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***Shoqata e Grave Medica Gjakova  
Women's Association Medica Gjakova***

***Project Final Report of***

***Project Title:***

***“Setting up a women cooperative for securing and sustaining basic standards of living of women in Kosovo – with a special focus on widows and survivors of war-related sexualized violence”***

***BMZ project number 2009.1577.7***

***Reporting time-frame: 01.04. 2011 to 28. 02. 2013***

**Implemented by: Women Association Medica Gjakova**

***March 2013***

**INTRODUCTION**

Women's Association Medica Gjakova (mgj) is a local independent, non-governmental and non-profit organization with the mission to improve the mental and physical health situation of women survivors of violence and the impact on social policies in support of the welfare of women and their integration in all areas of life.

MGJ also promotes respect of human rights in general, with particular emphasis on women's rights, regardless ethnicity, religion or race.

This report was reported during the regular meeting of the organization's Assembly.

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## **Foreword by Director of MGJ**



*We are meeting today to document developments and our activities during this period that was not so easy for us. Activities and achievements of GM would't have been realized without the persistent dedication of activist of the association, and without assistance from our continuous donor: German Government for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and medica mondiale e.V from Cologne / Germany.*

*Therefore on behalf of the organization, I thank the donors, activists and all others whom do not have the opportunity to mention in this report for supporting us during our new journey.*

*GM spent two years of its activation since its establishment in 2011. Despite the difficulties that the staff faced with during this period by splitting of a part of professional staff from the association Medica Kosova, we succeeded to establish a new association, and realized the following activities for the continuation of the implementation of the project: " Setting up a women cooperative for securing and sustaining basic standards of living of women in Kosova – with a special focus on widows and survivors of war-related sexualized violence".*

*We continued our efforts to improve mental and physical health status of women traumatized during the war in Kosovo and its aftermath. At the same time, the association continues to promote the rights of women and their integration in every sphere of life. There have not been missing the association attempts to cooperate with other organizations active in Kosovo that affect the improvement of the legal status of survivors of sexual violence and their integrate within the Law on Civil Victioms of War in Kosovo. SoMGJ has become the reference center for traumatized women. This is a very sensitive work and requires dedication and professionalism of psychosocial and gynecological health personnel.*

*A significant success for the association during this period is the provision of 3 grants for three short term projects ensured by International donors located in Kosovo, that will enable the continuation of support for our beneficiaries and our aim to raise funds for a long term project during the future.*

*The report for the period March 2011- February 2013 documents our development, activities and challenges during this period.*

*Mrs. Selamet Peni – Director*

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*Women Farmers' Agricultural Cooperative Duart e Dardanes is established and the shop - the first working unit is opened*

## 1. Project summary

The overall goal of the project is reduction of the social poverty of up to 400 women and their family members in Gjakova and Deqani municipalities, improvement of the women's psychological wellbeing and their integration into community and wider structures. The women are empowered to establish production units as self-help structures and at the same time the community members benefit from the improved agricultural infrastructure. The project in general supported the promotion of agricultural products in Kosovo and hence increase the market requirements for local products.

In approaching the achievement of this overall goal, Women Association Medica Gjakova reached the following specific objectives:

- 1. A dairy for the processing of milk collected by up to 120 women farmers is set up according to EU standards designed for dairy products;**
- 2. A honey collection point for qualitative storage of honey and production of honey products is set up for their promotion and selling in the local and regional market and the technical/business know-how of women involved in the process is increased;**
- 3. The city women are part of the supply chain and sell the products produced by rural women in a rented shop in the center of the city and hence the purchase of the local agricultural products is promoted and the business capacities of the target groups are increased;**
- 4. The target group is psychologically stable and empowered through both psychosocial and legal group counselling to assume responsibility for the production and promotion of their products as well as for enforcing their legal rights regarding ownership and other legal civil rights**
- 5. Women farmers influence the agricultural development in their region and reinforce networking with other farmers' organizations in and outside Kosovo hence playing an innovative role in improving public policies on the local and national level**

The Dairy is finalized by MK, while the setting up of the honey collection point as planned with the project was affected by insufficient production of honey among women involved, since a big number of bees died due to epidemic disease spread in the region. However based on the amount of honey gathered by some successful women bees keepers and after supporting some of those women with some extra bees, a location in the center of Gjakova was rented and the same, except honey collection was also used to organize the trainings of up to 7 women for making in group work honey products (cosmetic creams, soaps, candles etc).

During the reporting period, Medica Gjakova supported in total **406** women coming from **13** different villages covered in the project as well as women from the city. Out of this number, **376** women are beneficiaries of group and individual psychosocial and health gynecological support. **46** women, members of group psychosocial sessions are new client. **24** women coming out of the groups are also offered individual psychosocial support, while **352** are offered group health psychosocial and gynecological group sessions. Only **20** women, members of 3 new groups established in Rahavec are offered direct gynecological check-ups in HAREJA association based on a MoU between MGJ and Hareja.

**10** women in total are referred to other local NGOs that offer legal counseling for women's rights, as well as accompanied to different institutions for providing any kind of institutional documents for themselves or their children.

**70** women are offered individual psychosocial support, from them **24** clients are offered this kind of since after the war and are still time after time and/or whenever they get flashbacks as a result of any everyday life problems, while **46** other individual clients coming out of groups of women.

**Table 1. Project Beneficiaries supported by MGJ**

Groups of women supported by MGJ	Location and number of groups	Kind of support	Members
1	Dobrixhe (1)	11 women supported with a cow or calve, and 3 women supported with psychosocial counseling (new clients)	14
2	Hereq (1) Agriculture 8	8 agriculture	8
3	Rracaj (1)	11 11 women supported with a cow or calve	11
4	Shishmon (2)	5 women supported with bees, and 7 women supported with psychosocial counseling (new clients)	12
5	Korenica I (3)	20 women supported with a cow or calve, and 10 women supported with psychosocial counseling (new clients)	30
6	Korenica II (1)	10 women supported with cows	10
7	Krelan (2)	15 women supported with	21

		cows and 6 with psychosocial support (new clients)	
8	Dobrosh (1)	10 with cows and 4 with psychosocial counseling	14
9	Jahoc (1)	3 with cows and 7 with psychosocial support (new clients)	10
10	Gjakova (1)	5 with cows and 1 with psychosocial sup. (new clients)	6
11	Fortesa (1)	6 with psychosocial support (new clients)	6
12	Krushe (1)	5 with psychosocial support (new clients)	5
New clients joined to groups of women , but that are offered only psychosocial group support	All above mentioned places (the town of Gjakova and the above mentioned villages)	Psychosocial group support	46
13	Rahavec (3)	Educational health gynecological sessions	20
Total number of women from the group work		Group psychosocial and educational health sessions	372
Individual clients	Women coming out of groups of women	Individual psychosocial counseling	24
	Former individual clients	Individual psychosocial counseling	24
	Women referred and / or accompanied to other institutions and / or NGOs	Legal counseling and other needs	10
Total number of individual clients			34

**Total number of beneficiaries: 406**

While the total number of direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project is about **4000**. Based on the native tradition, Kosovar families, in most cases use to live in big joint families with their children, their families in laws, etc thus the figure contains the number of direct and indirect.

Due to the split of the organization during early 2011, women members from “Duart e Dardanes” also split by coming to MGJ organization established by part of the old professional staff. By developing successful networking activities for women and with the women farmers within its regular joint meetings, in 2012 the women farmers succeeded to establish the agricultural cooperative: Women Farmers Cooperative Duart e Dardanes.

During the project implementation period, in cooperation with the Department for Agriculture and Forestry at the local level, one woman farmer was awarded among the best farmers of the in Gjakova region.

The lobby work was developed throughout these project years, especially 2012 was mainly directed to see the possibility to reach the sustainability of the new established organization. MGJ Director and the

Managing Group have contacted different local and international donors located in Kosovo. During that period MGJ has delivered several new project proposals to several different international Embassies and donors located in Kosovo, and succeeded to win three short term projects which ensured the continuation of the activities and the organization sustainability.

MGJ Director and Head of Psychosocial Department participated in several meetings of the Civil Society Coordination Group at national level for coordinating support on the status and rights of the survivors of rape during the war. In this regard, the civil society continuously worked for preparing the path to push governmental authorities to amend the Law of Civil Victims of War in Kosovo aiming to include war rape survivors within the same Law as civil victims of War. These are only the first steps taken by civil society and a long engagement should continue in the future.

As a member of KWN, MGJ staff and some clients participated in the national protests organized on 8th of March, where demands were launched for legislative integration of war rape survivors and their public recognition. On this regard, during 2011, the promotion of MGJ support to women and girls affected by war is done on both local and regional levels. Director of MGJ and coordinators of psychosocial and gynecological departments gave public media interviews in "Radio Gjakova"; Radio Kosova and in "TV Syri Vision". The media coverage also includes published articles in Koha Ditore, and in municipal monthly newspaper.

Other local public coverage on the same above mentioned radio and TV stations were made during the last quarter of 2012, during the official opening of the as the first working unit within the women farmers' cooperative.



***DeDs Director and one of the shop keepers giving interviews to TV SYRI VISION and KOHA DITORE***

MGJ's professional staff – psychosocial counselors are also interviewed for the needs of the research work "Healing the Spirit: Reperation for Survivors of Sexual Violence Related to the Conflict in Kosovo" prepared for the Office of the High Commissionaire for Human Rights.

Cooperation of MGJ with other local NGOs and specifically with the group of women of Gjakova Municipal Assembly trying to push the municipal authorities to support women of rural zones. MGJ supported this group of Women of the Assembly through organizing the groups of women in different villages in Gjakova region for addressing the women's needs.

Two visits of MGJ activities made by the representatives of German KFOR resulted with the donation of an Ultrasound and a bed for the provision of primary gynecological check-ups in MGJ stationary ambulance. MGJ will look to find donors for completing the stationary ambulance making the same functional for the needs of the clients.

## **Project implementation**

### **Project objectives and activities**

The overall goal of the project is reduction of the social poverty of up to 400 women and their family members in Gjakova, Deqan and Rahavec municipalities; improvement of the women's psychological wellbeing and their integration into community and wider structures. The women are empowered to establish production units as self-help structures and at the same time the community members benefit from the improved agricultural infrastructure. The project will in general support the promotion of agricultural products in Kosova and hence increase the market requirements for local products. MGJ has undertaken a number of project measures in approaching the achievement of the specific objectives for improving the women's wellbeing and their active social integration.

#### ***Objective 1: A dairy for the processing of milk collected by up to 120 women farmers is set up according to EU standards designed for dairy products***

This objective is finalized during the time when MGJ professional staff was working in Medica Kosova (MK). This objective reported by MK.

#### ***Objective 2: A honey collection point for qualitative storage of honey and production of honey products is set up for their promotion and selling in the local and regional market and the technical/business know-how of women involved in the process is increased***

### **Activities and indicators:**

#### **2.1 Setting up of the honey collection point.**

The honey collection point is set up in September 2012. As mentioned in the project timeline, MGJ's women beneficiaries have collected a very little amount of honey because a big number of bees died attacked by a disease. A location with very good hygienic conditions was rented and used for the storing of the honey and organization of the trainings for women members of bees group.

#### **2.2 The health conditions of the honey products and storage of honey is improved.**

Hygienic conditions of the honey are improved (production and storage) through collective and professional handling. The women of Shishmon village bee group got a honey roast-fray bin each and bee hives, but the production will be taken during the next season. Thus, the collected honey was kept under very good hygienic condition until it got sold. The quality analysis of the honey was done by farmers from Tyrol before splitting from MK and it resulted as uncontaminated. Analysis in Kosova not done because it is too expensive (50 Euros/per one jar of honey, to be paid by every women)

**6 women** altogether of bee group from Shishmon village/ Gjakova municipality brought about 750 kg of honey to sell in the shop, because the bees of other women died and the women of the bee group from Irzniq village/ Deqani municipality, are supported by MK.

#### **2.3 Participation of women in the training on honey products.**

MGJ hired a woman expert – trainer on honey products, so 7 women beekeepers from Shishmon village, Jahoc and Gjakova attended the training on making candles, soap, cosmetics, prepolis etc. Women are able to produce additional honey products after getting enough amount of honey to use for this issue. Until they are able to produce much more amount of honey, they will sell it as pure honey.



*The trainer demonstrates the making of honey products*

#### **2.4 The bees group of women have chosen a woman to work in the honey collection point.**

Only one woman is hired to work in the honey collection point as regarding the amount of honey product there was no need to hire more. During the following years when women of bees groups increase the amount of products more women will be recruited regarding the needs. The process of selection was done by the bees group of women with the support of the counsellor. The same woman dealt with the packaging of honey. Women used the jars of 800 gr, not small plastic packs as planned with the project because the machine for this kind of packaging was very expensive. The other reason for not buying this honey small packaging machine is also the change of opinion of people now consider this kind of packaging not healthy, while restaurants use to serve the honey in small glass cups instead of plastics.

#### **2.5 Women stored and sold the honey in the shop**

7 women of bees group stored and sold 750 kg of honey in the shop of women's cooperative. Customers liked it very much and asked for buying it even after it got sold.

7 women of bees group of women sold the above amount of honey for 6 Euros per jar, thus each of them won 630 - 650 Euros approximately. In total (from the amount of honey produced during one year). MGJ will try to find ways to support this group of women with more bee hives in the future (with other income generating projects).

***Objective 3: The city women are part of the supply chain and sell the products produced by rural women in a rented shop in the center of the city and hence the purchase of the local agricultural products is promoted and the business capacities of the target groups are increased***

#### **3.1 Setting up of a shop in the city where women sell products.**

After establishing of Women Farmers Cooperative, women farmers supported by MGJ professional and administrative staff began with the election of 2 women to work in the shop, as well as with the process of purchasing the shop with equipments. The shop was hired for 6 months by the project, but after this period the women continued on their own. The shop is the first working unit opened within the cooperative, and all legal procedures for opening it were respected.

#### **3.2 Opening of tender and collection of offers for buying the pick- up and other needed equipments.**

The purchasing process of the pick-up and other needed equipments is made by respecting the existing Laws in Kosovo and regarding to the agreement with the donor. There are held meetings with the director and other members of the cooperative and the same were informed about the procedures of purchasing the shop (opening of tenders for the cars and collection of offers).



The shop was opened on 18 Oct. 2012 with an opening ceremony. A great number of representatives of local and national institutions and NGOs participated and were fractionated with the encouragement of women of the cooperative for their action. Two local media coverage, TV Syri and Radio Gjakova have followed and transmitted inserts of the ceremony. Representatives of some other NGOs from different places of Kosovo expressed interest to share the experiences with Medica Gjakova , thus after the ceremony Medica Gjakova organized a meeting for exchanging of its experiences with other NGOs.

### **3.3 Up to 90 women are supplying the shop with agricultural products.**

Although only **12** women accepted to become legal co-operators of the women's cooperative, **90** women in total do supply the shop with their agricultural products. They usually supply the shop with fresh milk and other handmade milk products, fruits; vegetables, traditional home made kitchen products like: flija, baklava etc.



*Homemade products*

### **3.4 Offering of business and marketing trainings to women farmers**

Although up to 14 women were planned to attend business and marketing trainings, **30** women in fact showed interest and have already participated in the following trainings: Business planning; leadership; and marketing. The trainees got the trainings certificates.



*The women are capable to sell and market products.*



Women running the shop contacted restaurants and 4 oral agreements with supermarkets to regularly deliver products are already made.

***Objective 4. The target group is psychologically stable and empowered through both psychosocial and legal group counseling to assume responsibility for the production and promotion of their products as well as for enforcing their legal rights regarding ownership and other legal civil rights***

#### **4.1 Psychosocial support – group and individual counseling**

Throughout the project years, MGJ provided psychosocial counseling to 18 groups of women coming from 13 different villages of Gjakova and Deqani municipality. Women participants of the group work received 2 group counseling sessions per month in MGJ premises and the covered villages.

The project continued to support 8 groups of women after the split of the organization in Apr, 2011. However during the



extension period of the project the counselors achieved to establish 10 new groups until the end of the project. The new groups are from: Shishmon; Fortesa; Krushe; Jahoc; Korenice; Kolonija – a suburb of Gjakova town inhabited mostly with

#### ***Group Psychosocial support***

Roma community and in Rahvec. Three new established groups of women in Rahavec are offered only health educational sessions as among them there are women of RAE communities, and after being offered direct gynecological visits they showed interest and asked for group sessions. .

Many women of group psychosocial counseling showed symptoms of having survived sexual violence during the war. They still considered as suspicious cases until they start to speak openly about their war experience.

During 2011, the counseling sessions with the old groups took place mostly in the villages while the regular every two months meetings of the groups' leaders of old groups of women are held mainly in MGJ premises.

During 2012, the counselors succeeded to organize the joint meetings of old and new groups' leaders. During these joint meetings the participants of new groups gained knowledge about the experiences the women of old groups gained during the project time. The members of old and some of new groups were motivated to participate in business and marketing trainings.

The topics treated during psychosocial sessions with new groups of women mainly covered techniques in developing coping mechanisms of trauma related to sexual violence. They were focused mainly on key issues important for the grieving process and reconciliation. The topics covered during psychosocial sessions are connected with identity and perceptions; the cycle of violence; denial and its consequences; the grieving process; dealing with emotions; needs and resources; reconciliation etc. While the health gynecological sessions were concentrated on health issues: primary health hygienic conditions; early marriages and pregnancy in very young age, especially among RAE communities; cervical and breasts carcinomas.

The joint psychosocial sessions included topics of gender equality and communication gap between generations. The most challenge during psychosocial sessions with new groups was when during the sessions were occasionally brought into discussions the issue of sexual crimes against women and how can other family members support the survivors of rape, although always the discussions made in the third person.



After group psychosocial sessions, a number of women are offered individual counseling. The sessions held either in their houses, or in MGJ premises. Aside of a number of former individual clients that are offered individual counseling time after time based on their needs, 46 other women coming out of groups of women are offered individual psychosocial counseling, too.

#### ***Individual psychosocial support***

### **4.2 Offering of Group health gynecological sessions and individual health gynecological visits and consultations**



***Health educational gynecological group session and primary gynecological visit***

Women beneficiaries of MGJ support also were offered group health gynecological sessions and individual consultations. With 3 groups of women in Rahvec are held topics on: primary health hygiene; family planning; early marriages and the consequences of pregnancy in early age, etc. These groups contain Roma nationality women too.

***Objective 5. Women farmers influence the agricultural development in their region and reinforce networking with other farmers' organizations in and outside Kosova hence playing an innovative role in improving public policies on the local and national level***

After splitting of MK, Medica Gjakova intended to become a strong, independent and viable Organisation it was actively networking with the local and regional women's organisations to see the possibilities to organise exchange experience meetings of Women Framers' Cooperative of Duart e Dardanes and women working in different local and regional Agricultural cooperatives.



***MGJ's clients visiting MUNDESIA NGO in Mitrovica***



***MGJ Staff exchange experience with the staff of other local and national NGOs***

Regarding to this, a study and exchange experience visit of women farmers of DeD cooperative to two Agricultural cooperatives in Albania was organised. Women farmers are aware about the importance of business and marketing trainings needed for a successful agricultural cooperative.



***Women farmers visiting Agro Koni Agricultural Cooperative in Albania***

MGJ Director and Director of the Women Farmers' Agricultural Cooperative contacted the representatives of NGO's Initiative of Kosovo Community that supports clients with income generating activities, and shared the information they got women farmers. The DeD's farmers showed interest to visit them.

Women of bees keeping group participated and sold their honey product during two Honey Fairs organized by The Municipal Department of Agriculture and Forestry, and the second organized by FLORA – a local NGO.



***A customer buys honey in the Fair***



***Women farmers promote the honey in the Fair***

Participated of MGJ representatives in the regular KWN meetings. Leaders of women's groups also joined and participated the meetings regularly. They participated with rotation every second meeting, so all groups' leaders could get familiar with KWN activities and at the same time got socialised with other women.



***Women of MGJ and DeD meet with women of other local NGOs' members of KWN***

Although many advocacy efforts taken by joint activities of members of Kosovo Women Network to address the status and rights of survivors of rape since after the war in Kosovo were done even before, during the last year of project implementation this issue is addressed through a protest at national level. It is organized by KWN on the 8th of March with the motto "We don't want flowers; we want justice for the survivors of rape during the war". Medica Gjakova staff and some clients participated in this protest. The motto of the protest was provision of legacy and public recognition for war rape survivors and their compensation by amending of a law that would offer them a pension and/or other social benefits. The protest had a great impact on mobilization of institutions to take seriously the responsibility of

supporting the women victims of war and their rights in receiving the same treatment as other categories of war. The same day the Parliament gathered and issued a resolution on supporting the access of survivors to justice and drafting a law that would provide them equal benefits with the war veterans, invalids and civilian victims of war.

### **Challenges and difficulties:**

MGJ faced some challenges during the implementation of the project:

- The biggest challenge at the beginning of the project implementation period was the establishing of a new NGO to continue the support of women that joined to the professional staff of MGJ after the split. But this was over passed by working under the umbrella of RENESANCA – a women’s legally registered organization. During those first months the staff of MGJ succeeded to establish and register their own local NGO, and at the same time reconstructed their organization structures and regulations.
- Also the motivation of women farmers to become legal cooperators within a women’s agricultural cooperative was another challenge for MGJ staff. Women coming from traditional rural areas still not used to work together as a joint working group.
- A difficulty that at the first glance seemed not to be so was the collection of offers for purchasing the equipments for the women’s cooperative and cars. Especially when buying second hand cars, they are sold in the open markets and is very difficult to collect offers.
- The sustainability of the organization after implementation of this project appeared to be another challenge, but it was over passed after being able to hire a fund raising expert trainer on fund raising. This supported the Managing Group to write and deliver project proposals to different donors.

**Report prepared by: Selamet Peni / Director**

### **Medica Gjakova donors during this reporting period**



**Donations can be sent to:**

**ProCredit Bank-Gjakovë**

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