



**International  
Medical Corps**

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**MENTAL HEALTH AND  
PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT  
2015 YEAR IN REVIEW**

# Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) is Critical

**450 million**

people struggle with some form of mental illness globally



The cost of mental illness per year is set to rise to

**\$6 trillion by 2030**



MENTAL ILLNESS ACCOUNTS FOR

**4 OUT OF 10**

LEADING CAUSES OF DISABILITY WORLDWIDE

**1 Psychiatrist**

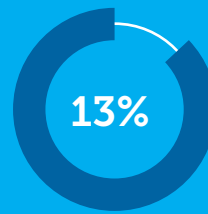
for every 2 million in low income countries



Unemployment rates among individuals with mental disorders can be as high as 90%



Around 20% of the world's children and adolescents are estimated to have mental disorders



Mental illness represents 13% of the global disease burden surpassing cardiovascular disease and cancer



The number of people with common mental disorders doubles from 10% to 20% in humanitarian settings

## Our Work

In 2015 we implemented mental health and psychosocial support programs in 24 countries



## OUR VISION

Improved access and availability of evidence based, high quality and culturally sensitive mental health services and psychosocial support for populations affected by conflict and crisis

## OUR MISSION

To build sustainable local capacities and provide comprehensive, integrated and community based mental health services and psychosocial support activities that promote the resilience and overall wellbeing of vulnerable refugees, internally displaced people and host populations

## Children have been especially affected by Syria civil war.

About 1.1 million other children are now refugees—three-quarters of them under 12. They have spent much of their young lives held captive by conflict. International Medical Corps' Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Team is working with local partners to assist children and their families by providing safe spaces and activities in urban and refugee camp settings. We also train local health care staff in providing comprehensive mental health services.

### Our Programs



#### Information, Coordination and Mapping

In emergencies, many organizations implement MHPSS activities with good intentions but do not coordinate with others and are not aware of guidelines and best practices. In line with the IASC Guidelines on MHPSS in Emergency Settings, International Medical Corps actively contributes to coordination groups and strives to establish coordination mechanisms where none exist to promote best practices, information sharing and joint planning.



#### Child and Youth Psychosocial Programs

International Medical Corps' projects for children and youth are not only recreational but aim to build key life skills for dealing with difficult situations, building friendships and keeping healthy. The programs involve families and community leaders to discuss ways of helping children and youth. Specific community projects are designed and carried out by youth, who learn important skills and make new connections with others.



#### Psychiatric Hospitals and Rehabilitation

People with severe and chronic mental disorders tend to be among the most vulnerable in humanitarian emergencies. As one of the few agencies to provide support to this population, International Medical Corps works to assess and improve the quality of care through provision of medication and supplies, training and mentoring of health professionals in mental hospitals.



#### Psychosocial Support Activities

In emergencies, people may lose opportunities to connect and socialize with others in a safe environment and may become isolated. Having support from others is one of the most important factors in helping people deal with new situations. We include psychosocial support activities (e.g. community events, cooking, dancing, learning new skills such as English or computer classes) in all of our MHPSS programming.



#### Mental Health Integration into Primary Care

Providing mental health as part of general health care is more accessible, cost effective and less stigmatizing. International Medical Corps has taken the lead in implementing mental health into primary care integration programs in over 15 countries around the world.



#### Psychological First Aid (PFA)

In emergencies, service providers are often unsure of how to respond to people suffering significant distress. PFA provides guidance on how to be supportive, do no harm, communicate effectively, and connect people to needed services.



#### Community Mental Health & Psychosocial Supports

People experiencing mental health problems often have multiple and complex needs which require a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach. In order to meet these needs, International Medical Corps has developed a mental health case management approach that meets multiple needs, helps people set goals and connects them to different available services and support.



#### Early Childhood Development

In emergencies, mothers often experience hardships and emotional distress which impacts their ability to take care of children. International Medical Corps implements programming that specifically enhances mother-child interactions and focuses on infant stimulation, through play and other activities, which is crucial for development and has been shown to improve child health.

# MHPSS' Strategic Plan and 2015 Achievements

Ensure continued quality MHPSS Programming

1

14



IN PERSON PROGRAM SUPPORT VISITS BY MEMBERS OF OUR TECHNICAL SUPPORT TEAM

12



HIGH QUALITY INTERNAL GUIDELINES DEVELOPED SUCH AS THE 2015 MHPSS PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

Highlight & Advance MHPSS Programming

2

6



GLOBAL INTER-AGENCY PROJECTS THAT LED TO MHPSS PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT SUCH AS IASC MHPSS REFERENCE GROUP

8



DOCUMENTS WRITTEN ABOUT MHPSS PROGRAMMING SUCH AS THE IASC MHPSS GUIDANCE NOTE FOR REFUGEES/MIGRANTS GROUP

Build the Capacity of our MHPSS Staff

3

7



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE CALLS WITH PROGRAM STAFF AROUND THE WORLD TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE BETWEEN COUNTRIES

1



MHPSS WORKSHOP TO LEARN AND EXCHANGE EXPERIENCES HELD IN TURKEY WITH TEAMS FROM LEBANON, IRAQ, JORDAN & TURKEY

Ensure Technical Competencies in MHPSS of our Staff

4

4



ONGOING PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM WORKING GROUPS TO INTEGRATE MHPSS INTO OTHER SECTORS SUCH AS NUTRITION AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

1



ROSTER OF STAFF AND JOB APPLICANTS DEVELOPED AND MAINTAINED

# MHPSS' 2015 Project Activities Timeline

Participated in Global Meetings about Ebola in Ghana on March 17-21 and discussed best practices for integrating psychosocial support with Ebola response

Presented at the UNICEF & Government of the Netherlands Symposium on Children in Conflict in May

[\(CLICK TO VIEW MORE\)](#)

Attended the World Health Organization Parenting Meeting from April 7-10th that focused on developing training materials for parents with children with disabilities



Researched and compiled a report on Mental Health Case Management in Jordan

Presented to Congressional Staff in Washington, DC on how International Medical Corps is integrating psychosocial support into the Ebola response

Participated in a global meeting organized by WHO on MHPSS as part of the Ebola response and contributed to global guidelines in Liberia in June

Contributed to new guidance documents together with other agencies such as the updated WHO Geneva Guidelines Development Group (GDG) that develops and updates WHO guidelines on mental health for general health professionals (mhGAP) [\(CLICK TO VIEW\)](#), IASC Guidance Note for refugees/migrants in Europe [\(CLICK TO VIEW\)](#) and recommendations to ministries of health about integrating mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies [\(CLICK TO VIEW\)](#)



Developed MHPSS Middle East Regional Strategy Plan for International Medical Corps Programs



Published several external reports including an analysis of mental health resources and needs in the Syria crisis [\(CLICK TO VIEW\)](#), an evaluation of Early Childhood Development in Gaza [\(CLICK TO VIEW\)](#), and rapid situational assessments for emergencies in Malawi and Nepal [\(CLICK TO VIEW\)](#)

Started to pilot test the ACT Project, a self help program for Syrian refugees experiencing psychological stress, anxiety and depression, in Turkey together with the World Health Organization

Coordinated and led a Middle East MHPSS Meeting in July attended by International Medical Corps country teams from Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq

Attended and participated in an International Medical Corps M&E MHPSS Assessment Workshop in July that agreed to indicators and instruments for MHPSS to be used across sectors



International Medical Corps held global and national workshops to disseminate information on the lessons learned and the necessary steps to integrate mental health into Primary Health Care based on an OFDA funded project



Started to distribute a monthly Newsletter to staff that highlighted noteworthy International Medical Corps programs and initiatives as well as new external resources, webinars and upcoming events



Developed a mental health module for integration into the South Sudan midwifery curriculum



Consulted with colleagues from the NCD Roundtable and NCD Alliance to advocate for incorporating mental health into the new Sustainable Development Goals  
[\(CLICK TO VIEW MORE\)](#)

Attended and participated in the Annual World Health Organization meeting in October that focused on mental health innovations and their uptake into policy and practice



Created a World Mental Health Day Action Kit that assisted eight field teams in celebrating the theme of "DIGNITY" on World Mental Health Day!

[\(CLICK TO VIEW MORE\)](#)



Represented International Medical Corps at the IASC MHPSS Annual Meeting in November that brought MHPSS actors together to share experiences and to work on joint tasks



Two International Medical Corps led congressional resolutions on mental health were introduced to congress and the senate on October 9th!

[\(CLICK TO VIEW MORE\)](#)



Orchestrated a panel discussion on scaling up available services by integrating mental health into general health care with partners such as the NCD Roundtable and the World Health Organization in Washington, DC on November 20th, 2015

[\(CLICK TO VIEW MORE\)](#)



In partnership with Fordham University, HealthNet TPO and CIHC, the International Medical Corps Ethiopia team hosted the annual Mental Health in Complex Emergency course

[\(CLICK TO VIEW MORE\)](#)



Conducted a webinar on the benefits of mental health integration into primary health care on an mhpps.net webinar presentation

[\(CLICK TO VIEW MORE\)](#)

Expanded our global MHPSS team from two to four staff who are providing in-person and remote support and guidance to country teams in addition to global engagement and representation

## TO COME IN 2016



Development of Staff Self-Care Guidance Note

Creation of the Maternal Mental Health Literature Review

Presenting MHPSS Quality Standards and Guidelines for our MHPSS programming

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*The impact of unaddressed mental health problems can have far reaching consequences for entire families and communities. Those with mental illness often struggle to complete the daily tasks needed to meet basic needs, raise children or have supportive relationships with others. This is more pronounced during humanitarian crises and even more so in the midst of armed conflict. International Medical Corps is providing not only basic and emergency health care but also mental health services and psychosocial support to the children, women and men affected by the crisis in Syria.”*

INKA WEISSBECKER, International Medical Corps Mental Health and Psychosocial



## MHPSS' Program Highlights

For the past year, our team has played a key role in integrating psychosocial support into our programming at Ebola treatment centers and within communities. This included having trained psychosocial staff as part of the team at the centers, conducting community outreach, helping to maintain ongoing contact with family members and helping meet the multiple needs of people affected by Ebola. As the pandemic decreased in scale, mental health and psychosocial support programs were developed to meet the ongoing needs as countries recover from the crisis.

In addition, our psychosocial workers continue to reach out to local communities to discuss the myths that surround Ebola and the importance of seeking medical attention if ill. They also work to promote integration of Ebola survivors back into their communities.



# Supporting Mental Health Services in Nepal After the Earthquake

Addressing the long term mental health needs of earthquake affected and vulnerable populations

International Medical Corps began by supporting local partners to strengthen much needed mental health services in affected areas. Local Partner: Transcultural Psychosocial Organization Nepal (TPO) and Integrated Community Development Campaign (ICDC)



**567**

people were trained on Psychological First Aid for first responders



**1,213**

health workers and community leaders – including social workers, teachers and other professionals who interact with families and children trained in mental health and psychosocial support using WHO's mhGAP Guidelines



**17**

earthquake affected communities received targeted care through our comprehensive and integrated mental health model which includes psychosocial counselling and referrals; and outreach and education for communities. Psychosocial counsellors trained by International Medical Corps and Transcultural Psychosocial Organization Nepal have been conducting individual counselling sessions in areas such as Dhading, Gorkha and Sindhuli



Worked with the Ministry of Health to enhance mental health care provided in primary health care setting (e.g. discussing updating the national list of psychotropic medicines)

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