Briefing: Analysis of COVID-19 Related Funding for Mental Health

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 there has been a global effort - led by the UN system, most notably WHO - to address its impact. Funding has typically been linked to global and national plans and strategies with a focus primarily on physical health. It has also been directed towards the development of a vaccine including through the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). However, funding for mental health is included in at least some of the financing packages already announced and it is anticipated funding will rise as the physical impacts of the virus reduce and the mental health aspects become ever more apparent.

Below is a summary of known funding to date and it will be updated at least monthly.

Global Appeals
UNOCHA details the main initiative and funds for the UN as a whole. Relief Web also includes details of other appeals including details on individual government’s COVID19 response plans.

The Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID19 (GHRP) is the main funding appeal for the UN agencies collectively. It calls for US$2 billion in funding. It brings together requirements from the World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN-Habitat, UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and World Food Programme (WFP). As of 20 April, 2020, 30% of the plan has been funded.

The GHRP mentions the negative impact on mental health as a result of COVID on the mental health of individuals and also the negative impact on the provision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) including mental health and other services.

Strategic Priority 2 is, “Decrease the deterioration of human assets and rights, social cohesion and livelihoods.” Objective 2.2. includes mention of mental health: Ensure the continuity and safety from risks of infection of essential services including health (immunization, HIV and tuberculosis care, reproductive health, psychosocial and mental health, gender-based violence services), water and sanitation, food supply, nutrition, protection, and education for the population groups most exposed and vulnerable to the pandemic.

UNFPA’s response in the GHRP aims to provide an integrated approach to provide access to integrated quality sexual and reproductive health including mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and specialised psychological-social support.

The WHO’s Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) was initially released in February 2020 and calls for US $675 million for response efforts till April. On 14 April, this plan was updated and includes the importance of support systems in suppressing community transmissions measures, including mental health support.

The COVID-Solidarity Response Fund for WHO has been set up by the UN Foundation to support WHO’s work and help fund the activities highlighted in the WHO’s Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan. As of 17 April, this has received US$150 million in donations.
The UN has established a **Multi-Partner Trust Fund**: the **UN COVID19 Response and Recovery Fund**. It is a US$2 billion appeal to support both the UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) and the WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan. The Fund terms of reference do not include mental health. It has three areas of focus:

1. **Tackle the health emergency**: supporting the implementation of National Health Plans for Combating COVID-19 and closing critical gaps with regard to supplies, logistics and preparedness; and by providing critical services interrupted by COVID-19;

2. **Reduce social impact and promote economic response** (no mention of MHPSS specifically - it does include digital innovations that boost employment and strengthen social service delivery and healthcare provision);

3. **Strengthening national preparedness measures**, safeguarding SDG programmes from pandemic-related setbacks, and [to] ensure are helping advance the SDGs and climate commitments.

The Fund covers all low- and middle- income programme countries and, in particular, those populations not included in the Global Humanitarian Appeal. UN Country Teams can use the Fund to leverage to support national governments and communities in meeting priorities and defining programming responses that assure their recovery and reach the poor and the vulnerable. The Fund’s financial requirements are projected at US$2 billion with US$1 billion in the first nine months of operation, noting that these requirements will be reviewed with the evolution of needs as a result of the pandemic.

Complementary to WHO COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, the **UNFPA COVID-19 Global Response Plan** aims to ensure UNFPA continues to provide an integrated response to gender-based violence (GBV) that includes MHPSS. UNFPA is calling for US $187.5 million.

UNICEF’s appeal **calls for US$651.6 million** and is in line with the GHRP, and WHO’s COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan. The appeal highlights that UNICEF plans to collaborate with other UN organisations to strengthen the capacity of health care providers to ensure access to care, including MHPSS.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has called for 550 million CHF (US $566 million) in funding to support National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies activities. Out of the 550 million CHF, 150 million CHF is for IFRC to support National Societies and 400 CHF million will be raised by National Societies domestically. The **150 million CHF IFRC appeal** seeks funding for MHPSS to the isolated, caregivers, and other vulnerable communities.

The ICRC has appealed for 250 million CHF (US $256 million) to respond in places of conflict and violence and to support National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in their response. Full details on the ICRC and IFRC appeals can be found [here](#).

**Multilateral Organisations**

**World Bank Group (WBG)**

The WBG plans to deploy **US $160 billion** in funds over the next 15 months to assist countries’ responses. Included in this is a US $14 billion fast-track facility (FTF) that will respond to immediate health and business needs. The first round of projects funded by the
FTF covered 25 countries and amounted to US $1.9 billion. Included in this, India received US $350 million in funding from the FTF (US $1 billion in total with other funds provided by IBRD) to strengthen health systems, including support for mental health and psychological services for vulnerable communities.

A full list of projects supported by FTF can be found here.

The World Bank has also established a new Trust Fund: Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Multi-Donor Fund (HEPRF), to provide incentives for low-income countries to increase investments in health preparedness and support the immediate COVID-19 response. This is still in the planning stage.

**IMF**

With US$ 1 trillion lending power, the IMF has replenished the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT), which was initially set up during the Ebola outbreak. The CCRT allows the IMF to provide grants for debt service relief. At the Spring Meetings the IMF and World Bank announced debt relief for 25 LMICs in relation to COVID-19. The IMF is now working with donors to almost triple the CCRT from $500 million to $1.4 billion to extend the duration of relief.

**Global Funds**

**Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)**

As of 17 April, the CERF has released US $95 million. This new CERF allocation – one of the largest ever made – will support: WFP to ensure the continuity of supply chains and transport of aid workers and relief goods; WHO to contain the spread of the pandemic; and other agencies to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to those most affected by the pandemic, including women and girls, refugees and internally displaced people. Support will include efforts around food security, physical and mental health, water and sanitation, nutrition and protection.

As of 9 April, CERF funds have been allocated to UNFPA, to provide health care and protection assistance, including psychosocial support, in response to GBV in 8 countries: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Chad, Haiti, the occupied Palestinian territory, South Sudan, Sudan and Venezuela.

**Education Cannot Wait (ECW)**

Established during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, ECW is a platform dedicated to making education a priority in the humanitarian agenda by using pooled funds from state and non-state actors.

ECW is calling for an initial US $50 million to be allocated for the COVID-19 education response in the next three months. As of 8 April 2020, ECW has announced US$23 million in emergency grants for 26 countries and emergency contexts. Emergency grants for COVID-19 response have been allocated to 55 grantees, ranging from UN Agencies and NGOs. Activities that have been supported include transforming the educational curriculum during the COVID response, which includes psychosocial support, and providing parents and teachers with tools to provide guidance on promoting psychosocial well-being of children and youth while away from traditional classroom settings.
Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM)

Raising and investing nearly USD $4 billion a year to support programmes to end AIDS, TB and malaria as epidemics, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) is enabling countries to use up to 5% of approved grant funding to address the negative consequences of COVID-19 on health and health systems. Eligible activities include epidemic preparedness assessment, laboratory testing, sample transportation, use of surveillance infrastructure, infection control in health facilities and/or information campaigns.

Alongside this, GFATM is also making US $500 million available through the COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM). This will let countries request funding for control and containment, to mitigate the impact on HIV, TB and malaria and to support systems for health, including community-led response. More details on this mechanism will be announced shortly.

Bilateral Donors

Australia

Australia has no new funding calls. DFAT is assisting Pacific neighbors with laboratories, medical equipment, health expertise, public information campaigns and support for national preparedness plans and the WHO’s regional plan. In March, Australia provided more details on this support on the DFAT website, however there is no specific mention of mental health support, yet.

Canada

The government of Canada has announced CAD $159.5 million in funding for global efforts. Broken down, this represents CAD $84.5 million for international organisations, CAD $40 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations for COVID-19 vaccine development, CAD $30 million for specific country assistance, and CAD $5 million for global health security. This is an initial announcement, and so far no there has been so mention of support for global mental health programmes.

EU

The EU is mobilising €15.6 billion for emergency response (including support for response plans of international organisations and immediate humanitarian support), supporting healthcare systems and the response to the pandemic in partner countries, providing budget support, and for mitigating the social and economic impact. The latest details on the EU response can be found here, and there is currently no mention of mental health support in this response.

France

France has announced a €1.2 billion initiative, COVID-19 - Health In Common, in response to the pandemic. It consists of €150 million in donations, and €1 billion in the form of loans, and will target 19 priority countries for French aid in Africa, MENA region and the ocean basins. This announcement was made 9 April by the French development agency, AFD, and so far no more details have been shared publicly.

Japan

Japan will be contributing US$768 million for various organisations, including US$147 million to CEPI. So far, there has been no specific mention of mental health support.
CURRENT AS OF APRIL 21 2020: WILL BE UPDATED AT LEAST MONTHLY

Netherlands
At the Global Ministerial Mental Health summit in 2019, countries agreed to the Amsterdam declaration to scale up MHPSS in emergency response. So far, the Netherlands has announced a US$11 million commitment for CEPI.

South Korea
Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has announced a new mid term strategy to assist with partner countries' COVID response. Further information can be found here, as of yet there is no specific mental health mention.

Sweden
On the 8 April, Sweden contributed SEK100 million (US$11 million) of humanitarian funds to support international organisations including UNHCR, UNICEF and ICRC. SEK 70 million will go to support the UN joint appeal, and SEK 30 million will go to ICRC, for multiple activities including psychosocial support.

United Kingdom (UK)
DFID has committed over £774 million towards the COVID-19 response. More details can be found here. It includes funding to international organisations such as WHO and the Red Cross, NGOs and COVID-19 related research organisations. Included in this is a £5 million (US$6.26 million) contribution to ECW.

United States (US)
USAID and the State Department have made available over US $500 million in emergency health and humanitarian assistance. There is no specific mention of mental health support from the list of country recipients and activities funded on the USAID website.

National Level Funding

Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs)
OCHA is assessing the use of CBPFs at the field level to help channel immediate support to COVID-related needs. CBPFs have allocated more than US$68.4 million since 17 April 2020 for COVID-19 response in Afghanistan, Sudan, Myanmar, Jordan, Lebanon, occupied Palestinian territory, Ukraine, Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, and Central African Republic. Together, CERF and CBPFs allocations have totalled US $163.4 million and supported 37 countries. In the countries where it operates, OCHA is helping Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordinators work closely with the host governments to prepare response plans to fight the virus and to ensure aid continues to reach those people most in need.

Other Pooled Funds
The Vatican has established a COVID-19 response fund. The only public information found so far is here and describes the focus as being, “aid of those people and communities who are being tragically impacted by the spread of COVID-19”

Private Philanthropy

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)
US $250 million has been announced to support the development of diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines; help strengthen African and South Asian health systems; and help mitigate the social and economic impacts of the virus. While the response will support
research on gender equality issues of the pandemic, there has been no mention of mental health in this aspect.

**Lego Foundation**
The Lego Foundation announced **US $50 million** to support education for children and youth around the globe. US $15 million will go to **ECW**, and the rest will be split between foundation and charity partners.

**Mariwala Health Initiative (MHI)**
MHI is working with **iCall** to provide free training webinars on changing services to phone, video and chat based services to any mental health professional. MHI is providing mental health support for specific marginalised communities uniquely affected by COVID, including tuberculosis survivors and LGBTQ+, through webinars and is commissioning a study on the mental health impact of quarantine.

**Open Society Foundation (OSF)**
OSF will make available **US $130 million** around the globe. Half of this response will go towards efforts in the United States. This initial announcement does not include support for mental health.

**Wider Economic Trends and Predictions**
Economists and governments are increasingly worried about the impact of the global pandemic. The head of the International Monetary Fund has warned that the world faces its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression in the 1930s. The IMF is urging the protection of lives, livelihoods and planning for recovery. The EU has agreed a €500bn rescue package for member states hit hard by the outbreak. More information on the wider impacts on the economy and the interventions planned can be found on the [IMF](https://www.imf.org) and [World Bank](https://www.worldbank.org) websites along with organisations including [the OECD](https://www.oecd.org).

**Recommended Actions Required to Support Funding for Mental Health in Relation to COVID-19**

Strong leadership that makes mental health a priority is urgently required.

Specifically this includes:

- **International agencies must include mental health as part of their initial response plans** - adopting a multi-sector approach and integrating mental health across relevant sectors including livelihoods, social welfare, child protection and education.

- **International development donors must prioritize mental health** - ensuring it is integrated into COVID19 emergency response planning, with a focus on prevention, promotion and holistic, life-course approaches. They must also improve coordination among themselves to ensure efficiency and improve impact.

- **National governments should allocate sufficient resources within their COVID19 health budgets for mental health** - for those national governments that host refugees, the mental health of those refugees must be part of their mental health planning; this includes integration into COVID19 preparedness and response plans.
The mental health community needs to develop a strong and compelling case for support for mental health in relation to COVID19 and to advocate for that in a joined-up way. The BluePrint Group is working on this approach at present.