The Challenge

Women who have experienced sexualised violence in conflict regions face difficulties to find assistance. The social infrastructure in war and post-war regions is frequently inadequate and run-down. In the existing health institutions, survivors often experience stigmatising or humiliating behaviour. The attitude of doctors, nursing staff and midwives, however, is crucial. With empathic, stress- and trauma-sensitive approaches they can provide women with the skilled consultations they need and prevent re-traumatisation.

Sexualised and gender-based violence (SGBV) is not an individual problem of the survivors. The long-term consequences affect the development of families and communities and women’s social participation.

→ With stress- and trauma-sensitive approaches, health professionals can prevent re-traumatization.
Our Approach

Following a multi-level approach for the prevention of and response to violence against women, the Transnational Health Training Programme (THTP) focuses on improving access to stress- and trauma-sensitive health services. The target groups are women and girls affected by sexualised and gender-based violence in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

THTP strengthens capacities at several levels with three interlinked components:

1. **Qualification**: trains health professionals to provide stress- and trauma-sensitive support. Following a ‘Training of Trainers’ approach (ToT), the health professionals act as a focal point for building awareness and disseminating stress- and trauma-sensitive services within their institutions.

2. **Institutionalisation**: aims for healthcare systems to institutionalise stress- and trauma-sensitive services by embedding medica mondiale’s Stress- and Trauma-sensitive Approach® (STA) in existing structures.

3. **Advocacy**: strengthens the capacities of the participating healthcare institutions and local project holders to influence the development of international guidelines and standards to improve access to stress- and trauma-sensitive support for women and girls affected by SGBV.

Results

Since 2015, medica mondiale has implemented the first phase of THTP in Afghanistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In October 2018, medica mondiale expanded the programme (THTP II) to Kosovo and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Between 2015 and 2020:

- 300 health professionals received training to provide stress- and trauma-sensitive support.
- 17 Focal Points were trained in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Afghanistan. 42 focal points started the training process.
- In Kosovo, the stress- and trauma-sensitive training received accreditation at the Chamber of Doctors and Nurses.
- In all four countries, government institutions signed Memorandums of Understandings to support the implementation of the programme.