



**NEWS  
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# NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME

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**01**

## **E-mental health guided self-help service provision pilot project: preparatory phase and stakeholder consultations**

Psychological interventions are rarely accessible to people who need them. This is because there is a shortage of well-trained and supervised mental health professionals and a lack of culturally adapted, evidence-based psychological interventions. In response to this, the World Health Organization (WHO) has developed and is evaluating Problem Management Plus (PM+). PM+ was designed with sustainability in mind: it is a brief, non-specialist-delivered version of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for adults in communities affected by adversity. It was designed to be transdiagnostic: it can be used with people experiencing a range of common mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety and stress, at different symptom severity levels. It is simple, so that it can be delivered by a trained lay person or non-specialist health worker who has no prior knowledge of mental health or psychological interventions.

The National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) at the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) in partnership with WHO and Fondation d'Harcourt are developing a generic and a Lebanese e-version of PM+, delivered over the internet, to increase access to evidence-based treatment using a cost-effective approach. Once developed and adapted, the intervention will be piloted in line with objective 2.1.7 of the "Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy for Lebanon 2015-2020": "To adapt and pilot an e-mental health guided self-help programme for Lebanon".

The teams from the NMHP, WHO and Fondation d'Harcourt met in Lebanon in February to plan for the content, design, programming and delivery of the project. Stakeholder consultation meetings took place on February 17, 2016 with around 60 participants from various stakeholder groups that included mental health professionals, members of the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Task Force (including local and international NGOs and UN agencies), university faculties and heads of professional associations. During these meetings, the project aims were presented and feedback was collected on its feasibility and acceptability to be incorporated in the project design.

The intervention is currently under development and will be culturally adapted before it is piloted.

**02**

## **Building national capacity in Interpersonal Psychotherapy in line with the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Task Force 2016 Action Plan**

The National Mental Health Programme and International Medical Corps (IMC) have collaborated for the implementation of Action 10 on the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Task Force 2016 action plan: "Conduct Inter-Personal Psychotherapy (IPT) trainings and supervision for 20 participants selected from TF organizations, universities and scientific societies". The project was implemented in partnership with Columbia University with the aim of building national capacity in IPT, adapted in content and delivery methods to increase local relevance for common mental disorders in persons affected by the Syrian crisis in Lebanon.

**02****Building national capacity in Interpersonal Psychotherapy in line with the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Task Force 2016 Action Plan (cont.)**

An initial training phase took place in January 2016. A 6 day IPT trainings of trainers (TOT) workshop for 20 IPT trainees (10 direct providers and 10 future supervisors/trainers) was held. Trainings were led by two senior IPT trainers from Columbia University who have experience in the adaptation and use of IPT in non-Western cultures. This training was followed by an intensive remote support and supervision phase, which will be maintained until January 2017. Phase III, which was implemented in May 2016, consisted of an advanced training of trainers on intensive IPT skills and clinical management skills.

**03****Psychological First Aid: Training of Trainers**

In line with the “Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy for Lebanon 2015-2020”, and the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support task force 2016 action plan, the MoPH, in collaboration with the WHO, conducted two two-day training of trainers (TOT) workshops on Psychological First Aid (PFA) on 19, 21, 26, and 28 April 2016, funded by the European Union. PFA involves humane, supportive and practical assistance for people who are distressed, in ways that respect their dignity, culture and abilities.

A total of 45 participants from the MOPH, UN agencies, and NGOs working in the field, with background in psychology, social work and psychiatric nursing, have attended the training which aimed at enhancing their capacities in delivering PFA trainings to non-mental health front-liners. Participants learned training and facilitation skills as well as PFA concepts such as approaching a situation safely; saying and doing the most supportive things for very distressed people; and not causing further harm by their actions.

This is the first series of trainings involving specialists in mental health who will themselves be delivering training sessions to non-specialists working in primary health care centres and social development centres.

**04****Trainings on the mhGAP for the Lebanese University Psychology Masters Students**

The NMHP has, for the second year in a row, offered a course for graduate students in the Psychology Department of the Lebanese University on the mhGAP. These trainings are in line with strategic objective 2.2.4 of the “Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy for Lebanon 2015-2020” which stipulates the revision of undergraduate mental health curricula for health and social welfare professionals in addition to postgraduate medical programmes, towards a multidisciplinary approach in compliance with the bio-psychosocial and recovery model.

**05****Mental Health Care in additional 44 Primary Health Care Centres**

The MoPH has prioritized the work on integrating care for mental disorders into Primary Health Care (PHC) whereby persons suffering from mental disorders will be able to consult PHC staff and be assessed and referred, as well as provided with psychoeducation. For this, the MOPH in collaboration with WHO conducted a series of training workshops in May and June 2016 in Beirut on the mental health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP), funded by the European Union. The mhGAP- intervention guide is a tool developed by WHO for non-specialized staff to deliver mental health interventions. These workshops are a continuation of the efforts initiated since three years. The focus this year is on the PHC centres that are part of the MOPH Emergency Public Health Restoration Project and the training is divided in two phases of 3-day training each, separated by on-site support and supervision.

A total of 44 centres, spread over Mount Lebanon, the South, and the North, took part of the first phase of training, with a total of 85 staff, namely medical doctors, nurses, and social workers. After receiving the training, the facilities will be visited by MOPH supervisors as part of the onsite support and supervision in order to strengthen the skills learnt in the training and monitor the quality of care as well as assist in any problem faced.

## 06

## Inter-ministerial Substance Use Response Strategy for Lebanon: National Consensus Meeting

A national consensus meeting on the draft “Inter-ministerial Substance Use Response Strategy for Lebanon 2016-2021” was held on May 19, 2016. During this meeting, the strategy draft was presented to participants which included representatives and focal persons from ministries, UN agencies, local and international NGOs, universities, healthcare organizations, professional associations and users associations.



The draft presented was developed based on the priorities identified in bilateral stakeholder meetings and the national consultation meeting conducted in 2015, and in line with the WHO Regional Framework for Strengthening Public Health Response to Substance Use. The draft was then reviewed by more than 30 local and international experts from a variety of stakeholder groups (UN agencies, local and international organizations, health professionals). A compilation of the feedback received from the expert review was presented during the consensus meeting, in addition to the responses to it; and additional feedback on the draft was gathered from participants.

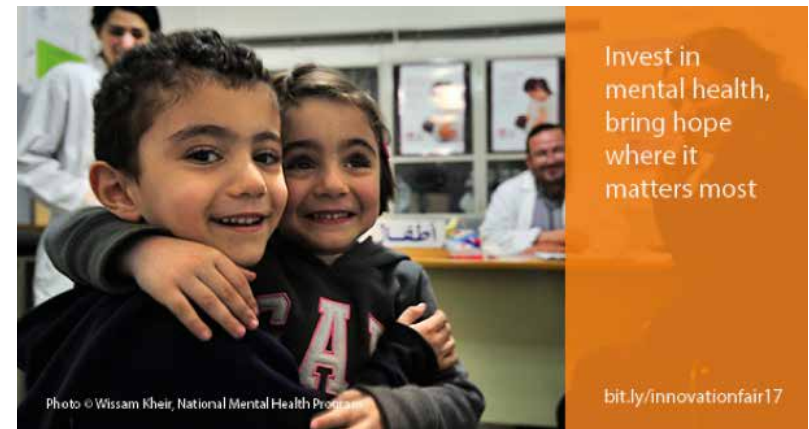
The draft was revised based on the feedback received and will be posted on the collaborating ministries’ websites for review and feedback by the public. Once feedback is addressed, the strategy will be finalized and jointly launched by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Social Affairs.

## 07

## Participation in local and international events

### a. National Mental Health Programme: an innovation in the World Bank/WHO “Out of the Shadows, Making mental health a global development priority” conference

WHO and the World Bank have co-hosted for the first time a two-day series of events in April in Washington DC under the heading of “Out of the Shadows, Making mental health a global development priority”. With the aim of moving mental health from the margins to the mainstream of the global development agenda, the event engaged finance ministers, multilateral and bilateral organizations, the business community, technology innovators, and civil society and emphasized the urgent investments needed in mental health services, and the expected returns in terms of health, social and economic benefits.



The event was inaugurated by an Innovation Fair featuring around 20 innovations from around the globe to establish that improving mental health is not only possible in diverse countries and settings, but also yields substantial health, social and economic benefits. The National Mental Health Programme was one of these 20 innovations selected, specifically for the collaboration mechanisms put in place with the aim of harmonizing and mainstreaming MHPSS in all sectors and improving access to care.

The case study, policy brief and infographic around the Lebanese mental health system reform produced for the occasion are accessible on the Mental Health Innovation Network website on the following link: [http://mhinnovation.net/find?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=Lebanon&sort\\_by=search\\_api\\_relevance\\_1](http://mhinnovation.net/find?search_api_views_fulltext=Lebanon&sort_by=search_api_relevance_1)

## 07 Participation in local and international events (cont.)

### b. New Mental Health Innovation Network webinar series “Ask the Policy Expert” with the Head of the National Mental Health Programme

The Mental Health Innovation Network has launched a new webinar series “Ask the policy expert” with the aim of learning more about the approaches used by policy makers to implement mental health programs and to achieve the targets of the WHO’s comprehensive mental health action plan 2013-2020 adopted by the 66th World Health Assembly. As such, each “Ask the expert” webinar in the series focuses on country level implementation of one of objectives of the mental health action plan.

The first webinar focused on the action plan’s first objective, “to strengthen effective leadership and governance for mental health” and the action plan global target 1.1: By 2020, 80% of countries will have developed or updated their policies/plans for mental health in line with international and regional human rights instruments. The webinar was offered by Dr. Rabih el Chammay, head of the NMHP, who spoke about the NMHP, why and how it was created, about the ongoing mental health reform process in Lebanon and about lessons learned from the implementation process.

The webinar is accessible on the following link: <http://mhinnovation.net/new-series-ask-policy-expert-dr-rabih-el-chammay-lebanon>

### c. iYCG/UNICEF Workshop, March 16-18, 2016: Investing in Young Children for Peaceful Societies: Individual and Structural Transformation

The Forum on Investing in Young Children Globally held on March 16-18, 2016 in partnership with UNICEF and the King Abdulaziz International center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID), a workshop in Amman, Jordan, to explore topics related to investing in young children for peaceful societies toward individual and structural transformation. Over the course of the 3-day workshop, researchers, policy makers, program practitioners, funders youth and other experts came together to understand the effects of conflict and violence on children, women and youth across areas of health, education, nutrition, social protection and other service domains. The goal of the workshop was to fill in the gaps in knowledge and explore opportunities for discourse through a process of highlighting the science and dialogue.

During his intervention, the Head of the National Mental Health Programme, Dr Rabih El Chammay, shared perspectives on policies that invest in women and young children as peacebuilders. He highlighted that on one hand, addressing wars and conflicts which constitute

## 07 Participation in local and international events (cont.)

important risk factor for mental ill-health, contributes to improving mental health. On the other hand, investing in mental health, and more specifically in maternal and child health, will not only improve their mental health and health in general but will also contribute to more peaceful societies. Dr. El Chammay also gave insight on how mental health policy can contribute to peace and how the policy development process can be designed to be a peace-building tool itself.

Dr. El Chammay’s intervention is viewable on the following link: <http://www.nas.edu/hmd/Activities/Children/InvestingYoungChildrenGlobally/2016-MAR-16/Day%202/Day%202%20El%20Chammay.aspx>

### d. Seminary on “The effectiveness of humanitarian aid: new actors in the Mid-Orient”

With the engagement in the humanitarian field of new actors such as donor states, companies, actors from recipient countries, public administrations and civil society organization, the classical humanitarian community is confronted with the challenge of integrating all the efforts being made in a way that ensures the respect of humanitarian principles and that consolidates the contribution of new actors beyond mere economic contribution.

To reflect on the role of new humanitarian actors and the mechanisms that are contributing to the improvement of the efficiency of humanitarian action in the Middle East, a seminary on Humanitarian Aid was organized by the Centre of Middle-eastern studies in Madrid on March 9, 2016 entitled: “The effectiveness of humanitarian aid: new actors in the Mid-Orient”.

During his presentation in the seminary, the Head of the National Mental Health Programme highlighted, as an example of mechanism that improved efficiency of humanitarian action, the coordination work between local and international NGOs for the crisis response in Lebanon. He also emphasized on the importance of aligning humanitarian agendas with development agendas in order to sustainably strengthen the available national systems.

**All NMHP newsletters are accessible on the MoPH website on the following link:**  
<http://www.moph.gov.lb/en/Pages/6/553/the-national-mental-health-program>



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