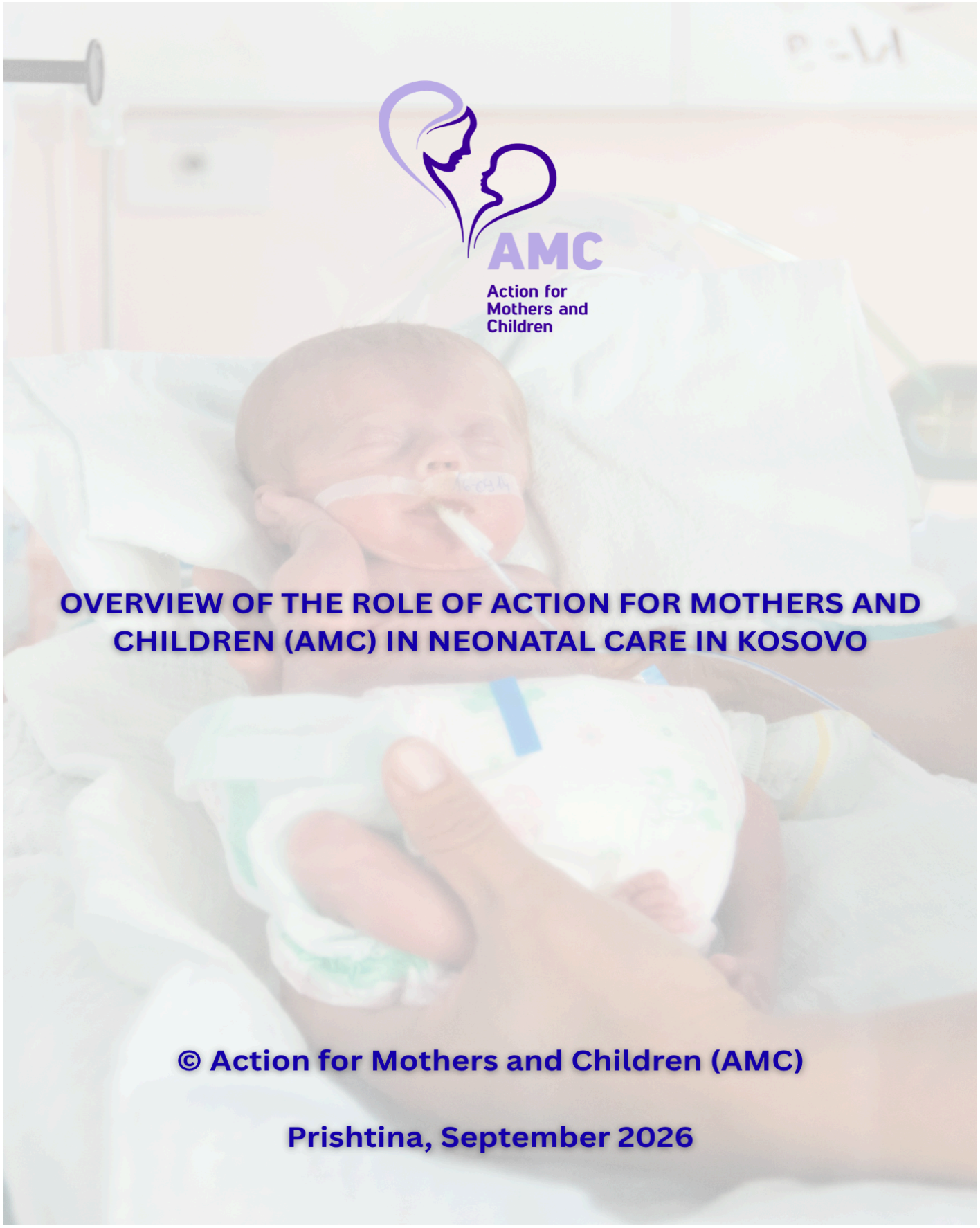

AMC
Action for Mothers and Children

OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE OF ACTION FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN (AMC) IN NEONATAL CARE IN KOSOVO

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Prishtina, September 2026

Abbreviations

AMC – Action for Mothers and Children

CPAP – Continuous Positive Airway Pressure

HUCSK – Hospital and University Clinical Service of Kosovo

EC – European Commission

GC_1000 – Group Care in the first 1000 days

MFMC – Main Family Medicine Center

MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

MoH – Ministry of Health

UCCK – University Clinical Center of Kosovo

UN-IGME – United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation

WHO – World Health Organization

Neonatal Care in Kosovo and the Role of Action for Mothers and Children (AMC)

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the neonatal period comprises the first 28 days of life and represents the most critical period for a child's survival. Globally, an estimated 2.6 million children die during the first month of life, including approximately 6,500 newborns a day. Neonatal mortality accounts for a significant proportion of deaths among children under five years of age, and many of these deaths are considered preventable through appropriate healthcare interventions.[1]

During the post-war period, Kosovo continued to face numerous challenges across all sectors, including the healthcare system. Despite gradual improvements in healthcare services, perinatal, fetal, and neonatal mortality rates remained high. In 2011, the perinatal mortality rate was 18.7‰, the fetal mortality rate was 11.0‰, while the early neonatal mortality rate was reported at 7.5‰. These figures continued to indicate relatively high mortality levels compared with other European countries.[2] In this context, the main causes of infant mortality included infections in the lower respiratory tract, acute infectious diarrheal diseases, perinatal complications, congenital malformations, and unclassified conditions. These indicators highlighted the urgent need to strengthen healthcare services for mothers and newborns.

In response to these challenges, Action for Mothers and Children (AMC) was established with a clear mission: to save the lives of mothers and children in Kosovo. AMC has played an important role in advancing healthcare for mothers and newborns through awareness-raising programs, support to healthcare institutions, and the promotion of evidence-based practices. This work has been carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Hospital and University Clinical Service of Kosovo (HUCSK), Main Family Medicine Centers (MFMCs), healthcare professionals, as well as local and international partners and donors.

1. World Health Organization. Newborn mortality. 2024.

2. Azemi, Mehmedali et al. "Rate and time trend of perinatal, infant, maternal mortality, natality and natural population growth in Kosovo." Materia socio-medica vol. 24,4 (2012): 238-41. doi:10.5455/msm.2012.24.238-241

According to the European Commission's 2023 Kosovo Report, neonatal, infant, and child mortality in Kosovo remains the highest in the region and is three times higher than in European Union countries.[3] Furthermore, according to the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN-IGME)[4], since 2015, Kosovo's neonatal mortality rate has decreased from 10.3 to 6.6 deaths per 1,000 live births, representing a 36% reduction. Over the same period, the under-five mortality rate declined from 14.3 to 8.7 deaths per 1,000 live births, representing a 39% reduction by 2024. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2020),[5] the child mortality rate in Kosovo is 16 per 1,000 children, while among Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, the rate is 27 per 1,000 children. These data highlight, on the one hand, significant health inequalities and the need for continued, well-coordinated interventions and, on the other hand, reflect the progress and efforts made over the years to improve child health and survival in Kosovo.

Figure 1 (appendix) presents the journey and development of AMC from 2006 to 2026, highlighting some of the organization's most important milestones and achievements in improving the health of mothers, newborns, and children in Kosovo. This journey began in 2006 with the establishment of the Dartmouth–Kosovo Alliance and the first use of beractant (Survanta) at the Neonatology Clinic. In the years that followed, the organization expanded its work through the procurement and distribution of essential medical equipment, the training of healthcare professionals, and the development of partnerships with local and international institutions. Over the years, AMC has developed the *"Mothers' Classes"* program, which provides evidence-based guidance on topics ranging from family planning to pregnancy to infant care. The organization has also supported and implemented a range of important initiatives, including retinopathy screening for newborns, Group Care in the First 1,000 Days (GC_1000), along with leading efforts to establish a neonatal referral and transport system.

3. European Commission. *Kosovo 2023 Report.* Brussels: European Commission; 2023. SWD(2023) 692 final.

4. Levels & Trends in Child Mortality. Report 2025 Estimates developed by the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation.

5. 2019-2020 MICS in Kosovo & 2019-2020 MICS with Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo.

AMC has also continued to support the Neonatology Clinic by distributing donations of essential medicines and medical equipment, including beractant (Survanta), as well as by strengthening the capacities of healthcare professionals. In 2026, AMC marked another important milestone with the launch of the Mothers' Classes program at the Neonatology Clinic of the University Clinical Center of Kosovo (UCCK), continuing its mission to strengthen healthcare services and ensure better, safer and more accessible care for mothers, children, and families across Kosovo.

Interventions by Action for Mothers and Children (AMC) to Improve Neonatal Care in Kosovo

Since its establishment, Action for Mothers and Children has worked closely with local and international partners to improve Kosovo's public healthcare system, with a particular focus on maternal and child health. AMC has implemented its programs in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Neonatology Clinic at the University Clinical Center of Kosovo (UCCK), as well as with neonatal units in regional hospitals.

These programs have received significant international support from partners including Dartmouth College, Americares, Solidar Suisse, and Abbott. In its role as a bridge between Kosovo and the United States, AMC has focused, through joint interventions, on several key areas of neonatal care in Kosovo.

Beractant (Survanta)

Care for premature infants in Kosovo has been particularly challenging because of gaps in healthcare infrastructure and limited access to essential medicines within the public health system. Survanta was first introduced in Kosovo in 2006 through the Kosovo–Dartmouth Alliance. This medication plays a critical role in supporting lung function in premature newborns. In cooperation with Americares, AMC has distributed more than 4,500 vials of Survanta to date, directly contributing to life-saving care for thousands of newborns. Through joint advocacy by AMC, the Neonatology Clinic at UCCK, and other partners, beractant was included in the Ministry of Health's Essential Medicines List. AMC and Americares continue to support the Neonatology Clinic with annual donations of Survanta. In 2025, 260 vials were donated, helping ensure the continued availability of this essential medication for newborns in need.

Donation of Medical Equipment

AMC has supported Kosovo's public healthcare system by procuring and distributing donated medical equipment, contributing to improved healthcare services for pregnant women, mothers, and children. This support has been provided through donations worth hundreds of thousands of euros, both directly by AMC and in cooperation with private donors.

For more than a decade, AMC has also organized and supported philanthropic events to raise funds to strengthen Kosovo's public healthcare system. Through initiatives such as *Let's Dance Kosova*, *Save a Life* in Switzerland, *Meet Us Halfway* in New York, and *Cycle Kosovo for Children,** AMC has mobilized significant support for the healthcare sector.

Funds raised through these initiatives are dedicated to providing medical equipment to public healthcare institutions in Kosovo, with a particular focus on improving care for mothers and children. Beneficiaries of these donations have included, among others, the Neonatology Clinic at UCCK and regional hospitals across Kosovo, as presented in Table 1 (appendix).

Initiatives to Improve the Quality of Public Healthcare Services

Despite multisectoral interventions by various donors and the involvement of government institutions, Kosovo continues to face significant challenges in providing adequate healthcare for mothers and newborns. One of the key factors contributing to this situation is the need for continuous professional development of healthcare staff, alongside infrastructure challenges and the need for standardized equipment and protocols, particularly in the areas of neonatal resuscitation and nutrition. In this context, AMC has played a facilitating role, serving as a bridge between the Neonatology Clinic at UCCK and Dartmouth College to promote the exchange of expertise and support the continuous professional development of healthcare professionals.

**Cycle Kosovo for Children was established by former European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) staff back in 2014 in close coordination with Action for Mothers and Children (AMC) with the goal of raising funds for children in Kosovo.*

Furthermore, AMC has played an important role in advocating for and supporting the development of the neonatal transport system in Kosovo through its partnership with Dartmouth College. Through this collaboration, AMC has supported the conceptualization and design of the neonatal transport model by bringing international expertise and experience to the process. AMC's contribution has included support in developing standard operating procedures, reporting and monitoring tools, and organizing training for healthcare professionals across all regions of Kosovo. AMC has also advocated with the Ministry of Health for neonatal transport to be recognized as a priority within national health strategies and policies, as well as for the provision of the equipment and resources necessary to ensure the effective functioning of this service.

In 2018, the Ministry of Health developed Kosovo's first Neonatal Transport Guideline.[6] Building on this work, in 2024 AMC, with support from the Fulbright Program, organized training on the Neonatal Referral System for healthcare professionals, including nurses and neonatologists from regional hospitals and the Neonatology Clinic at UCCK. The training was delivered by international experts, including specialists from Dartmouth Medical School, and addressed a critical area of neonatal care in Kosovo where further development and sustained efforts remain necessary.

Mothers' Classes at the Neonatology Clinic

Mothers' Classes at the Neonatology Clinic is AMC's newest program, designed to place parents at the center of newborn care and provide them with support during the early postnatal period. The program focuses on empowering parents with practical knowledge and emotional support related to newborn care and breastfeeding, contributing to healthy development and the establishment of a secure parent–child bond. The program is delivered through a comprehensive informational session held once a week, covering key topics essential to newborn care. Sessions include interactive group discussions, practical demonstrations, and the exchange of experiences among parents. By providing a strong foundation of knowledge during this particularly sensitive period, the program helps strengthen parents' confidence and caregiving skills, supports their emotional well-being, and contributes to the optimal development of their newborns.

6. Udhërrëfyes Klinik. Udhërrëfyes i Transportit Neonatal. Nr8. Verzioni 1.0. 2018. Ministria e Shëndetësisë, Republika e Kosovës.

Between January and June 2026 alone, more than 150 mothers at the Neonatology Clinic benefited from the program.

Evidence-Based Approaches and International Collaboration in Scientific Research

Throughout its work, AMC has maintained a strong commitment to evidence-based practice, introducing innovative approaches in Kosovo and building strong partnerships with international academic and research institutions. In collaboration with leading institutions, including the *London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Jhpiego—an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University, Dartmouth College, City, University of London, Leiden University, the University of São Paulo, Group Care Global, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Maastricht University, and the Evidence Synthesis Group,* among others, AMC has contributed to international research in the field of maternal, neonatal, and child health, as presented in Table 2 (appendix).

An important part of this work has been AMC's contribution to generating and strengthening the evidence base on Group Care during the First 1,000 Days, a program implemented by AMC within primary healthcare in cooperation with Main Family Medicine Centers across Kosovo and supported through Horizon 2020. Particular attention has also been given to breastfeeding as an essential component of maternal and child health, development, and well-being. Most recently, AMC also joined The Lancet Rheumatology Working Commission on reproductive health and family planning in people with chronic immune-mediated diseases. Through these collaborations, AMC has contributed as both a lead and collaborating partner in international research and scientific publications, helping ensure that programs and interventions in maternal, neonatal, and child health are informed by reliable data and robust scientific evidence.

Conclusion

Neonatal care remains one of the key public health priorities in Kosovo, particularly as the country continues to face higher neonatal, infant, and child mortality rates compared with European Union countries. In this context, Action for Mothers and Children has played an important role in supporting the public healthcare system and advancing the quality of care for newborns.

Through strategic partnerships with local and international institutions, AMC has contributed to the provision of essential medicines and life-saving medical equipment, the professional development of healthcare staff, support for neonatal transport, and the empowerment of parents through educational and support programs. These interventions have contributed directly to improving the quality of neonatal care and expanding access to safer, higher-quality services for newborns and their families. Although important progress has been achieved, significant challenges in neonatal care remain and require sustained commitment from public institutions, healthcare professionals, international partners, and civil society. AMC's experience demonstrates that cross-sectoral collaboration, investment in healthcare professionals, and evidence-based approaches can lead to sustainable and measurable improvements in maternal and child health in Kosovo. AMC remains committed to continuing this mission, with the goal of ensuring that every newborn has the opportunity for the safest and healthiest possible start in life.

Appendix

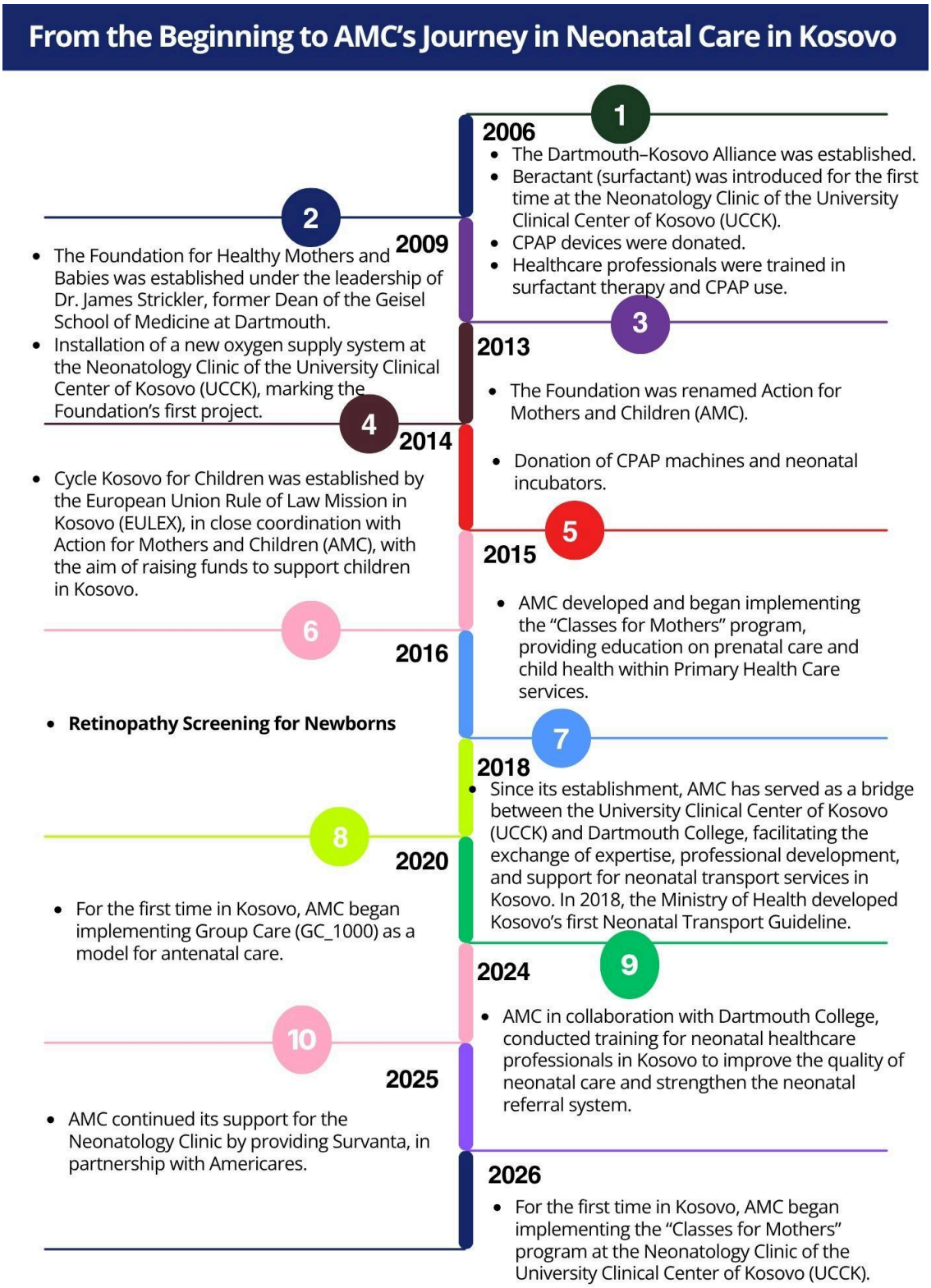

Figure 1. AMC's Journey in Neonatal Care in Kosovo

Table 1. Medical Equipment Donated by AMC and Partners Over the Years

CPAP devices	CRP testing devices
Incubators	Glucometers
Transport incubators	Glucose test strips
Infant beds	Trinocular microscopes
Pediatric monitors	Inhalers/nebulizers (standard and professional)
Cardiopulmonary monitors	Phototherapy equipment
Pulse oximeters	Breathing circuits/tubing
Blood pressure monitors	Portable ultrasound devices
Infusion pumps	Adult weighing scales
Perfusion pumps	Pediatric weighing scales
Bilirubinometer	Medical consumables, etc.
Hematology analyzer (CBC)	

Table 2. AMC's Contribution to International Scientific Publications

Title	Journal & Year of Publication
The Economics of Group Antenatal Care: A Systematic Review and Narrative Analysis	***Maternal and Child Health Journal, 2026***
Belonging: a meta-theme analysis of women's community-making in group antenatal and postnatal care	***Frontiers in Public Health, 2025***
Can behavioral science advance breastfeeding friendly primary care? Key findings from an evaluation in Kosovo	***PLOS Global Public Health, 2025***
Group Care in the first 1000 days: implementation and process evaluation of contextually adapted antenatal and postnatal group care targeting diverse vulnerable populations in high-, middle- and low-resource settings	***Implementation Science Communications, 2022***
Identifying anticipated challenges when implementing group care: Context-analyses across seven countries to develop an anticipated challenges framework	***Midwifery, 2024***
Assessing the validity of maternal report on breastfeeding counselling in Kosovo's primary health facilities	***BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth, 2024***
Maternal satisfaction with group care: a systematic review	***AJOG Global Reports, 2024***
Group Care in the first 1000 days: implementation and process evaluation of contextually adapted antenatal and postnatal group care targeting diverse vulnerable populations in high-, middle- and low-resource settings	***Implementation Science Communications, 2022***
Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals and Breastfeeding Duration: A Review	***Curr Opin Endocrinol Diabetes Obes, 2021***

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