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More than 164 babies have died in Kosovo during 2013. Action for Mothers and Children has a key goal: to save the lives of babies and mothers in Kosovo, which has the highest infant and maternal mortality rate in the Balkans, and perhaps in Europe.



Arbresha and her husband married a year ago in Klina, Kosovo. Arbresha studies to become a teacher. When she learned she was pregnant, she went to see a doctor at her nearest hospital in Peja. There she was told she was carrying twins. This is Arbresha's first birth.

Two weeks before delivery she was referred to the main hospital in UCCK in Prishtina, as she was experiencing a premature prolonged rupture of membranes (PPROM), and needed more sophisticated treatment. Soon after, two beautiful baby girls are born – Amela and Alea via normal vaginal delivery.

Because the twins were born prematurely they were experiencing breathing problems and were treated with the medication called Survanta and a machine called CPAP that improve breathing. Gradually, these distressed newborn babies improved and today they live happily in Klina and are fed with mother's breast milk.

The birth of Amela and Alea has brought happiness in Arbresha's family. Survanta medication and CPAP machines were made possible by Action for Mothers and Children, AmeriCares, and its many donors. Amela and Alea were kept at the Neonatology Intensive Care Unit for 5 weeks and today they weigh 2115 gr and 2135 gr.

Back in 2000, Kosovo's perinatal mortality rate was 29 deaths per 1,000 births, far and away the highest rate in Europe. By 2006 the perinatal mortality in Kosovo dropped to 23 per 1,000. Today, the rate has dropped to about 16 per 1,000 thanks in measure also to the ongoing work of Action for Mothers and

Children through its donors, sponsors, friends, and supporters.

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Announcement Letter – New Board of Trustees and Name

We are pleased to send you this update of the work of Action for Mothers and Children. The foundation has been serving mothers and babies for 4 years, and it is an **outgrowth of the previous Foundation for Healthy Mothers** and Babies since May 2013. Action for Mothers and Children will continue the mission to save the lives of mothers and babies in Kosovo by providing medical and educational support for pregnant women and their infants.

The past year's work has produced amazing changes! Interventions such as the Survanta medication and CPAP machines were given to hundreds of premature babies in 2013. CPAP machines helped to save the lives of 485 babies during 2013. Survanta was given to 235 babies. 70% of the pregnant women who deliver at the Gynecology Hospital UCCK say that owing to antenatal counseling at the Women's Health Resource Center, they are well prepared, less scared, and more informed about the delivery process.

Action for Mothers and Children is a nonprofit, nongovernmental, nonsectarian, humanitarian organization based in Prishtina, Kosovo. The foundation's foremost goal is to save the lives of babies and their mothers in the Republic of Kosovo, which has the highest infant mortality rate in the Balkans, and perhaps in Europe.

4 Pillars of AMC's work

1. Education of patients and health care providers about quality improvement
2. Advocacy on behalf of mothers and children for better healthcare
3. Research and studies identifying gaps in mother and child health
4. Supplies of medications and equipment to save lives of mothers and children

We are delighted to announce our new Board of Trustees:

Bekim Ahmetaj – Vice President, Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. a leading global investment banking, securities and investment management firm that provides a wide range of financial services.

Ilirjana Bajraktari – The founder of Healthcare Professionals for Peace and Social Responsibility of Kosovo. Worked with the World Health Organization in the field of health systems and policy. She now leads development of the Western Balkans project on health as partnership between Dartmouth and World Bank. Has extensive experience in healthcare delivery and patient empowerment.

Ardiana Bunjaku – Executive Director of Society of Certified Accountants and Auditors of Kosovo -SCAAK, where, in addition to her other accomplishments, in last twelve years she was part of development of accountancy profession and professional education in Kosovo. She has also been appointed by the Government of Kosovo to several powerful committees that provide oversight in key sectors relevant to the development of Kosovo's economy.

Jehona Gjurgjeala – has extensive experience in strategy and execution in both profit and non-profit sectors. In her current role as Director of Account Management Customer Experience at Egencia (an Expedia Inc Company) she leads a number of large-scale commercial projects of high impact for the business globally.

Rexhep Hoxha – Associate Professor of Pharmacology at the University of Prishtina. Dean of Pharmacology Unit at the University of Prishtina, with an extensive experience in research field.

George Little – Professor of Pediatrics and of Obstetrics & Gynecology at the Dartmouth Medical School and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in the United States where he is neonatologist. He served for over a decade as Professor and Chairman of the Department of Maternal and Child Health at Dartmouth before it became separate departments of Pediatrics and Ob/Gyn.

Richard Lukaj – Founder and Managing Partner of The Bank Street Group LLC, a US registered Broker Dealer headquartered in the New York metropolitan area. Has over 20 years of investment banking experience and has executed hundreds of transactions over the course of his successful investment banking career. Mr. Lukaj devotes significant energy to philanthropic activities (particularly those related to education, children, refugees, women's issues and Southeastern Europe).

Rezearta Reka – With background in Management and Public Policy from the University of Pittsburgh, working at UNDP Kosovo, and a great writer on mother and child health. She has published her first book where she describes her own experience while pregnant and shares challenges with other women.

Philip Sigwart – The executive chairman of ProCredit Bank in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Prior to that, he was during six years the CEO of ProCredit Bank Kosovo, the leading bank in Kosovo, and before that was the CEO of ProCredit Bank Georgia.

James Strickler - Emeritus Dean and Emeritus Professor of Medicine/Community and Family Medicine at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth; Emeritus Co-Chairman Board of Directors, the International Rescue Committee; Dr. Strickler coordinated Dartmouth's extensive activities in Kosovo after the end of the war with Serbia in 1999, for which he received Kosovo's Mother Theresa Award.



Women Health Resource Center starts with intensive education lectures

Since January 2014, the established Women's Health Resource Center as part of Gynecology/Obstetric unit in University Clinical Center of Kosovo is providing much needed education and counseling directly to pregnant women. Women are learning from videos, educational handouts, small group sessions, and direct counseling with a midwife, all in a comfortable setting. They are learning about normal changes that occur during pregnancy, use of contraceptives, preconception, antenatal, and postnatal care, post-natal depression, breastfeeding, new-born care, baby nutrition, immunization, women and child's care, warning signs, and healthy nutrition.

Access to information remains crucial in impacting healthy pregnancies and healthy newborns. The Women's Health Resource Center has started to expand its activities to help educate women of Kosovo in other regions in the Republic. Soon the Center will start wellness activities for pregnant women such as desirable exercises and diet.



280 more vials of Survanta medication arrive in Kosovo

In February 2014, Action for Mothers and Children and its partner in USA, AmeriCares, deliver 280 more vials of Survanta medication to Neonatology Unit in University Clinical Center in Kosovo. This expensive medication is donated to AmeriCares by Abbott Laboratories in the USA.

Infants who experience respiratory distress lack sufficient amounts of surfactant – the liquid coats inside the lungs. Babies usually don't start producing surfactant until a few weeks after they are born. Without enough surfactant the lungs collapse and premature babies cannot breathe. Thus, Survanta is vital for prevention and treatment of RDS (Respiratory Distress Syndrome) and reduces the infant mortality rate caused by RDS.

Grant Awarded from Solidar Suisse: Research on Needs Assessment for Mothers and Newborns

Since March 2014, Action for Mothers and Children, under the support of Solidar Suisse in Kosovo, is conducting a research on Maternal and Child Health, with specific focus on C-section delivery mode and costs.

The research program is being developed as part of **Health dialogue program KoSana**, with specific focus on identifying the costs/expenses of women from early pregnancy to early post-partum period, which will be used to advocate for health insurance scheme for mothers. The final publications are expected to be available by the end of this year.



Minister Ferid Agani welcomes Dr. George Little and Dr. Barry Smith from Dartmouth, USA

In March 2014, Dr. George Little – Action's trustee and Professor of Pediatrics and of Obstetrics & Gynecology at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, and Dr. Barry Smith - Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Emeritus Chairman at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center visit Minister Ferid Agani to further see how Action for Mothers and Children, through its partnerships with Dartmouth, can help the Ministry's health reforms.

Dr. Little and Dr. Smith also visited Women Health Resource Center, Gynecology and Neonatology units at University Clinical Center in Kosovo.

American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo fundraises for Action for Mothers and Children

AmCham's Annual Gala Dinner of 2013 was dedicated to Action for Mothers and Children, through which AmCham donated 25,000 Euros, to support the sustainability of AMC which provides support for mothers and premature babies.



Among the companies which contributed to this charity dinner were: (Platinum Sponsors) Bechtel Enka, Devolli Corporation, Limak Kosovo; (Gold Sponsors) TEB Bank, Banka Kombëtare Tregtare, NewCo Ferronikeli, Post and Telecommunications of Kosovo, Llamkos GalvaSteel; (Silver Sponsors) Bank for Business, HIB Petrol; (Regular sponsors) Railtrans, Z Mobile, Marigona Residence, Pestova, Sharrcem, and Crimson Capital for purchasing 32 tickets.

This charity activity, now a tradition of AmCham was also supported by: Elkos, Booz Allen Hamilton, USAID Contract Law Enforcement Program, Banka Ekonomike, Boga & Associates, Trepharm, ProCredit Bank, Kosovo Assembly, Universum College, The Headhunter, PricewaterhouseCoopers, CTA, First Legal Solutions, American University in Kosovo, Hasi - R, Metton Advertisement. State institutions and organizations such as: Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Diaspora, Ministry of European Integration, Kosovo Chamber of Commerce, Care for Kosovo Kids, Business Support Centre Kosovo (BSC), Innovation Centre Kosovo supported this initiative as well.

Mother's Day finds participants of Women's Health Resource Center celebrating

This year's Mother's Day in Kosovo, March 8, was special for some of mothers – participants at our WHRC center. They were given flowers and chocolates to praise their role as Mothers. Mothers at our Women Health Resource Center have become friends with one another and they share experiences to ease each-other's pregnancy concerns. Women experiencing their first births are also provided education and exercises to prepare for birth delivery room.

More than 20 women per day attend Center's education lectures. 70% of women delivering birth in Gynecology say they are prepared, less scared, and aware of the birth delivery process in the birth-delivery room.



World Midwife Day marked by Action for Mothers and Children

On May 5th, Action marks the World Midwife Day in Prishtina with an activity in Mother Teresa Boulevard - distributing flyers on the role and importance of midwives, use of Wellness Center resources, and performed some basic checks to passing pregnant women together with Medical Students of UP and UCCK staff. The event was on local TVs as well.

The brochures explained the important role of a midwife when a woman undergoes a normal pregnancy. Women were advised on the importance of having good relationships with their midwives and using the Women's Health Resource Center for counseling. Childbirth may be the most powerful life experience a woman undergoes and midwives can play an important role in this an experience.



International Cyclists ride the whole Kosovo for Action for Mothers and Children

A weekend of May finds a group of internationals living in Kosovo organizing the Cycle Kosovo for Children event to raise funds for Action for Mothers and Children in support of NICU clinic located in Prishtina. Their challenge was to cycle around Kosovo in three days passing many of major cities in a total distance of 500 kilometers with 5000 meters of climbing. The funds raised will be used to purchase a diagnostic equipment needed to save the lives of babies at NICU, that will improve in the standards of care delivered to new born children.



NICU Clinic now equipped with a modern Blood Analyzer

Last month, with the help of our esteemed partner – AmeriCares, Action for Mothers and Children donated 1,800 pcs of endotracheal tubes and a CRP detector device for Neonatology Unit in UCCK.

The tubes provide a pathway for oxygen to move from the breathing machine to the lungs for the newborns at NICU.

The CRP detector device will enable practitioners at the NICU to test newborns at the bedside for infections and get the results immediately. Beforehand, parents had to obtain such blood tests for their newborns outside the clinic.

Action for Mothers and Children in KlanKosova TV during summer season

Action activities on education of women patients will be on KlanKosova TV station (one of the biggest 4 in Kosovo) during the afternoon time every Monday.

The first broadcast talked about Action's activities and mission. Each Monday, a health expert/doctor will discuss topics that are very important to expectant mothers, including optimal health care during pregnancy, preparation for labor, and care of the newborn infant.

These sessions will make it possible to raise awareness of important health issue especially among women outside Prishtina. The first topic covered was "Early pregnancy stages and necessary examinations" and the TV sessions will continue into other phases of pregnancy and newborn care for 10-12 episodes.

To support our work:

Your donations are gratefully accepted, and will be used to continue to improve the health of mothers and children in Kosovo. Gifts may be made by credit card, direct deposit, or cheque.

In Kosovo:

Phone: +377 44130251 and +386 49 685943
Raiffeisen Bank No. **1501-090-002-825-780**

In the U.K.:

HSBC Bank, Sort Code 40-29-08, Account No. 41244337
Or online at: <http://www.lcvs.org.uk/help-me-give-to-charity/givemoney/donate-online/fhmb->

kosovo.phuse

In the U.S.A.:

U.S. citizens may make tax-deductible donations to the Foundation by sending a check or money order to:

Kosovo Fund
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Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center
1 Medical Center Drive
Lebanon, NH 03756

Or by giving online at: http://med.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/hitchcock_foundation.html

All donations to Action will be acknowledged in writing, and external auditors will annually review Action's budget. The Trustees and staff of Action will appreciate your generosity and also any comments, ideas and suggestions you may have.

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