



# Learnings, Methodologies and Experiences in Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

PERU 2021-2023



COMUNIDAD  
DE PRÁCTICA

Del Sub-Grupo de Salud Mental y Apoyo Psicosocial del GTRM Perú



# Introduction and key figures

A Community of Practice (CoP) serves as a strategic platform for knowledge mobilization and practice enhancement, converging organizations and professionals around a specific area of expertise through structured, ongoing interaction.

Within Peru's humanitarian sector, our CoP focused on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) for migrant and refugee populations has become a cornerstone for advancing effective response. It provides the essential architecture for sharing nuanced field intelligence, evidence-informed approaches, and adaptive strategies specifically calibrated to address the complex psychosocial needs inherent in displacement and migration experiences within the country.

The core value proposition of this CoP lies in its ability to foster synergistic learning and accelerate programmatic innovation. Through collective problem-solving and the cross-pollination of successful methodologies, member organizations refine and scale up interventions that are demonstrably more effective, culturally attuned, and community-driven—critical attributes for navigating Peru's intricate humanitarian setting and the specific mental health challenges faced by displaced populations.

From an organizational perspective, participation translates into tangible gains: enhanced institutional capacity in MHPSS, leveraged access to a broad consortium of experts, and improved overall quality assurance for services rendered.

This ultimately strengthens the efficacy of humanitarian interventions, ensuring a more targeted and impactful response to migrant and refugee needs while simultaneously supporting the sustainability and mental health of frontline teams. The unprecedented Venezuelan migration flow into Peru starkly highlighted gaps in existing support systems, demanding agile adaptation of MHPSS interventions to address the multifaceted sequelae of displacement, loss, and cultural negotiation. This underscores the critical need for collaborative fora dedicated to developing and promoting practices grounded in cultural humility, dignity, and human rights.

We now present a summary of key outputs across its initial three-year period (2021-2023), beginning with these consolidated engagement data key figures:

**21**  
Member  
organizations

**31**  
Consistent  
institutional  
participants

**6**  
In-person and/or  
virtual meetings

**+250**  
Individuals  
participating in the  
meetings



# Actively engaged member organizations during 2024



**ACNUR Perú**

 [www.acnur.org/pais/peru](http://www.acnur.org/pais/peru)



**CCEFIRO**

 [www.ccefiro.blogspot.com](http://www.ccefiro.blogspot.com)



**Centro de Atención  
Psicosocial**

 [www.caps.org.pe](http://www.caps.org.pe)



**HIAS Perú**

 [www.facebook.com/hiasperu](https://www.facebook.com/hiasperu)



**Libremente**

 [www.libremente.pe](http://www.libremente.pe)



**Veneactiva**

 [www.veneactiva.org](http://www.veneactiva.org)



**ALDEAS  
INFANTILES SOS  
PERÚ**

**Aldeas Infantiles SOS Perú**

 <https://www.aldeasinfantiles.org.pe/>



**care®**

**CARE Perú**

 [www.care.org.pe](http://www.care.org.pe)



**humanity  
& inclusion**

**Humanity & Inclusion**

 <https://hi-lac.org/peru/>



**INTERNATIONAL  
RESCUE  
COMMITTEE**

**International Rescue Committee**

 <https://www.rescue.org/country/peru>



**ADRA**

**ADRA Perú**

 <https://adra.org.pe/>



**Demuna de Carmen de la Legua  
Reynoso - Callao**

 [Facebook Demuna](#)



**Cáritas  
Chiclayo**

**Cáritas Chiclayo**

 <https://caritaschiclayo.org.pe/>



**ENCUENTROS**

**Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes**

acompañar • servir • defender

**Encuentros Servicio Jesuita a  
Migrantes**

 <https://www.encuentros-sjs.org/>



# Thematic focus, shared methodologies, and learnings

The series of four dedicated exchange forums on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in Peru served as crucial convenings for synthesizing experiences, consolidating effective methodologies, and disseminating best practices tailored to interventions within Venezuelan migrant and refugee communities.

These forums facilitated rigorous dialogue on evidence-informed MHPSS practices, spotlighting the critical role of community-level strengthening, with a particular emphasis on empowering migrant and refugee women. Investing in women's capacity not only positions them as pivotal agents of change and resilience within their communities but also demonstrably strengthens mutual support systems, which are foundational for building psychosocial safety nets and enhancing collective coping mechanisms in displacement contexts.

Regarding group-based psychosocial support for migrant women survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), the discussions underscored the profound and complex psychosocial sequelae of such experiences, necessitating trauma-informed, sensitive, and empowering therapeutic modalities. Group sessions, showcased through practical workshop simulations during the forums, were validated as potent instruments for facilitating emotional processing, fostering solidarity through shared narratives, and catalyzing the formation of vital peer support networks essential for recovery trajectories and sustained mental well-being.



*A community-based MHPSS framework represents a strategic imperative, particularly for optimizing interventions situated at the second tier of the MHPSS pyramid. This approach is operationalized through the active engagement and empowerment of affected populations, fostering resilience and psychosocial well-being by systematically strengthening social support networks and mobilizing local leadership capacities. By prioritizing the identification and amplification of inherent community strengths and resources, protective factors for mental health can be effectively mapped and leveraged. These community assets, when coupled with targeted capacity-building and appropriate technical support, form the bedrock for sustainable peer-support initiatives, facilitate the establishment of effective support groups, and serve as vital conduits for timely referrals to specialized mental health services when needed.*

**Christian Guzmán**  
Librementepe



Furthermore, the implementation and adaptation of holistic art therapy for migrant children and adolescents emerged as a significant area of practice innovation. Its efficacy in promoting non-verbal emotional expression and processing traumatic experiences within younger populations was clearly demonstrated. Direct engagement via workshop methodologies allowed participants to observe firsthand art's capacity as a universal medium, enabling children and adolescents to articulate complex feelings often inaccessible through verbal communication alone. This approach shows considerable promise for scalable replication across diverse community initiatives, offering adaptable, secure therapeutic spaces for emotional healing and psychosocial development.

The forums also emphasized the strategic importance of embedded operational research, particularly examining the community-based delivery of Interpersonal Therapy (IPT) by trained lay workers and the nuanced management of high-priority MHPSS cases (e.g., SMAPS protocols) involving children and adolescents. These analyses highlighted the imperative of iterative adaptation and contextualization of interventions to align with the unique socio-cultural realities and evolving needs of migrant and refugee communities.

Crucially, the collaborative knowledge exchange fostered among participating organizations directly informed the refinement of intervention strategies, enhancing their cultural relevance, appropriateness, and overall effectiveness. The systematic implementation, evaluation, and collective deliberation surrounding these strategies, central to the forum's design, represent tangible advancements in strengthening community resilience and the broader MHPSS architecture supporting migrant and refugee populations across Peru.



# Agendas addressed during the meetings

Collaborative forums among MHPSS actors operating within Peru yielded critical synthesized learnings across pivotal intervention domains. These included effective community empowerment strategies, validated group support modalities, innovative therapeutic approaches such as art therapy, the integration of embedded operational research, refined case management protocols, and frameworks for strategic engagement with governmental entities. A central convergence point emerging from these multi-stakeholder deliberations was the reinforced understanding that participatory methodologies, coupled with robust monitoring and evaluation systems, are indispensable for maximizing the relevance, effectiveness, and demonstrable positive outcomes of MHPSS programming tailored to migrant and refugee populations in the Peruvian context.



## 1st Workshop (April/May 2021)

A dedicated series of three capacity-strengthening sessions was strategically designed and implemented for personnel from GTRM Peru's partner organizations actively engaged within the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Protection sector working group. The core focus of this initiative was to bolster staff care practices and enhance the psychosocial resilience of service providers operating under the unique and demanding pressures imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, recognizing this investment as fundamental to maintaining both individual well-being and sustained programmatic effectiveness during the ongoing public health crisis response.



## 2nd Meeting (April 2022)

Presentation of the Community of Practice

- CARE Peru: Presentation detailing their field-tested, community-based MHPSS work methodologies specifically designed for engagement with migrant and refugee women within "Fronteras Invisibles" Project.
- Save the Children: Overview of their holistic framework for specialized MHPSS interventions (MHPSS protocols) targeting the unique needs of migrant and refugee children and adolescents.



## 3rd Meeting (August 2022)

- HIAS Peru: Presentation on implementing group-based specialized MHPSS (SMAPS) interventions tailored for migrant and refugee women survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV).
- SOS Children's Villages: Detailing their integrated case management framework that synergizes Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) with Child Protection protocols for refugee and migrant children.





#### 4th Workshop (September 2022)

Regional Capacity Enhancement: Active participation of the Peruvian MHPSS Group in the Latin America regional capacity-building workshop facilitated by the IASC MHPSS Reference Group (convened across Honduras, Venezuela, and Peru), fostering advanced knowledge exchange and strategic alignment with regional best practices on:

- Framework Alignment & Coordination.
- Standardized Impact Measurement.
- Quality Assurance Standards.



#### 5th Meeting (March 2023)

- Strategic Coordination: Optimizing Alma Llanera / CARE-Community Mental Health Centers referral pathways and operational links.
- Strategic MHPSS Advocacy: Leveraging National Health Council & CCEFIRO Association channels for policy influence.
- Partnership Analysis: Reviewing UNHCR/State collaboration dynamics and critical operational challenges impacting CAPS-level service delivery.
- Community Integration Models: Examining effective collaboration between CSMC Carmen de la Legua and local civil society organizations (CSOs).



#### 6th Meeting (November 2023)

- HIAS: Strategic Capacity Strengthening Utilizing Scalable Methodologies within the SMAPS Framework (including Basic Care protocols).
- VENEACTIVA: An Innovative Peer-Support Model: A Migrant-Operated Contact Center Delivering Accessible Frontline MHPSS.
- CCEFIRO: Presentation of their Framework for Mobilizing Community-Based Responses in Mental Health Support.
- CAPS: Community-Led Empowerment Initiatives: Insights and Learnings from the 'Emotional Wellbeing Driving Group' linked to formal services.

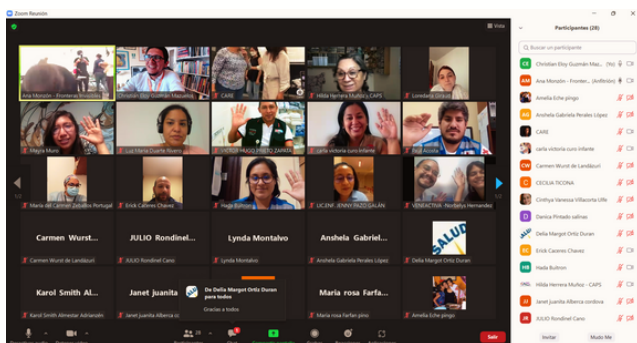
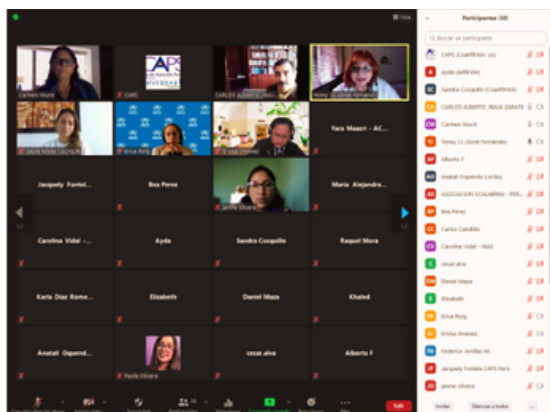




# Images from the meetings

## 2021 - April and May 1st Online Strengthening Workshop

Three capacity-building sessions on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support were organized by the GTRM Protection Group for member organizations.



2022 - April

## 2nd Exchange Meeting (hybrid format)

SMAPS collaborates with refugee and migrant women and children.



2022 - August

### 3rd Exchange Meeting (hybrid format)

SMAPS, safeguarding and case management for women survivors of gender-based violence and refugee or migrant children and adolescents.



**COMUNIDAD DE PRACTICA**  
Subgrupo de Salud Mental y Apoyo Psicosocial del GTRM - Perú

**3ra reunión**  
Intercambio de metodologías y experiencias en SMAPS

**Agenda:**

- 3 p.m.  
"Mariposas Moradas" intervención grupal desde SMAPS frente a la Violencia de Género  
Romina Miranda - Especialista SMAPS
- 4 p.m.  
Protección de la niñez refugiada y migrante  
Paola Olivera - Coord. de Fortalecimiento familiar y proyectos  
Gestión de casos en Salud mental  
Zurán Nacgá - Especialista en Prevención e Intervención frente a la Violencia Familiar y/o Maltrato Infantil

**Miércoles 17 de agosto**

**Hora:** De 3 p.m. a 5 p.m.  
**Lugar:** Calle Horacio Cachay 111  
Santa Catalina, La Victoria

**Sesión híbrida**

Para participar, en línea o presencialmente, primero debes inscribirte en el siguiente formulario:  
[www.bit.ly/SMAPS-GTRM-Peru3](http://www.bit.ly/SMAPS-GTRM-Peru3)

**INTERVENCIONES  
EN SALUD MENTAL  
Y APOYO  
PSICOSOCIAL**

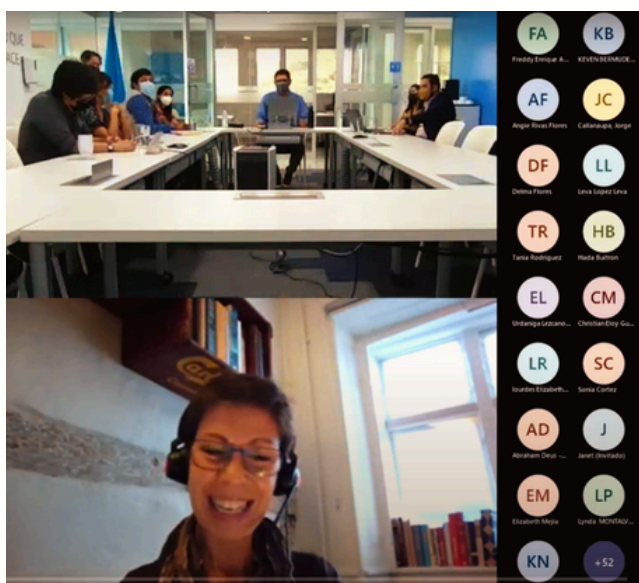
TALLER PRÁCTICO

**EN LÍNEA Y PRESENCIAL**  
Auditorio UNICEF: Edificio  
Naciones Unidas - Tegucigalpa

**VIERNES 30  
SEPTIEMBRE**

09:00 a 13:00 hrs (Honduras)  
10:00 a 14hrs (Perú)  
11:00 a 15:00 hrs (Venezuela)

Conociendo el Marco Común de Monitoreo y Evaluación para intervenciones en Salud Mental y Apoyo Psicosocial (SMAPS) en el marco de Emergencias propuesto por IASC y el Paquete de Servicios Mínimos en SMAPS elaborado por la articulación Interagencial



2022 - September

### 4th Strengthening Workshop (hybrid format)

The MHPSS Group actively engaged in this regional workshop organized by the IASC, focusing on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support interventions within the context of emergency response. This practical and participatory workshop examined fundamental IASC tools for formulating MHPSS proposals, including the Minimum Service Package and the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Organizations from three primary countries—Peru, Venezuela, and Honduras—were in attendance.



2023 - March

### 5th Exchange Meeting (in-person)

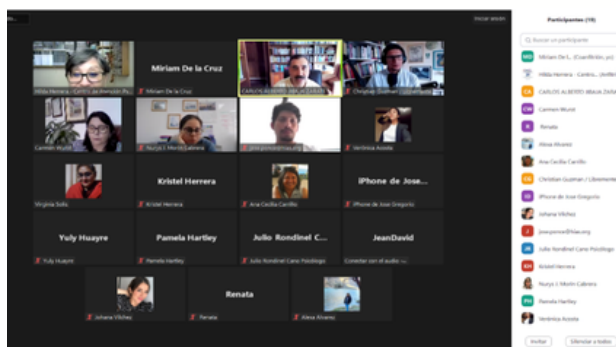
During this in-person session, the discussion centered on potential avenues for collaboration with the state in the MHPSS sector. Participants shared diverse experiences regarding key stakeholders, effective strategies, and significant challenges.



2023 - November

### 6th Exchange Meeting (online)

The emphasis of the final meeting of 2023 was on exchanging various capacity-building processes and experiences among community agents and leaders from both migrant/refugee and host communities.







# Common insights and barriers

The humanitarian response faces dual critical pressures: systemic overload across essential health, education, and social services due to elevated demand from migrants and refugees, compromising service delivery; alongside increasing xenophobic attitudes within host populations and occasionally service providers, which actively undermine social integration pathways, restrict access to rights and opportunities, and exacerbate psychosocial distress and protection concerns.

Our primary insights were:



# What we have learned as organizations



*"The MHPSS Group has enabled us to exchange experiences from community work with migrant populations, familiarize ourselves with the lessons learned from each participating institution, and collect insights that assist us in viewing the community as the focal point of our strategic initiatives to foster community-level mental health processes. It serves as a participatory online platform that facilitates our ongoing innovation in enhancing the psychosocial resources of individuals, reference groups, and the community environment."*

**Carlos Jibaja**

Centro de Atención Psicococial - CAPS



*"The Community of Practice demonstrates that it is feasible to implement initiatives that stem from our collective needs. Establishing a shared space for reflection on our practices is essential for evaluating the relevance and quality of our interventions. We find ourselves at a juncture where increased collaboration is necessary for learning and collective development, and the Community of Practice has facilitated this in various ways."*

**José Ponce**

HIAS Peru



*"One of the most valuable aspects of participating in the MHPSS Group has been the exchange of experiences and training with colleagues. Through open and constructive discussions, we have acquired new intervention strategies and received valuable feedback that has enhanced our approach. Additionally, we have had the opportunity to engage in collaborative projects, working as a team with professionals to offer dedicated care to the migrant and refugee community and, importantly, to create a safe space."*

**Nurys Morín**

Veneactive



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And we will  
continue in 2024!



## COMUNIDAD DE PRÁCTICA

Del Sub-Grupo de Salud Mental y Apoyo Psicosocial del GTRM Perú