



MH4U Mental health for Ukraine project

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Mental Health for Ukraine (MH4U) project was established to assist in the reforming Ukraine's mental health system. It aligns with the Ukrainian government's reform initiatives launched in 2017.

The **OVERALL GOAL** of the project is to improve the quality of and access to care and psychosocial support for people living with mental health (MH) disorders in Ukraine.

OUTCOMES

Outcome 1 (policy and national coordination): National and regional authorities are supported to deliver an adequate legal framework, institutional support, coordination, and leadership for community-based mental health care.

Outcome 2 (service delivery): Mental health service providers are supported to deliver evidence-based services, which are accessible and coordinated across sectors and levels of care.

Outcome 3 (population): Awareness has been raised among Ukrainian people about ways to prevent mental health disorders and access mental health services.

In 2022 with the new context the project intervention was broadened to cover two additional components:

- **Emergency response** efforts in mental health and psychosocial support, and
- initiatives promoting **supported living** in Kyiv and Lviv, including policy work and awareness-raising.

POLICY AND NATIONAL COORDINATION

National and oblast authorities are supported in creating an adequate legal framework and institutional support.



- MH4U is recognized as a **reliable source of information** by national authorities in public mental health.
- 62 legal acts were analyzed and a draft **Bill on MH** was created & negotiations with stakeholders are underway
- Two **National action plan on MH services** elaborated
- Technical support offered to authorities lead to the **inclusion of community-based mental health services in the National Health Service of Ukraine**.
- The project shared **98 policy briefs** and recommendations, with **85% serving as input** for creating an enabling environment for mental health services in Ukraine.
- A **regulatory framework and quality standards for rehabilitation services for veterans** was developed and is being implemented by the Ministry of Veteran Affairs.
- The project facilitated the formation of a **working group to develop and implement pathways of care** for individuals with common MH disorders.

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

DURATION of I Phase:
October 2019 - December 2023

BUDGET:
7.7 million CHF

BY MANDATE OF:
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

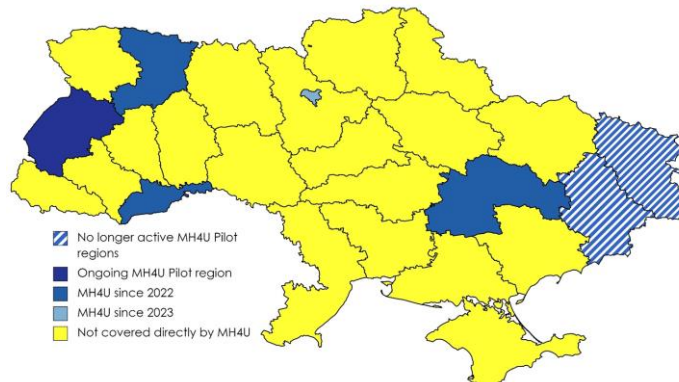
IMPLEMENTING AGENCY:
GFA Consulting Group GmbH

PARTNERS:
Implemental Worldwide C.I.C
University Hospital of Psychiatry Zürich
Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU)

BENEFICIARY:
Ministry of Health of Ukraine (MoH)

MAP OF UKRAINIAN REGIONS COVERED BY MH4U

Before the Russian full-scale invasion in 2022, MH4U pilot areas were in three regions: Lviv region in Western Ukraine and government-controlled territories of Luhansk and Donetsk regions in eastern Ukraine. After the Russian full scale invasion in 2022, Donetsk and Luhansk became inaccessible. MH4U then expanded its pilot area to Chernivtsi, Rivne, Dnipro and Kyiv.



- MH4U created **Quality Assurance guidelines for both in-patient institutions and community-based services**, currently being considered for implementation by MH services providers.
- As a result of 12 policy briefs related to occupational standards in MH and 2 occupational standards developed by MH4U, one of the **occupational standards for school psychologists** is approved by the Ministry of Education and research (MoER) together with a **road map for psychological support in schools**.
- A **National Road Map on supported living** for people with mental health illness elaborated with Ministry of Social Policy.
- MH4U managed to engage into **multisectoral MH work** during the implementation period **10 Ministries as well as National public bodies**.
- The project provided support for the establishment of **8 implementation teams at the local level (LITs)**. MH4U has shared 61 recommendations with local community partners for improving the institutional capacity of MH service networks. being implemented in the form of mental health **action plans within LITs**.



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SERVICE DELIVERY

The project engaged in capacity building activities for specialists working in MH.

- 9 types of trainings were made available for both clinical and non-clinical staff and 4.567 professionals were trained until now on evidence-based interventions within 174 trainings provided by the MH4U project both online and offline since 2020.
- In 2023, MoH accepted the WHO mhGAP Intervention Guide as the official training for family doctors. It qualifies them to deliver mental health care at primary care level. MH4U is a key partner in implementing the mhGAP training program. Specifically, MH4U has trained over 440 family doctors.
- 20 international clinical manuals, service standards and treatment protocols translated to Ukrainian are made available by MH4U to mental health specialists, including NICE guidelines and DSM 5.

responsible for organizing MHPSS coordination meetings



- MH4U supported 14 mental health projects from NGOs with small grants. The project strengthened 22 NGOs through capacity building and developing services support for people with mental disorders and disabilities.
- MH4U created an online education platform, www.edu.mh4u.in.ua offering information in the field of mental health. 159 Child and Adolescent Mental Health educational materials were made available to over 10 600 Subscribers. At present there are over 14 courses, 11 webinars in the field of mental health for both specialists and non-specialist, as well as two spring schools and a psychiatric course for providers of mental health services.
- 135 Child and Adolescent Mental Health trainings were conducted, webinars and parenting schools 50 816 people took part in activities.

AWARENESS RAISING

The project developed MH anti-stigma campaigns.

- MH4U cooperated with journalists to publish online news, TV and Radio items that reached over 52.7 million viewers.
- Local campaigns with events, billboards and leaflets about MH were implemented in target communities.
- MH4U Facebook page achieved to have regular posts with app. 25 000 followers.
- The project website www.Mh4u.in.ua has 215.176 users.
- The project engaged 1.527 teenagers in interactive learning activities about MH.
- MH4U trained and empowered 30 MH ambassadors to speak up about MH disorders, they posted a total of 40 publications on social media, and created six videos talking about their experience living with a mental disorder and reached 900 000 views on social media.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Operating in the new context of a full-scale war, MH4U expanded its activities towards the mitigation of negative mental health effects by providing Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS).

- During the initial weeks of the full-scale war, the MH4U project helped provide emergency response at the regional level.
- The project created procedures, provided trainings, offered supervision to volunteers to help them effectively respond to the crisis.
- MH4U is in Lviv and Chernivtsi and inviting humanitarian and public actors. They have also developed standard operational procedures for the Coordination Centers for Humanitarian Aid in Lviv Region, which will be scaled up nationwide in the future with the initiative of the First Lady's Office.
- The project trained 1054 professionals to improve their capacity to provide quality MHPSS services in emergency situations.
- MH4U is supporting families in need through the Near the Family partnership project, where families of people with disabilities receive support including for reintegration of children into the family.
- MH4U collaborated with www.ucare.me and received external financial support to create the Mental Health Navigator, allowing people to request offline and online psychological counselling or psychotherapy. Demand is growing rapidly: from October 2022 to January 2023, 1742 consultations were delivered. Now the services provide 2000 consultations per month.
- MH4U has contributed to the creation of eight spaces designed to be child and youth-friendly in the regions of Dnipro, Rivne, and Chernivtsi.
- MH4U provided support to five policlinics in Lviv to help create sustainable infrastructures for mental health centers. They facilitate the provision of psychosocial and psychiatric care in a community based model of care.

SUPPORTED LIVING

MH4U is increasing its engagement and piloting supported living services for persons with disability (PDs) in Kyiv and Lviv, while also undertaking policy work and awareness-raising efforts.

One implementing partner has already opened the first supported living service and in the following period the project will focus on building capacities of NGOs that develop supported living initiatives.

WAY FORWARD

- Advocate and support a favorable legal framework for evidence-based community mental health services.
- Establish inter-sectoral cooperation mechanisms to address mental health issues collaboratively.
- Engage local decision makers through advocacy events to expand intervention areas.
- Support the development of local action plans and enhance the capacity of mental health service providers.
- Continuously promote anti-stigma initiatives in mental health.
- Refine a community model of care for nationwide scalability.
- Advocate for deinstitutionalization and alternative supported living services.
- Drive transformative changes in the mental health system to improve accessibility for individuals with mental health disorders in Ukraine.