

Midwives for Peace - the Safe Birth Project

Palestinian Territory



Madre Org

Organization type:

nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector

Budget:

\$1,000 - \$10,000

Website:

<http://www.madre.org/>



- [Abuse & violence](#)
- [Health education](#)
- [Infant health](#)
- [Maternal health](#)
- [Reproductive health](#)
- [Vulnerable populations](#)
- [Women's issues](#)

Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Every minute a woman dies from complications related to pregnancy or childbirth; 99% of them in developing countries. MADRE's partner organization, Midwives for Peace, is part of the solution to this major global health problem. This grassroots group of Palestinian and Israeli midwives are committed to their profession and to peace. They are piloting a project to reduce maternal and infant mortality in Palestine. Our midwifery trainings and "safe delivery kits" enable women to have healthy deliveries. Midwife Aisha Saifi embodies the change we wish to bring to the world when she says, "I dream of delivering a baby who will one day ask her mother what it was like to live during the years of war and conflict."

About Project

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

The Safe Birth Project exists because a small brave group of Israeli and Palestinian midwives refuse to be enemies. They enact peace every day by coming together across physical and national barriers to advance a shared conviction: that every mother deserves a safe, joyful, birthing experience and that every newborn deserves to grow up in peace. By bringing together women from opposite sides of the Israeli-Palestinian border, the Safe Birth Project fulfills an urgent humanitarian need, promotes reproductive rights and builds peace. The project seeks to address reproductive health impacts of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in ways that are at once concrete and visionary; local and systemic. In contexts where militarized barriers block health care access, mobile health care providers are essential. Midwives for Peace expands access to high quality care for pregnant and laboring women. As midwives, the women participating in this project are committed to ensuring the health and well-being of newborns and their mothers. As Palestinians and Israelis, they understand that ultimately, their patients' health and well-being depends on ending the decades-long armed conflict that surrounds them.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

MADRE is supporting a grassroots group of Palestinian and Israeli midwives - Midwives for Peace - who have come together to act on their commitment to their profession and to peace. They are working side by side to: 1. Leverage existing global health platforms in order to address the issue of maternal and child health in the Palestinian territories 2. Develop updated standards of midwifery practice 3. Create joint professional trainings and workshops for Palestinian and Israeli midwives 4. Deliver healthy babies and ensure that childbirth is a joyful happy, healthy occasion for every mother 5. Create mechanisms for Israeli and Palestinian midwives to support each other and work for peace.

About You

Organization:

MADRE

About You

First Name

MADRE

Last Name

Organization

Twitter<http://www.twitter.com/MADREspeaks>**Facebook Profile**<http://www.facebook.com/madre.org>**About Your Organization****Organization Name**

MADRE

Organization Phone

(212) 627-0444

Organization Address

121 West 27th Street, # 301 New York, NY 10001 USA

Organization Country

, NY, New York County

Country where this project is creating social impact**How long has your organization been operating?**

15 years

Is the project that you are entering related to this organization?

Yes

The information you provide here will be used to fill in any parts of your profile that have been left blank, such as interests, organization information, and website. No contact information will be made public. Please uncheck here if you do not want this to happen..

Innovation**What stage is your project in?**

Operating for 15 years

Tell us about the community that you engage? eg. economic conditions, political structures, norms and values, demographic trends, history, and experience with engagement efforts.

Israeli-imposed restrictions on Palestinians' freedom of movement, coupled with intermittent military attacks, threaten the rights and well-being of Palestinian women, with particular consequences for women's reproductive health.

The Israeli military has already destroyed thousands of roads in the West Bank and is building a 470 mile Separation Wall that further fragments the Occupied Palestinian territories, making it extremely difficult for Palestinian women who are in labor to reach hospitals. Ambulances are regularly detained by soldiers at checkpoints or forced to take circuitous routes to medical care facilities during emergency situations. Curfews prevent women from leaving their homes, even in the midst of labor or other medical emergencies. Mandated checkpoints between Jerusalem and the West Bank often compel women to transfer to different ambulances, even if they have a life-threatening condition such as a post-partum hemorrhage.

Travel restrictions have major implications on women's health. Within the first four years of the second intifada, 61 Palestinian women were forced to give birth at Israeli military checkpoints, resulting in the deaths of 20 women and 36 infants. There has been almost a fivefold increase in the number of pregnant women who received no prenatal care due to movement restrictions on women and healthcare providers. There has also been a dramatic increase in births that take place in unsafe conditions or without a skilled health worker, increasing the danger to women during pregnancy and childbirth, and creating enormous psychological strain for women. These statistics do not even begin to address the limitations placed on postpartum care for women and pediatric care for newborn infants.

Mothers and newborns in the US benefit from lactation workshops, tests that monitor newborn weight and bilirubin, and the administration of routine vaccinations. Yet newborns in Palestine may never get a chance to have an early evaluation by a healthcare provider. Midwives for Peace recognizes the importance of holistic care and works to provide it for both mothers and newborns.

Share the story of the founder and what inspired the founder to start this project

Aisha Saifi is a dedicated women's health professional and the Palestinian coordinator of Midwives for Peace. Aisha has been working with women and children in different communities for 25 years, providing direct services and doing community organizing around issues of early marriage, domestic violence, child abuse and family planning.

Aisha has expertise in prenatal and postnatal care, chronic disease prevention, home health care delivery and follow up for high-risk cases. She has degrees in midwifery and nursing from Bethlehem University, as well as an MBA from York University. She also has specialized training in neonatal resuscitation, advanced life support in obstetrics, and vaccination and immunization.

Aisha is a role model for how (extra)ordinary citizens can use their skills to work for peace. Aisha understood, early on, that a mother's experience, regardless of religion or nationality, involves the same stages of pregnancy, the same pain during delivery and the same timeless joy from a newborn's first cry. She believes that every woman deserves attention, care, and support during this process. It is with this belief that Aisha founded Midwives for Peace, and continues to work tirelessly to sustain it.

Social Impact

Please describe how your project has been successful and how that success is measured

1. Maternal and infant mortality are reduced by "safe delivery kits" that MADRE has provided to midwives in the West Bank.
2. The health of mothers and newborns is improved as the midwives provide women with personalized healthcare counseling and postpartum health education on breastfeeding, hygiene, infant care and family planning.
3. Women's access to family planning is expanded. Regular MADRE deliveries of condoms are distributed by midwives who offer workshops on preventing unwanted and high-risk pregnancies.
4. Despite the ongoing conflict, Palestinian and Israeli midwives are able to work cooperatively to share skills and midwifery techniques that save lives and improve maternal health. Despite heavily-militarized physical barriers and a political climate that has undermined cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians, the group of women has been meeting six times a year for the past 3 years.
5. These women have increased access to well-trained midwives in their communities, lowering the risk associated with the difficult trips to the hospitals through heavily barricaded checkpoints.

How many people have been impacted by your project?

101-1,000

How many people could be impacted by your project in the next three years?

1,001-10,000

Winning entries present a strong plan for how they will achieve growth. Identify your six-month milestone for growing your impact

Leverage existing global health platforms in order to reduce morbidity and mortality for women and children. Expand existing workshops to improve access to trained midwives and essential resources.

Task 1

Visit childbirthing centers in the area in order to promote alliances with local and international NGOs working on reproductive health issues. Adapt and employ pre-existing global health platforms.

Task 2

Provide Aisha with funding to purchase more "safe delivery kits" and arrange training workshops for midwives. Provide funding to publicize training sessions and to distribute educational materials.

Task 3

Support Aisha's linkage with the global women's health rights movement by supporting her attendance at international conferences and training on reproductive health.

Identify your 12-month impact milestone

Advance midwifery training through use of ultrasound imaging and newer imaging modalities. Develop a birthing registry to quantify and categorize barriers encountered by pregnant and laboring women.

Task 1

Sponsor the purchase of imaging equipment and train technical support in order to improve the quality of care provided to pregnant and laboring women.

Task 2

Support reproductive rights education material on contraception, family planning and access to care. Increase awareness on domestic violence issues through community workshops and speakers.

Task 3

Begin a preliminary survey to be filled out by each midwife providing care in Palestine in order to identify barriers to access and resources for women and newborns.

How will your project evolve over the next three years?

1. Use a sustainable platform for providing maternal and child health care in the context of restricted travel and access to care.
2. Create midwifery protocols to be distributed at childbirthing centers throughout Palestine.
3. Ensure that the midwives can access the technologies necessary to meet standards of care as defined by the World Health Organization.
4. Strengthen alliances with pre-existing organizations working in the area of maternal and child health.
5. Provide comprehensive, accessible and immediate maternal and child health care for all women in Palestine.
6. Link Midwives for Peace with the global women's movement on reproductive rights.

Sustainability

What barriers might hinder the success of your project and how do you plan to overcome them?

Our mobile team of midwives is equipped to work within the restrictions on the ground in Palestine, but this project will not thrive unless it has adequate funding for its activities.

Tell us about your partnerships

MADRE was founded in 1983 as a partnership between women in the United States and Nicaragua. Our founding partnership was grounded in the belief that community-based organizations, not "outside experts," are best situated to identify and meet the needs of the women and families they serve. While they lack the resources and training to effect change, they have a first-hand understanding of local conditions—they are the true experts. Rather than replicate or compete with local activists, MADRE empowers community-based women's organizations to effectively address rights violations by sharing financial resources and building their capacity. Our model ensures that skills and resources remain in the hands of community members. Today, MADRE has built a vibrant network of more than 20 local women's organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and the Middle East.

Explain your selections

The Safe Birth Project is an ongoing initiative that MADRE will sustain through a variety of revenue streams, including individual contributions, foundation grants and honoraria from speaking engagements. MADRE has a membership base of 25,000 individuals who support our programs including this project.

How do you plan to strengthen your project in the next three years?

This project will adapt and employ pre-existing global health platforms to address maternal and child health in Palestine. The midwifery workshops will collaborate with the global women's movement, promote technical training on obstetrics and gynecology, and promote community awareness through education.

Existing global health platforms on reproductive health will shape the future of this project. With the goal of increasing access to care and reducing maternal and child morbidity and mortality, protocols will be developed to ensure that every delivery occurs safely and in controlled settings.

Linking with the global women's movement through participation in international conferences and trainings will strengthen this project. The midwifery workshops will be structured around evidence-based standards of care. Additionally, this will ensure that this project remains in dialogue with similar projects taking place around the globe.

Employing new technologies in order to reduce cost and improve access to care is essential. Supporting technical training on novel imaging modalities and procedural training on methods of contraception, such as IUD insertion, will promote safe delivery and informed family planning. The group, Midwives for Peace, also strives to support awareness through educational pamphlets and community workshops. Addressing topics such as family planning, contraception and domestic violence, Midwives for Peace will bring in popular educators from the area in order to engage women and families on these important issues.

Challenges

Which barriers to health and well-being does your innovation address?

Please select up to three in order of relevancy to your project.

PRIMARY

Lack of physical access to care/lack of facilities

SECONDARY

Limited human capital (trained physicians, nurses, etc.)

TERTIARY

Lack of access to targeted health information and education

Please describe how your innovation specifically tackles the barriers listed above.

1. Our mobile team of midwives is equipped to work within the restrictions on the ground in Palestine confronting the issue of limited physical access to care and a shortage of facilities.
2. This team strives to train more midwives in order to remove the limitations on human capital that impact maternal and child health in Palestine.
3. Midwives for Peace trains midwives to provide for safe and effective childbirth.

How are you growing the impact of your organization or initiative?

Please select up to three potential pathways in order of relevancy to you.

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

Enhanced existing impact through addition of complementary services

TERTIARY

Influenced other organizations and institutions through the spread of best practices

Please describe which of your growth activities are current or planned for the immediate future.

1. Expanding by developing alliances with local and international NGOs working on reproductive health services.
2. Increasing breadth of services offered by using new technologies and educating communities about reproductive healthcare options.
3. Collaborating with existing organizations in order to provide access to care for all women in Palestine.

Do you collaborate with any of the following: (Check all that apply)

NGOs/Nonprofits.

If yes, how have these collaborations helped your innovation to succeed?

MADRE has cultivated strong collaborations with sister organizations in Afghanistan, Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Nicaragua, Palestine, Peru, Sudan and many other countries. The women, young people, children and men of these communities are survivors of war, political repression, genocide, economic and sexual exploitation, and the twin burdens of natural disaster and disastrous policies. MADRE empowers community-based women's organizations to effectively address rights violations by sharing financial resources and building their capacity, ensuring that skills and resources remain in the hands of community members.