14 May 2015, Beirut From left to right representatives from UNICEF, the Ministry of Public Health, WHO and IMC during the launching of Lebanon's first mental health strategy – The Ministry of Public Health of Lebanon, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and International Medical Corps (IMC), are launching a mental health and substance use prevention, promotion, and treatment strategy for Lebanon to ensure accessibility of high quality mental health care to all populations in Lebanon. Governmental entities, ministries, local and international nongovernmental organizations, UN agencies, syndicates, societies, and academia, among others attended today's launching.

This marks an important milestone for mental health reform, especially considering that mental and substance use disorders are prevalent in Lebanon and at the top of public health priorities.

The current strategy is the result of a participatory exercise involving all actors in the field of mental health and substance use in Lebanon as well as international experts. The strategy, comprising all national priorities identified by the main actors, underwent many stages of consultations that concluded with a national consensus-building meeting in April 2015 to approve its final draft.

The strategy addresses mental and substance use disorders in a cost-effective, evidence-based and multidisciplinary approach with an emphasis on community involvement, continuum of care, human rights, and cultural relevance. The goals and domains of action of the Strategy are in line with the WHO Global Action Plan for Mental Health (2013-2020).

Mental health is an integral part of health. As stated by WHO, there is no health without mental health. Today's release of Lebanon's first mental health and substance use strategy is only the beginning; the next step will require that the government adequately funds and implements this strategy. With national leadership and provincial partnerships, it is possible for Lebanese to get the help they need when they need it.

“We remain confident that the same collaboration that led to producing this strategy will continue in the future to ensure the implementation with the same commitment and enthusiasm,” said Dr Walid Ammar, Director General, Ministry of Public Health.

“I would like to thank the Ministry for taking a strong leadership role and for its trust in WHO as technical partner. Let me reiterate the commitment of WHO to support the Ministry in translating the strategy document into action,” said Dr Gabriele Riedner, WHO acting representative in Lebanon.

Saturday 12th of October 2024 07:04:43 AM