



MOMENTS THAT DEFINE US...

#WorldMentalHealthDay #WMHD2025

#MoreNowThanEver



Mental Health is Essential for Effective Humanitarian Responses

This year's World Mental Health Day theme, “**Mental Health in Humanitarian Emergencies**”, is a timely reminder of the urgency to prioritise mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for millions of individuals affected by crises, catastrophes and emergencies.

Around the world, countless communities – including people living with and/or affected by HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria – are impacted by displacement, hunger and destruction. Over the past five decades, climate- and weather-related disasters have increased five-fold¹, while global levels of conflict and violence have doubled in just five years². The Asia-Pacific region is exceptionally impacted by climate change: In 2023, Asia was the world's most disaster-hit region from weather, climate and water-related hazards³, while more than half of Pacific Island countries' infrastructure lies in high-risk coastal zones⁴. Globally in 2025, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 305 million people⁵ will require urgent humanitarian aid, including 67 million living with a mental health condition.

Key and vulnerable populations living with and/or affected by HIV, TB and malaria are disproportionately at risk of developing poor mental health and this risk intensifies during crises. During humanitarian emergencies, elevated stress and trauma can trigger or worsen mental health conditions among key and vulnerable individuals while disrupted health services often make essential treatment and care even harder to access. The observed bidirectional relationship between HIV, TB and mental health⁶ – which shows that poor mental health increases vulnerability to HIV and TB, and vice versa – highlights the urgency of integrating MHPSS into emergency health responses.

“In times of war, conflict, and climate catastrophes, the most poor, vulnerable and marginalised are inevitably impacted the most. It is essential that during these periods of distress and insecurity, mental health and psychosocial support are integrated with the continuation of accessible, inclusive and effective health services for all key and vulnerable populations,” said Bikas Gurung, Regional Coordinator of the Network of Asian People who Use Drugs (NAPUD). “That is why, more now than ever, global health and humanitarian organisations which operate in challenging environments are essential to save lives and uphold fundamental human rights!”

The [Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria](#) (Global Fund) is the largest multilateral funder of health grants, investing in health and community systems in over 100 low- and middle-income countries, including some facing severe humanitarian crises. In collaboration with local communities, civil society, emergency coordination mechanisms and international partners, the Global Fund has disbursed approximately US\$24 billion since 2002 to challenging operating environments⁷ including [Ukraine](#), [Sudan](#) and [Syria](#). Guided by its 2023-2028 Strategy⁸,

¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1098662>. Accessed on: 27 September 2025.

² <https://acleddata.com/series/acledd-conflict-index>. Accessed on: 27 September 2025.

³ [State of the Climate in Asia 2023](#). World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

⁴ [Special Report: Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate](#). Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

⁵ <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/crisis-and-emergency-response>. Accessed on: 27 September 2025.

⁶ [Bending the curve: The impact of integrating mental health services on HIV and TB outcomes](#). 2021. United for Global Mental Health.

⁷ [Results Report 2025](#). The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

⁸ [Global Fund Strategy \(2023-2028\): Fighting Pandemics and Building a Healthier and More Equitable World](#). The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.



Global Fund investments support the expansion and integration of MHPSS with HIV, TB and malaria services, while also strengthening the resilience and sustainability of these health responses and providing immediate crisis support through rapid deployment of [Emergency Fund](#) resources.

“During crises, community health workers and community-based organisations play integral roles in ensuring continuity of psychosocial support and health services to key and vulnerable communities, in particular marginalised groups such as displaced persons, refugees, stateless persons, and irregular migrants. Community health workers trained to provide peer counselling and run support groups break down barriers of stigma and discrimination that would otherwise prevent these underserved groups from accessing holistic healthcare, closing important service gaps,” said Moh Moh Lwin, National Director of Sun Community Health, Myanmar. “To be truly effective, sustainable, and inclusive, humanitarian and health development assistance must champion community leadership and community-based interventions!”

On this World Mental Health Day, as key populations, communities, and civil societies from the Asia-Pacific region, we reiterate the severe impact that conflict and disaster, including wars, displacement, insecurity, human rights atrocities, and climate-related catastrophes have on the mental and physical wellbeing of communities living with and/or affected by HIV, TB and malaria. Furthermore, we emphasise that key and vulnerable populations face significantly higher risks of developing mental health conditions, which is linked to lower treatment adherence and results in greater mortality.

Therefore, we call on country leaders, duty-bearers, and all stakeholders with the support of technical partners to:

1. **Strengthen human resources for health** by closing the domestic resourcing gap in MHPSS services – a crucial step towards resilient and sustainable systems for health capable of addressing HIV, TB and malaria within primary care and community settings;
2. **Increase awareness and training among community health workers** and other primary health care (PHC) providers to deliver integrated mental and physical health services to key and vulnerable populations.
3. **Support a successful [Eighth Replenishment of the Global Fund](#) by raising at least US\$18 billion**, ensuring mental health is included in programmatic investments and that sufficient resources are allocated to countries to finally end HIV, TB and malaria – advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and Universal Health Coverage.

#MoreNowThanEver, we must ensure mental health is fully funded and integrated in HIV, TB and malaria responses!

The [Global Fund Advocates Network Asia-Pacific](#) (GFAN AP) is an advocacy platform of HIV, Tuberculosis and malaria community and civil society organisations in the Asia-Pacific region. GFAN AP supports advocacy for a fully resourced Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; increased and sustainable domestic resource mobilisation for health; and equitable, people-centred, human rights-based and gender transformative inclusion of HIV, tuberculosis and malaria responses within Universal Health Coverage.

[United for Global Mental Health](#) (UnitedGMH) is a charity organization working with partners toward its vision of a world where mental health support is accessible to everyone, everywhere without stigma or restrictions. UnitedGMH uses its expertise in advocacy, financing and campaigning to advance this vision and focus on four areas of strategic impact – rights, health systems, ecosystems, and field building – to deliver progress.

The [Seven Alliance](#) is a consortium of Asia-Pacific networks of key populations and people living with HIV composed of APCOM, APN+, APNSW, APTN, ICW-AP, NAPUD and Youth LEAD. The Seven Alliance serves as a unified, representative body for communities in all our diversity disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS across the region with the aim to promote effective community leadership and advocate for CLM as critical component of community-led responses and to establish strong and sustainable CLM mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region.

