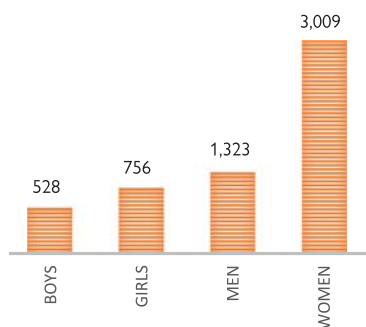




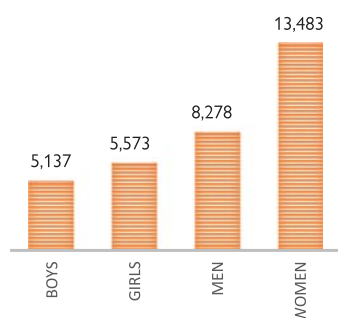
During Stress Management at Workplace Training for MHADM Staff at Palm Africa Hotel. © IOM 2021

 <p>8,640 individuals reached with MHPSS services</p>	 <p>1,177 at-risk individuals provided with psychosocial support</p>	 <p>1,608 caregivers provided with psychosocial support</p>	 <p>1,734 individuals provided with psychosocial first aid (PFA)</p>	 <p>32,471 individuals participating in social, creative & recreational activities</p>
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MHPSS focused non-specialized services provided to new beneficiaries (e.g. counselling, support groups)



Community-based recreational, communal and non-formal learning activities



Continued Capacity Building of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management Staff on Stress Management at Workplace

Throughout this quarterly reporting period Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Unit, in cooperation with Shelter and Settlement Programme of IOM continued capacitating staff members of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MHADM) of South Sudan. This time 30 staff members (8 men and 28 women) in a classified category have attended the training which took place on 26th of October 2021 at Palm Africa Hotel in Juba.

During the training, staff members were introduced to the concept of stress, nature of stressors experienced on a daily basis, influence of the stress on performance at work, thinking processes, capacities of problem-solving and decision-making, vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue, types and sources of stress and most importantly, trainees were sensitized on differentiation between the concepts of stress and a problem. Correspondingly, staff

members were guided through strategies, approaches and techniques of prevention and management of stress and routine activities useful for emotional self-regulation. Dynamics of the training were positive and based on trust between the trainees and a trainer. MHADM staff members were honest while sharing their personal and professional experiences relating to stress and have gained during this capacity building process from each other's personal experiences as well as theoretical and practical inputs offered by IOM's MHPSS Unit.

In conclusion to the training, the Director General for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of MHADM, Dr. Lawrence Akola expressed his appreciation to IOM for this interesting and useful training session and noted that the training has opened his eyes on some daily stressors that were not evident before. Dr. Akola mentioned that understanding types of stress and corresponding prevention and management

techniques During the second day of this nationwide dialogue, MHPSS technical working group and forum coordinators at the state level had an opportunity to discuss achievements, progress, challenges and existing gaps in coordination of MHPSS service provision and the operationalization of a Regional Hotline for MHPSS in South Sudan. All seven chairs participating in the

dialogue agreed that for betterments of inter-state coordination and ensuring nationwide harmonization of the remote MHPSS service provision standards as well as for improvement of coordination between state-level MHPSS TWGs, quarterly coordination meetings shall take place in a hybrid manner – either face-to-face, online or mixing both modalities.



IEC of IOM MHPSS Unit on the occasion of the World Mental Health Day. © IOM 2021

Assessment Missions in Tonj South and Aweil South

In the frames of the newly initiated project “Provision of Holistic Humanitarian Support to Persons With Disabilities in Aweil South and Tonj South” funded by the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund, MHPSS team undertook assessment missions to Tonj South (from 9 to 13 November, 2021) and Aweil South (from 30 November to 6 December 2021) to perform assessment of MHPSS needs of specific beneficiary groups of this project and to deliver MHPSS service. The given project is innovative and unprecedented in its nature, endeavoring to address needs of the most vulnerable, often stigmatized and marginalized group of people with disabilities, including severe neurological conditions and mental health disorders and their caregivers through provision of holistic, complementary support by Protection, Gender Empowerment and Inclusion, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support and Displacement Tracking Matrix Units of IOM.

During abovementioned missions aimed at MHPSS assessment and service provision following issues were ascertained by the MHPSS team.

In Tonj South main source of psychological distress was named to be the impact of floods and flood-related displacement and consequences, such as loss of essential personal belongings and property. Lack of conducive environment to facilitate positive coping negatively affects all gender groups, especially putting at risk such vulnerable subgroups as children and youth that are in need of particular support due to their development stages. Generalized feelings of anxiety and insecurity are due both to exceeding floods and insecurity. Communal conflicts originating back in 2020 resulted in destruction, displacement, and loss of lives that as a consequence left feelings of incomplete mourning and frustration. Community support structures are weakened and there are no services existing to facilitate rebuilding of the social fabric of the community. Number of existing partners on ground is limited with only TOCH and World Vision operating currently. Recommendations by community leaders for improved

psychosocial wellbeing were evolving around capacity building of community focal points in delivery of MHPSS services. Further possibilities of tailored intervention in line with specific project target group will be explored early 2022.

Lack of services and poorly accessible areas in Aweil South add on to the existing emotional strains experienced by the affected, with only few partners (Malaria Consortium, Humanity Inclusion, NRC, Jam, Concern Worldwide and IRC) operating in the area and being overstretched to alleviate basic needs of host and IDP populations. Issues of psychosocial nature, such as, alcohol and substance use (smoking of Bangi opium), GBV, forced/ child marriage, suicide attempts, extreme poverty and limited schooling opportunities, further exacerbate existing dire emotional state of the area residents. Lack of specialized services for persons with mental disorders and severe neurological conditions pushes individuals suffering from such conditions in an aggravated state, negatively impacting emotionally their caregivers and family members as well. Community support structures are weakened due to inability to practice peer support – there are no safe spaces available allowing community members to gather and discuss issues of concern, neither there are safe spaces for children and youth allowing them to engage in recreational activities. Comparing to other gender groups, women are capable to practice peer support through home visits and individual support to those in need of it. People with disabilities and elderly face issues with mobility due to absence of assistive devices and in some cases, due to the lack of a caretaker. Community applies efforts to support PWDs and elderly but is limited due to lack of available means for support. In view of religious confession, there are two dominant groups – Christian and Muslim as well as two ethnic groups in Aweil South that are Dinka (majority) and Luo (minority). During the assessment there were no discriminatory views noticed towards PWDs, including severe mental health disorders and neurological conditions, however, further assessment is required to ascertain the real picture on this matter.

MHPSS Unit's Annual Communication Campaign on the Occasion of the World Mental Health Day, 2021

World Mental Health Day (WMHD) is the most important commemoration event for the mental health and psychosocial support practitioners worldwide, occurring annually on 10th of October. It is an international day for global mental health education, awareness and advocacy against social stigma. It provides for an opportunity to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health. In a volatile context of South Sudan that experiences extreme scarcity of appropriate, accessible, and quality mental health and psychosocial support services, the given commemoration event gains high significance. MHPSS Unit applies efforts to promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of conflict- and natural disaster-affected displaced populations as well as public at large by means of elaborating on an annual basis Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials in line with the present official theme of the World Mental Health Day. These IEC materials are used during commemoration events, psychoeducation sessions as well as

during provision of MHPSS services, to educate, sensitize, inspire and develop essential skills of positive coping among vulnerable beneficiary populations and to promote importance of mental health among decision makers and donor community. Official theme of the WMHD 2021 was "Mental Health in an Unequal World". To ensure cultural appropriateness of IOM IECs in visual terms and content wise (in view of key messages conveyed), IOM MHPSS Unit conducted series of brain storming sessions with its beneficiaries at all field locations disaggregating them by sex, age and other context-specific categories, such as youth, widows, people with disabilities, caregivers, community leaders. Correspondingly, there were six posters elaborated to address specific MHPSS needs of different subgroups and launched throughout the Mental Health Awareness Month in a progressive manner, through official tweets and Facebook posts of IOM South Sudan. These IECs are corresponding to cultural and contemporary issues and are available for further dissemination at IOM's Publications Platform.

Human interest story



Nyakume Thipek Mani with MHPSS PMT Counsellor, Peter Luoy Ruei at the courtyard of her shelter in Bentiu IDP Camp. © IOM 2021

Life for Nyakume Thipek Mani was as normal as it comes. The 45-year-old lived with her husband in Tharkan, a village in South Sudan's Rubkona County, raising their children and tilling the fields. In early 2014, when fighting spilled over to her village, Nyakume's family was uprooted from their home, escaping death. They took refuge in the former United Nations Protection of Civilians (PoC) site in Bentiu, now the internally displaced persons (IDPs) camp. Thankfully, for Nyakume and her family, they escaped unscathed, physically at least. Over the months, after arriving in Bentiu, something started to change in Nyakume. She had witnessed what most of us will only see in a movie. "My neighbours in the village were not as lucky as we were. They were killed," says Nyakume, whose small frame makes her look younger than she is. "I saw corpses of people I knew." Nyakume's youngest son Bol Wiyoh Bath says his mother started behaving in a strange way. "She

looked like my mother, but she behaved like someone I had never met." Nyakume's strange episodes occurred sporadically. Her family took her to a traditional healer but to no avail. In 2020, her condition deteriorated. She experienced hallucinations, went through periods of speech disorder and had nightmares and difficulty sleeping because she was constantly haunted by images of her neighbours. "I was scared about what I was going through," says Nyakume. "I could feel my mind escaping me." MHPSS Unit's Psychosocial Mobile Team (PMT) counsellor have learnt about Nyakume during outreach visits at Bentiu IDP camp and referred her for specialized services and treatment at the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) hospital. The counsellor provided Nyakume support in stress management and psychoeducation about how to cope with the situation. The counsellor also supervised and ensured that Nyakume took the medication as instructed at the hospital. "Nyakume made positive progress with the specialised treatment she got from MSF and the psychosocial support IOM provided her," says Peter Luoy Ruei, IOM's PMT Counsellor. "They helped me get back to reality," Nyakume says. Today, Nyakume is preparing for the traditional marriage ceremony of her eldest son, Both Wiyoh Bath. The wedding celebrations were halted when the girl's family prevented her from marrying Nyakume's son, pinning the reason to "her condition" thus amplifying the stigma still prevalent around mental health in South Sudan. Nyakume says that now she can look back and laugh about her past "situation". She says it is "not to make light of the situation and mental health but I laugh because of happiness". "When I recall these days I smile, even though going through this suffering was like a trial for me and my family. I smile because that period of my life is behind now," she says."