



MHPSS  
INTERNATIONAL  
MOVEMENT  
HUB

# THE RED CROSS RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT MHPSS HUB STRATEGY

2026 – 2030

The development of the 2026–2030 Strategy for the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement MHPSS Hub was made possible through the dedicated contributions of individuals and institutions across the Movement. The MHPSS Hub extends its sincere thanks to all who participated in the consultations, writing, review, and refinement of this strategic framework.

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## Acknowledgement of lived experience and community input

We acknowledge with deep gratitude the voices of volunteers, staff, and affected communities whose lived experiences continue to shape the evolution of MHPSS within the Movement. This strategy is grounded in their realities and guided by their leadership.

*The MHPSS Hub welcomes continued feedback and collaboration as we move from strategy to implementation.*

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**MHPSS  
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# CONTENTS

THE RED CROSS RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT MHPSS HUB STRATEGY 2026 – 2030	4
INTRODUCTION	6
FROM THE IFRC PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT REFERENCE CENTRE TO THE RED CROSS RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT MHPSS HUB	7
THEORY OF CHANGE	8
GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND THEIR IMPACT ON MHPSS NEEDS	10
VISION	12
OBJECTIVES	13
OUTCOMES	14
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	16
ENABLERS	20
STOCKTAKING OF THE STRATEGY	23

# THE RED CROSS RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT MHPSS HUB STRATEGY 2026 – 2030

This strategy is based on the broadened mandate, and scope of responsibilities, established when the former IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support (IFRC PS Centre) transitioned into the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement MHPSS Hub (MHPSS Hub) on 1 January 2025. With the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) joining the International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the Danish Red Cross (DRC), through a tripartite partnership agreement, it became the first resource centre to represent and service the entire Movement - the world's largest humanitarian entity - uniquely anchored locally, through millions of volunteers, under its banner across the globe.

The MHPSS Hub aims to enhance the Movement's ability to respond effectively to the mental health and psychosocial needs of affected populations, and to more efficiently advocate for their fundamental right to mental health. This includes populations exposed to disasters and emergencies whether generated by natural hazards and climate change, conflict and displacement, or combinations of these factors. This requires a technical scope from basic psychosocial services to specialised clinical support, a focus spanning from prevention and preparedness, through treatment and care to rehabilitation and recovery, across individually tailored and community-based approaches. To say that this is ambitious would be an understatement. Not least in the face of increasing and accelerating mental health challenges, a widening gap between mental health needs and capacity, and a volatile funding situation. However, our Movement has been at the centre of humanitarian responses for more than 160 years. Through a history of ever changing and intensifying challenges we have managed to adapt, to find ways of supporting people in need, despite complex circumstances and contexts.

This ability stems from our collective willingness to change. Not at the core level of humanitarian principles, but in terms of revising strategies, operations, policies and structures when the reality around us confronts

us with new challenges. The establishment of the MHPSS Hub, and the Movement uniting around MHPSS, is an illustrative example. Our success will ultimately rely on our continued ability to identify new possibilities, in the form of knowledge, insights and ideas, whether fostered at high-level forums in Geneva or by staff and volunteers on the frontlines, or in the form of technological and digital advances that can be utilized to advance access to quality services.

While grounded in the broader vision of the Movement, this is not a strategy for the Movement as a whole. Each component of the Movement defines its own strategic priorities. Rather, this strategy outlines the direction and ambition of the MHPSS Hub itself—how it will function as a shared resource, complement existing mandates and strategies of Movement components, and contribute to the delivery of sustainable, inclusive, and quality MHPSS services across the Movement. The MHPSS Hub's primary role is to support all components of the Movement both in their domestic services and in their international solidarity efforts.

A deep and heartfelt thanks to all the colleagues who have contributed to decades of mental health efforts and results in our Movement - now culminating in the establishment of the MHPSS Hub. A warm welcome to the tripartite partners, as well as the Steering Committee and Advisory Group members that will help shape the MHPSS Hub in the future. Finally, a word of gratitude to the staff members that put in the hours and effort to make it possible to publish this first MHPSS Hub strategy, after an inclusive and thorough process.



Sarah Harrison  
Director

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement MHPSS Hub

# INTRODUCTION

The MHPSS Hub builds on a heritage of more than 30 years of experience from the former IFRC PS Centre. In particular its established position as a key actor in the global MHPSS community, reflected in a significant network and base of acknowledged expertise as well as the global audience of listeners, viewers, followers, subscribers and users of MHPSS Hub platforms and outlets, across more than 200 countries.

Further, it draws on the extensive operational knowledge and experience of the ICRC, the IFRC and National Societies. The tripartite partnership agreement to establish the MHPSS Hub, signed by the ICRC, the IFRC and the DRC in 2024, reflects the commitment to utilise this collective strength in service of all components of the Movement. To unite behind the delivery of principled, high-impact support in line with the Fundamental Principles, the Seville Agreement 2.0, and the 2019 Council of Delegates resolution on MHPSS, and in alignment with the Movement MHPSS framework covering the full spectrum of MHPSS approaches, from basic psychosocial care to specialised mental health services. At the same time, the MHPSS Hub will continue the tradition of curiosity to include new perspectives, approaches and methodologies that defines the MHPSS efforts across the Movement and explore new opportunities arising from technological advances such as digital MHPSS.

This strategy is being launched at a time of intensifying needs. The world has entered an era of polycrisis, marked by protracted conflicts, mass displacement, climate shocks, pandemics/epidemics, social and economic

constraints, and global uncertainty and volatility. These overlapping emergencies continue to expose individuals, families, and communities to mental health and psychosocial challenges. They also challenge the Movement, to be more focused, more unified in purpose, and more committed than ever before in ensuring that mental health is treated not as a luxury, but as a fundamental right. The MHPSS Hub recognises that delivering on this ambition requires financial sustainability with a greater focus on mobilising core funding. The strategy also confronts the unprecedented constraints on humanitarian and overseas development assistance, and in particular, the chronic underinvestment in mental health and psychosocial support that weakens service continuity, undermines local systems, and limits access for those most at risk.

From the outset, the ambition has been to design a strategy that is both scalable and adaptable, while maintaining a high level of technical and professional ambition. To achieve this, annual operational plans will translate the strategy into concrete goals, aligned with budgetary possibilities for the coming years. The first plan will also establish baselines, assumptions, risks, and external dependencies. In addition to these annual reviews, a more in-depth mid-term review of the strategy will take place during 2028. While the overarching objectives and expected outcomes will remain consistent throughout the strategic period, strategic initiatives and enablers will be reviewed and can be expected to evolve based on lessons learned and experiences from the first two-years of implementation.

# FROM THE IFRC PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT REFERENCE CENTRE TO THE RED CROSS RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT MHPSS HUB

The transition from an IFRC Reference Centre to a Red Cross Red Crescent Movement-wide Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Hub marks a decisive step for the Movement and reflects our shared ambition for increased collaboration and joint work. The establishment of the MHPSS Hub, in January 2025, was the culmination of years of coordinated efforts by the ICRC, the IFRC, the DRC and key-partners to increase synergies, coherence and knowledge sharing in relation to MHPSS across the entire Movement. The Steering Committee and Advisory Group ensures the MHPSS Hub has a broad and diverse representation across the five regions of the Movement, as well as the broader global MHPSS community.

The vision of the MHPSS Hub, as set out in its Terms of Reference, is “to support and enable the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in realizing the universal right to MHPSS for all.”

The MHPSS Hub embraces this vision and mandate with enthusiasm while also acknowledging that the diversity of mandates, capacities, and resources across the Movement presents a complex and dynamic reality. A reality that will have to be navigated in a way that allows flexibility and respect for individual actors and their contexts and ambitions, but at the same time ensures Movement components access to coherent and relevant support.

Together with partners, the MHPSS Hub has prepared a five-year strategy to guide its work—reflecting the Movement’s commitment to ensuring that each of its’ components have a strong global source of expertise to drive their work.



# THEORY OF CHANGE

The next page illustrates the Theory of Change that underpins this strategy outlines how the MHPSS Hub will support and enable the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in realizing the universal right to MHPSS for all. This includes improving the quality and impact of MHPSS services delivered to people in need, as well as the care and well-being of staff and volunteers who deliver them. To achieve this, the MHPSS Hub will focus on three outcomes that contribute to two overarching objectives: improving the quality and impact of MHPSS services and improving the care and well-being of staff and volunteers.

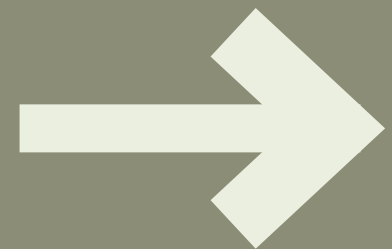
These objectives and outcomes will be driven forward by five strategic initiatives, which will define the core work of the MHPSS Hub in the coming years. The realization of these objectives and outcomes will be underpinned by five cross-cutting enablers—internal capacities and systems that ensure the MHPSS Hub’s ability to lead, support, and adapt in a dynamic global environment.



# GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND THEIR IMPACT ON MHPSS NEEDS

The next five years will test the humanitarian sector in unprecedented ways. The MHPSS Hub must navigate a global landscape marked by escalating armed conflicts, public health emergencies, climate shocks, natural hazards, increased migration and internal displacement<sup>1</sup>. These overlapping circumstances are compounded by resource constraints and widening social and economic inequities.

This section outlines four interconnected global challenges that will shape the strategic environment for the MHPSS Hub and define how it must act, adapt, and lead in the years ahead. These global challenges also underpin the current 'humanitarian reset' in which the MHPSS Hub is directly engaged through its role as the current IFRC Co-Chair of the IASC Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Humanitarian Settings.



<sup>1</sup> Terminology based on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2024-30 [Migration Strategy](#)

# 1 POLYCRISIS

The world is entering a period of sustained polycrisis: multiple, interconnected emergencies—climate shocks, conflict, economic collapse, increasing inequality, societal polarisation, health emergencies, displacement—are occurring simultaneously, reinforcing one another and eroding public systems of care and protection. In 2024, global displacement reached over 120 million people. Many of those affected face long-term psychological stress and instability, compounded by interrupted social networks, loneliness and chronic uncertainty.

These dynamics create layered MHPSS needs that often go unmet due to increased stigma, fragmented service delivery, or limited local capacity. Further, mental health needs are not static or universal but influenced by social and economic status, geography, identity, time and general circumstances with vulnerable families and communities particularly exposed. Meeting these needs requires scalable, adaptive, and trauma-informed systems of support.

# 2 INCREASED AND EVOLVING MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

Mental health needs are increasing across all contexts, including high-income countries, but especially among those impacted by crisis. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a 25% global increase in depression and anxiety, with long-term consequences among youth, caregivers, displaced populations, and frontline workers.<sup>2</sup> One in five conflict-affected people are likely to develop mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).<sup>3</sup> MHPSS services must now respond to both acute traumatic events and sustained psychological and psychosocial distress in protracted emergencies and resource constrained settings.

Mental health challenges are diverse and access to support is unequal. It is vital to ensure the agency and inclusion of people and communities in need through services that are community-led, culturally relevant, and accessible to those outside formal health and social care systems. Tailored, context-sensitive responses grounded in local realities, culture, and social norms are critical for effective care and recovery.

# 3 CONSTRAINED RESOURCES AND UNPREDICTABLE FUNDING ACCESS

Despite growing awareness, MHPSS remains severely underfunded. Mental health accounts for less than 2% of health budgets globally—and under 1% of humanitarian health funding. The latest analysis shows a global annual mental health finance gap of at least \$200 billion.<sup>4</sup> This chronic gap limits continuity of care, fragments service delivery, and makes it harder to sustain national and community-based MHPSS systems—particularly those needed by families in crisis, in protracted conflict settings and across migration routes.

Short-term project cycles, siloed funding mechanisms, and a lack of crisis-modifier or pooled financing models exacerbate these issues. For Movement components operating in complex emergencies, constrained funding weakens the ability to scale and/or sustain MHPSS services, and places excessive strain on volunteer-led models of emergency response and service delivery. For the MHPSS Hub, these factors have impeded efforts to secure diversified, flexible and multi-year core funding.

# 4 ACCESS TO MHPSS IN THE CONTEXT OF GROWING MISTRUST AND INEQUITY

Access to MHPSS services is shaped not only by availability but by trust, stigma, and societal dynamics. Growing mistrust and disillusionment towards the humanitarian sector, health institutions and science, the production and sharing of mis- and disinformation, increasing racism and xenophobia, and fear of surveillance can discourage people—particularly displaced or marginalized communities—from seeking care. In many contexts, mental illness is spiritualised and can be misunderstood and heavily stigmatized, making disclosure and help-seeking risky for affected individuals and their families. In addition, mistrust in health and social care systems and professionals may contribute to self-diagnosis and the unnecessary pathologization of the diversity of human experience.

These dynamics reinforce exclusion, silence, and suffering. Without deliberate efforts to build trust and focus on human dignity and rights, even well-designed services may remain inaccessible to those most in need.

2 [COVID-19 pandemic triggers 25% increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide](#)

3 [Mental health conditions in conflict situations are much more widespread than we thought](#)

4 [Increase, improve and integrate: the way forward for financing NCDs and Mental Health - United for Global Mental Health](#)

# VISION

In the face of compounding global challenges, the MHPSS Hub sets forth an ambitious and transformative vision. Over the next five years, the MHPSS Hub will work towards objectives that collectively support its core aspiration, as articulated in its Terms of Reference:

*To support and enable the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in realizing the universal right to MHPSS for all.*

This vision reflects the MHPSS Hub's mandate: "to ensure that the Movement continues advancing on effectively promoting, preventing, and responding to global MHPSS needs, with the ambition to make MHPSS a right for everyone, alleviating human suffering and promoting mental health, psychosocial well-being, and resilience of individuals (including volunteers and staff), and communities at all times, as per the Movement MHPSS Resolution and Policy on addressing mental health and psychosocial needs (Resolution 5 Council of Delegates 2019, hereinafter the Resolution). The Movement MHPSS Hub will help the Movement in making MHPSS a right for everyone".

# OBJECTIVES

The following outlines two objectives of the MHPSS Hub's first strategy, with an overarching aim to strengthen the Movement's capacity to deliver high-quality, evidence-informed, and sustainable MHPSS services for communities, volunteers and staff.

These objectives are formulated to guide the strategic direction and day-to-day work of the MHPSS Hub over the next five years. However, their achievement will be mediated by external factors, both within and outside the Movement.

## 1

### IMPROVED QUALITY AND IMPACT OF MHPSS SERVICES ACROSS THE FULL SPECTRUM OF CARE

The MHPSS Hub will enable the Movement, and broader humanitarian sector, to develop and apply evidence- and practice-informed tools, guidelines and competency-based learning systems to enhance the quality and consistency of MHPSS services across the continuum of care including prevention and promotion, through treatment and care, to rehabilitation and recovery. This will include a focus on developing guidance and practice across the full MHPSS Framework from a protective environment to basic psychosocial support through to specialized mental health care. The MHPSS Hub will strive to include individuals and communities with lived experience in the process and strengthen the inputs and perspectives from local and national levels. The MHPSS Hub will also advocate for the effective utilization, adaptation and prioritization of existing tools, guidelines, and systems throughout the Movement. Quality assurance will be embedded in MHPSS services, through technical support on quality benchmarks, supervision, feedback mechanisms, and adaptive learning.

To support this, the MHPSS Hub will convene Movement components to consolidate, align and disseminate both existing and new tools, and guidance based on emerging evidence and global standards and informed by practice. These approaches will reflect diverse operational realities, be adaptable and scalable across humanitarian, health, social care, education and protection sectors, and will be informed by research.

In so doing, the MHPSS Hub aims to strengthen the coherence and relevance of MHPSS practice across the Movement. This outcome will help ensure that services are of quality and are principled, practical, and tailored to local needs, cultures, and Movement capacities. This includes both MHPSS practices as they relate to MHPSS services, and to the care and well-being of staff and volunteers.

## 2

### IMPROVED CARE AND WELL-BEING FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The MHPSS Hub will support Movement components to protect and promote the mental health and psychosocial well-being of staff and volunteers. We will support Movement components to embed, institutionalize and adopt comprehensive care systems for staff and volunteer well-being as part of National Society Development and aim to equip Movement components with the tools, necessary skills, frameworks, supervision systems and peer support mechanisms to promote and operationalize a culture of care.

The MHPSS Hub will advocate that staff and volunteer well-being is embedded as a core, integrated component of all programmatic and operational planning across all Movement components. Recognising well-being not merely as a support function, but as a prerequisite for effective humanitarian and crisis response work conducted by volunteers and staff.

Across the Movement, these systems will uphold the protection, dignity, and well-being of responders, reinforcing humanitarian effectiveness and strengthening the long-term competencies of volunteers and staff delivering MHPSS services in increasingly demanding contexts. To support this work, the MHPSS Hub aims to engage with, and foster strong collaborations with the IFRC and the ICRC Staff Health units, Human Resource functions, National Society Development teams at the IFRC, and Volunteer Management units within National Societies.

# 1

## OUTCOMES

The three outcomes outlined in the strategy focus on equipping Movement components to deliver high-quality, inclusive, and contextualized MHPSS services across a range of settings. These outcomes are, as outlined below, organised into three key areas: the generation and application of research and evidence, and the strengthening of capacities to ensure effective delivery of support and the advancement of the prioritization and promotion of MHPSS within the Movement. All three components benefit from and contribute to the efforts of the MHPSS Hub beyond the Movement. These efforts are especially linked to the function as delegated by the IFRC to the MHPSS Hub's role as Co-chair of the IASC MHPSS Reference Group and the MHPSS Hub's commitment to continue to engage with inter-agency coordination structures into the future.

### THE MOVEMENT HAS STRONGER SYSTEMS FOR EVIDENCE, LEARNING, RESEARCH AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF MHPSS

The MHPSS Hub will support Movement components to strengthen systems and structures that enable evidence-generation, learning, research, and accountability of MHPSS services. Mechanisms for monitoring, feedback, and ethical data processing will be improved so that Movement components can better assess outcomes, objectives and long-term impact. The MHPSS Hub will support Movement components to review and evaluate MHPSS services and provide recommendations for improvements to service delivery.

Operational research and shared learning from staff, volunteers and affected communities will inform MHPSS service design and delivery. Through internal and external partnerships, advisory roles, participatory research, or co-authorship in guidance/tools the MHPSS Hub aims to ensure that MHPSS programming, for both communities and humanitarian personnel, is responsive, grounded in real-world insights and informed by people with lived experience.

# 2

## MOVEMENT COMPONENTS ARE EQUIPPED TO DELIVER CONTEXTUALIZED MHPSS SERVICES

The MHPSS Hub will support the Movement with the tools, technical support and capacity strengthening to deliver contextualised MHPSS services effectively. The MHPSS Hub will continue developing tools in a collaborative manner across the Movement, including through inter-agency efforts as the IFRC Co-Chair of the IASC MHPSS Reference Group, and in partnership with key external actors. With humanitarian and overseas development funding decreasing, the MHPSS Hub is underlining the importance in linking with national systems and strengthening the capacity of National Societies to address increasing domestic needs as well as national preparedness for inevitable future emergencies. Localized and volunteer-led approaches will be adapted to meet the needs of displaced, conflict- and disaster-affected communities while considering the development and support needs of staff and volunteers.

The MHPSS Hub will advocate for, and support the Movement components to, systematically integrate MHPSS institutionally into emergency health, epidemic preparedness, social care, migration services, disaster risk reduction, protection and inclusion, and anticipatory action plans. These efforts will anchor MHPSS across the continuum of care—ensuring that prevention, promotion, treatment, rehabilitation and recovery services are not only reactive, but proactive and inclusive.

The MHPSS Hub will create guidance documents on how Movement components can institutionalize MHPSS services and will accompany Movement components through a process of integration, including by supporting internal advocacy efforts. This includes both MHPSS practices as they relate to MHPSS services, and the care and well-being of staff and volunteers.

# 3

## MOVEMENT COMPONENTS INCREASINGLY PRIORITIZE AND PROMOTE MHPSS

The MHPSS Hub will support all Movement components to ensure widespread prioritisation of and commitment to MHPSS implementation, in alignment with the MHPSS Movement Policy. This support will focus on the prioritisation of mental health and psychosocial activities in humanitarian, development and high-income settings, as per the Movement MHPSS Framework, with a focus on strong systems before, during and after emergencies.

In addition, the MHPSS Hub will integrate Movement prioritisation and promotion of MHPSS as an objective in its broader advocacy and Humanitarian Diplomacy efforts. This includes direct internal promotion with targeted communications and advocacy activities from the MHPSS Hub to the Movement Components, as well as supporting efforts from the Movement components to further influence their most relevant and direct stakeholders (e.g., government, donors, policy makers). This requires building the competency of “MHPSS Champions” or advocates amongst the Movement components’ senior leadership, as well as staff and volunteers.

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

To achieve the objectives and outcomes defined in this strategy, the MHPSS Hub will implement a set of five high-impact strategic initiatives.

The initiatives expand the MHPSS Hub's work into targeted areas that reflect global trends, without replacing ongoing efforts in areas of continual need. Each initiative is designed to be adaptive, collaborative, and scalable. The initiatives form a core part of the strategy's theory of change and are central to achieving its objectives. Activities under each of the strategic initiatives will be detailed in annual workplans, which will be reviewed and adjusted each year in line with available funding and emerging priorities.

### STRENGTHENING EXISTING, AND DEVELOPING NEW WAYS OF ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL NEEDS

The increasingly complex contexts that Movement components operate in may demand an evaluation of existing approaches, tools and services to address impacts on the mental health and well-being of affected populations, staff and volunteers. The past focus of the MHPSS Hub on primarily psychosocial approaches also necessitates an expansion in technical focus to encompass specialized mental health care approaches and services and to explore digital approaches to MHPSS service delivery. Existing approaches in the Movement may also require development and adaptation to best serve communities in increasingly uncertain and risky environments. This initiative aims to strengthen the capability of the Movement to address the mental health and psychosocial impacts of armed conflicts, a more extreme climate and related displacement and migration.

In close collaboration with the ICRC, the IFRC, National Societies, and other humanitarian agencies the MHPSS Hub will develop, gather and enhance existing tools, approaches, lessons learned and services for use in conflict, climate, migration, and socially and economically vulnerable contexts across the full spectrum of the MHPSS Framework. The MHPSS Hub will facilitate co-creation and exchange with Movement components and partners ensuring existing and new, approaches are informed by evidence and practice. Special focus will be given to supporting Movement components to integrate MHPSS across sectors and to sustainably embed MHPSS into operations from prevention and promotion, through care and treatment, to rehabilitation and recovery.

The MHPSS Hub will facilitate the alignment of approaches, explore new modalities such as digital solutions to MHPSS service provision and support the development of Movement frameworks by reviewing evidence-based practices—positioning the MHPSS Hub as a platform for sharing and validating effective approaches for volunteers. All resources will remain open source and available through the resource library.

## 2

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIZATION OF SUPPORT FOR MOVEMENT COMPONENTS ON MHPSS CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND DEVELOPMENT

The current approach of the MHPSS Hub, of supporting National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC in developing their MHPSS services, is largely reactive and constrained by limited dedicated funding for learning and development. Tools provided tend to be topic-specific rather than part of a comprehensive core package aimed at sustainable systems and services provided by volunteers and staff. Furthermore, the MHPSS Hub lacks the structure and financial resources to offer long-term, continuous support and accompaniment to all Movement components — from assessing needs and competency development to ongoing monitoring.

To address these challenges, the MHPSS Hub will adopt a community development approach in collaboration with National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC in each of the Africa, Americas, Asia Pacific, Middle East and North Africa and Europe/ Central Asia regions. Movement components will receive tailored support to assess their MHPSS capacity and develop strategic programming, and monitoring and evaluation approaches in focus countries. The MHPSS Hub would accompany Movement components by providing ongoing technical advice, facilitating peer learning through networks, and fostering partnerships. Peer learning initiatives will encompass advocacy and leadership, humanitarian diplomacy, and resource mobilization to build buy-in and secure resources within targeted Movement component contexts, with a focus on both developing MHPSS programming and embedding MHPSS approaches.

Additionally, the MHPSS Hub will institutionalize regional learning events through existing networks to promote inclusive, multi-lingual engagement. A transparent, needs-based and equitable process to identify Movement components to be supported with targeted resources will improve service access, demonstrate impact and enhance peer learning exchanges at technical and leadership levels across the Movement.

## 3

### PROTECTING THE MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS, THROUGH SUPPORT SYSTEMS, SUPERVISION AND COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT

This initiative aims to further develop, and advocate for a Movement-wide framework that safeguards the mental health and well-being of staff and volunteers through shared competency benchmarks, support systems, and a culture of care. The MHPSS Hub will accompany Movement components and key stakeholders in meeting their commitments to prevent and mitigate harm to staff and volunteers and to respond effectively when needed. This will necessitate the bringing together of Human Resources, National Society Development, Staff Health and MHPSS departments across Movement components. Key actions will include co-creating, with Movement partners, a comprehensive framework for Caring for Staff and Volunteers by consolidating and adapting existing models and practices relevant in diverse contexts and providing peer support and practical tools to guide implementation, and policy development.

The initiative also actively advocates for Movement components to embed well-being and a duty of care into leadership priorities, operational plans and humanitarian diplomacy messages advocating for all to adhere to international humanitarian law. The MHPSS Hub seeks to embed supportive supervision approaches across the Movement and continue to develop existing platforms for peer exchange to highlight National Societies' supervision examples tailored to volunteers. Additionally, the MHPSS Hub will foster a user-friendly resource library, support storytelling and communications from volunteers and staff, and establish and host a dedicated Movement-wide Thematic Group to co-create and refine content.

# 4

## STRENGTHENING HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY AND ADVOCACY FOR MHPSS ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF THE MOVEMENT AND IN EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENTS

The MHPSS Hub represents the entire Movement in accordance with the tripartite partnership agreement. With this strengthened mandate comes a clear responsibility to intensify humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy efforts. The aim is to ensure awareness and understanding of MHPSS, and that MHPSS is strategically and operationally prioritized, adequately resourced, and firmly embedded across all levels and areas of the Movement—vertically from senior management to volunteers, horizontally across all sectors, and geographically across the five regions, as well as by the broader international community.

To this aim, the MHPSS Hub will, firstly, build capacity across the Movement components on mental health advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy. Movement components will be supported with training, toolkits, access to peer learning, as well as with tailored advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy plans, to influence leadership, donors and decision-makers towards increased MHPSS programming and services.

Secondly, the MHPSS Hub will amplify and escalate advocacy outcomes by promoting Movement alignment and collaboration, with a strong focus on fostering unity across the Movement around coherent messaging and maximizing synergy and coordination in all MHPSS humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy initiatives. The MHPSS Hub will continue to host a Thematic Group on MHPSS Policy, Advocacy and Humanitarian Diplomacy to work towards these results, connecting its efforts with existing Movement advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy networks.

Externally, the MHPSS Hub sustains strong links with communities of practice, formal and informal networks, and inter-agency stakeholders. The MHPSS Hub is respected and regularly invited to share positions and expertise beyond the Movement in high-level forums. This position will be leveraged to initiate, facilitate and support Movement advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy towards external policy-decision makers, donors and inter-agency partners.

Regarding policy development and influence, the Movement will leverage its expertise and commitment to MHPSS policies and resolutions to promote accountability and implementation of policy commitments, and to identify and promote new policy changes.

# 5

## STRENGTHENING THE EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

The MHPSS Hub will support the Movement components to strengthen evidence building systems, to contribute to a global body of knowledge on MHPSS and to inform humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy efforts. This involves supporting MHPSS knowledge generation, including research, monitoring, evaluation, learning and accountability, with a focus on using this knowledge to enhance humanitarian diplomacy, advocacy, service quality, and access to assistance for those with MHPSS needs.

This further includes supporting Movement components to embed monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) systems into MHPSS initiatives to track progress, measure impact, and identify areas for improvement. In addition, the MHPSS Hub will continue supporting Movement components through technical reviews and programme evaluations and help to ensure that MHPSS programming remains relevant, effective, and aligned with global standards.

Beyond MEAL, the MHPSS Hub is deeply committed to advancing research as a foundation for the effective design and delivery of MHPSS programmes. This includes supporting the integration of research components and academic partnerships into project proposals, facilitating collaborations between Movement components and national and international academic institutions, and promoting research that explores the broader impact and effectiveness of MHPSS services.

A key focus of the MHPSS Hub's research agenda is to promote human rights-oriented and contextually grounded research. This involves expanding the existing MHPSS Research Network to include underrepresented regions and communities, ensuring that diverse voices and lived experiences are reflected in the global evidence base. The MHPSS Hub seeks to support research that is led by local actors, grounded in indigenous knowledge systems, and responsive to the specific needs and priorities of affected populations. By doing so, the MHPSS Hub aims to promote more inclusive, locally relevant approaches to MHPSS. Research priorities will also include the differential mental health impacts of crisis across age groups and genders, and the effectiveness of tailored interventions delivered by community volunteers in conflict and displacement contexts. The MHPSS Hub will also focus on communicating research and scientific findings with communities and other inter-agency stakeholders. This will be achieved through strategic investments in regional research partnerships and the promotion of ethical, participatory research methodologies. By amplifying diverse perspectives and challenging structural inequities in knowledge production, the MHPSS Hub aims to contribute to a more just, inclusive, and effective global MHPSS system.

## ENABLERS

The success of this strategy depends not only on what the MHPSS Hub does, but how it operates. The following five enablers represent the essential internal conditions and capabilities that will support the effective delivery of outcomes and initiatives. Enablers will be strengthened through activities detailed in the annual operational plans. They reflect the MHPSS Hub's commitment to principled, adaptive, and sustainable humanitarian practice. Each enabler strengthens the foundation for implementation, innovation, and equity across all areas of the MHPSS Hub's work.

## GLOBAL POSITIONING AND REGIONAL PRESENCE

The MHPSS Hub has long aimed to strengthen National Societies and broaden its regional and global outreach. MHPSS Hub annual global activity reports reveal an uneven distribution of services across regions, with certain areas receiving significantly more engagement than others. Regions with an existing MHPSS Hub presence—and therefore easier access to regional MHPSS Hub staff—demonstrate higher levels of engagement.

A consultancy report developed to inform the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the MHPSS Hub, based on extensive global consultations with the Movement, highlighted a strong desire among National Societies, the ICRC and the IFRC for an expanded MHPSS Hub presence at the regional and national level. This would reinforce the MHPSS Hub's core functions by providing technical advice and support at national and regional levels, while also promoting cultural and contextual adaptation of MHPSS Hub approaches. In addition, this will strengthen the MHPSS Hub's ability to continue to attract diverse and qualified staff to support its objectives.

As a key strategic enabler, the MHPSS Hub will develop a clear plan to enhance regional activity levels and engagement. A long-standing wish to increase the physical regional presence, by locating MHPSS Hub staff outside of Denmark, will be further explored. Establishing such a presence will also require an in-depth analysis of the legal, administrative and technical feasibility of operating in different regions and countries.

To guide this effort, the MHPSS Hub will, during the first year of the strategic period, undertake a structured feasibility study. These exploratory steps will help determine how a physical regional presence could effectively support the MHPSS Hub's strategic objectives, while also ensuring alignment with available resources and legal, administrative, managerial and technical considerations. The feasibility study will also assess whether alternative models of engagement should be explored and emphasized.

# 2

## THE MHPSS HUB AS A DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE, AND WELL-STRUCTURED WORKPLACE

The MHPSS Hub prioritizes diversity and inclusion as essential to effectively meeting mental health and psychosocial needs across diverse populations. A diverse and inclusive workplace fosters innovation, improves problem-solving, and ensures culturally adequate support—a key concern in all Movement settings. In collaboration with the DRC, the MHPSS Hub will enhance recruitment, onboarding and retention of persons with diverse backgrounds, professional competencies and abilities. In addition, the MHPSS Hub will explore how flexible work arrangements, in line with DRCs<sup>5</sup> policies, can contribute to an even more diverse and inclusive work environment.

To complement its inclusion efforts, the MHPSS Hub will continue strengthening quality standards for project and programme management, financial management, and compliance—ensuring transparent and accountable processes that align with DRC policies and values, the Movement’s principles and strengthens institutional capacity.

Additionally, the MHPSS Hub recognizes the importance of long-term institutional sustainability and core funding. To this end, it is committed to investing in new partnerships, collaborations, fundraising modalities and strategic budget proposals (in compliance with the DRC)—covering both organisational and donor budgets. During this strategy period, the focus will be on securing core funding to enable the MHPSS Hub to fulfil its mandate, long-term sustainability and enable greater investment in essential functions such as staff well-being, organisational development, and aligned reporting. These efforts are foundational to building an inclusive, high-performing workplace capable of achieving its strategic objectives.

# 3

## MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND LEARNING

The MHPSS Hub will invest in its own monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) system to ensure the MHPSS Hub is supporting the Movement, and its partners, in the most effective manner and to ensure the quality and impact of its services. By fostering adaptive learning, MEAL will be integrated across all projects, initiatives, and strategic reviews to drive ongoing improvement and to ensure the MHPSS Hub can effectively and efficiently report on progress and impact to the Movement and partners.

The MHPSS Hub will continue to conduct a bi-yearly global MHPSS survey to ensure comprehensive mapping and gap analysis of MHPSS services across the Movement. This assessment will evaluate service coverage, identify gaps, overlaps, and underserved areas across tiers of care to inform strategic targeting of the MHPSS Hub’s resources to technical areas in need of development and the Movement components most in need of technical support. The insights generated will be synthesized into actionable guidance to inform strategic planning, resource allocation, advocacy efforts, and priority-setting across all outcomes and initiatives, strengthening the overall effectiveness and reach of MHPSS efforts. All monitoring and evaluation efforts will ensure data is disaggregated by gender, age, and other relevant diversity factors to support equitable access, and identify disparities in service reach and impact.

# 4

## RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS AND ACADEMIC COLLABORATIONS

This enabler aims to strengthen the Movement's knowledge base by fostering research collaborations that link academic insight with practice relevant for National Society volunteers working in development and humanitarian contexts. Research and academic collaborations are essential for enhancing the impact and effectiveness of MHPSS. The MHPSS Hub will serve as a knowledge broker — connecting National Societies with researchers and academic institutions, advocating for shared research priorities, and promoting a balance between rigorous study and practical volunteer-oriented learning tools. It will also strengthen and support local and regional partnerships between Movement components and academia. The MHPSS Hub will help bridge the gap between research and practice by promoting the use of implementation science and localizing research to reflect the experiences and needs of affected communities, staff and volunteers.

By integrating research into evaluations and creatively disseminating results, the MHPSS Hub seeks to demystify research, make scientific findings more accessible and boost advocacy. These collaborations will drive innovation, learning, and improved quality of MHPSS services across the Movement.

# 5

## MODALITIES FOR COLLABORATION AND RESOURCING

With its transition from an IFRC Reference Centre to a Movement-wide entity, the MHPSS Hub has entered a new phase of development. The years 2024 and 2025 have been dedicated to establishing the foundational structures and jointly developing this strategy.

The MHPSS Hub is positioned to serve the entire Movement now that it is governed by a steering committee that includes National Societies from each region, the DRC, the ICRC, and the IFRC. To fulfil this role effectively, the focus in the coming years must be on, establishing the MHPSS Hub as a convenor of Movement components, as per the tripartite partnership agreement, clarifying the modalities of collaboration, and fostering inclusive engagement.

A key priority will be building a sustainable and predictable funding base to support the MHPSS Hub's core functions. While the MHPSS Hub has successfully operated through a combination of core contributions, cost-recovery services, and grant-funded projects, an increasing reliance on grants has made it difficult to sustain core operations. Additionally, not all Movement components can participate in cost-recovery models, further limiting funding options.

Looking ahead, the MHPSS Hub will continue to implement aligned grant-funded projects while prioritizing sustainable core funding—particularly through increased partnerships, collaborations with, and contributions from more Movement components. To overcome funding challenges and ensure long-term viability, the MHPSS Hub will adopt a robust resource mobilization plan focused on securing both financial and in-kind support. This will strengthen its capacity to deliver essential services and provide support across the Movement.

# STOCKTAKING OF THE STRATEGY

## MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING

It is essential for the MHPSS Hub to be able to assess what has been achieved both during and at the end of the strategic period. Accountability and commitment to continuous learning are central pillars of the MHPSS Hub's strategy.

At the beginning of the strategic period, a detailed annual operational plan will be created, outlining clear goals, measurable indicators and activities. We recognise that this is a challenging task, as the MHPSS Hub does not work in isolation but is part of a global community, where numerous external factors influence global developments—as outlined in the initial section on global challenges.

During the strategy period, we will carry out an annual stocktaking and planning cycle, consistently reviewing progress and making timely adjustments to enhance the quality and impact of our work. There will be a formal mid-cycle strategy review process in 2028.

This ongoing evaluation and learning process will position the MHPSS Hub to promote MHPSS as both a basic human right and an integral part of humanitarian response globally. It will also serve as a strong basis for shaping the next five-year strategy. The next five years will test the humanitarian sector in unprecedented ways. The MHPSS Hub must navigate a global landscape marked by escalating armed conflicts, public health emergencies, climate shocks, natural hazards, increased migration and internal displacement<sup>6</sup>. These overlapping circumstances are compounded by resource constraints and widening social and economic inequities.

This section outlines four interconnected global challenges that will shape the strategic environment for the MHPSS Hub and define how it must act, adapt, and lead in the years ahead. These global challenges also underpin the current 'humanitarian reset' in which the MHPSS Hub is directly engaged through its role as the current IFRC Co-Chair of the IASC Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Humanitarian Settings.

<sup>6</sup> Terminology based on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2024-30 [Migration Strategy](#)



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**MHPSS**  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
**MOVEMENT**  
**HUB**