



MHPSS  
INTERNATIONAL  
MOVEMENT  
HUB



ANNUAL REPORT

2025

RED CROSS RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT MHPSS HUB

*Front cover: Regional MHPSS in  
Emergencies training in Asunción,  
Paraguay, June 2025.*

*Back cover: Regional Community-based  
MHPSS training in Nairobi, May 2025.*

*Photo: The MHPSS Hub*

*Crocheting club in a Red Cross  
community centre in Kosice, Slovakia,  
assisting Ukrainian displaced  
populations. The project is supported by  
IFRC and the MHPSS Hub and funded by  
EU4Health.*

*Photo: The MHPSS Hub*

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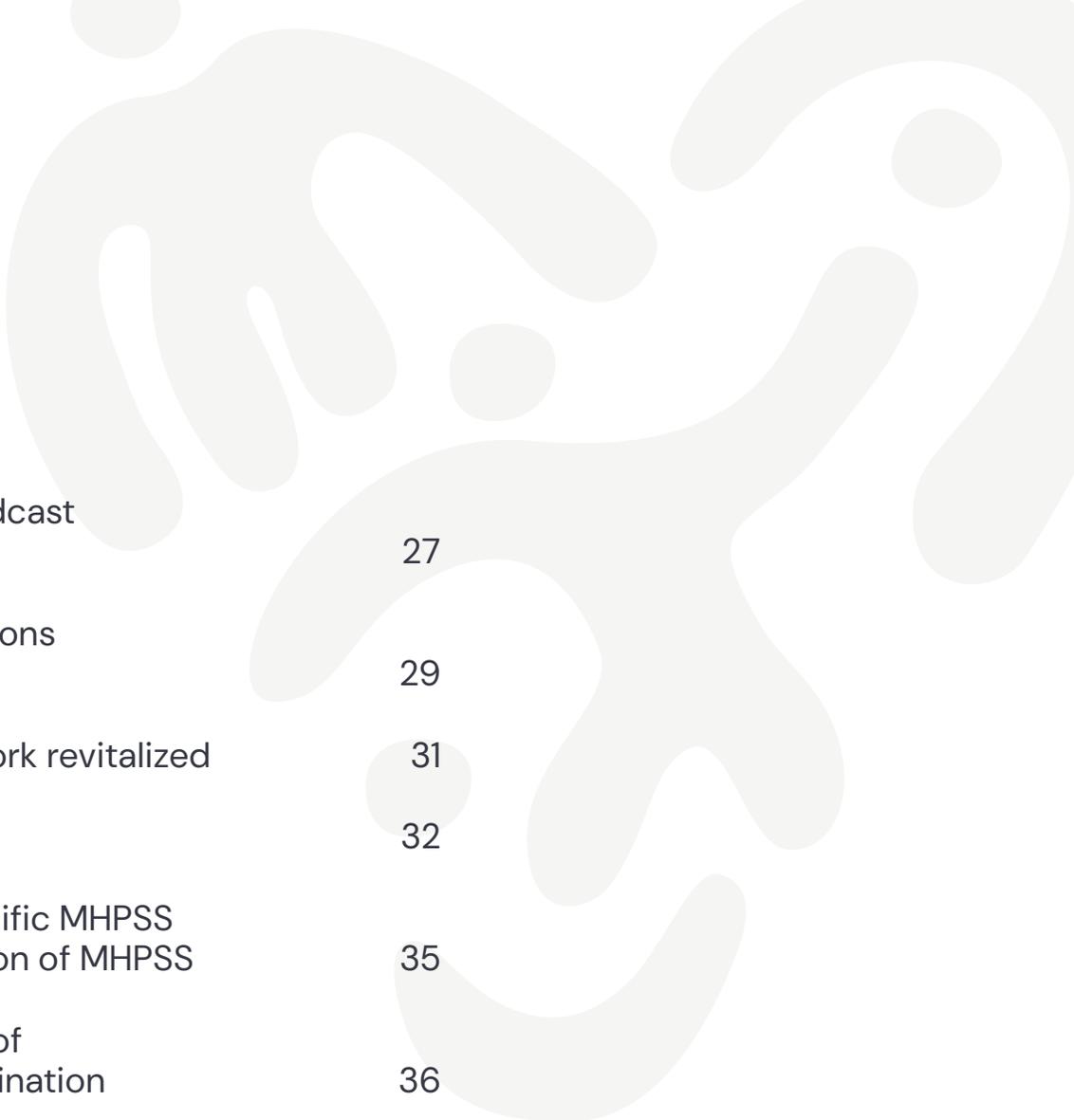


**MHPSS  
INTERNATIONAL  
MOVEMENT  
HUB**



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# Year one – the challenge of meeting increasing needs with less resources

Looking back over ‘year one’ of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement MHPSS Hub, there is no denying that it has been a challenging year.

We left for the Christmas holiday in 2024 as the IFRC Psychosocial Centre staff, and returned in early January 2025 as MHPSS Hub staff. What followed was a hectic but inspiring 12-month period of intense activity – producing a new organisational strategy, establishing governing structures, and defining the new portfolio. This, of course, happened while we were simultaneously implementing the ongoing work and projects inherited from the PS Centre. At the same time, we have undergone significant internal changes, partly as the result of significant adverse developments in the world around us.

Former MHPSS Hub Director, Nana Wiedemann, left in late July, and in October the recruitment process for her replacement was concluded with the announcement of me as the new Director. I entered the position at a time of sustained polycrisis: multiple interconnected emergencies – climate shocks, conflict, economic collapse, increasing inequality, societal polarisation, health emergencies, displacement – occurring simultaneously, reinforcing one another, and eroding public systems of care and protection. That translates into an exponential increase in mental health needs. At the same time, the financial constraints following the loss of USAID funding, and the generally volatile funding situation in the humanitarian and Official Development Assistance sector, leave us with limited immediate alternatives. The MHPSS Hub was forced to downsize by not replacing three positions and terminating another four positions. The loss of a total of seven positions represents a significant reduction of resources (27%), leaving 19 staff members to cover the current and future portfolio of work, including core mandated work as per our tripartite agreement, as well as initiatives to support the Movement under the new organisational strategy.

This requires diversifying and increasing our funding through a combination of partnerships, collaborations, projects, and consultancies within and beyond the Movement.

With the new organisational strategy as the anchor, we are finding ways to match partnership funding opportunities with relevant workstreams. We have started that journey through developing joint initiatives with the ICRC: MHPSS Programme, Staff Health, Health and Protection units. We completed a consultancy under the IFRC to ensure the sustainability of the three-year EU4Health project for the provision of mental health support for Ukrainian displaced and affected populations, funded by the European Commission (DG Sante) and implemented by IFRC RoE, Red Cross EU, the MHPSS Hub, and National Societies across 28 countries. The Sport Coach+ initiative, supporting coaches working with young people in collaboration with the Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF), National Olympic Committees, Red Cross National Societies, and a variety of local partners, saw the successful conclusion of its first phase in 2025 and will continue until 2029. Further, we have a series of research-related funding applications under development targeting the EU’s research and innovation funding programme Horizon, and the Wellcome Trust Foundation. These initiatives represent collaborations with a diverse group of partners within and beyond the Movement, including key universities, organisations, and RCRC National Societies. We have also produced strategic documents explaining our value and outlining how we operate, and what our services are for current and potential partners. Another example would be the conclusion of our first ever consultancy-based, joint practitioner-researcher podcast series in collaboration with Elrha – contributing to and funding the initiative.

Challenges aside, 2025 leaves me with a sense of sadness, a huge responsibility, and yet confidence. The MHPSS Hub’s passion and drive remain intact; the needs are large, complex, and increasing, and require partners and partnerships to deliver our new strategy, servicing the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.



Sarah Harrison,

*Director of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement MHPSS Hub*

# The overall objectives of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement MHPSS Hub



Increase the capacity of components of the Movement to respond to the mental health and psychosocial needs of populations, at all times and within their respective mandates. Communicate and advocate for MHPSS.



Contribute to the global body of knowledge on MHPSS and to related humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy efforts globally.



Develop further MHPSS approaches in close collaboration with the ICRC, IFRC, National Societies, and other humanitarian agencies.



Develop capacities in accordance with the existing Movement MHPSS Policy, meeting the needs of different population groups and in line with the Functions as stated in Article 4 of the Term of Reference for the Movement MHPSS Hub.



Create a platform to bring together professionals, researchers, and other relevant stakeholders to share knowledge, strengthen capacities and mobilize resources for MHPSS knowledge and skills generation.



Establish and foster partnership developments.



Mobilize resources for the Movement MHPSS Hub.

## The MHPSS Hub online



www



Facebook



Bluesky



LinkedIn



You Tube



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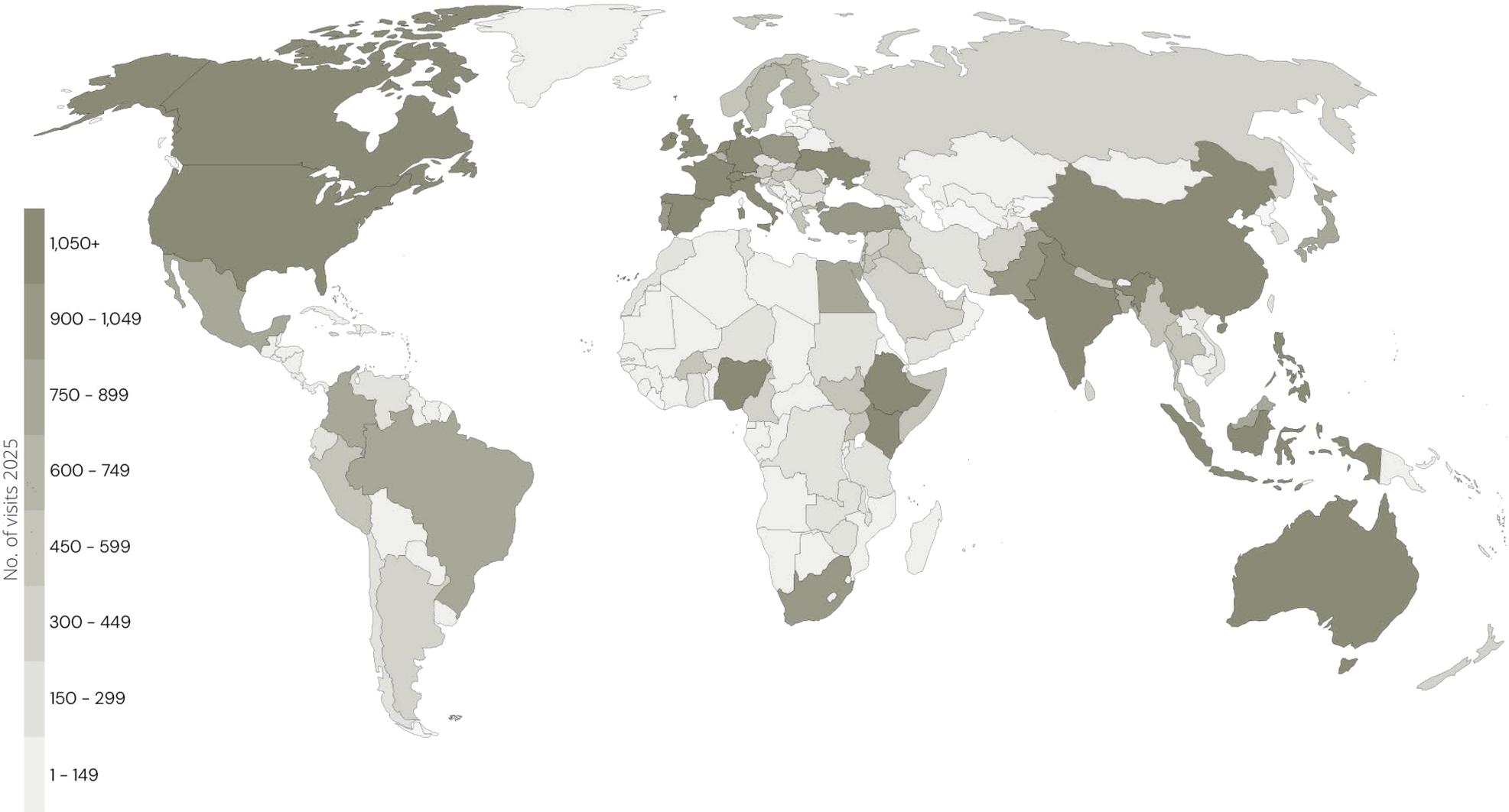
*Mental health implications are not always the most visible challenge in an emergency context, but they are essential to the people and communities exposed, as well as the people supporting them. The Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan sees mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) as an integrated part of emergency interventions, and we train our staff and volunteers accordingly. Our simulation trainings focus on the full scope of response – after an earthquake or in an armed conflict for instance it is obviously important to attend to the wounded, but that would include mental wounds. That also includes the coping and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers in the frontlines of the response.*

*Mental health is at the core of our humanitarian support and our activities include a variety of interventions like Psychological First Aid (PFA) for children, women and men in exposed communities. At the same time, we build resilience and capacity by working with community leaders and ensuring the availability of guidelines and SOP's for our staff and volunteers.*

**Guldar Kasymova,  
Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan**

# The MHPSS Hub in numbers

In 2025, the MHPSS Hub had **159,792** online visits and **64,006** resource downloads from the MHPSS Hub website.



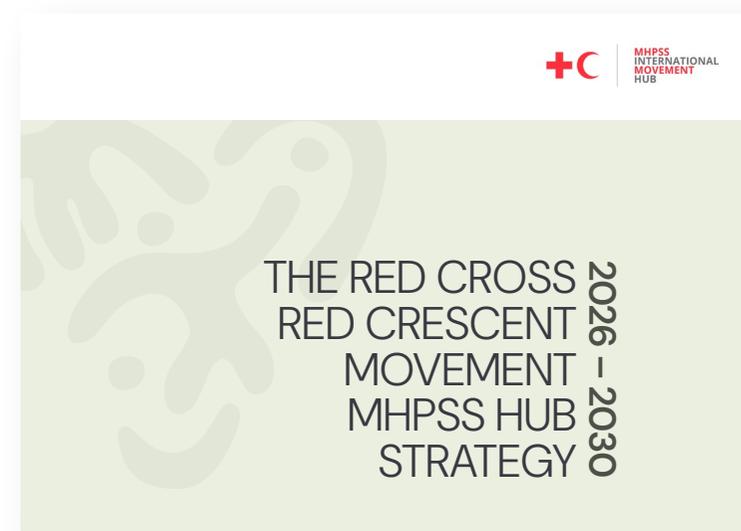
# All Inclusive: MHPSS Hub Strategy 2026-2030

When the MHPSS [Hub Strategy 2026–2030](#) was approved in October 2025, it marked the conclusion of an inclusive, Movement-wide process.

In the first half of 2024, a series of consultations with representatives of the tripartite partners of the MHPSS Hub – the IFRC, the ICRC and the Danish Red Cross (DRC) – as well as more than 50 Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies across the five regions, were conducted. The aim was to critically review the work and functioning of the former IFRC Psychosocial Centre, to inform the organisational strategy of the MHPSS Hub.

The year-long strategy development process in 2025 included continuous review, both internally within the MHPSS Hub and by the broader review group, which includes members from the [governing and advising bodies](#) of the MHPSS Hub – the Steering Committee and the Advisory Group. The Steering Committee consists of the ICRC, the IFRC, DRC as founding members, and a National Society from each region, while the Advisory Group includes Movement components, UN representatives, as well as academic, institutional and government partners. Future annual planning for the MHPSS Hub will be guided by the new strategy. Ongoing projects and other core mandated activities will be aligned with the strategic initiatives and reported as part of the strategy.

In cooperation with the IFRC and the ICRC, the MHPSS Hub has launched a new and enhanced Global MHPSS Survey to provide input from focal points across 191 National Societies, as well as the IFRC and the ICRC. The questionnaire covers all areas of MHPSS capacity and interventions globally and across the five regions, and will function as a baseline for developments under the new MHPSS Hub Strategy 2026-2030.



# The MHPSS Hub theory of change



# Humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy: heritage and new partnerships

Despite its recent establishment, in January 2025, the MHPSS Hub is well positioned in the global MHPSS community and represented in key coordination bodies and humanitarian diplomacy forums. “The credibility, network and know-how harvested over decades in the former IFRC Psychosocial Centre is the heritage we now rely on as we continue to expand our humanitarian diplomacy efforts and build new partnerships,” says Carmen Valle-Trabadelo, MHPSS Hub Specialist and focal point for Policy, Advocacy and Humanitarian Diplomacy.

In 2025, the MHPSS Hub partnered with Protect Humanitarians – a global initiative advocating for better protection of humanitarian aid workers. “Caring for staff and volunteers is a key concern for us and the Movement as a whole, and there are clear synergies and potential for us – alongside the IFRC and the ICRC – in working closely with an organisation devoted entirely to the protection of humanitarian workers. The mental health implications of the increasingly unsafe conditions, and indeed direct targeting of humanitarians, was an area where we could

contribute significant expertise to the work of Protect Humanitarians – we have done so in a variety of ways, including panels at events at Brussels level and in a joint statement on World Mental Health Day on 10 October,” says Carmen Valle-Trabadelo.

The MHPSS Hub is engaged in extensive humanitarian diplomacy across the globe, and some key events include the Global Mental Health Ministerial Summit in Qatar, the second hearing of the Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health, and supporting the Danish Red Cross and IFRC contribution to the High-Level Meeting on NCD and Mental Health at the UN General Assembly. The MHPSS Hub also delivers policy and humanitarian diplomacy support to Movement components. Cooperation at that level would include joint strategic action with DRC in relation to the Danish EU Presidency, support for the Red Cross EU Office in the preparation for meetings with EU Commissioners, and the delivery of content and review of the Red Cross EU Office Position Paper on MHPSS.

## The MHPSS Hub in numbers

### Humanitarian diplomacy & collaboration

In 2025, the MHPSS Hub collaborated with

**407**

Movement partners, academic institutions and UN agencies, participated in

**191**

high level meetings, conferences, seminars, and Movements events.

Additionally, the MHPSS Hub arranged, facilitated or participated in

**21**

webinars, reaching a total of

**717**

people.

In 2025, the MHPSS Hub produced

**13**

online campaigns with Movement components or external partners.

”

*For Palestinians, it is hard to talk or think about emergencies as something timebound that breaks a normal situation. We live, breathe and bleed an ongoing and all-consuming emergency, with mass casualties, displacement and destruction, and it is no different for staff and volunteers from the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS). In fact, you only have to look at the number of killed colleagues to establish that. We are in survival mode at all times, and that is the fundamental condition under which we have to perform our humanitarian duties.*

*We have to establish safe spaces for children in Gaza in a context where no one is safe. We have to implement MHPSS programmes for communities and families in areas where anything can happen at any moment. We have to support the mental health of the communities while we are losing family members ourselves. In that situation, you have to rely on your peers — they are the only people who really understand. As Red Crescent staff and volunteers, we are directly responsible for the mental health of our colleagues, and vice versa — to talk about experiences, to cope with loss, to not give in to despair. To survive as individuals, we have to survive together.*

**Shaden Saleem,**  
Palestine Red Crescent Society



## Americas: MHPSS in emergencies regional training

In June 2025, the first ever regional **MHPSS training in the Americas region** was conducted in Asunción, Paraguay, upon request of the IFRC Panama Office and the National Societies in the region. The five-day training was facilitated by the MHPSS Hub in collaboration with the Paraguayan Red Cross (Cruz Roja Paraguaya) and the Centro Regional de Referencia en Preparativos para Desastres (CREPD).

“Responding to the need for a regional training in the Americas has been a dream of mine for a long time. It is a region facing severe and complicated emergencies and with limited resources. To suggest that the Red Cross National Societies in the Americas are punching above their weight would actually be an understatement – in fact, it is more like they make the impossible possible. It has been an absolute pleasure to be part of this five-day microcosmos of training, exchanging and learning together. One dream came true here in Paraguay, but many other dreams have been generated by participants from across the region,” says Cátia Peres de Matos, MHPSS Specialist and focal point for the Americas Region at the MHPSS Hub.

The training brought together regional representatives from the ICRC and the IFRC, as well as participants from National Societies across the region, including Paraguay, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Chile and Mexico.

“I was happy to co-facilitate the training, which confirmed that the Movement is aligned across the MHPSS Hub, regional representatives from the ICRC and the IFRC, as well as the many Red Cross National Societies represented,” says Dr Maria Gloria Montórfano, National Health Coordinator for the Paraguayan Red Cross.

”

*I was happy to co-facilitate the training, which confirmed that the Movement is aligned across the MHPSS Hub, regional representatives from the ICRC and the IFRC, as well as the many Red Cross National Societies represented.*

**Maria Gloria Montórfano,**  
National Health Coordinator,  
the Paraguayan Red Cross



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WWW.MHPSSHUB.ORG

# Video series for Movement colleagues - staff care by rhyme



***A Movement, a network, a community  
A cause, an idea, a human plea  
Millions engaging in a humanitarian manner  
Under the Red Cross & Red Crescent banner  
Local access and global impact  
In a world that needs people willing to act  
We are neutral, but we take a stand  
However, wherever, whenever we can...***

In 2025, the MHPSS Hub launched a series of five videos in collaboration with the Emergency Aid Orchestra. The videos combine spoken word, rhymes and original music in a tribute to colleagues across the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement – a form of staff care by rhyme.

“At the MHPSS Hub communications team, we always try to expand our toolbox and explore new formats. We had a concept, the lyrics and the in-house video expertise and capacity, but through our creative partnership with musician and producer Peter Kibsgaard and musician and rapper Al Agami, we could add the artistic brilliance to the mix that took it to the next level,” says Senior Communications Officer Jesper Guhle.

The Emergency Aid Orchestra is cooperating with the Danish Red Cross, the Danish Red Cross Youth and Kenya Red Cross in a variety of ways, including concerts and jam sessions in Red Cross-run asylum facilities in Denmark, and setting up a studio for youth in Kendani, Kenya.

The video series and a video about the Kendani studio are available on the [MHPSS Hub resource library](#).

## The MHPSS Hub in numbers

### Videos

In 2025, the MHPSS Hub produced a total of

**27**

videos. The videos were seen

**46,212**

times on YouTube and the combined watch time in 2025 across all platforms were

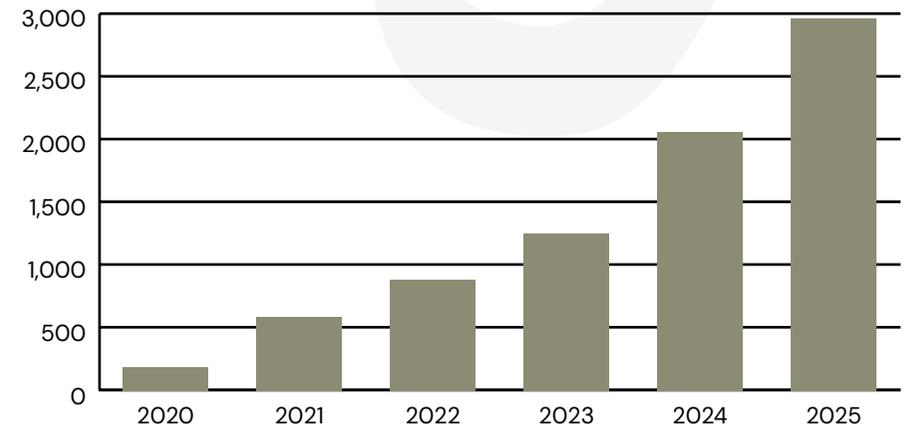
**2,951**

hours.

### Top 10 video views by geography

- United Kingdom
- United States
- Philippines
- India
- Australia
- Portugal
- Ukraine
- Spain
- Ethiopia
- Syria

Hours of watched video showcasing the MHPSS work of National Societies on MHPSS Hub platforms





A MOVEMENT  
A NETWORK  
A COMMUNITY  
A CAUSE  
AN IDEA  
A HUMAN PLEA



NOT A RAP BATTLE  
BUT A RHYME  
COOPERATION



THE MC'S OF MENTAL HEALTH  
ARE COMING AT YOU **LOUD**  
TO ERASE YOUR CONCERNS  
AND LEAVE NO DOUBT



**RED VESTS ON THE READY  
FOR RED ALERTS**

# Regional Community-based MHPSS trainings in Africa

In May 2025, 17 people from nine Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies across the African region, the ICRC and the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSI) participated in a **five-day regional training about community-based MHPSS** arranged by the MHPSS Hub and co-facilitated with the IFRC. The first of its kind.

“Community-based approaches to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (CB MHPSS) in emergencies are based on the understanding that communities can be drivers for their own care and change and should be meaningfully involved in all stages of MHPSS responses. And because the approach is community-based, understanding the cultural context is crucial. It can never be a one-size-fits-all approach and that is why regional trainings are so important,” says Guleed Dualeh, MHPSS Specialist for the African Region in the MHPSS Hub and facilitator at the training in Nairobi.

Through discussions, roleplays, group work, and practical and theoretical assignments, the participants shared their experiences and created networks across the continent.

“It is very interesting to see how we have different ways of engaging with communities, how we design our projects and programmes and how we do follow-ups and monitoring. It is obvious that we can really learn from each other. This training reinforces our capacity and helps us when we will be back in our respective communities and

countries to improve what we do already,” says Natalie Nyamukeba, MHPSS regional specialist for Africa Region, ICRC.

Half a year later, in December 2025, Croix-Rouge Burkina Faso hosted a similar **five-day training**. 24 people from RCRC Movement components, National Societies and key humanitarian actors from across Francophone Africa participated in the training, which was conducted in French and co-facilitated by the Danish Red Cross and the MHPSS Hub.

“It was deeply inspiring to meet the capable and dedicated people carrying MHPSS forward in the region,” says Ahlem Cheffi, facilitator of the training, MHPSS Specialist and frontline focal point for the MHPSS Hub.

Together, the two trainings represent a stronger focus on MHPSS competency strengthening in the African region, but also a new approach to MHPSS capacity building, emphasising the importance of the cultural contexts in which Movement components and National Societies operate.

Guleed Dualeh: “For me, this has been a long time coming. We have worked so hard for this to happen, and hopefully these trainings will mark a beginning – a beginning of a clearer focus on MHPSS in the African region and a beginning of more knowledge sharing across National Societies in Africa.”

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**Guleed Dualeh**  
MHPSS Specialist  
MHPSS Hub



# Well-being cards for children

In 2025, the MHPSS Hub created **a set of 25 cards**, with each card offering a well-being exercise for children. The exercises are divided into six categories: **sensorial and body awareness, relaxation, inner resources, movement, spatial awareness and thinking.**

“It has been quite a journey,” says MHPSS Hub Director Sarah Harrison. “From 2020 to 2023 we posted a new well-being exercise on social media every week. It was a way for us to reach and practically support our peers during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, we published **the Well-being Guide**, a compilation of the best self-care exercises posted by the MHPSS Hub online. The year after, based on requests from National Societies, we published **the Well-being Cards**, which were basically the same exercises but designed as a deck of cards, which are more “volunteer-user-friendly”. We believed the new format offered alternative ways of using the exercises, e.g., in a group session or as a game/energiser in a volunteer team meeting. At the same time, the cards could fit nicely in a pocket or in a backpack, making it easier for staff and volunteers to carry and use them when supporting individuals or families in distress. From here, it felt natural that the next resource should support children. Children are among the most at-risk groups in emergency contexts, and the items used in some of the exercises – balls, balloons, crayons

etc. – are already a part of the MHPSS toolkit or backpack carried by many volunteers.

However, supporting children also offered a new layer of complexity. Senior Communications Officer Villads Zahle: “The original Well-being Cards could be used by any adult at any time or anywhere – individuals as well as groups – but, in order to make the well-being cards useful for as many children as possible and, at the same time, promote that the exercises are done in a safe environment, the exercises are not written for the individual boys and girls but for the adult guiding the children through the exercise. It made it possible to address particular challenges when performing the exercises. This also ensures that the well-being exercises are useful for younger children (aged 3 yrs+) and through childhood to adolescents.”

We are grateful for the professional reviews and testing by Koen Sevenants, a Child and Adolescent Psychologist, and Ea Suzanne Akasha, a Psychomotor Therapist.

The cards were produced with the financial support of the European Union as part of the response to support displaced Ukrainians and affected populations under the EU4Health project. The content of the cards is the sole responsibility of the MHPSS Hub and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



**Funded by  
the European Union**



# The MHPSS Hub in numbers

## Resources

In 2025, the MHPSS Hub published a total of

**113**

resources – reports, guides, videos, podcasts – in the resource library on [mhpsshub.org](http://mhpsshub.org).

**60**

publications were made available in languages, other than English.

Resources were downloaded

**64,006**

times from the MHPSS Hub website.

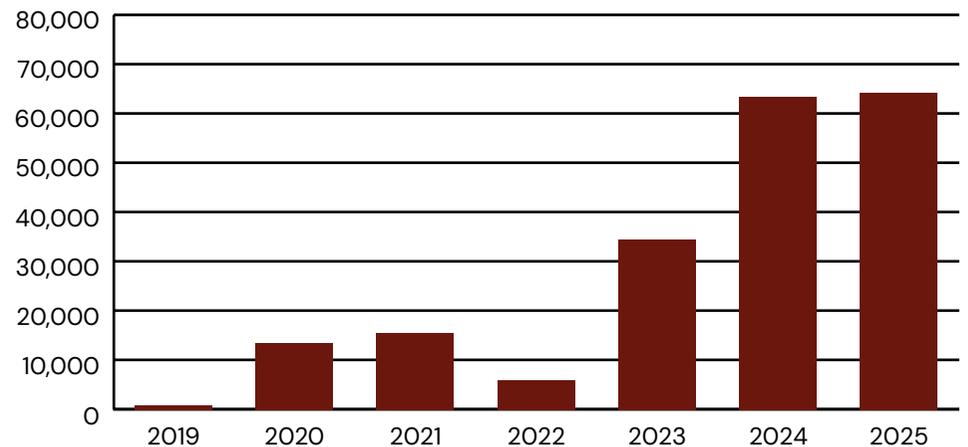
## Translations

- Spanish (14)
- Arabic (13)
- Burmese (8)
- French (6)
- German (5)
- Ukrainian (4)
- Japanese (2)
- Polish (2)
- Russian (2)
- Latvian (1)
- Portuguese (1)
- Slovak (1)
- Turkish (1)

## Top 10 resource downloads by geography

- Denmark
- Phillipines
- United States
- Ukraine
- Spain
- United Kingdom
- Ethiopia
- Canada
- Indonesia
- Germany

No. of resource downloads



# The MHPSS Hub in numbers

## Activities

In 2025, the MHPSS Hub responded to

**1686**

requests for assistance from

**95**

countries.

**80.5%**

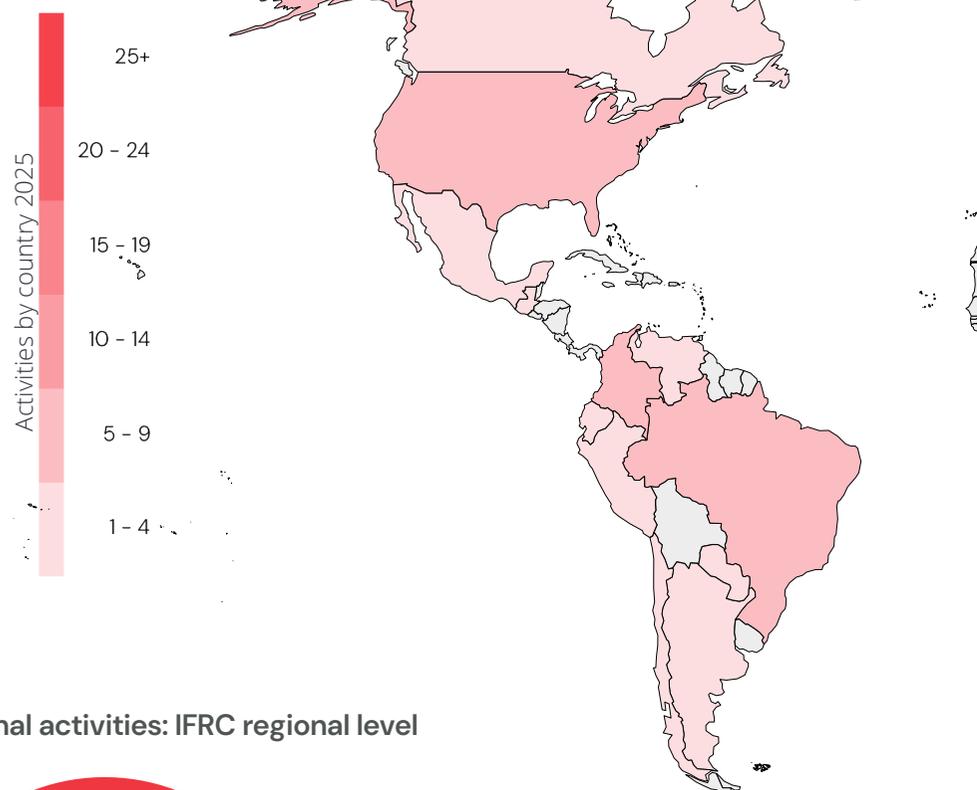
of the requests came from organisations within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and

**19.5%**

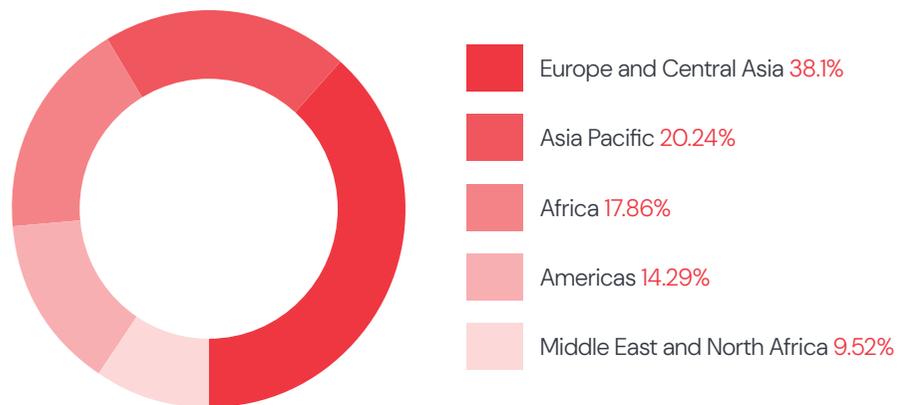
of the requests came from organisations external to the Movement.

## Top 10 requests by geography

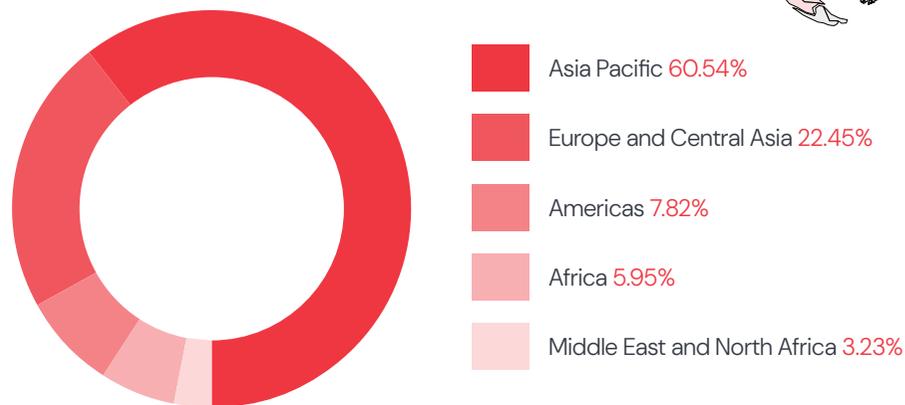
- Denmark
- Myanmar
- Palestinian Occupied Territories
- Ukraine
- Slovakia
- Poland
- Afghanistan
- Australia
- Mongolia
- Ireland

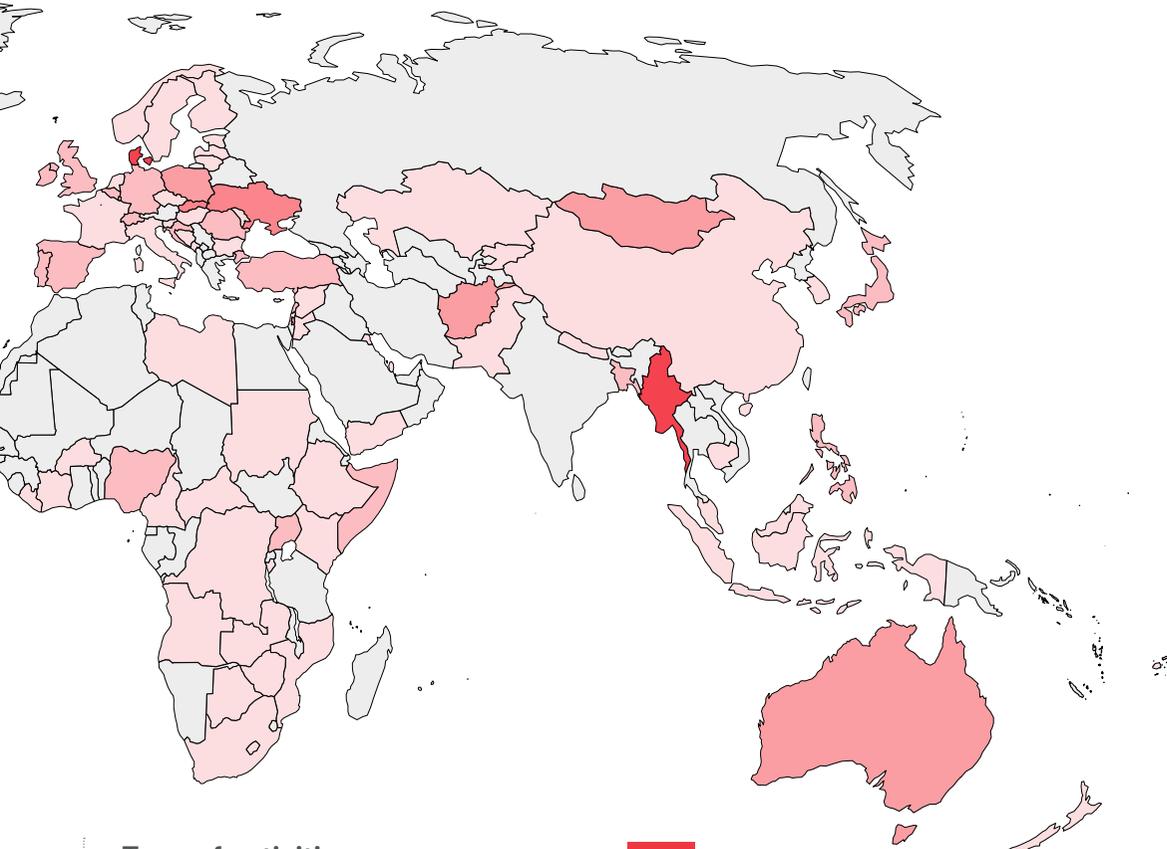


## Activities by region: Country level

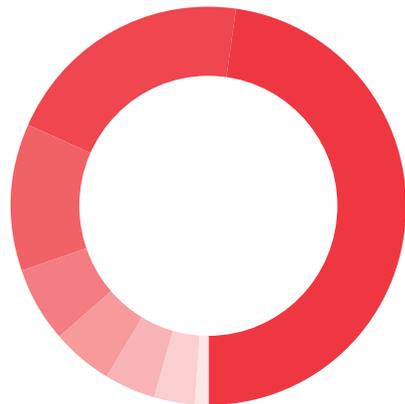


## Regional activities: IFRC regional level

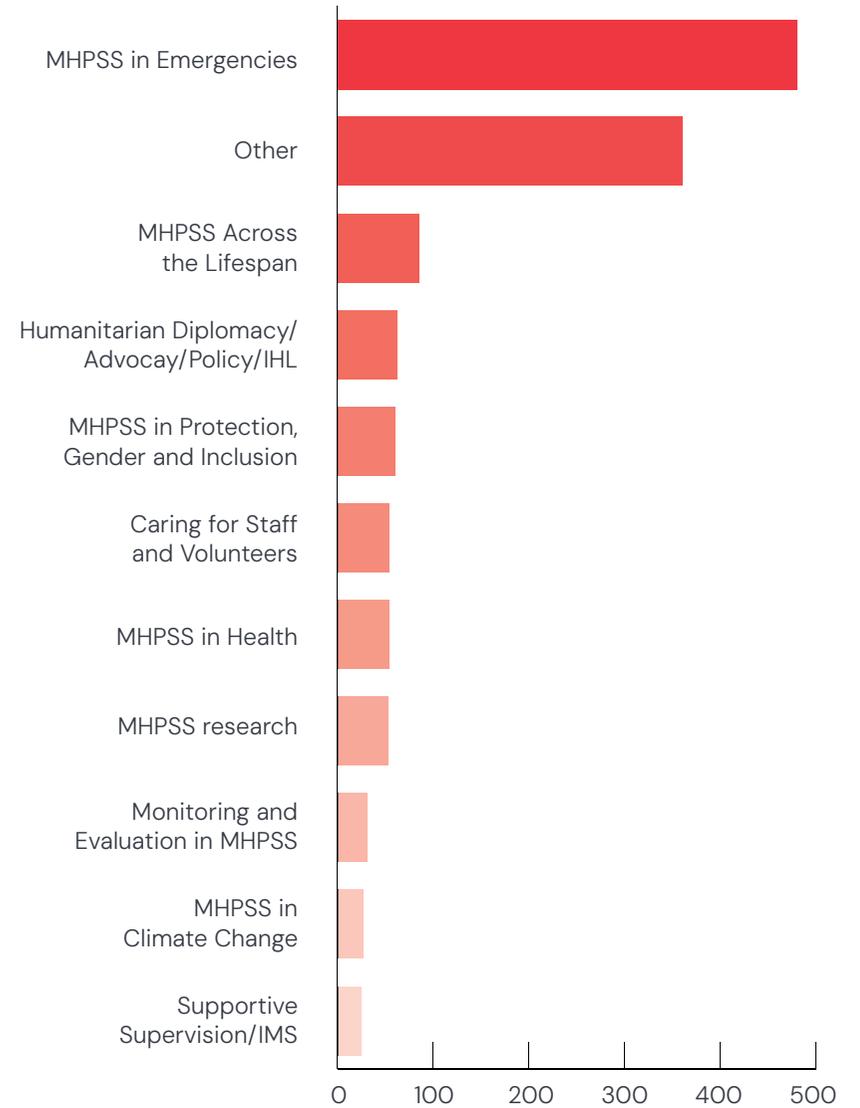




Type of activities



Activities by thematic category



## MENA: Humanitarian Diplomacy, training, campaigning, co-production

On invitation from the Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS), the MHPSS Hub joined the [Global Mental Health Ministerial Summit](#) in Doha from 30 September to 1 October. Ahlem Cheffi, MHPSS Specialist for the MENA region, presented alongside the ICRC and the IFRC during a QRCS-facilitated panel on MHPSS before, during and after emergencies, focusing on how global tools and guidelines are contextualised and adapted to local settings, using local expertise.

Further, MHPSS Specialist and focal point for emergencies, Shona Whitton, facilitated an MHPSS in emergencies training with QRCS in September 2025 in Doha. The training sessions covered the full cycle of emergencies, from the impact on communities and frontline supporters to policy frameworks within and beyond the Movement, and planning, monitoring and evaluation. This training was part of the QRCS learning pathway for staff and volunteers to prepare for emergency responses in Qatar, but also as a pathway to build their international MHPSS surge roster.

Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) colleagues contributed to our joint campaign in advance of World Mental Health Day 2025, under the theme of mental health in emergencies. The campaign was based on [pictures and](#)

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*The Syrian Arab Red Crescent's psychosocial support teams work alongside other units to provide immediate psychological first aid and support to those affected by trauma and distress. This early intervention helps prevent their mental health from deteriorating and requiring more advanced care*

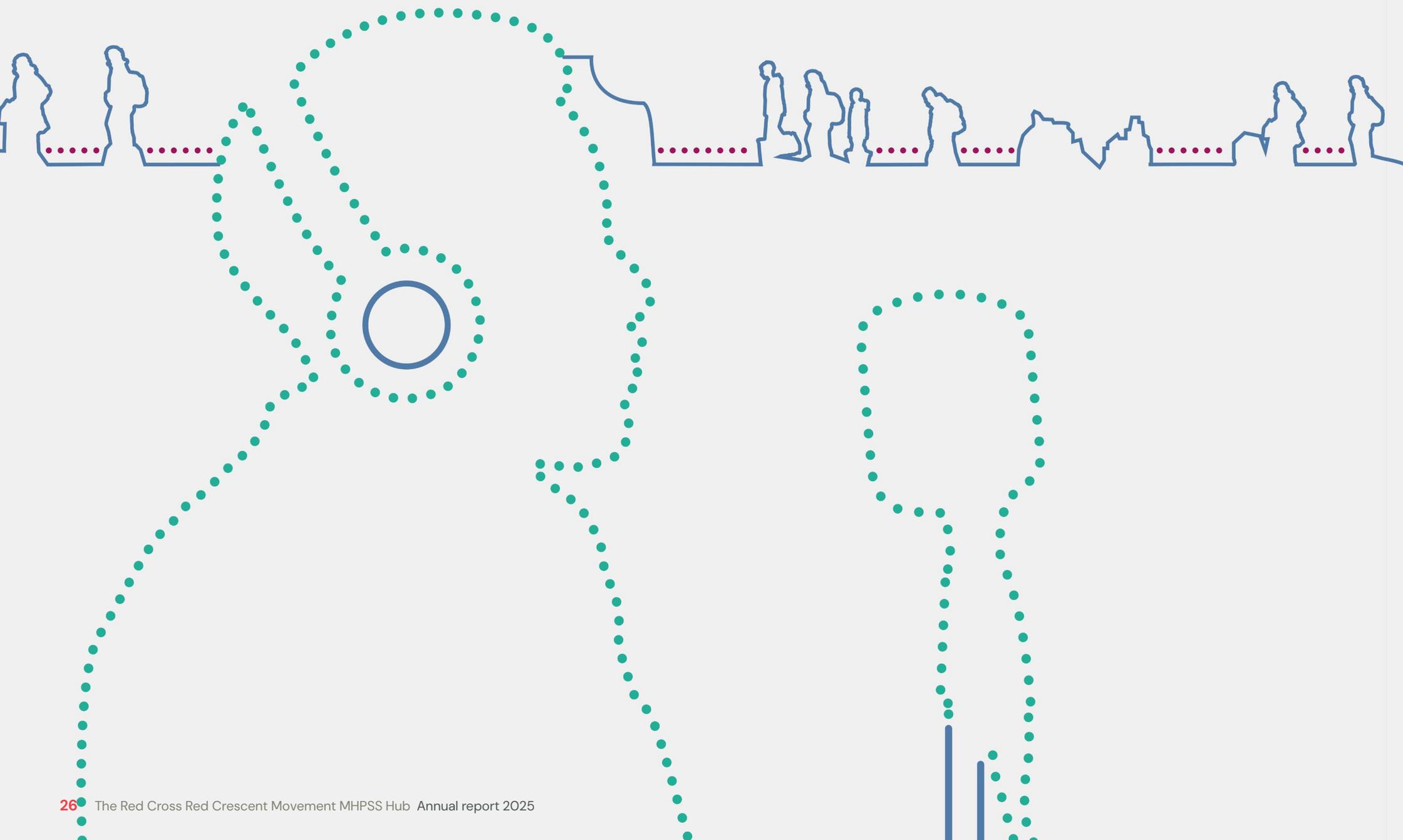
**Jawaher Barmawi**  
Community Services  
and Protection Coordinator,  
Syrian Arab Red Crescent

[quotes](#) from Movement colleagues working in emergencies across the globe. “During emergencies and crisis, addressing psychological needs is as crucial as providing essentials like food and shelter. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent's psychosocial support teams work alongside other units to provide immediate psychological first aid and support to those affected by trauma and distress. This early intervention helps prevent their mental health from deteriorating and requiring more advanced care,” [says Jawaher Barmawi](#), Community Services and Protection Coordinator for SARC.

PRCS and the MHPSS Hub collaborated to produce a series of [six videos on psychological first aid \(PFA\)](#) with a focus on complex reactions such as panic, dissociation or freezing. The videos portray real-life situations of individuals affected by crises and show how professionals, as well as communities, can effectively respond to mental health needs during emergencies.

Another joint initiative was the [Heartbeat of Humanity podcast episode on Moral Injury in the line of duty](#), featuring Nisreen Qawas, MHPSS Director for the PRCS. MHPSS Hub Director, Sarah Harrison, interviewed Nisreen on the mental implications of the loss of colleagues killed while carrying out their humanitarian work.





# The MHPSS Hub in numbers

## Podcasts

In 2025, the MHPSS Hub released a total of

**23**

podcast episodes, totalling

**82**

episodes produced by the MHPSS hub since the first episode of Heartbeat of Humanity was launched in November 2020.

**7,278**

podcast episodes were downloaded in 2025 and since the first episode, people have listened to the podcast channel

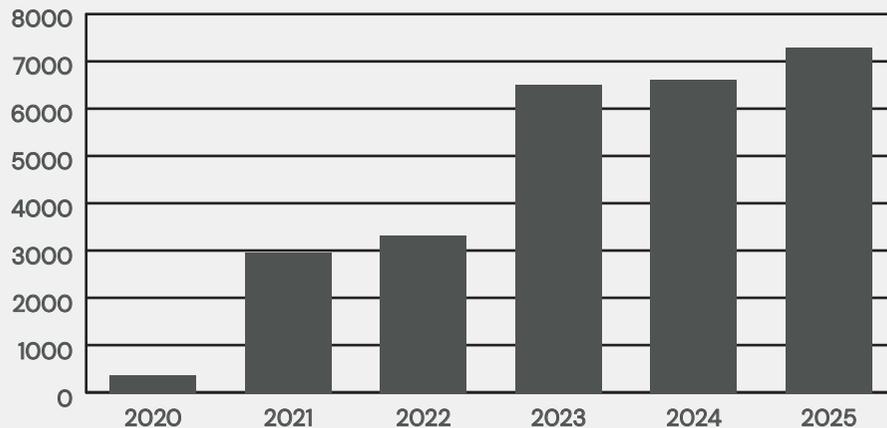
**27,346**

times.

## Top 10 downloads by geography

- United Kingdom
- United States
- Australia
- France
- Germany
- Denmark
- Kenya
- Switzerland
- Canada
- Netherlands

No. of podcast downloads



## First ever co-produced podcast series launched with Elrha

Throughout 2025, the MHPSS Hub and Elrha collaborated to produce and disseminate a six-episode podcast mini-series entitled **Evidence from the Frontline: Mental Health in Crisis-Affected Contexts**.

The series, which was designed for MHPSS practitioners and researchers working in humanitarian and crisis contexts, highlighted impactful interventions and offered practical insights from experts in the field. It explored critical topics, including effectiveness, implementation, adaptation, integration into existing programmes, human resources, costs, and the importance of cultural and contextual relevance.

“The cooperation with Elrha represented the perfect synergy. We shared our networks and contacts in the MHPSS community to interview the most relevant experts, we used our respective websites, newsletters and social media channels to increase the reach, and we combined the technical expertise and well-established podcast infrastructure and audience from the MHPSS Hub with the new ideas and input from Elrha. The result was well received by our combined audiences. I hope this is a model we can use in the future with Elrha or other potential partners,” says MHPSS Hub Director, Sarah Harrison.

The six episodes were presented as in the frame of the **MHPSS Hub Heartbeat of Humanity podcast**, which has accumulated more than 27,000 episode downloads since it was established in late 2020.

# The MHPSS Hub in numbers

## Capacity-strengthening and competency development

In 2025, the MHPSS Hub built the capacities and competencies of

**1,559**

people.

Capacity-development initiatives included:



Since the escalation of the armed conflict in Ukraine in May 2022, the EU4Health project has enabled the delivery of over 643,000 instances of MHPSS support within Ukraine and across 27 countries. This represents the largest MHPSS initiative in Europe, and the most extensive collaboration among National Societies, IFRC, and the MHPSS Hub to date.

**Sabina Dziadecka Gråbæk**  
Senior Project Manager  
MHPSS Hub

An art Class in a Red Cross community centre in Kosice, Slovakia assisting Ukrainian displaced populations. The project is supported by IFRC and the MHPSS Hub and funded by EU4Health.

Photo: The MHPSS Hub

## Projects in Europe: conclusions and continuations

Sport Coach+ and EU4Health represented the flagship projects for the MHPSS Hub in the Europe region throughout 2025. Both projects were designed to strengthen MHPSS capacity at national level, including through Red Cross National Societies, with the aim of reaching and supporting vulnerable communities, with a particular focus on those affected by displacement.

The three-year EU4Health project for the Provision of Quality and Timely Psychological First Aid to People Affected by the Ukraine Crisis in Impacted Countries, funded by the European Commission (DG SANTE) and implemented in cooperation with IFRC RoE, the RC EU Office and 28 National Societies, was successfully completed in 2025.

“Since the escalation of the armed conflict in Ukraine in May 2022, the project has enabled the delivery of over 643,000 instances of MHPSS support within Ukraine and across 27 countries. This represents the largest MHPSS initiative in Europe and the most extensive collaboration among National Societies, IFRC and the MHPSS Hub to date. While the scale is impressive, these numbers ultimately reflect the individual stories of people who experienced displacement and whose MHPSS needs have been evolving over time,” says MHPSS Hub Project Manager, Sabina Dziadecka Gråbæk.

“For me, the most meaningful achievement of the MHPSS Hub was our commitment to accompanying National Societies in delivering MHPSS services with and for Ukrainian communities. This included identifying evolving needs, co-developing resources, making the voices of those with lived experience of displacement heard, and engaging them. Many of the volunteers and staff were themselves Ukrainians living in displacement. Community-rooted psychosocial support, including host and displaced communities supporting one another through community-based MHPSS, was truly uplifting,” says Ganna Goloktionova, MHPSS Specialist and focal point for the Europe and Central Asia region.

Examples of best practices developed under the project are presented in the [Catalogue of Successful MHPSS Services](#), a collection showcasing services and interventions created by National Societies through the EU4Health programme. The catalogue serves as a

resource for peer learning, capacity strengthening across the Movement and inspiration for adaptation in other contexts. It is available online and complemented by an [interactive dashboard](#) hosted by the IFRC.

To help ensure that MHPSS capacities are sustained across National Societies, the MHPSS Hub – on request from IFRC RoE – co-developed the [Guidance on Building Sustainable MHPSS Practices](#). This resource includes key considerations, practical case studies, checklists, indicators and project management cycle frameworks to support the long-term integration of MHPSS services.

The [Sport Coach+](#) initiative supports coaches working with young people (aged 10-24 years) affected by displacement and other adversities. It aims to provide sport coaches with the skills, knowledge and techniques to understand how stressful experiences impact young players, create safe and supportive sport environments and respond to young players in trauma-informed and healing ways. Sport Coach+, implemented in collaboration with the Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF), National Olympic Committees, Red Cross National Societies and a variety of local partners, saw the successful conclusion of its first phase.

“More than 1,900 coaches have been trained in safe and supportive coaching practices across ten European countries. They represent a significant diversity of sports – from team to individual activities, from martial arts and motor sports to athletics, football and yoga. At the same time, they have different levels of resources, are organised in different ways and coach youth from different social environments. However, the common denominator is the will to make a real and lasting difference in the lives of the youth they are responsible for,” says MHPSS Hub Project Manager, Anna Tarsetti.

Based on the successful implementation of the first phase of Sport Coach+, the initiative will continue until 2029, including a higher number of participants, a wider geographical reach, a revision and optimisation of the training package based on the feedback received, and a strengthened commitment to advocating for the added value of sport and physical activity for the well-being and mental health of crisis-affected communities.



”

*It took us, the humanitarian sector, a long time to fully recognise the importance of a systematic approach to MHPSS in humanitarian crisis response. The impact of crisis and conflict on mental health can be long-lasting if not addressed. You can rebuild streets, you can rebuild hospitals, but for those who have experienced violence, the psychological consequences can persist for years, if not generations.*

*If we want to rebuild societies after a crisis, we need to ensure that people get the mental health and psychosocial support they need. Investing in mental health is also an investment in capital, as untreated mental health conditions impose significant costs on healthcare systems, societies, and families.*

*As a matter of fact, MHPSS is crucial in our work to promote peace, social cohesion, and community togetherness, because the central element in peacebuilding is reconciliation and acknowledgment of what has happened.*

Omar Salih Rasheed,  
ICRC

## The MHPSS Research Network revitalized

The MHPSS Research Network Coordination Group, consisting of the MHPSS Hub, the British Red Cross, the Swiss Red Cross, and members from various academic and research institutions, civil society organisations, and RCRC National Societies, has been revitalised.

“After a period of staff changes at the MHPSS Hub, and different people covering the MHPSS Research Network, there was a need to renew our commitment. In close coordination with our partners, we have optimised our communication and events,” says Dr Yasin Duman, MHPSS Research Specialist.

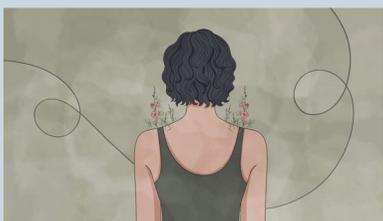
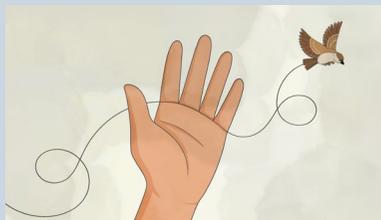
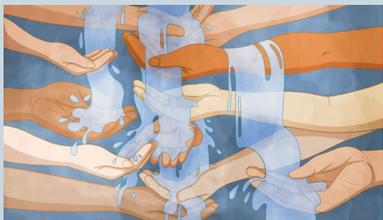
The Research Network newsletter has been relaunched

with a defined structure and a bi-monthly dissemination cycle. The newsletter features relevant information on MHPSS-related research, publications, and events. Journal Club sessions represent a newly developed open format created to explore a variety of topics related to MHPSS. Each session is led by experts (academics or practitioners) within and beyond the Movement.

In 2025, the MHPSS Hub continued to contribute to MHPSS research across the Movement and beyond. These efforts included participation in relevant research events, including the RC3 Global Research Workshop held in Istanbul, alongside National Societies, the IFRC, and the ICRC, contributing to RC3's research strategy and roadmap

for the coming year, as well as the IHSA Conference organised by the Global Disaster Preparedness Reference Centre (GDPRC), with the theme of humanitarianism in crisis, which represented an important opportunity for the MHPSS Hub to expand its research network by engaging with researchers, academics, practitioners, and policymakers.

The MHPSS Hub joined several research consortia applications for funding from EU HORIZON and Wellcome Trust (UK). These initiatives reflect strong collaboration across the Movement, with application outcomes expected in the first quarter of 2026.



## The well-being calendar

In 2025, the MHPSS Hub created the **Well-being Calendar 2026**, a wall calendar offering a new well-being exercise for every month in 2026. “The underlying idea was that, in many homes, the wall calendar is a central tool when planning, and something people look at on a regular basis. Planning and organising time can be stressful for many, and therefore a calendar seemed to be an obvious medium for offering exercises to relieve that stress,” says Senior Communications Officer Jesper Guhle.

Along with the exercises are 12 illustrations created by artist and illustrator Ali Yousef. “We wanted to create a calendar that was not just functional, but also pleasing to look at, and I think Ali did an amazing job,” says Jesper Guhle.

Followers of the MHPSS Hub communication channels seem to agree. Even though the well-being calendar wasn’t published in the resource library on [mhpsshub.org](http://mhpsshub.org) until 10 October – World Mental Health Day – it is on the top 10 list of most downloaded resources in 2025. The calendar is available in Arabic and English.

The well-being calendar was produced with the financial support of the European Union, as part of the response to support displaced Ukrainians and affected populations under EU4Health. The content of the calendar is the sole responsibility of the MHPSS Hub and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



**Funded by  
the European Union**

”

*Japan is prone to natural disasters, and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is one of our key pillar interventions among the Japanese Red Cross Society's (JRCS) emergency response. For example, after the devastating 2024 Noto earthquake, the JRCS delivered not only medical relief but also MHPSS – including trained emergency teams providing Psychological First Aid (PFA) in temporary shelters.*

*Supporting the resilience of key service providers in affected communities was highly prioritised. We conducted knowledge-transfer sessions for local nursery and day-care staff on how to support children after the disaster. We also established safe spaces for the public officials directly responsible for emergency response and recovery. These officials had to operate under extreme stress, facing pressure from their communities, whilst they were often affected along with their families.*

*Disaster recovery is a long journey. By supporting the local key actors, we aim to ensure that they have the resilient conditions needed to perform their vital duties for the disaster-affected communities.*

Reo Morimitsu,  
Japanese Red Cross Society





Photo: The MHPSS Hub

”

*In Colombia, large segments of the population are facing armed conflict, internal displacement, migration, and natural disasters worsened by climate change, and often all these crises and emergencies play out simultaneously and in combination.*

*We, as MHPSS professionals, talk a lot about building resilience, but the exposed people and communities are tired of being resilient – they simply want the armed conflict and killings to stop, to be safe from disasters, and to be able to stay in their homes and communities. We try to avoid vocabulary that can cause pain and frame our work in a way that is adapted to the people we assist.*

*As Red Cross (Cruz Roja Colombiana) staff and volunteers, it is deeply important to understand that, in communities that have faced or been displaced by decades of armed conflict, trust is not a given. In fact, mistrust is a survival mechanism – we have to respect that and not impose. We try to work with locals trusted by the communities and on the basis of the principles of autonomy, dignity, and participation.*

**Ximena Piraban Gonzalez,  
Colombian Red Cross**

# The Journey of the Asia Pacific MHPSS Collaborative: Regionalization of MHPSS

The Asia Pacific MHPSS Collaborative was established in 2021 through a partnership between Hong Kong Red Cross Branch (HKRC), the IFRC Regional Office for Asia Pacific (APRO), and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement MHPSS Hub (formerly the IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support). The establishment marked the culmination of a long-standing commitment by the tripartite partners to strengthening mental health and psychosocial support across one of the world's most disaster-prone regions.

The past five years in the Asia Pacific region have been marked by an unrelenting series of disasters and crises – ranging from natural hazards and climate-related emergencies to protracted conflicts, disease outbreaks, and mass displacement. In response, the Asia Pacific MHPSS Collaborative has strengthened mental health and psychosocial support across the region, responding to **1,660 requests**, delivering **61 trainings** that equipped **1,079 people**, and carrying out **32 advocacy initiatives** that collectively reached over **505,702 individuals**, with an additional **30,146,044 people engaged through social media**.

“The most inspiring aspect of this journey has been witnessing the remarkable development of National Societies. Over the years, many of them have achieved significant milestones, often marking their entry into structured MHPSS programming for the very first time. Across the region, National Societies held their first Psychological First Aid trainings, launched their first emergency MHPSS responses, facilitated their first

peer-to-peer learning exchanges, drafted and approved their first policies, and initiated many other foundational achievements. Each of these ‘firsts’ represents a meaningful step in building sustainable, community-rooted MHPSS services that will continue to evolve long after the initial milestones are crossed,” says Prednison Morales, MHPSS Regional Coordinator, IFRC Asia Pacific Region.

What began in 2021 as a tripartite initiative has since grown into a trusted and visible mechanism driving quality, connection, and capacity across borders. And what started with a small team has led to large-scale impact – an expanding network of National Societies better equipped to support mental wellbeing in their communities.

“The journey of the Asia Pacific MHPSS Collaborative is still unfolding. As humanitarian contexts grow more complex, as communities face new forms of adversity, and as National Societies continue to strengthen their capacities, the Collaborative remains committed to walking alongside them. Its mission endures: to ensure that mental health and psychosocial support is accessible, prioritised, and integrated into every phase of humanitarian action. Because in every disaster, every crisis, and every act of service, the emotional and psychological wellbeing of individuals and communities matters. And together, the region continues to build a future where MHPSS is protected, championed, and strengthened for all,” says Dr Eliza Yee Lai Cheung, MHPSS Specialist based in Hong Kong, and focal point for the Asia Pacific region.

# INTERVIEW: A new chapter of MHPSS inter-agency coordination

2025 represents a time of transition for the IASC Reference Group on MHPSS in Emergency Settings. UNICEF has taken on the co-chair role from the World Health Organization (WHO) with Marcio Gagliato filling the position. Joshua Sung Young Lee has stepped in as the new IFRC co-chair, a role that the MHPSS Hub has performed on behalf of IFRC since 2015.

The new co-chair team is taking over at a time of significant changes and increasing challenges in the humanitarian sector, but ambitions remain high. We interviewed Joshua Lee.

## **What are the main challenges in relation to MHPSS in a changing humanitarian sector?**

*The humanitarian reset affects the entire sector, and it is staggering how much funding has dropped. I think around six per cent of the entire OCHA appeal was funded at the beginning of 2026. In a context of hyper-prioritisation, the immediate concern for us is to maintain MHPSS at country and global level as an integrated area of work across all humanitarian clusters, at a time when they are undergoing rapid change alongside the entire humanitarian architecture. Fundamentally, we have to advocate and demonstrate that MHPSS is not a competing area of intervention but, rather, a complementary aspect of all humanitarian interventions.*

*Luckily, we are not starting from scratch. The MHPSS Reference Group is one of the longest-standing in the IASC, and we can utilise a heritage of joint efforts of advocacy, networking, and concrete support to emergencies.*

## **How do you see the balance between MHPSS needs and capacity?**

*The needs are evident. If we look at the largest humanitarian emergencies by scale, they have only worsened – particularly in the MENA and sub-Saharan Africa regions, which account for the large majority of people in need.*

*In terms of capacity, a particular challenge in relation to MHPSS is that it relies heavily on human resources, which have been reduced. We do not have an exact overview of the staff reductions by intervention, but the global average of funding cuts across agencies and organisations lies somewhere between 20–40%. My estimate would be that it is higher for MHPSS.*

*Local NGOs, the national staff of INGOs and UN agencies, and Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies continue to deliver despite significant funding gaps and increasingly dangerous conditions – including through volunteers – but a key concern is ensuring their access to the financial, technical, and moral support they need to sustain these critical services in their communities. A sustainable anchoring of MHPSS requires people with specific expertise and experience, which often takes years to obtain. Losing seasoned MHPSS experts and focal points, both at country and global level, is one of the fundamental challenges we are facing at a time of increasing needs. To mitigate that, we will have to focus even more on country-level support, including by linking local technical working groups and actors to humanitarian decision makers, and efficiently advocating for MHPSS.*

## **What are the strengths of the MHPSS Reference Group at this critical moment?**

*Those of us who still remain – the last MHPSS colleagues standing, if you will – have definitely joined closer, and our passion and drive remain intact despite extremely difficult circumstances. At the same time, I think, as a collective, we have quite substantial experience in being flexible and agile, because we are a cross-cutting area of work that has had to coordinate and integrate across multiple clusters throughout our existence.*

*We have less money, we have fewer people, so the question is: how do we localise? I don't mean that as a soundbite or a buzzword, but in the sense of truly acknowledging that we have to work with local actors – because we cannot stay forever, because we can no longer rely on short-term deployments of international experts, and because local actors know their respective contexts better than anyone. We need to more intentionally tap into local ecosystems beyond the humanitarian sector, like psychologist networks, activists working on mental health, and community resources that are often the deciding factor for longer-term impact, as well as in addressing immediate humanitarian needs.*

*This question of localisation has been the point of much discussion within the MHPSS Reference Group and the broader MHPSS community prior to the humanitarian reset, but it is now absolutely centre stage. We cannot afford to be naïve or deny the fact that this is a serious challenge. However, I am optimistic. Mainly because it is clear that the MHPSS Reference Group, and the many MHPSS colleagues it represents, are both ready and capable of thinking outside the box – that is what we have to do in an unpredictable and rapidly changing reality.*

”

*Humanitarian interventions prioritising MHPSS are vital to uphold dignity in crises. The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement commits to community-based and community-driven approaches that embed MHPSS throughout response.*

*In Africa, this means integrating MHPSS across sectors and emergencies; ensuring staff and volunteer well-being; strengthening recruitment, capacity, and retention; advancing organisational development and sustainability; improving advocacy, collaboration, and stakeholder engagement; enhancing monitoring, evaluation, and evidence-building; and promoting strong community-based MHPSS.*

Linda Nene,  
IFRC



# IASC in numbers

In 2025, the IASC Reference Group on MHPSS in Emergency Settings responded to

**171**

requests, supported

**59**

Technical Working Groups covering

**89%**

of emergencies globally.

In 2025, IASC facilitated

**10**

interagency MHPSS Surge deployments to emergencies in

**10**

countries:

- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Burundi
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Ethiopia
- Ivory Coast
- Madagascar
- Poland
- Sudan
- Vanatu

”

*Over the summer, devastating wildfires ravaged the Limassol districts of Cyprus, leaving two deaths, injury, and the loss of homes and belongings for the population. The Cyprus Red Cross Society was part of the emergency response, providing relief items as well as psychosocial support activities, including the establishment of safe spaces for children trying to uphold a sense of normalcy amid the destruction.*

*Our regular programmes cover multiple psychosocial support interventions targeted towards different segments of the population with diverse needs. Examples include free psychotherapeutic sessions to adult individuals; weekly psycho-educational activities in migration centres; experiential workshops with the 'Linos and Flora' series; and an activity book, available in various languages, for migrants – also used in primary schools; a helpline offering companionship to lonely and elderly citizens; as well as psychosocial support in nursing homes.*

**Polina Savva,  
Cyprus Red Cross Society**



Photo: The MHPSS Hub

## The MHPSS Hub in numbers

### Budget 2025

In 2025, total global expenditures for the MHPSS Hub supporting the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in advancing the universal right to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) amounted to

**22,741,226** DKK  
(2,856,838.55 CHF)

and was implemented by a workforce of 27 staff members.

However, global funding reductions that commenced in 2025 and significantly impacted the 2026 budget also contributed to a slight decline in total revenue in 2025.

Total revenue for 2025 amounted to

**21,624,567** DKK  
(2,716,559.64 CHF)

(excluding minor prior-year adjustment), resulting in a net deficit of

**1,116,659** DKK  
(140,278.91 CHF).

(Exchange rate: 7.9603)

# Donors

## Donors and friends

The MHPSS Hub collaborates with, and receives funding from, a broad variety of Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies, research institutes, NGOs, institutional donors, and the private sector. Without their generous financial support and collaboration, the activities and reach of the MHPSS Hub in 2025 would not have been possible.



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# MHPSS TECHNICAL EXPERTISE



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MHPSS Specialist



**Eliza Yee Lai Cheung**  
MHPSS Specialist



**Joshua Lee**  
MHPSS Specialist



**Yasin Duman**  
MHPSS Research Specialist



**Arz Stephan**  
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**Guleed Dualeh**  
MHPSS Specialist



**Ganna Goloktionova**  
MHPSS Specialist



**Shona Whitton**  
MHPSS Specialist

THE  
MHPSS  
HUB  
TEAM



**MHPSS  
INTERNATIONAL  
MOVEMENT  
HUB**

**Red Cross Red Crescent Movement MHPSS Hub**

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