

Provisional programme

Dealing with the mental health needs of children and adolescents affected by conflict

Wednesday 17 – Friday 19 January 2018 | WP1581

This Wilton Park Dialogue, in partnership with Save the Children and the UK Department for International Development (DFID), seeks to examine responses to what has been called a mental health crisis among children and adolescents trapped in conflict. This meeting will have a Middle East focus but will draw on global lessons and have wider significance for the field of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).

Young people make up a third of those affected by conflict and disaster. More than 600 million young people live in fragile or conflict affected areas. At least 25 per cent of those affected by the Syria crisis are aged 10 to 24.

In recent reports by Save the Children, the mental health and psychosocial needs of children and adolescents in Syria were examined comprehensively for the first time. One of those reports, *'Invisible Wounds'*, states that millions of Syrian children could be living in a state of 'toxic stress' due to prolonged exposure to conflict. It speculates that the damage to an entire generation of children could soon become permanent and irreversible due to trauma and extreme stress. Toxic stress can disrupt the development of the brain and increases the risk of physical health problems such as diabetes, heart disorders and mental health conditions in adulthood.

Building on recommendations from the 2015 Hague symposium, 'Growing up in Conflict: The impact on children's mental health and well-being', this dialogue will review progress and examine recent innovative developments in the field of MHPSS. It will bring together experts and innovators worldwide in MHPSS, children's war exposure and broader mental health needs to suggest policy responses and their coordination. Discussions will focus on issues relating to programme design, operation and scalability in order to produce a roadmap to guide organisations and individuals working in the field.

This event is part of the 'Wilton Park Youth Dialogues: powering the future' series, which focuses on young people, with a view to generating a positive and action-oriented debate, looking at youth ambitions and opportunities in relation to employment, education, security and peace.

In association with:



Goals and objectives

- To discuss and evaluate good practice in MHPSS for children and adolescents during and after conflict, lessons learned globally and innovations from new and promising interventions.
- To share good practice for making programmes multi-sectoral, coordinated and integrated with humanitarian missions.
- To discuss the challenges of implementing MHPSS programmes and how to address these, including age and gender sensitivities, stigma, accessing difficult to reach areas and strengthening national capacity, with particular focus on the Middle East.
- To develop a roadmap setting out the priority pathways needed, likely challenges and solutions and necessary collaborations for scaling up MHPSS programming for children and adolescents affected by conflict.

(Speakers invited and themes proposed * denotes to be confirmed)

Wednesday 17 January

1500-1600

Participants arrive

1600-1630

Welcome and introduction

Alison Hilliard

Programme Director, Wilton Park

Kevin Watkins

Chief Executive, Save the Children UK, London

Anna Seymour

Head, Protecting Children's Hub, Department for International Development (DFID), London

1630-1715

Photograph followed by tea/coffee

1715-1845

1. A mental health crisis for children and adolescents in conflict: the scale and need for action

Setting the scene and examining the scale of the problem. What are the possible repercussions if the MHPSS needs of children affected by conflict are not addressed? What new evidence is there of the impact of displacement on children who live through conflict and who witness the horrors of war? What implications does this have for children in their adult lives as they seek to come to terms with the conflict they have lived through and rebuild their lives and nations?

Peter Ventevogel

Senior Mental Health Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Geneva

Mark van Ommeren

Public Mental Health Adviser, World Health Organisation (WHO), Geneva

Lynne Jones (by video link)

Visiting Scientist, François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights, Boston

1900

Reception drinks

1930

Dinner

Thursday 18 January

0800-0845

Breakfast

0900-1030

2. What can be learnt on MHPSS for children and adolescents affected by conflict from around the world?

Case studies from around the world demonstrating approaches that overcome key challenges and good practice in the field. What works and what doesn't?

Carmel Gaillard

Senior Technical Specialist, Africa Psychosocial Support Institute, Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), Johannesburg

Felicity Brown

Senior Researcher, War Child Holland, Amsterdam

Natalia Tapies

Senior Regional Advisor - Adolescents and Youth, Middle East and Eastern Europe, Save the Children, Amman

1030-1100

Tea/coffee

1100-1230

3. Innovative responses to support the mental health needs of children and adolescents in the Middle East

Examine innovative and creative new responses to children and adolescents' war exposure in the Middle East. Case studies demonstrating cutting edge programmes that overcome some of the challenges facing those working on this area.

Mohsin Mohi Ud-Din

Founder, #MeWeSyria; Director, Storytelling and Innovation for Youth, Ashoka, Arlington

Mike Niconchuk

Senior Researcher, Neuroscience and Social Conflict Innovation Lab, Beyond Conflict, Boston

Jamil Abdel Atti

Country Director, The Center for Mind-Body Medicine, Gaza

Salah Ahmad

Chairman, Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights, Berlin

1230-1400

Lunch

1400-1530

4. What are the challenges in delivering MHPSS programmes for children and adolescents in the Middle East and how they can be overcome with innovative approaches?

This session will explore the challenges that face MHPSS programmes for children and adolescents during and after conflict in the Middle East region and approaches to overcome them.

Sarah Harrison

Technical Advisor, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support; Co-Chair of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings, Copenhagen

Salah Barzngy

Country Director, Iraq Program, Heartland Alliance International, Erbil

1530-1600

Tea/coffee

5. Showcasing innovations in the field

An opportunity to share and explore innovations in the field. Six half hour presentations will be held in parallel, with participants able to attend two different presentations over the hour.

A field guide to barefoot psychologists

Mohsin Mohi Ud-Din

Founder, #MeWeSyria; Director, Storytelling and Innovation for Youth, Ashoka, Arlington

Mike Niconchuk

Senior Researcher, Neuroscience and Social Conflict Innovation Lab, Beyond Conflict, Boston

Beyond self-reports, evaluating MHPSS programmes with stress biomarkers

Catherine Panter-Brick

Professor, Anthropology, Health and Global Affairs, Yale University, New Haven

Noura Shahed

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning (MEAL) Advisor, Mercy Corps, Amman

Development of a Community Informant Detection Tool for identifying children in need of MHPSS services

Felicity Brown

Senior Researcher, War Child Holland, Amsterdam

Group based approaches for reaching conflict affected populations

Inka Weissbecker

Senior Global Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Advisor, International Medical Corps, Washington, DC

How to achieve a wrap-around holistic approach to MHPSS programming

Marcia Brophy

Regional Senior Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Technical Advisor, Middle East and Eurasia, Save the Children International, Amman

Maria Waade

Humanitarian Adviser, Child Protection and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), Save the Children UK, London

Restoring hope and opportunity for children in the Middle East: from Sesame Seeds to Super Heroes

Laura Boone

Deputy Director, Violence Prevention and Response, International Rescue Committee (IRC), London

6. Developing a roadmap for MHPSS interventions in the Middle East and globally: discussing four areas requiring urgent attention

Four challenging areas where progress is needed for MHPSS programming for children and adolescents affected by conflict are: (i) multi-sectoral programming; (ii) engaging youth; (iii) supporting caregivers' mental health; and (iv) how to meaningfully strengthen national capacity. Speakers will outline the shortfalls in these specific areas and share promising developments.

Mohamed Elshazly

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Officer, UNHCR Iraq, Erbil

Marc Sommers

Youth, Conflict and Peacebuilding Expert, Washington, DC

Sandra Maignant

Child Protection Technical Advisor, International Rescue Committee (IRC), London

Ananda Galappatti

Co-Founder and Co-Director, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Network (MHPSS.net), Colombo

1830 Reception followed by conference dinner

Friday 19 January

0800-0845 Breakfast and checkout

0900-0915 **7. Introduction to the day**

A short plenary introduction to the breakout groups and objectives for the final day.

0915-1030 **8. Breakout groups: developing a roadmap for MHPSS interventions for children and adolescents affected by conflict in the Middle East and globally**

Based on agreement of the challenges in working on mental health for children and adolescents affected by conflict, as well as identification of what works and what could be replicated or taken to scale, participants will split into four groups, each focusing on one topic area, to develop a roadmap which will identify priority pathways.

1030-1100 Tea/coffee

1100-1115 **9. Evaluation survey**

Completion of online survey.

1115-1300 **10. Next steps for putting the roadmap into practice**

Feedback from breakout groups, agreement on next steps and closing remarks from:

Alastair Ager

Deputy Chief Scientific Advisor, Department for International Development (DFID), Glasgow

Marcia Brophy

Senior Regional Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Adviser, Middle East and Eastern Europe, Save the Children International, Amman

1300 Lunch

1400 Participants depart