



Group of Friends of  
**Health** for Refugees  
and **Host Communities**

# Newsletter

Convened by:



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency



World Health  
Organization



## Latest news

### Global Refugee Forum (GRF) 2023 Outcome Document

The GRF 2023 was widely hailed as a success, demonstrating diversity, dynamism, and positive community building despite growing global challenges. The participation of **over 4,000 people in-person** (including more than **320 refugees and stateless persons**) and **10,000 virtually** demonstrated remarkable political will and solidarity. The [GRF 2023 Outcome Document](#) is now available, as well as the [Roadmap to the High-Level Officials Meeting \(HLOM\) 2025](#), which will consolidate stocktaking at country, regional, and global levels, and assess progress toward supporting **low and middle-income countries' policy pledges** through the multi-stakeholder pledging architecture, focusing on key policy priorities and next steps in the lead-up to the **GRF 2027**.



### WHO's Fifth Global School on Refugee and Migrant Health in Colombia

Colombia has been selected to host the [World Health Organization's Fifth Global School on Refugee and Migrant Health](#), reflecting the country's critical role in addressing these populations' health challenges. This hybrid event offers a platform to share best practices in refugees and migrant healthcare with a global audience, with more than 5,000 participants expected to attend.

Keep an eye on WHO's website to [learn more about the upcoming School on Refugee and Migrant Health](#). Learn more about the [2023 edition: Fourth WHO Global School on Refugee and Migrant Health](#).

## Films on migrants' and refugees' health shortlisted for a WHO Health for All Film Festival special prize

The World Health Organization's fifth edition of the **Health for All Film Festival** features a special prize category titled *"Migrants and Refugees Health"* for short films that highlight the significant health challenges faced by refugees and migrants and their health needs. [View and comment on your favourite shortlisted films](#) and champion them on social media using the hashtag #Film4Health. [Read more about WHO's work for refugee and migrant health.](#)



## Transforming Tomorrow: Innovative Solutions for Children in Crisis

The report developed by the **International Rescue Committee (IRC)** shares learning from Ahlan Simsim's experience in the MENA region. It concludes with a set of recommendations for funders, policymakers, and implementers, and advocates for **nimble funding strategies**; a **dedicated focus on children and caregivers**; and the integration of funding, research, and data for impactful global outcomes across sectors. [More info.](#) [Read the report.](#)

For more info, please contact **Elana Banin** at [Elana.Banin@rescue.org](mailto:Elana.Banin@rescue.org).

## Bridging the Early Childhood Development Gap: Working in Partnership to Strengthen the Jordanian Health System

The partnership between the **Jordan Ministry of Health** and the **International Rescue Committee (IRC)** through the *Ahlan Simsim initiative* represents a groundbreaking approach to integrating early childhood development (ECD) into Jordan's healthcare system. [More info.](#) [Read the report.](#)

For more info, please contact **Elana Banin** at [Elana.Banin@rescue.org](mailto:Elana.Banin@rescue.org).

### Bridging the Early Childhood Development Gap

Working in Partnership to Strengthen the Jordanian Health System

The impact of prolonged stress and adversity during children's early years can have serious negative consequences on their mental and physical health. In a world where nearly 40% of young children risk falling developmentally off track, the stakes could not be higher—especially for 103 million children in the Middle East and North Africa who are in dire need of humanitarian support.<sup>1</sup>

When children do not develop to their full potential it puts whole communities at risk. Creating conditions that help children thrive as they grow and develop is crucial. Supportive policies, resources, and services centered around early childhood development (ECD) can significantly reduce the harmful effects of adversity, positively influencing lifelong economic and social outcomes.

Aligned with the Government of Jordan's national priorities, the Ministry of Health (MoH) partnered with the International Rescue Committee as part of the Ahlan Simsim initiative to co-develop an ECD Health Integration program. This program works with the national health system and healthcare providers to bring critical resources on responsive caregiving and social-emotional development of children to parents and other caregivers of children ages 0 to 5.



<sup>1</sup> UNICEF. "Protracted Stress in Children in the Middle East and North Africa." UNICEF Middle East and North Africa. 1 Dec 2022. <https://www.unicef.org/mena/stress-in-children>

BRIDGING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT GAP



 **Upcoming events**

**Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Weeks (HNPW): Innovation, Partnership, and**

### Lessons from Ahlan Simsim:

Innovation, partnership, and the future of humanitarian response



**Chantale Kallias**  
Senior Scaling  
and System  
Specialist,  
International  
Rescue  
Committee



**Mohammed Meqdad**  
Secretary General  
of the National  
Council for Family  
Affairs (NCFA),  
Jordan



**Rita Karam**  
Secretary General of  
the Higher Council  
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(HCC), Lebanon



**Joe Elias**  
Senior Director,  
Program  
Management,  
International Social  
Impact, Sesame  
Workshop



**Laila Hasso**  
Accountability to  
Affected People  
Advisor to Deputy  
Regional  
Humanitarian  
Coordinator, OCHA,  
Gaziantep

As part of the HNPW, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Sesame Workshop are delighted to invite you to the panel discussion: "*Lessons from Ahlan Simsim: Innovation, partnership, and the future of humanitarian response*" on **April 30, 2024, 08:00-09:00 ET**. [Register to attend online](#).

For more info on the event, please contact **Elana Banin** at [Elana.Banin@rescue.org](mailto:Elana.Banin@rescue.org).

## Geneva Health Forum Conference 2024



**Geneva  
Health  
Forum**

The Geneva Health Forum (GHF) is a Swiss not-for-profit initiative that brings together a diverse range of stakeholders to discuss and address global health challenges. This year's edition will take place on **May 27 - 29 in Geneva, Switzerland**. This year's GHF includes, amongst others, a dedicated day on the health of refugees and migrants. [More info](#). [Register to attend the event](#).



## World Health Assembly 2024

The World Health Assembly is the decision-making body of WHO. It is attended by delegations from all WHO Member States and focuses on a specific health agenda prepared by the Executive Board. The main functions of the World Health Assembly are to determine the policies of the Organization, appoint the Director-General, supervise financial policies, and review and approve the proposed programme budget. The 2024 World Health Assembly will be held from **May 27 to June 1, 2024** in Geneva, Switzerland. [More info](#).

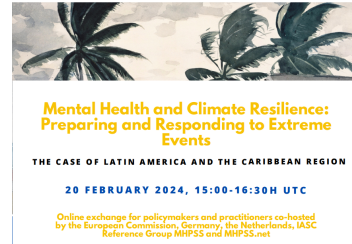
## ← Past events



## First 2024 Group of Friends of Health for Refugees and Host Communities (GoFH) Meeting

On **March 22, 2024**, was held the first 2024 GoFH Meeting after the Global Refugee Forum 2023. The event focused on the outcomes and updates from the GRF 2023, the planning for 2024 and beyond for the wider GoFH and its workstreams, and the roadmap to the High-Level Officials Meeting in 2025. [Watch the recording](#).

## Webinar "Mental Health and Climate Resilience: Preparing and Responding to Extreme Events": The case of Latin America and the Caribbean region



The LAC Webinar, held on **20 February 2024** and co-hosted by the European Commission, Germany, the Netherlands, the IASC Reference Group MHPSS, and MHPSS.net, aimed to provide a roadmap for policymakers and practitioners to incorporate MHPSS into environmental and disaster management plans, emphasizing the need for proactive, adaptive, and sustainable approaches in the face of a changing climate. [More info](#). [Watch the recording](#).

## Ukrainian-German Conference on Mental Health, Psychosocial Support and Rehabilitation

On **1 and 2 February 2024**, the Ukrainian-German Conference on Mental Health, Psychosocial Support and Rehabilitation took place in Berlin and brought together more than 200 representatives from politics, science, business and civil society. The conference formed an important milestone on the way to the Ukraine Recovery Conference, which Germany will be hosting in June. It set a clear sign that psychosocial support is particularly important in times of crises and war. German Development Minister Svenja Schulze emphasized that people can only move on with their lives and make plans for the future if they are able to process their traumatic experiences. The Ukrainian First Lady, Olena Zelenska, highlighted the Ukrainian Coordination Centre for Mental Health as a successful example. The key message of the conference was clear: mental health is pivotal in rebuilding lives and should not be a taboo subject. [Watch the recording](#).



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## Quick links

More info on the [Group of Friends of Health for Refugees and Host Communities](#).

Multistakeholder pledge on [National Health System Inclusion](#).

Multistakeholder pledge on [Fostering Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing](#).

If you wish to share any upcoming events, materials, or resources to all GoFH partners, please feel free to contact us ([chollet@unhcr.org](mailto:chollet@unhcr.org)).



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