy work on behalf of war rape survivors and women's rights

2.1 Empowerment activities

Supporting mental/physical health and legal rights



2.2 Economic empowerment



3. Patriarchal cultural context

- Social conception of gender roles (family and society)
- Strong family and social isolation of women
- Restricted mobility of women, especially widows
- Customary laws affecting women's human and legal rights
- Institutional exclusion of women in peace and democracy building
- Social and economic situation with average 60% of unemployment strengthening patriarchal environment and affecting the women's decision making power
- Rape considered as an attack of the "family honor"
- Stigmatization of women survivors of wartime rape (still no public recognition)



4. Strategies to access survivors of war

- Visiting the affected families for condolences immediately after the war
- Post-war emergency and humanitarian assistance
- Meeting local authorities and explaining the social services provided by mK (religious and other community leaders)
- mK team serving as a role model according to social and customary laws
- Carefully breaking the taboo of sexualized violence
- Breaking the taboo of mental health support and promoting importance of psychosocial support
- Gynecological ambulance visiting the women in the villages and mK center together with the Counselors
- Psychosocial anamnesis applied during medical services as an instrument of identifying symptoms of PTSD
- Referral system from one department into another (psychosocial to gynecological, legal and vice versa)

4. Strategies to access survivors of war violence

- Individual and group psychosocial counseling and support
- Intensive trainings from medica mondiale in regard to trauma work, sensitive approach and self-reflection
- Women activists in the villages and mK more empowered clients referring other women to the center for support
- Combination of trauma concept support with income generating activities, agricultural and technical assistance of mK
- Lobby and advocacy work at social and political level
- Surveys on most war-affected regions with special attention on those affected by sexualized violence (village assessment analyses)

5. Obstacles and challenges

- Some of the families not supporting participation of women in project activities
- Women coming for counseling with their family members (mainly in-laws)
- Paternalistic structures and regulations intensify trauma symptoms
- Lack of social infrastructure and agricultural resources among women affecting their inclusion in income-generating activities (Roma and those living under extreme poverty)
- Rape survivors being not supported by their families
- Customary laws affecting achievement of women's legal rights
- Insufficient implementation of the laws that support women's legal rights, especially those in the field of ownership and property rights
- Women with war missing members waiting for repatriation of the bodies of their families
- Slow and hard repatriation procedures affecting psychological situation of these women
- Taboos and prejudice among women themselves in regard to public participation and reproductive health

6. Future strategies

- Continuing with group psychosocial counseling and support
- Continuing with the establishment of self-help groups and the combination of trauma work with income-generation
- Supporting the recently established of the NGO of women farmers composed of all mK farmer clients (in organizational development, networking, lobby and fund-raising)
- Technical and professional assistance of women for improving their farming operation
- Developing a survey on sexual violence during the war together with mK clients
- Strengthening ownership among target groups over mK outcomes and results
- Inclusion of mK clients in the dairy milk supplying chain
- Starting with educational and emancipation programs of elderly women as a separate target group