



Women are attending a session on embroidery lead by an IOM staff in one of the IDP camps. © IOM 2016/Muse Mohammed

## Overview

Any form of migration implies a redefinition of individual, family, group and collective identities, roles and value systems, which can put the individuals, the families and the communities involved under stress.

The conditions under which migration takes place are dictated by policies and laws and underlying political, economic and social structures, which determine the outcomes for migrants in terms of their integrated wellbeing, mental health and human development.

An inclusive and human rights-based approach that guarantees the availability and accessibility of psychosocial support and mental health care for all migrants (irrespective of their status) and their host communities can contribute to positive social, economic and cultural outcomes for migrants, their families, communities, and also the societies of both origin and destination countries.

IOM contributes to the promotion of mental health and psychosocial well-being of migrants and host communities, through programs, and activities aiming in accompanying the re-definition of social, professional, family and interpersonal roles. MHPSS is integrated in IOM programmes throughout all phases of the migration process, following three guiding principles:

The pursuit of the most attainable standards of health and psychological wellbeing of migrants and displaced populations is enshrined in both the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018) and the United Nations Global Compact on Refugees (2018). The Sustainable Development Goals, from the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, call for universal mental health care and psychosocial support that leave none behind, including migrants and refugees.

- Flexibility - Programmes are adapted to specific target populations, cultures and situations.
- A community-based approach - Programmes are designed and implemented with an aim to strengthen existing networks and services, valuing the agency of all communities involved.
- Mainstreaming- Psychosocial considerations and mental health and psychosocial support services are embedded in educational, cultural, social, economic, humanitarian, law enforcement and health settings.

## WHOM IT IS FOR

IOM MHPSS activities serve those migrating in a voluntary way and those forced to move, including: IDPs, asylum seekers and refugees, victims of trafficking, returnees, former combatants, other vulnerable migrants, crises affected populations and their host communities.

IOM promotes global, regional and national capacity building activities aimed at mental health professionals, health professionals; social workers, educators, protection actors, counsellors, cultural mediators and interpreters, applied artists, activists, humanitarians, law enforcement officials.



Educational activities. Psychosocial mobile teams in Bassariya, Lebanon.  
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## Facts and figures

- To date, IOM has developed MHPSS activities in more than 72 countries.
- 2016/2019:
  - 784,000 individuals received MHPSS.
  - 5,800 trained professionals and activists in MHPSS.
- In 2019: IOM can count on a capacity of 27 International MHPSS experts and several hundred national MHPSS officers worldwide.



Learning baking at Hassan Sham Camp in Iraq. © IOM 2018/Aziz Raber

## Global Technical Support

The Global Section for Mental Health, Psychosocial Response and Intercultural Communication provides:

- Technical oversight to MHPSS programs of IOM.
- Assessments of the MHPSS needs of migrants and host communities, mapping of services and resources, analysis and research;
- Knowledge dissemination initiatives, including conferences, webinars and external publications;
- Organization of Summer schools, Master programmes, trainings on different facets of MHPSS and population mobility;
- Development of policy papers, guidelines, manuals for MHPSS programming for a wider community of practice;
- Creation of an international network of MHPSS experts.



Support group for persons with disabilities at the Protection of Civilians site in Wau, South Sudan. © IOM 2018

## Summer School

IOM and the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna in Pisa organize every year the IOM Summer School "Psychosocial Interventions in Migration, Emergency and Displacement" for IOM staff and external participants. After eight editions, 250 participants have successfully completed the Summer School.

## Recent Tools and Publications

- Manual on Community-Based MHPSS in Emergencies and Displacement (2019)
- Psychosocial Support and Dialogue in the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon (2019)
- Reintegration Counselling: A Psychosocial Approach (2018)



IOM's engagement in MHPSS in humanitarian responses stems from the IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework (2012), which includes psychosocial support as one of the 15 priority areas of IOM's intervention in humanitarian and migration crises and the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on MHPSS in Emergency Settings (2007). IOM's commitment to provision of MHPSS to vulnerable migrants was prompted by the inclusion of psychosocial support among the rights of Victims of Trafficking in the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children (2000).

## EMERGENCIES

- Deployment, training and supervision of multidisciplinary Psychosocial Mobile Teams;
- Establishment of temporary Psychosocial Support hubs in camps and host communities;
- Socio-relational and cultural activities, creative and art-based activities, ritual and celebrations, sport and play, non-formal education and informal learning activities;
- Counselling and support groups and training in counselling methods;
- Referral mechanisms for those with severe mental disorders, interpretation, cultural mediation, and national mental health system strengthening;
- Integration of MHPSS in the framework of protection to vulnerable conflict-affected individuals.



Community celebration in Iraq. © IOM 2018

### Case study: MHPSS to Displaced Populations in the North east of Nigeria

IOM is a key partner in the provision of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in North-East Nigeria, supporting the State Ministry of Health as co-chair of the MHPSS Sub Working Group and providing direct psychosocial support and services to the affected population. IOM has established a multitiered psychosocial program and has been operating both in MHPSS centers and through multidisciplinary psychosocial mobile teams, based in camps, host and returnee communities. These teams, composed each by a social worker, a counsellor, an educator, and an artist or a community resource has promoted continuity and quality of support in a challenging and unstable environment, putting the communities and their resources at the center of the intervention. A total of 123 team members have provided more than 200,000 psychosocial support services in North East Nigeria in the 2018/2019.

## TRANSITION AND RECOVERY

- Start-up of recreational and counselling centres for families in post-emergency and migration crises settings;
- Strengthening and implementation of community-based supports aiming at mending social fabrics and promoting social cohesion;
- MHPSS to former combatants;
- Integration of MHPSS in Conflict transformation and mediation;
- Livelihood and developmental programmes.



Community volunteers, trained on PFA in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. © IOM 2019

### Case study: Capacity building on Psychosocial Support and Dialogue in Lebanon

In Lebanon, IOM has enhanced the capacity of national governmental and non-governmental actors to provide psychosocial support services and foster integration and stabilization following the Syrian influx, through a series of capacity building activities. These have included two editions of the Masters in Psychosocial Support and Dialogue, organized in coordination with the Lebanese University and addressed to psychologists, social workers, educators, doctors and artists; one edition of the certificate in Psychosocial Support, Conflict Transformation and Livelihood, addressed to 50 Social Workers active in Social Development Centers of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; a series of trainings on the integration of psychosocial support and livelihood support for livelihood experts throughout the country.



Small scale mediation activities in Wau, South Sudan. © IOM 2015

## MIGRANTS' PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

- MHPSS for trafficked persons, stranded migrants, migrants in detention, unaccompanied and separated children, returnees, and other migrants in need of protection;
- Cultural mediation training and mainstreaming;
- Individual, community and structural technical assistance in mainstreaming MHPSS in reintegration assistance for returning migrants;
- Assistance during travel for migrants with mental health conditions;
- Assessing the mental health needs of prospective resettled refugees and other migrants and ensure referrals for specialist services and treatment prior to departure in coordination with national and international partners.

### Case Study: MHPSS to migrants returning to West Africa

IOM has provided MHPSS to more than 6,000 migrant returnees from vulnerable situations in Libya and Niger. Supervised by a MHPSS expert based in Dakar, 10 dedicated MHPSS officers, in close coordination with protection, health and social support structures of NGOs and governments, provide an array of services, which include recreational, sport, artistic and cultural activities, family mediation, support groups, psychoeducation sessions, individual and group counselling, referrals to specialized mental health services for people with mental disorders. IOM missions integrated a psychosocial approach in their whole reintegration response. For those helpers assisting migrants with their reintegration plans, IOM has developed the guidance note: Reintegration Counselling: a psychosocial approach. In addition, concerned partners and front-line workers have been trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA) and basic communication skills.

## HEALTH SECTOR

- Capacity building of service providers in mental health and population mobility;
- Actions promoting migrants' access to mental health services;
- Integration of mental health care for migrants in primary health care settings;
- Capacity building and policy actions for mainstreaming interpretation, mediation, outreach to diverse populations and cultural diversity awareness in mental health services.



Indoor games for children at the Protection of Civilians site in Bor, South Sudan. © IOM 2017

### Case Study: Training modules for health professionals, law enforcement officers, on migrants' and refugees' mental health in the EU.

In line with the aims of the social exclusion target of the "Europe 2020 strategy", in 2018/2019 IOM has developed 9 specific training modules on various aspects of mental health needs and mental health care for migrants, specifically addressed to health professionals and law enforcement officers in the EU. The materials were based on a research review conducted by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), and in coordination with the Frontex Training Division, UNAIDS, ECDC and other European academic partners. The modules have been translated in ten European languages and piloted in ten European countries, reaching over 700 health professionals and law enforcement officers.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

- Interagency collaborations: WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF and IFRC in the domain of MHPSS;
- Humanitarian: IOM is an active member of the IASC-Associated Reference Group on MHPSS:
  - a) It co-chairs the working groups on community-based MHPSS and on MHPSS for men at the global level;
  - b) It co-chairs the field-based MHPSS groups in Libya, South Sudan, Nigeria, Bangladesh-Cox Bazar, Turkey.
- Academia and research: IOM has established partnership with University of Essex, Hunter College, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, University of Dacca, Lebanese University, University of Maiduguri, and many others;
- **Migration Health Research Portal:** IOM MHPSS contributes to this open-access global repository as an important hub for policy makers, researchers, media and other relevant actors interested in driving migration and health actions;
- Professional associations: IOM has established partnerships with the World Psychiatric Association, the Royal College of Psychiatry and many others.

For additional information on IOM MHPSS:

Visit IOM website - [www.iom.int/mental-health-psychosocial-response-and-intercultural-communication](http://www.iom.int/mental-health-psychosocial-response-and-intercultural-communication)

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