

As the number of displaced Syrians in Jordan passes the 275 000 mark, vital supplies and resources are being stretched to full capacity.

Though the government of Jordan continues to allow Syrians to enter the country, providing them with access to essential services, humanitarian actors are striving to meet the needs of displaced Syrians within the limited resources available, which makes effective planning and coordination essential to the humanitarian response. In the mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) sector, many measures are being taken to ensure the protection and promotion of the mental health and psychosocial well-being of this vulnerable population.

WHO and International Medical Corps Jordan have recently launched the Inter-Agency Guidance Note for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Displaced Syrians in Jordan, under the patronage of H.E. the Minister of Health. This note outlines the consensus among different actors and provides a coherent framework for organizations wishing to fund, develop or implement activities in this field. The document can be used by programme managers, donors, the media, general relief workers and volunteers, as well as health care, mental health and protection workers, and any other personnel helping those affected by the Syrian crisis.

The Guidance Note aims to advocate for the highest quality of programming and service provision, in accordance with global guidelines and recommendations in this field. It is rooted in the global Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings, which emphasize the importance of a multi-sectoral, inter-agency framework that enables effective coordination, identifies useful practices, flags potentially harmful practices, identifies gaps and avoids duplications in the response, improves referral mechanisms and clarifies how different MHPSS approaches complement one another.

WHO representative for Jordan, Dr Akram Eltom stated “as coordination of aid is one of the most important and most challenging tasks to sustain during emergency settings, the maintenance of a coordination group on MHPSS has been fundamental. The coordination of programmes, assessments and other activities in the field has fostered strong links and partnerships among involved agencies, improved the transparency and legitimacy of the MHPSS field, facilitated sharing of lessons learnt from previous emergency responses, and aided in presenting a coherent and coordinated sector for the purposes of donor support.”

Endorsed by 19 UN agencies, international nongovernmental organizations and local community-based organizations, the Inter-Agency Guidance Note for Mental Health and Psychosocial support will allow a more efficient and effective way to respond to the needs of Syrians in Jordan.

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