


www.ifrc.org  
Saving lives,  
changing minds.

# Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support Mid-Year Report

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

06/09/2012

This report covers the  
period 01/01/2012–  
30/06/2012

*Children doing psychosocial group  
activities in Venezuela. Photo/Venezuela  
Red Cross*



## Overview

The first half of 2012 was not characterized by the same number of large disasters and dramatic events as was 2011. Instead, the PS centre experienced an increased number of requests for service and advice. It becomes ever clearer that psychosocial support is an activity most National Societies want to include or improve upon as part of their services to target populations. Drawing on lessons learned, experiences, and experts from National Societies helping one another, this again provides an opportunity for more capacity-building. This is a gradually increasing practice, well-supported by the Global Health Team and others.

The PS Centre has additionally finalised a number of psychosocial publications, among others the Children's Resilience Programme for psychosocial support in and out of schools, and the Volunteers Toolkit, much requested during the General Assembly in late 2011.

## Progress towards outcomes

The PS Centre serves to promote and enable psychosocial wellbeing of beneficiaries, humanitarian staff and volunteers, thereby contributing to the realization of the main aims of the IFRC's Strategy 2020.

This is achieved through following four strategic approaches:

- Technical and Operational Support

- Capacity Building of NS and Competence Development
- Knowledge Generation and Knowledge sharing
- Humanitarian Diplomacy and Communication

## 1. Technical and Operational Support

### Achievements

The PS Centre's services have been in growing demand with a vast number of requests from National Societies and delegations for assistance and training support. The Centre has been involved in interesting trainings and workshops around the world, including the first-ever French language PS training of trainers in Central and West-Africa (Yaoundé) with participants from 11 societies and IFRC; the first national training in Portugal as part of implementing a new national programme and establishing a network; a training for ERU delegates in Finland; and a training of trainers for roster members and Centre staff in Copenhagen.

Numerous other national or regional trainings in psychosocial support have been organised by National Societies, Regional and Zone offices, occasionally with assistance or advice from the PS Centre but always with the use of the training kit and other materials.

The PS Centre has provided technical, operational, M&E, as well as project and programme development support to National Societies of Pakistan, Denmark, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Belarus, Indonesia, Tanzania, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Kenya and Libya as well as the MENA office.

Likewise, the centre was asked to provide input to the DREF-application after a plane crash in Nigeria. This led to a further assessment mission conducted by two PS roster members from Uganda and Kenya, respectively. They also had time to conduct some debriefing and some training as well as to assist in lining up the framework for a psychosocial programme in Nigeria.

### Constraint and challenges:

One of the challenges of increased interest in training is that they lead to expectations about follow-up and activities. The Centre only has limited capacity to seriously and consistently support these needs and efforts.

Another challenge is the congestion that can occur in the workload when a barrage of requests for training and technical support arrives at one time.

## 2. Capacity Building of National Societies and Competence Development of Staff and Volunteers

### Achievements

Capacity building continues to be an important focus of the PS Centre's work plan. Requests for technical and training support have increased, and the Centre continues to provide support when requested, as well as proactively offering our services.

"Caring for Volunteers, A Psychosocial Support Toolkit," was finalised in first half of the year (delivered for print in August). Judging by the large number of pre-orders as well as requests expressed during the General Assembly, this toolkit will fill a gap for many National Societies.



The materials are also available for download on [www.ifrc.org/psychosocial](http://www.ifrc.org/psychosocial), and will be released in October in French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian, in both electronic and hard copy.



The major part of the comprehensive resource kit to implement the “Children’s Resilience Programme,” was also finalised in first half of 2012 (the electronic Activity Bank will be completed in September). The resource kit is comprised of four manuals, flip charts and activities, and has been prepared in close cooperation with Save the Children. The CRP can be implemented in- and out of schools, it is

very flexible and can be used in its entirety or in parts by all National Societies in the world. It will be translated and published in French during the second half of the year.

Training packages (PowerPoint and digital tools as well as exercises and other training materials) for the entire PS Intervention Handbook have also been completed and uploaded to the website in English and French.

Progress continues on other major projects such as the life-skills handbook, which provides a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills to help people make informed decisions, solve problems, communicate effectively, and otherwise cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner. It contains numerous examples of life-skills programmes from National Societies and other organisations around the world. The first draft of the project has been submitted for revision.

The development of the Sports and Physical Activities in Psychosocial Interventions (SPAPSI) training manual began in mid-2012, after a literature review and best practices analysis of the use of sports and physical activities in psychosocial interventions. The 3 partners are: International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education, Swiss Academy for Development and Technische Universität München

The lay counselling manual, conceived and developed by the PS Centre in cooperation with The Danish Cancer Society, University of Innsbruck, and the War Trauma Foundation of the Netherlands, completed its pilot testing phase in February and final editing has since taken place. It will be ready for distribution towards the end of 2012.

Early 2012 also saw the start of a cooperation between the PS Centre and the Norwegian organisation Health and Human Rights Info on the development of a training of trainers manual on Gender Based Violence. The development of the manual is funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The final product will be piloted in early in 2013 and can be expected mid-2013.

### Constraint and challenges

Budget for distribution of new material is often an issue. Another is to coordinate roll-out plans for trainings and distribution. The PS Centre will work increasing with the Global Health Team to ensure that new material is included in trainings and meetings when appropriate.

### 3. Knowledge Generation and Knowledge Sharing

#### Achievements

The PS Centre has invested efforts in compiling information for development of a catalogue, which will provide an overview of all programmes and training materials available through the Psychosocial Centre.

Efforts have been made to update and upgrade the Roster of PS experts and trainers. This has been done in order to better reply to training requests as well as to harmonize trainings and expectations. Roster members are now more “on the same page”, and agreements about short term deployments and missions have been made with the National Societies employing the Roster members.

The PS Centre has contributed to the field of education by lecturing as part of the Master’s programme in Emergency Health & Refugees at the School of Global Health, University of Copenhagen.

The IASC MHPSS Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management Manual have been finalized in cooperation with IOM and ACT alliance.

Pending final editing, the PS ERU Delegate Manual has also been completed.

The PS Centre has further contributed with extensive PS technical input to different IFRC’s publications, such as the Step-by-Step Manual on shelter assistance entitled, ‘Assisting host families’, the “Stay Safe Volunteers” leaflet and the upcoming volunteer manual.

The Centre has also provided technical support and input to the ESCAP Disaster report.



Training of trainers workshop with volunteers in Finland (photo: Ferdinand Garoff) and training in community-based psychosocial support in Cameroon (photo: Olivier Nyssens)

### 4. Humanitarian Diplomacy and Communication

#### Achievements

The magazine “Coping with Crisis” is a central part of promoting psychosocial support within and outside the movement. This printed media – which focuses on a particular theme in each issue, in conjunction with new

materials published by the Centre – has proven popular among the Centre's supporters and those working in the field of psychosocial support.

The Facebook site has been renewed, and first steps have been taken to redesign and renew the Centre's homepage.

Subscriptions to the Centre's newsletter continue to increase, with the total subscribers nearing 2000.

### **Constraints and challenges**

Communication has taken an active role in managing different productions (CRP and the Volunteers toolkit) as well as editing of the lay counselling manual. This has meant that fewer efforts have been applied to other communication tasks.

## **Partnerships**

A new partnership was established with the IFRC Tsunami Unit in Kuala Lumpur, collaborating on a new programme called 'Strengthening Psychosocial Programming'. This was made possible through participation in the South East Asia partnership meeting, where the PS Centre made a presentation of the Centre's activities.

The Head of Centre has also participated in the reference centre meeting in Geneva, visited the Climate Change Centre in Holland and established closer contact with the DP reference centre.

Likewise, the Head of Centre participated in the Global Health Team meeting in Geneva, and cooperation and coordination remain close.

The process of developing content for e-learning systems about the psychosocial aspects of the Restoring Family Links (RFL) programme is on-going, and to that effect the Centre has participated in coordination meetings in Geneva with the ICRC, as well as held a PSS RFL workshop. The RFL training materials are to be published in late 2012 or early 2013.

The most important partners of the PS Centre are the NS, and the Centre continues to respond to requests from a large number in the Middle East, Europe, South America, Asia and Africa. The PS Centre has strong partnerships with the Nordic NS as well as with the Japanese, American, Canadian and French Red Cross.

The partnership with IASC MHPSS continues with the PS Centre as a board member, as does the cooperation with numerous organisations on tools, publications and up-coming programmes.



Children attending PSS activities at Maelis Center in Cambodia, (photo: Daniela OGLIASTR)

## Lessons learned and looking ahead

Focus in the second half of 2012 will be on capacity building. The Centre will continue to facilitate in trainings, such as the CHM and PSS ERU field training in Zimbabwe and the BHU-ERU training in Japan. Other training workshops slated for the coming half year include Panama (zone), Beijing (regional), and Afghanistan (regional).

Some of the above-mentioned tools and projects will be completed, among them the lay counsellor manual, the RFL e-learning platform and material with ICRC, and a new, more user-friendly website.

Upcoming missions include an assessment mission to Haiti, the ENPS meeting in Paris and the IASC MHPSS meeting in Amsterdam.

Work towards the achievement objectives of the PS Centre 2012 work plan is going well and according to plans. Still there are specific funding gaps in relation to translation, reprint and distribution of training materials, as well as for core costs.

## Financial situation

### Achievements

A project agreement has been signed with the IFRC Tsunami Unit in Kuala Lumpur, for the funding and implementation of 'Strengthening Psychosocial Programming' project. Funding for the project, which runs from 2012-14, comes from tsunami residual funds.

Two applications have been submitted to the European Commission, under the programme for Life Long Learning. The proposal for PID – Psychosocial Interventions for people affected by Disabilities – was accepted, and the project will start towards the end of 2012.

The PS Centre is currently in negotiations with the European Commission for a large project under the FP7 programme. Called OPSIC – Operationalizing Psychosocial Support in Crisis – the project involves 10 partners, with the PS Centre as the possible manager and coordinator. The project is likely to start at the end of 2012.

Following the success of the OPSIC project, the PS Centre has been invited to take part in a consortium to develop a Demonstration Project proposal under the FP7 programme on Crisis Management. Four additional

European National Societies have been recruited to the consortium, and the proposal is to be submitted in November 2012.

### Constraints and challenges

One of the main partners, the Swedish Red Cross, ceased its financial support from 2012, due to financial challenges, as well as major restructuring of international support and priorities.

With a mandate to service 188 National Societies, the PS Centre's capacity remains limited and there is a constant need to prioritize resources when responding to requests from National Societies.

The PS Centre's economy is increasingly dependent on available project-based funding.

## How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\)](#) in Disaster Relief and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

[www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)  
Saving lives, changing minds.



The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of nonviolence and peace.

Find out more on [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

## Contact information

For further information specifically related to this report, please contact:

- **In the Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support**
  - Nana Wiedemann, Head of Centre; [psychosocial.centre@ifrc.org](mailto:psychosocial.centre@ifrc.org); tel: +45 35 25 93 59.
  - Jon Kristiansen, Advisor, [jokri@rodekors.dk](mailto:jokri@rodekors.dk); tel: +45 35 25 92 93.