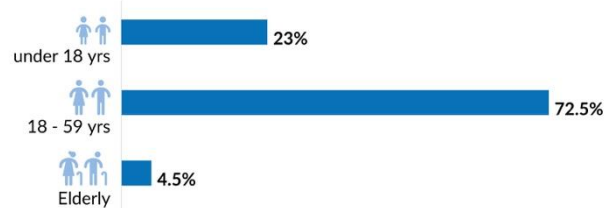
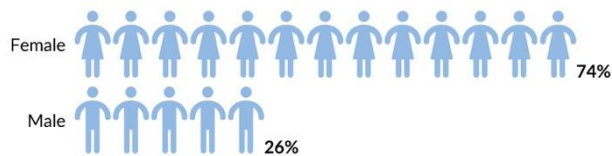


Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

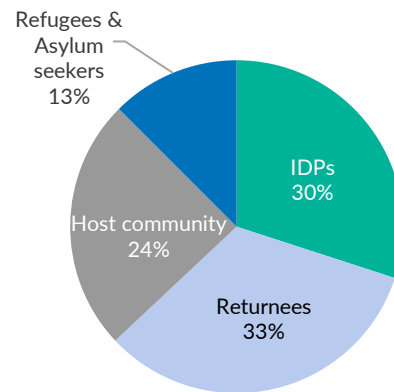
January - December 2022



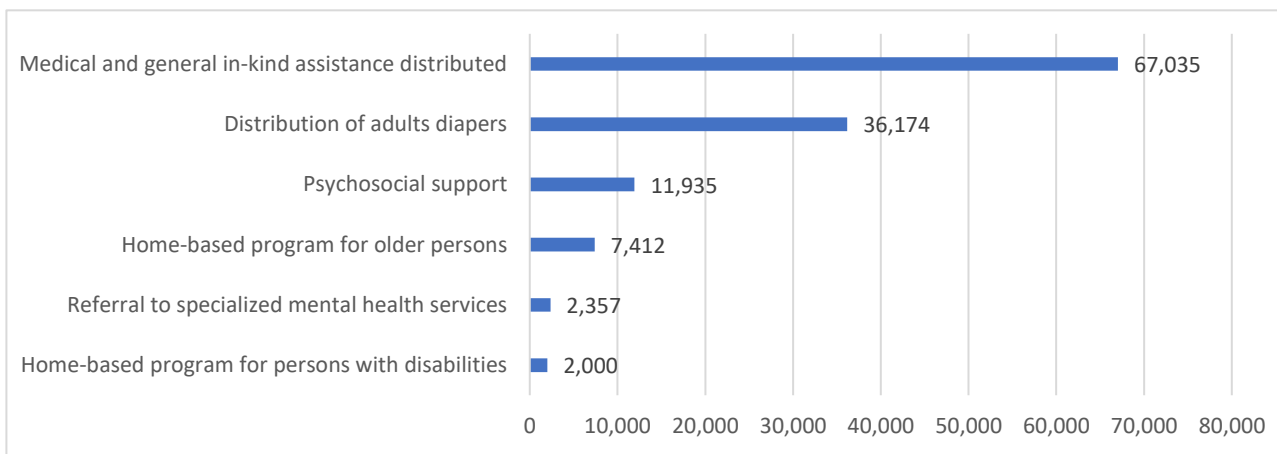
20,908 people received mental health and psychosocial support



Population groups benefitting from services



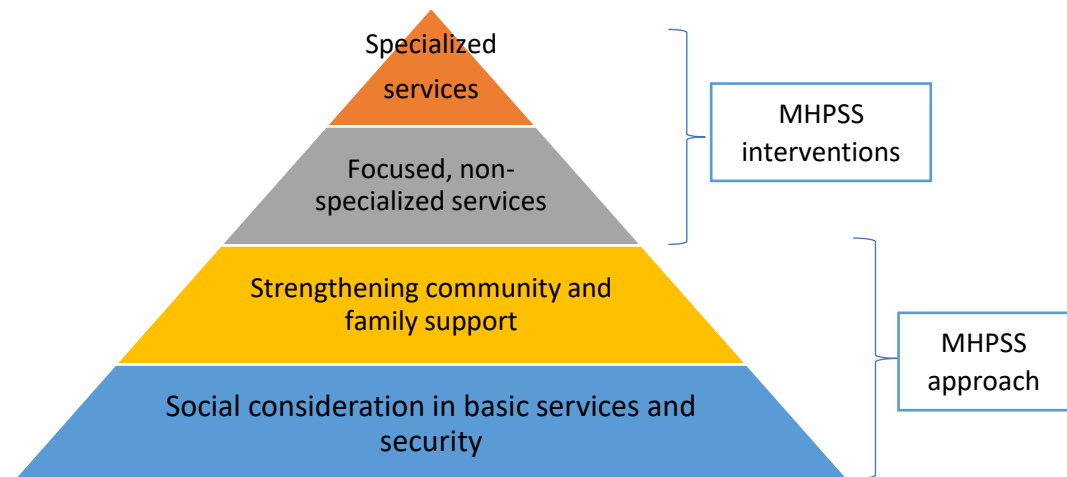
14 Governorates | **127** Community Centres | **762** Volunteers



Services provided

Mental health in Syria has been severely impacted by years of crisis, displacement and economic insecurity. Affected populations have experienced a range of stressors such as exposure to violence, separation from or loss of loved ones, poor living conditions, poverty, food insecurity, loss of livelihoods, physical injuries and illnesses as well as a lack of access to services such as health care, education and social care.

The mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) approach of UNHCR Syria is aligned with [UNHCR's operational guidance on MHPSS and Inter-Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\) guidelines](#). Multi-layered interventions are integrated in the health and protection responses (primary health care, community-based protection) as well as in education and shelter programmes.



IASC pyramid of MHPSS interventions

Social considerations in basic services and security

- The [age, gender and diversity approach](#) is applied and mainstreamed in all protection activities and interventions conducted at UNHCR-supported [community centres](#) and by mobile teams and outreach volunteers.
- Basic services such as food, core relief items, shelter, health and education are provided in a safe and culturally appropriate manner that ensures dignified access for all persons that UNHCR serves.
- In 2022, **67,035 persons with specific needs** (older persons, persons with disabilities, and persons with mental health conditions) benefitted from the provision of general and medical in-kind assistance. This assistance is provided to increase a sense of dignity, help prevent harmful coping mechanisms and reduce the financial burden on the families and caregivers. It included general items such as kitchen and heating appliances and cooling devices in addition to power devices and housewares, and medical items such as medicines, hearing aid devices, and

wheelchairs. Around 40% of the items distributed in 2022 were medical assistive devices which are critical for older people and persons with disabilities. In addition, **36,174 persons with specific needs** received adult diapers. This assistance was identified as one of the most pressing factors in people's lives. In 2022, UNHCR conducted a **post distribution monitoring exercise** to measure the impact of the programme. Around 82% of the people surveyed stated that receiving adult diapers reduced the financial burden on them and their families and reduced their exposure to health problems.

- In 2022, training sessions on identification, referrals, and providing specific psychosocial interventions were offered to **713 partner staff** working with internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, refugees and asylum-seekers.

Strengthening community and family support

- One child friendly space is established in each UNHCR-supported **community centre** to support the development of children. Child-friendly spaces are safe spaces set up in humanitarian settings to help support and protect children. Their objective is to restore a sense of normality and continuity to children whose lives have been disrupted by crises.
- Older persons' clubs are established in each community centre supported by UNHCR to support the integration of older persons. Activities taking place at the clubs include social/recreational activities, intergeneration activities, awareness sessions, psychodrama, games and music.
- Home-based rehabilitation interventions were provided to the families and caregivers of **7,412 older persons and 2,000 persons with disabilities** to strengthen their capacity to care for the older persons and the persons with disabilities in their families and preserve their independence and dignity.
- Psychological first aid training is delivered to frontline workers, mobile teams, outreach volunteers, and staff working on issues related to child protection and gender-based violence to strengthen their ability to identify and response to people in need.
- UNHCR and partners conducted **25,298 social/recreational activities and awareness-raising sessions for 386,508 individuals** in 2022. Topics were selected based on communities' needs and concerns and included the management of depression and suicide prevention, stress and anger management, bed wetting by children and stuttering.

Focused, non-specialized psychosocial support

- In 2022, individual and group counselling and "problem management plus" were provided to **8,973 persons with psychosocial needs** by MHPSS case managers in all UNHCR-supported community centres and multidisciplinary clinics. "Problem management plus" is a brief psychological intervention for adults that aims to reduce problems that those supported identify as being of concern to them, such as psychological problems (e.g. stress, fear, feelings of

helplessness) and, where possible, practical problems (e.g. livelihood problems, conflict in the family).

- **25,298 awareness sessions on mental health and psychological disorders and social/recreational activities** were implemented in all community centres in 2022. The activities include sports, drawing, storytelling, and drama play, reaching an estimated **386,508** people, in the aim of strengthening emotional and social development of older persons, persons with disabilities, youth, children and adults.
- In 2022, **11,935 persons were provided with mental health and psychosocial support case management services**, of which 20% were referred to specialized mental health services including psychiatrists and psychotherapists. The most reported psychological disorders included depression (32%), anxiety (29%), and post-traumatic stress (15%).
- UNHCR and partners conducted a **feedback survey with 2,274 persons** who had benefitted from MHPSS case management (19% of the total cases) to measure the impact on their wellbeing. Around 87% of the people surveyed stated that the MHPSS case management helped them, and they noticed an improvement in their quality of life.

Specialized mental health services

- In 2022, **2,357 referrals to psychiatrists and psychotherapists** were made by MHPSS case managers for people suffering from severe mental health disorders.
- **146 people were provided with MHPSS specialized services** by doctors trained on the **WHO Mental Health Gap Action Programme (MhGAP)** at multidisciplinary clinics to strengthen their capacity in diagnosing mental health problems and prescribing medicines. The MhGAP aims at scaling up services for mental, neurological and substance use disorders for countries lacking mental health specialized services and countries with low income.