

Multistakeholder Pledge on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Call for Collective Action

Good mental health enables people to cope with the stresses of life, to realize their abilities, to learn and work well, and to contribute to their communities. Addressing the mental health needs of refugees is important because these needs are elevated while access to services and supports is often restricted. Experiences of adversity, loss, and disruptive events in countries of origin, during travel, and upon arrival in receiving communities may increase needs for MHPSS among refugees. Needs may also be elevated because of current life circumstances, loss of supportive social networks, marginalisation, discrimination, and limited options for work and livelihood. Over the years, a wealth of experience has been developed in host countries, by governments, local authorities, and NGOs to strengthen access of refugees to MHPSS.

MHPSS is a multi-sectoral issue that requires the active involvement of, and coordination between, various sectors, including health, social services and social protection, education and others. Interventions are interrelated at multiple layers, ranging from the community level (strengthening the agency of refugees, helping people to help each other, fostering social cohesion between nationals and refugees) to specialist services (that need to be made accessible, affordable, appropriate, and available for refugees).

Addressing MHPSS needs through strengthened services within communities and national systems contributes to sustainable care and protection systems for refugees and communities hosting them. This will support their physical, social and mental well-being during all stages of life and is, at the same time, important to strengthen global health security, contribute to social and economic development and benefit communities hosting and receiving refugees.

The Multistakeholder Pledge

The multistakeholder pledge on Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) aims to achieve concrete commitments from a wide range of stakeholders to foster forcibly displaced and stateless people's¹ sustainable and equitable access to mental health and psychosocial support and related services at affordable costs.

- **Fostering mental health and psychosocial well-being:** Systematically integrate mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in humanitarian, development and peace-building programmes, through policy changes towards inclusion, supported by financial, material and capacity strengthening, to foster access to quality services and support for all refugees and host communities.

The multistakeholder pledge will bring together refugee-hosting countries, donor countries, multilateral donors, foundations, civil society, private sector and academia to promote synergies and identify matching opportunities to enable the effective implementation of pledges and combine resources.

States and relevant stakeholders have committed in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) to contribute resources and expertise to expand and enhance the quality of national health systems to facilitate effective access to health care for refugees and host communities. The GCR specifically address mental health and psychosocial well-being in the context of service provision around health, (child) protection and education. We recognise the generous commitments made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum by States and other stakeholders and seeks to build upon implementation and progress made to date with renewed support through the two multistakeholder pledges.

¹ No matter their age, gender, and other diverse aspects including having a disability, diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, and belonging to a minority or indigenous group.

Pledge Thematic Areas

Fostering mental health and psychosocial wellbeing for refugees and host communities

Law and Policy: Pledges will create enabling environments in States for the sustainable inclusion of refugees, other forcibly displaced and stateless people into multi-sectoral systems, policies and programmes around mental health and psychosocial well-being and will enable access to services at par with host communities. This may include changes in national legislative frameworks such as laws and policies around health, education, protection from gender-based violence (GBV), social welfare and community development. Pledges will also include elements of emergency preparedness and response to support States and non-state actors in preparing for mental health and psychosocial outcomes due to displacement-related emergencies in order to protect the mental health and psychosocial well-being of forcibly displaced and stateless people and host communities alike.

Achieving improved outcomes for mental health and psychosocial well-being requires coordinated multi-sectoral action in which various sectors are involved, with involvement of line ministries for Health, Education, Social Welfare and others.

Programmes: MHPSS pledges will focus on tangible actions by stakeholders (states, UN agencies and others) to improve mental health and psychosocial well-being in an integrative way, routinely incorporated into work in sectors such as health, protection and education. Pledges will include financial support to advance and enable sustainable inclusion in mental health system and social protection schemes including through innovative, flexible and predictable funding mechanisms; technical support to enable policy change; capacity building of personnel and volunteers, support to MHPSS service delivery in refugee hosting areas through infrastructure adjustments, human resources, survivor-centred approaches, etc; fostering work opportunities for accredited refugee MHPSS providers; community engagement and mobilisation in MHPSS actions; expanding the use of mobile technologies for telemedicine. Pledges may include linked measures to overcome barriers related to language and culture to effectively access services and supports for mental health and psychosocial support at local level. Pledges may also consider the expansion of civil society programmes for refugee- and host community-inclusive services to bridge gaps where national services are not fully available or accessible and in line with national legislation.

Data and evidence: pledges will support evidence-informed planning, programming, monitoring and inclusive law and policy making through the provision of tools, expertise, and data disaggregated by age and gender to advance measurement and build the evidence-base related to refugees' inclusion in national systems and improved outcomes related to mental health and psychosocial well-being for refugees and the communities who host them.

Cross-Cutting Principles

- Multistakeholder partnerships will facilitate advancement of inclusion of MHPSS in sectoral work through commitments that are supported with financial, technical and material support.
- Efforts to strengthen the quality and coverage of MHPSS systems will enhance access to quality services for host communities and forcibly displaced and stateless people alike, including through interventions to enhance the capacity of MHPSS workers to provide equitable care to forcibly displaced and stateless people. Accountability is predicated on the meaningful, intentional, and systematic inclusion of the expressed needs, concerns, capabilities and views of refugees, other forcibly displaced and stateless people, and host communities – in their diversity – in the development and implementation of pledges.
- Mainstreaming of age, gender and diversity, intersectional, and multisectoral approaches and best practices will inform pledge development across all three thematic areas. Specific needs will be incorporated in pledges and linked outcomes for MHPSS, including those of children, adolescents, women, older persons, persons with disabilities and of any other persons with specific health needs. See the [Age Gender and Diversity Tip Sheet - Helping to ensure AGD inclusive pledges and good practices for the GRF](#).
- The principle of non-discrimination, health equity, and equality of opportunity and treatment, in particular gender equality, will be championed across pledges.
- Economic, environmental and social sustainability considerations will guide inclusion and MHPSS system-strengthening approaches and pledges.
- Pledge commitments shall seek a “do no harm” approach and endeavour to assess risks and mitigate potential negative effects of their actions.

Group of Friends of Health for Refugees and Host Communities

The multistakeholder pledge on MHPSS is supported by the Group of Friends of Health for Refugees and Host Communities which is co-convened by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNHCR. The Group supports the mobilisation of multistakeholder pledges by bringing together refugee-hosting countries, donor countries, multilateral donors, civil society, refugee-led organizations, private sector and academia to effectively achieve sustainable inclusion of all forcibly displaced and stateless persons into national strengthened health systems, to systematically include MHPSS actions in the response, and to ease the burden on host countries.

Related pledges

[Multistakeholder pledge: Agriculture, food systems, and food security](#)

[Multistakeholder Pledge: Economic inclusion and Social Protection](#)

[Multistakeholder Pledge: Gender Equality and Protection from Gender-Based Violence](#)

[Multistakeholder Pledge: Child Rights](#)

[Multistakeholder Pledge: Sport for Inclusion and Protection](#)

[Multistakeholder pledge: National education system inclusion](#)

[Multistakeholder pledge: Inclusion in statistical systems and surveys](#)