

Plan 2010-2011



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Reference centre for psychosocial support

Executive summary

Psychosocial support

Emergencies and disasters – man-made or natural - have severe psychosocial consequences, which affects the individual and the community's ability to recovery and rebuild their lives. The emotional wounds caused by the death of a relative, the loss of ones home and possessions are less visible than the physical scars, but can be devastating. Disruption of social relations, the anxiety and fears that accompany the event before, during and after, and the uncertainty for the future can render people helpless and prevent them from taking care of themselves and their family. As a result, they are likely to loose hope for the future. If left unaddressed, the psychosocial effects of a disaster or a conflict may lead to distress, apathy, depression, frustration, aggression and anti-social behavior, - thereby increase social tension, prolong the recovery process and weaken the resilience of a community in the long-term.

Following the Israeli incursion in Gaza in January 2009, international humanitarian and development organizations alike, stressed that the greatest need was psychosocial support for the victims with a high priority focus on vulnerable groups such as children and women.¹ Similarly, the response to the humanitarian crisis in Pakistan and Sri Lanka emphasized the need for psychosocial support as part of the overall programme response.² Psychosocial support was also successfully used as part of the humanitarian response to recent natural disasters such as Sichuan earthquake in China and cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in 2008, and other major natural disasters, most notably the earthquake Bam in 2003 and the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004. The examples show how psychosocial support has become increasingly accepted as an effective instrument to mitigate human suffering and a way to speed up the recovery process.³

PS Centre overall goal and strategy

The RCRC Movement is at the forefront of community-based psychosocial support and established as early as 1993 the International Federation Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support (PS Centre). As part of the International Federation secretariat, the PS Centre supports National Societies to help meet the psychosocial needs of their beneficiaries, applying international standards and documented global best practices. The PS Centre also works as the collective voice of the International Federation, raising awareness and advocating for greater attention to the psychosocial needs of beneficiaries and the benefits of psychosocial interventions in humanitarian responses.

¹ *Inside Gaza*, UNDP report, January 2009, and *Gaza Crisis: Psychosocial Needs and Capacity Assessment Mission*, 9-12 February 2009, PSP Consortium, Palestine RC Society

² *Pakistan Assessment and Programme Design Mission*, 3-11 June 2009, Danish RC and Pakistan RC

³ Community-based psychosocial support programmes (PSP) generally seeks to enhance psychosocial well-being through provision of services that ensure survival and protection needs are met, accurate and timely information is available, a normalizing of daily life to the extent possible, re-establishing social relationships and trust, opportunities for expressing grief, restoring confidence and competences, and building coping mechanisms within a community or social setting.

The overall goal of the PS Centre is to promote and enable psychosocial well-being of beneficiaries, humanitarian staff and volunteers and thereby contribute to all four Global Agenda Goals. This is sought achieved through **four strategic objectives**:

1. Operational and technical assistance to psychosocial programming to promote high quality and timely psychosocial responses.
2. Capacity building of National Societies and competence development of RCRC staff and volunteers to strengthen their ability to effectively identify, respond and programme for the psychosocial needs of beneficiaries.
3. Knowledge generation and knowledge management to ensure that psychosocial approaches are based on evidence-based research and global best practices.
4. Advocacy and communications to increase awareness of psychosocial reactions to disaster and social disruption, and to raise attention to psychosocial needs of beneficiaries in programmes and policies.

The PS Centre overall goal and strategy currently resides under, and contributes to, the Global Health and Care Strategy and Service Programme. It is expected that Strategy 2020 will introduce psychosocial support as a cross-cutting theme for the first time, which opens up for a broader institutional integration of the PS Centre and psychosocial work in the coming decade.

Priorities for 2010-11

The PS Centre work plan for 2010-11 will focus on activities and projects that will contribute to the achievement of its overall goal and strategic objectives. The **key priorities** include:

- i) Intensifying technical assistance and capacity building support to National Societies.
- ii) Increased psychosocial support for volunteers in emergencies.
- iii) Build 'Clearing House' capacity.
- iv) Strengthen networks and partnerships:
 - National Societies, Zonal Offices and the secretariat
 - Academia & humanitarian stakeholders
 - Civil Society & Media
 - The International Committee of the Red Cross Red Crescent (ICRC)
 - External donor bodies

Budget 2010-11

The total 2010-2011 budget is CHF 1.158.495. An additional CHF 1.905.352 are budgeted for new pipeline projects.

Context

The PS Centre is established as part of the International Federation secretariat to support Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies responding effectively to the humanitarian needs of beneficiaries. The number of National Societies that include psychosocial support in their disaster response and in their training of staff and volunteers is constantly on the rise and, at this point, is estimated around a little under half of all National Societies. Some National Societies and regions already have considerable operational and technical capacity to undertake these type of interventions, for others psychosocial support remain a relatively new and unexplored area. Given its primary function as 'Centre of Excellence', the PS Centre's role is to facilitate, develop and deliver the highest quality technical expertise and global knowledge on community-based psychosocial interventions and promote the development and application of global standards and documented best practices to improve future operations.

Priorities and current work with partners

Work plan priorities 2010-11

The PS Centre recognizes the value and importance of coordination, collaboration and knowledge sharing and actively seeks and promotes partnerships to achieve its overall goal and strategic objectives. The PS Centre work plan and activities for 2010-11 will focus on the following priorities with a strong focus on strengthening and expanding partnerships to achieve results:

Intensify technical assistance and capacity building support for National Societies

The PS Centre will continue and strengthen its support to National Societies in 2010-2011. As the foremost important partners, National Societies will receive the highest attention in the coming work plan. The PS Centre will be as responsive as internal capacity permits to National Societies requests for operational and technical assistance. Technical assistance will involve, among other things, support to the process of implementation, testing and refinement of the recently finalized Psychosocial Support Component of the Emergency Response Units. The PS Centre plans furthermore to reconceptualise its roster group to provide an effective system for deploying additional external technical and operational support when needed.

Efforts will also be made to intensify capacity building support and competence development through training and other means, using the newly developed training material (the *Training Kit on Community-based Psychosocial Support* and the *Handbook on Psychosocial Interventions*) and through the further development of new and complementary training materials. In 2010-11, the PS Centre plans to develop a number of new material and training modules that include:

- school-based psychosocial interventions - before and after a disaster
- sports to promote psychosocial well-being
- gender-based violence, and
- IEC and training materials for volunteers working with handicapped and disabled people.

Increase psychosocial support for volunteers in emergencies

The work plan 2010-11 also addresses the need to strengthen psychosocial support for the carers. A project to develop global standards for a comprehensive psychosocial support system for volunteers in emergencies is planned in cooperation with the International Federation Organizational Development department. The project will form part of a larger support programme for volunteers that aims to be completed for the Year of Volunteers in 2011.

Build 'Clearing House' capacity

A high priority for 2010-11 will be to strengthen the capacity of the PS Centre to live up to the expectations of a 'Centre of Excellence'. Psychosocial support remains a relatively new but rapidly developing sector. For the RCRC Movement to maintain a global lead in this field and be an authoritative voice on psychosocial support and operational approaches, the PS Centre needs to build its capacity for compiling, analysing and disseminating existing psychosocial knowledge. The PS Centre will seek to identify research gaps and bridge the link between theory and practice. Thereby, an important step can be taken towards identifying and strengthening global standards and further develop indicators for best practices. Such capacity strengthening can only be achieved through increased in-house expertise, introduction of effective global knowledge management systems and a strengthening of knowledge networks and partnerships with research institutes and other humanitarian stakeholders including United Nations agencies and civil society organisations.

Strengthen networks and partnerships

- *National Societies, Zonal Offices and the secretariat*

Extensive effort will be put into strengthening existing partnerships and establishing new ones. Historically, the Nordic National Societies (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and Icelandic RC)

have been the main supporters of the PS Centre with some more recent contributions also received from the Hellenic, French, United Arab Emirates, Canadian and American RC. The PS Centre hopes to expand this group in 2010 to attain a better geographical balance and to strengthen and diversify its resource base. The PS Centre also seeks to 'projectize' more of its activities in the coming years and hope to effectively coordinate and work in partnerships with multiple National Societies, the Zonal Offices and the secretariat to achieve global project goals.

- Academia & humanitarian stakeholders

Increased attention will also be paid to research partners and other humanitarian stakeholders including UN agencies and others, to promote enhanced coordination, collaboration and knowledge sharing. Already, the PS Centre holds partnership agreements with University of Copenhagen, University of Nottingham and University of South Dakota and plans to expand this type of partners in 2010-11. The PS Centre will continue its active involvement in inter-agency psychosocial networks including the IASC Reference Group for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support and the newly established MHPS Network.

- Civil Society & Media

The PS Centre has in 2009 entered new partnerships with a number of civil society organisations including the International Council of Sports, Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE), the Human Rights Info and the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI) that works with vulnerable children in Southern Africa. The outcome of these new partnerships will be a number of new project initiatives in 2010-11, which will include an e-learning course on Gender-based Violence and training and advocacy material on sports to promote psychosocial well-being. The PS Centre plans for 2010-11 to strengthen its communication and advocacy work through ongoing improvements to its website, newsletters (*Coping* and *E-newsletter*), advocacy and visibility material on PS interventions around the world. Efforts will also be made to strengthen ties with the public media.

- The International Committee of the Red Cross Red Crescent (ICRC)

The PS Centre plans to coordinate and collaborate more closely with the ICRC in 2010-11 with an initial focus on Restoring Family Links and raising awareness in the National Societies of the psychosocial aspects of tracing.

- External donor bodies

Finally, effort will be made to strengthen and diversify the resource base of the PS Centre to reduce its financial vulnerability. The PS Centre will continue to identify new partnerships and funding channels, including the EU, corporate sector and private funds, which can generate additional resources to the work of the PS Centre.

Secretariat programmes in 2010-2011

Health and social services / Psychosocial support programme

a) The purpose and components of the programme

Programme purpose
To promote and enable psychosocial well-being of beneficiaries, humanitarian staff and volunteers

The psychosocial support programme budget is CHF 1.158.495. An additional CHF 1.905.352 is budgeted for pipeline projects.

Programme component 1: Operational and technical assistance to psychosocial programming
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<p>Outcome: High quality and timely PS programming based on global standards and best practices.</p> <p>National Societies are technically supported to undertake needs assessments and to design, implement and monitor community-based psychosocial interventions based on innovative methodologies, evidence-based knowledge, best practices and quality global standards. Attention will be paid to the operational application of the IASC Guidelines 2007, ERU PS Support Component, the newly published PS Centre Handbook for Psychosocial Interventions and other guidelines.</p>
<p>Programme component 2: Capacity building of National Societies and competence development of staff and volunteers</p>
<p>Outcome: National Societies are effectively able to identify, respond and programme for the psychosocial needs of beneficiaries</p> <p>National Societies will receive capacity building support and competence development of staff and volunteers through training courses, individual guidance and the availability of high quality training material, guidelines, handbooks, and other tools to support National Societies, staff and volunteers in their work. Psychosocial curriculum will be increasingly included and mainstreamed in all relevant trainings of the RCRC Movement - e.g. FACT trainings, RDRT trainings, First Aid trainings, ERU and public health emergency trainings etc. Psychosocial issues are included and addressed in briefings, assessments, and evaluations of the International Federation. Psychosocial support systems are developed for staff and volunteers.</p>
<p>Programme component 3: Knowledge generation and knowledge management</p>
<p>Outcome: Interventions are based on evidence-based research and best practices.</p> <p>Existing knowledge of psychosocial interventions, research and best practices, is systematically compiled, analysed, stored and disseminated. Effective global knowledge management systems and databases are in place and used by both practitioners and researchers to further build global expertise and improve future operations. The PS Centre facilitates an effective bridging between practice and theory and identifies and seeks to fill research gaps. Networks and partnerships with research institutes and other humanitarian stakeholders are in place and expanding, and serve to promote coordination, collaboration, knowledge sharing and knowledge building.</p>
<p>Programme component 4: Communication and advocacy</p>
<p>Outcome: Increased awareness of psychosocial reactions to disaster and social disruption and increased attention to psychosocial support in programmes and strategic policies.</p> <p>Strategy 2020, related sub-strategies, policies and guidance documents of the International Federation will include psychosocial support as relevant. It will be presented as an instrument to mitigate human suffering and reduce the impact of disasters and humanitarian emergencies and highlight the qualities of psychosocial interventions for increasing community resilience and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion (i.e. Global Agenda). Psychosocial interventions, its results and impact are well documented and communicated using multiple communication venues and channels to reach a wide audience of practitioners, researchers, programme managers, humanitarian decision-makers both inside and outside the RCRC Movement. The general public will also be targeted through public websites, mass media and new media such as Facebook.</p>

b) Potential risks and challenges

Firstly, with a mandate to serve 186 National Societies, the Centre's capacity remains limited. Prioritization is necessary for the PS Centre when responding to requests for technical assistance and capacity building support. The PS Centre will need to consider systems to maximize its global outreach of services.

Secondly, strategy 2020 provides basis for an expanded focus on psychosocial support in disaster as well as in longer-term recovery operations. In preparation for the implementation of Strategy 2020, psychosocial support needs to be incorporated into relevant sub-strategies and implementation guidelines. Furthermore, to meet the needs of National Societies, Zonal Offices and the secretariat, the PS Centre needs to strengthen its capacity and resource base in 2010-11. A resource mobilisation strategy has been prepared and its success will ultimately be determined by donors' priorities and the impact of the global financial crisis in the coming two years.

Thirdly, as psychosocial support gains wider institutional acceptance within the RCRC Movement, psychosocial support should form part of not only health and care and disaster response operations – either as stand-alone or integrated interventions, - but also be integrated into longer-term recovery and development programmes as well as risk reduction efforts.

Fourthly, the need for coordination of psychosocial interventions among multiple humanitarian agencies during an emergency or disaster response is likely to increase in the coming years as the sector expands. The RCRC Movement as a whole needs to take an active role in coordination and collaboration in the field to avoid duplication, promote synergy and maximize cross-agency learning. Coordination through inter-agency and regional networks also needs to be strengthened, particular in Asia and Africa.

Role of the secretariat

a) Technical programme support

The PS Centre is provider of technical assistance to psychosocial programming undertaken by the RCRC Movement. Operational and technical support is provided to National Societies upon request, and involves technical input and coordination support to needs assessments, programme design, implementation and monitoring.

Technical support is also provided for capacity building and competence development through training, individual guidance and consultations targeting staff, volunteers and psychosocial delegates. Training tools, practitioners' handbooks and other technical support material have been developed including a Training kit for Community-based Psychosocial Support and the Handbook on Psychosocial Interventions. Additional material, training tools and modules will be developed in 2010-11.

b) Partnership development and coordination

The implementation of the PS Centre work plan 2010-11 will largely depend on the success of the PS Centre to forge strategic partnerships with National Societies, Zonal Offices and the secretariat on the one hand, and research institutes, other humanitarian stakeholders, civil society and donor bodies on the other. As outlined under 'priorities for 2010-11', the PS Centre will seek to strengthen and expand its partnerships to achieve its strategic objectives. Networking and partnerships are critical to ensure coordination, knowledge sharing and knowledge building for continuous learning and improvements of psychosocial interventions, and to generate the needed resources to deliver results.

c) Representation and advocacy

Psychosocial support is expected to become a cross-cutting theme in Strategy 2020, which will broaden its institutional integration into the International Federation. While in itself an important achievement, much advocacy and policy work lies ahead in terms of incorporating psychosocial into sector policies and operational guidelines.

The PS Centre will continue its active engagement in inter-agency coordination, global standard setting and networking through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, the MHPS Network and other fora.

Finally, the PS Centre aims to contribute to the World Disaster Report in 2010 focusing on psychosocial reactions to disasters.

d) Other areas

Promoting gender equity and diversity

Psychosocial needs differ from one situation to another, based on several factors. The cultural setting of disasters, as well as social and political factors, has to be taken into account in programme design.

Gender is an important factor in psychosocial programming. The different needs of women and men, and particular power dimensions that form the basis of these needs are often at the core of understanding a particular context. In emergency settings, the rights and security of women is often compromised, calling for specific targeted action to enhance their level of protection. Men, on the other hand, are affected in different ways. In emergency settings, men's role and status as breadwinners are often lost and they need support to deal with their changed role in society. Children, the elderly and people living with physical or mental health disabilities are other groups, whose special needs must always be considered following an emergency. The range of needs translate into programme design and services of the PS Centre, with the aim of reaching all those affected, with methods that have been adapted to the specific case and social groups in question.

Quality, accountability and learning

As an International Federation 'Centre of Excellence', the PS Centre strives to support and guide all National Societies and the secretariat to undertake community-based psychosocial interventions of the highest quality and greatest impact on beneficiaries. The technical expertise and the quality of its guidance, tools and materials must therefore be based on the latest research, aggregated global knowledge, documented impact based on high quality global indicators, and best practices.

To achieve this, the PS Centre continues to build its technical capacity through training, data collection, monitoring and evaluations of psychosocial interventions and lessons learned reviews. Furthermore, the PS Centre seeks to strengthen its knowledge networks through networking and partnerships with National Societies, research institutes, civil society and other humanitarian stakeholders, and to continuously improve its knowledge sharing systems and tools. Technical quality and continuous learning are core competences of the PS Centre. For this reason, one of the highest priorities for the work plan 2010-11 is to build the PS Centre's capacity to the status of international 'clearing house' for psychosocial support.

Finally, in 2009, the management structure of the PS Centre was strengthened through the introduction of a clear demarcation of the Steering Committee and the Advisory Group and through the establishment of a training coordinator and a strategy advisor. The impact of these changes is expected to show in 2010-11. The PS Centre has also taken steps towards introducing a more results-based management and reporting system. This includes alignment of the PS Centre work plan and monitoring tools with those of the secretariat and greater focus on impact and results in reporting.

How we work	
<p>The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the International Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".</p>	<p>Global Agenda Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters. • Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies. • Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability. • Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.
Contact information	
<p>For further information specifically related to this plan, please contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nana Wiedemann, Head, PS Centre. E-mail: naw@drk.dk / psychosocial.centre@ifrc.org / www.ifrc.org/psychosocial Telephone: 0045 35 25 93 59; Fax: 0045 35 25 93 50 	