

Report on Pledge 17 June 2024

Pledge: Psychological First Aid (PFA) for all

2019 - 2024

Report from the IFRC

Has your organization taken action on the implementation of this pledge?

X Yes

Please describe the actions taken (including challenges encountered if there is any) and provide concrete examples (including written reports, programmes information, photos and videos)

The main objective of the pledge signed in 2019 is to support the scaling up of global capacity for Psychological First Aid as a means to prevent and alleviate mental health and psychosocial needs and promote individual and community resilience. With this goal in mind, the IFRC Secretariat and the PS Reference Centre have taken several initiatives to support the pledge, which are listed below:

Guidelines, training manuals and other resources

Psychological first aid (PFA) is an entry point to assist people in acute distress. It is a simple, yet powerful way of helping someone to feel calm, safe and supported, and to link to more specialized support if needed. In order to support the understanding and capacity building of PFA skills, its benefits but also its limitations, and also in line with the pledge's action plan, many resources were developed and are available online, for easy consultation and/or download, the majority of these in the PS Centre website. Many of them were translated with support from National Societies, amplifying the reach and the audiences for those, but also proving the interest generated by these resources, as well as the positive and meaningful collaboration with National Societies. Below is the detailed description of all of the resources, developed since the adoption of the pledge, including the many resources that were produced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Developed the guide [Remote Psychological First Aid during COVID-19](#) (2020), available in eight languages (Burmese, Bahasa, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Serbian), which supported National Societies in setting up remote services for adults during the pandemic response.
- Developed a series of versatile open-source training packages on *Psychological First Aid* that NSs could adapt and use as they see fit. Tools are accompanied with PowerPoint, speaker notes, and instructions for facilitators. The series *Psychological first aid in the COVID-19 outbreak response* comprises:
 - [Online Psychological First Aid training for COVID-19](#) (2020)
 - [Remote supportive communication](#) (2020)
 - [Loss and grief](#) (2020)
 - [For children](#) (2020)
 - [Caring for staff and volunteers remotely](#) (all developed in 2020)
 - [For vaccine hesitancy](#) (2021) – available in Portuguese and Spanish

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- In 2022 and 2023, IFRC Health and Care department worked with National Societies, IFRC offices and external stakeholders updating the **IFRC Health and Care Framework 2030** inline with the changes in health ecosystem due to COVID-19 pandemic. The health security, health systems approach, Community Resilience, health protection components of the framework has been strengthened. The First Aid and MHPSS components of Health Protection pillar will support better positioning and scaling up PFA for all.
- Worked with IFRC Health and Care Department and IFRC Global First Aid Reference Center and strengthened the PFA module in **IFRC First Aid and Resuscitation Guidelines 2021**. The Guidelines will support National Societies in scaling up First aid including PFA for all.
- Developed the [Training of Trainers in Psychological First Aid](#) (2021), a training manual for a three-day face-to-face training. This ToT module prepares trainees to conduct their own trainings in the PFA manual *Module 2: Basic PFA*, that can be delivered in one day and can be extended for up to two days. Besides English, this manual is also available in Spanish.
- Developed the [Online Training of Trainers in Psychological First Aid](#) (2021), a training manual for a five-day online training for National Societies using the PS Centre's PFA training *Module 2: Basic PFA*, ensuring that participants would acquire the needed cognitive, social, and emotional skills.
- Added a session on Psychological First Aid to a PS Centre manual for teachers: [A Hopeful, Healthy & Happy Living & Learning Toolkit](#) (2021), developed together with REPSSI and APSSI, with support from MHPSS.net and funding from Education Cannot Wait. The toolkit was designed to facilitate support for children, parents/caregivers, and teachers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but nevertheless useful for anyone, anywhere, and at any time. The toolkit is available in seven languages (English, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian).
- The Americas Regional Office translated into Spanish the [Module 1: Introduction to PFA](#), [Module 2: Basic PFA](#), [Module 3: PFA for children](#) and, the [ToT in PFA for RCRC volunteers](#) (2022).
- Developed a package on *PFA for young peers* (2021) which introduces PFA to young people, outlining what PFA is and how it can be used to provide peer support in different contexts. The package includes a [handbook](#) and [a training manual](#), featuring a two-day training, with a suggested training programme and training notes, including links to other resources on PFA
- Developed the presentation: [Psychological First Aid in times of conflict and uncertainty](#) (2022), a three-hour orientation available in English, Portuguese and Russian, with accompanying materials, which include:
 - [Role-play guide: PFA training in situations of conflict and uncertainty](#) – English and Portuguese
 - [Video](#): Psychological First Aid in Conflict – Look
 - [Video](#): Psychological First Aid in Conflict – Listen
 - [Video](#): Psychological First Aid in Conflict – Link
- Produced and released a [video sequel](#) named 'Let's Talk about Psychological First Aid', showcasing how to implement PFA, in English and Ukrainian (2022).
- In a joint collaboration with GFARC and GDPC Reference Centers, the PS Centre Developed the PFA component to the [IFRC First Aid App](#), which was released in 2023.
- Supported the development of the PFA session integrated to Standard First Aid Training of Lao Red Cross (2023).
- In partnership with the Danish Red Cross, produced and released an online course on [Psychological First Aid for all: An introduction](#), available at the IFRC Learning Platform. This self-paced 90' course is currently available in English and was release in late Decembre and disseminated in early January 2024. To date, 3800 plus people have registered and 2000 plus have completed it, with a 4.9 rating from learners, with 90% giving the maximum score to the course.

Trainings conducted on Psychological First Aid

One of the indicators for measuring progress proposed in the pledge is “Training of staff and volunteers in PFA by the signatories”, and also “Training of local community members in PFA by the signatories”. IFRC has invested significantly in leading, facilitating or supporting training events, solely focused on PFA or incorporating it into wider topics. There has also been a large number of Training of Trainers (ToT) conducted, allowing for the future roll-out of PFA trainings by those participants, and therefore increasing the reach of these capacity-building initiatives. Together, the IFRC Regional Offices and the PS Centre have conducted or supported more than half a hundred training events, building the capacities of hundreds of individuals on PFA principles and delivery. Find attached the full list of trainings held within the period of this pledge.

Advocacy, dissemination and exchange initiatives

Besides learning tools, the PFA for all Pledge calls for the facilitation or establishment of platforms and systems to be made available by signatories, to support the scaling up of global capacity in Psychological First Aid. In this section, with report on initiatives that have been responding to this call, which can be found detailed below.

- A **Technical Working Group on Psychological First Aid for All** has been established, under the initiative of Danish Red Cross and the IFRC PS Centre. The first meeting was called in early 2021, primarily to the signatories of the pledge, but open to all those who were interested in scaling up PFA capacity. Meetings have been conducted bi-annually until 2023, mostly with different National Societies presenting on their different initiatives around PFA and presenting examples of how PFA can be used in different circumstances and with different target groups.
- The IFRC was a key partner in developing the report: [The Greatest Need was to be listened to. The Importance of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support during COVID-19](#) (2020) which features examples of provision of PFA in response to the pandemic.
- Several webinars have been conducted, with the aim of creating awareness and understand around PFA, as listed below:
 - In 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic hindering physical events and with increased interest in PFA as an approach to address distress caused by the emergency, the PS Centre has conducted three webinars on the topic, including [Remote Psychological First Aid](#) on how to provide PFA remotely, [Psychological First Aid For All - anywhere and anytime](#) and another one on [Remote Psychological First Aid](#).
 - Conducted two three-hour webinars on **Premiers secours psychologiques**, for Francophone countries (2020 and 2021).
 - Conducted a **Psychological First Aid** webinar for the European Youth Network (2022).
 - Facilitated a webinar on **PFA for Staff and Volunteers** during the celebrations of World Mental Health Day of Cambodian Red Cross (2022).
 - Based on the understanding that PFA should be trauma-informed, the PFA for all Pledge Group hosted an open webinar on [Psychological First Aid, Complex Settings and Reactions](#) (2023).
- During the period of the pledge, the IFRC has also conducted Red Talks focusing on or including a focus on PFA, developed podcasts and other promotion resources on IFRC PS Centre Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, including a [podcast](#) in 2020 introducing this pledge, with Icelandic Red Cross

which are one of the signatories, an [interview](#) with Pernille Hansen, Psychologist and MHPSS specialist, by Ea Suzanne Akasha, Technical Advisor of IFRC PS Centre, on Psychological First Aid in COVID-19 in 2020, a media interview and a [podcast](#) on *PFA for vaccine hesitancy* in 2021, and a video on [What is Psychological First Aid?](#) released in 2023, which is available in English, French and Arabic.

- Within the IFRC commemorations of World Mental Health Day in 2021, an **online brown bag lunch talk** was conducted on *Psychological First Aid* for IFRC staff.
- In 2022 a **sharing session about PFA in Emergencies** was conducted with Hong Kong RC Staff and Volunteers.
- Throughout 2021-2024 the [Asia Pacific MHPSS Collaborative Newsletter](#) featured different PFA activities of the National Societies from the region.
- In 2023 the Regional Office of Europe commissioned an **Impact Study in PFA**, which was conducted to explore the impact of upscaling and implementing PFA by National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement within the context of an emergency response, based on the example of the Ukraine crisis. Montenegro RC, Bulgarian RC, Ukrainian RC, Romanian RC, Lithuanian RC, Polish RC, and Slovak RC participated in the frame of the emergency response to the Ukrainian response and therefore were key informants in this study. The [report](#), released in 2024, contributed to place PFA as an evidence-informed approach that is widely acknowledged and effective in reducing distress and supporting recovery, while it also reflected on the challenges of measuring the direct impact of PFA, which is why the study focused rather on what the impact of integrating and institutionalising PFA is within National Societies.
- Within the EU4Health project, run by the Regional Office of Europe, the [Introduction to Psychological First Aid](#) module was adapted to respond to people affected by the international armed conflict in Ukraine and released in 2023. In the same year, two [Community of PFA Trainers](#) (CoTs) were established, in English and Ukrainian, as a part of the ToT PFA trainings follow up. Within the scope of the same project, a [regional dashboard](#) was created, where all the achievement can be monitored, including the PFA training delivered in the frame project. As of mid-June, more than 14K first line responders have been trained to deliver PFA. Social media assets, created to highlight the importance of PFA and access to services developed with the Regional office for Europe Teams, and accessible to NS online (Trello board) were also developed.
- A mutual learning exchange was facilitated and coordinated by IFRC, for HKRC and Japanese RC on Standardized PFA Training (2024).

Way forward

While the achievements have been many, we believe that much more can be done in order to expand the reach of PFA, both in terms of capacity building and also people in distress receiving it from a trained person. Our efforts towards scaling up global capacity for PFA, as a means to prevent and alleviate mental health and psychosocial needs and promote individual and community resilience, will continue beyond 2014, with some initiatives already in place.

The first of them is to continue working towards the **Integration of PFA into Standard First Aid Training**. While this is already contemplated in the [First Aid Operational Framework 2030](#), more efforts need to be done to encourage this shift from the traditional stand-alone vision regarding PFA, and building the capacity of training providers to be able to adequately deliver these two components together.

In addition, more efforts are needed also in regards to **providing translations for the existing and future resources of the IFRC on PFA**. While the allocation of budget for translations is not always easy, especially in an under-funded sector like MHPSS, new ways can be explored, in light of past experiences of partnering with National Societies that take on the leadership of translating into local languages. This approach is already being explored for the translation of the PFA eLearning module, available in the IFRC Learning Platform, with Portuguese Red Cross already in the process of translating it and three other National Societies considering it. Furthermore, the interest demonstrated in the eLearning module also encourages us to explore **expanding the PFA modules available in the Learning Platform**. Currently discussions are ongoing for a joint collaboration with the Europe Regional office for the adaptation of the PFA for children module, to be tailored to the Red Cross Red Crescent and available in our learning platform.

Other alternatives are also under exploration to provide **remote support and quality assurance for people delivering PFA** with limited local support, acknowledging that PFA can be delivered by non-MHPSS professionals that may need guidance when confronted with complex situations.

Considering that awareness raising and dissemination continue to play a key role in incentivizing the scaling-up of PFA capacity, two initiatives are also underway, one regarding displaying **progress on PFA in a global dashboard**, to be available for National Societies on IFRC pages, and the other one will be the release of an issue of the **MHPSS Global newsletter entirely dedicated to PFA**, showcasing different ways in which National Societies are delivering PFA and making a difference in the lives of many.

Please click here if the implementation is completed.

No

Challenges encountered.

Regarding some of the challenges encountered, the IFRC has observed that reporting on the number of people who have received PFA is extremely challenging, since this is most often done integrated with other services. While this is not an indicator within the PFA for all pledge, it is something that stakeholders are often interested in, and therefore hard to provide. Similarly, and as exposed in the PFA Impact Study mentioned in this report, measuring direct impact of PFA on mental health and wellbeing is extremely challenging, although the principles are aligned with international guidelines and empirically validated guidance. Another challenge that has been observed has been the capacity to offer resources, be it materials, trainings or online events, in multiple languages, to respond to the larger community of the IFRC network. The fact that the vast majority of these are only available in English results in a shorter reach to what could be accomplished if translation/interpretation was offered.

ANNEXES

1. List of trainings conducted or supported by IFRC

- **Premiers secours psychologiques.** A five-day training for Francophone countries conducted in Tunis (2020).
- **PFA in the context of COVID 19** piloted in Latin-American to adapt the training to the region, with the participation of Venezuelan, Chilean, Dominican Republic, and Bolivia National Societies (2020).
- **Basic Psychosocial Skills** training including psychological first aid for IASC members in Venezuelan Child Protection practitioners (2021).
- **Psychological First Aid** - three online sessions, of three hours duration each, for Norwegian Red Cross delegates and National Staff (2021).
- **Psychological First Aid and Training volunteers'** session held at IFRC Public Health in Emergencies training, in Germany (2021).
- **MHPSS orientation** session for Spanish Red Cross, including psychological first aid (2021).
- **Online Training of Trainers in Psychological First Aid** – two five-day trainings conducted: one for the Asia Pacific Region and one international (2021).
- Conducted two three-hour online **PFA for vaccine hesitancy** training for the Asia Pacific Region (2021).
- Regional (Asia Pacific Region) Pilot Training of **PFA for Pandemic Fatigue** - Online (2021).
- Four **PFA for vaccine hesitancy** online trainings were held in the Americas, with the participation of 27 NSs (2021).
- An online training on **PFA during COVID-19** was organized for Bahrain RC for 4 days, co-facilitated by PS Center and IFRC MENA, where 42 participants from staff and volunteers attended (2021).
- A 3,5-hour online **introduction to PFA** session was conducted for IFRC staff, within the commemoration of World Mental Health Day (2021).
- Two days online **ToT on PFA during Covid** was organized for MENA region, where 26 participants joined from different National Societies. The training was co-facilitated by PS Centre and MENA MHPSS Network and supported by IFRC MENA (2021).
 - The following trainings were co-facilitated by the IFRC MENA and MENA MHPSS Network:
 - Online 3-days training on **PFA during COVID-19** for each of the following National Societies: Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia (2020).
 - One workshop on **PFA for staff and volunteers** for North Africa National Societies: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria (2021).
 - Two physical **Psychological First Aid** trainings for Palestinian RC – Lebanon branch in collaboration with Swedish RC for 50 volunteers (2021).
 - A physical training on **Psychological First Aid** for Egyptian RC, as part of the PSS in Emergencies training of the DREF operation, for support to Egyptian RC in their response to the train crash, in 2021.
- Conducted a **PFA for Vaccine Hesitancy Training**, for the Asia Pacific Region National Societies (2021).
- Facilitated **PFA for Young Peers training** within the Mediterranean Youth Camp Atlantis, in Portugal (2022).
- **Psychological First Aid for Pandemic Fatigue** conducted, a three-hour online training piloted in the Asia Pacific Region (2022).
- Facilitated an online Regional Asia Pacific **Basic PFA Training** (2022).

- **ToT PFA** in Tbilisi, Georgia: 18 participants from Estonian, Azerbaijan, Armenian, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russian, Tajikistan, Georgian, and Turkmenistan National Societies. (2022).
- **Regional ToT PFA** in Budapest, Hungary: 14 participants from four National Societies (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia) was conducted as part of the EU4Health project (2022).
- Conducted one day **PFA Training** (online) for IFRC Bangkok CCD supported National Societies (Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam), 2023.
- Conducted one online session on **Psychological First Aid**, during Caring for volunteers ToT for 19 participants from Libyan Red Crescent, facilitated together by MENA RO and PS Centre (2023).
- Conducted a physical **ToT on Psychological First Aid** for Egyptian RC, as part of an MHPSS in Emergencies training for Gaza response (2023).
 - A **Psychological First Aid** training was conducted within the Mediterranean Youth Camp Atlantis, in Cairo (2023).
 - A **PFA ToT** was organized in the Central and South-East Europe Cluster, with 22 participants from Montenegro, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Albania, and Bosnia & Herzegovina National Societies (2023).
 - A **PFA ToT** was organized in Central Asia, engaging 14 participants from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan National Societies (2023).
 - A regional **PFA ToT training** was conducted in Budapest, Hungary, with 17 participants from Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, and Slovenia National Societies, as part of the EU4Health project (2023).
 - A regional **PFA in Groups Training** was conducted online for Asia Pacific National Societies (2023).
 - A **PFA workshop** was conducted in Hong Kong for HKRC Health ERU pool of delegates (2023).
 - A regional **PFA ToT** was conducted for Southeast Asian National Societies (2023).
 - An online orientation session on **PFA for Vaccine Hesitancy** was conducted for Papua New Guinea Red Cross (2023).
 - Two batches of **Psychological First Aid** trainings were conducted for Marastoon Personnel in Afghanistan (2023).
 - A **basic PFA training** was conducted online for the Pacific National Societies (2023).
 - A **PFA ToT** was conducted online for the Pacific National Societies (2023).
 - A 4-hours **PFA orientation** was conducted in Hong Kong for HKRC Health ERU pool of delegates (2024).
 - An online session on **Basic PFA** was conducted for Algerian RC (2024).