

Executive Summary:
**Mapping the path: Navigating Monitoring and Evaluation Challenges and Solutions in
Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Across Red Cross-National Societies**

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) interventions are increasingly recognized as vital in humanitarian responses to wars, crises, and natural disasters. However, the systematic monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of these interventions, often remains limited and faces significant challenges.

What We Know About M&E in MHPSS:

While MHPSS is gaining traction among NGOs, including the RCRC Movement, the integration of M&E remains inconsistent. Although academic literature has focused on individual therapy on the top layer of the [MHPSS Framework](#), most on-the-ground interventions target broader psychosocial support (PSS) on the lower levels of the pyramid. However, these PSS interventions are not systematically monitored or evaluated, raising concerns about their effectiveness. The core question remains: Are PSS interventions, such as Psychological First Aid (PFA) activities effective, and how can we know without M&E?

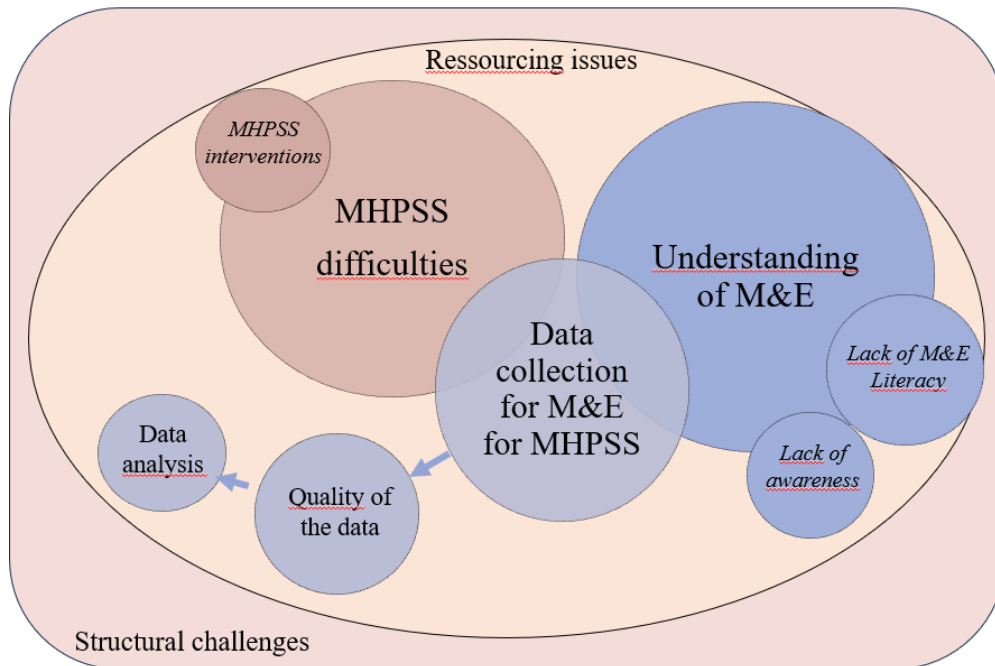
Research Context:

This work, conducted within the framework of Priority Action Area 4 of the [MHPSS Roadmap](#) on demonstrating the impact of MHPSS interventions through research, evidence, monitoring and evaluation, has three objectives:

1. Identify the specific challenges related to M&E in MHPSS faced by "beginner" National Societies (NS) at the intervention level and understand the barriers preventing systematic monitoring and evaluation.
2. Highlight and analyse successful M&E approaches adopted by "champion" NS to identify best practices and strategies that can be adapted and implemented by other NS.
3. Determine the requirements and conditions necessary for NS to overcome M&E challenges and build effective, sustainable M&E systems for MHPSS interventions.

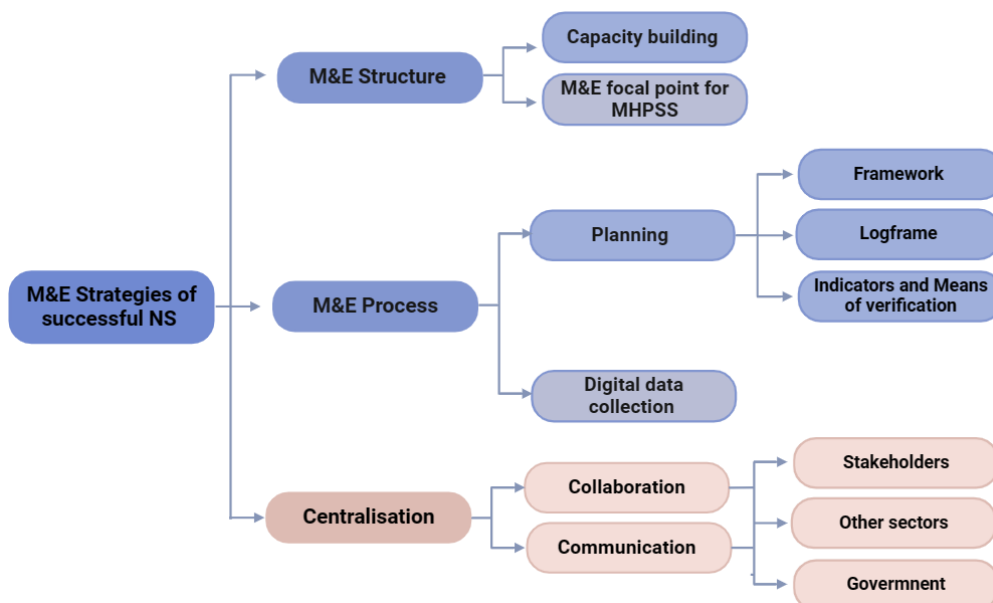
This analysis is based on a combination of literature review and nine interviews with representatives from two "beginner" NS in M&E for MHPSS (e.g., Swiss Red Cross, Cameroon Red Cross) and two "champion" NS (e.g., Kenyan Red Cross, Australian Red Cross).

Key Challenges for Beginner National Societies:



M&E-specific barriers (in blue) include an inconsistent integration of M&E processes, limited technical capacity, and inadequate tools for assessing psychosocial outcomes. External challenges (in antique pink) encompass structural and resource limitations, such as insufficient funding and weak institutional frameworks for MHPSS. A decentralized structure and internal political issues further complicate MHPSS interventions. Additionally, new initiatives struggle with raising awareness, gaining recognition, and integrating into existing programs. These factors, combined with gaps in MHPSS literacy, data collection, and quality analysis, hinder effective M&E practices.

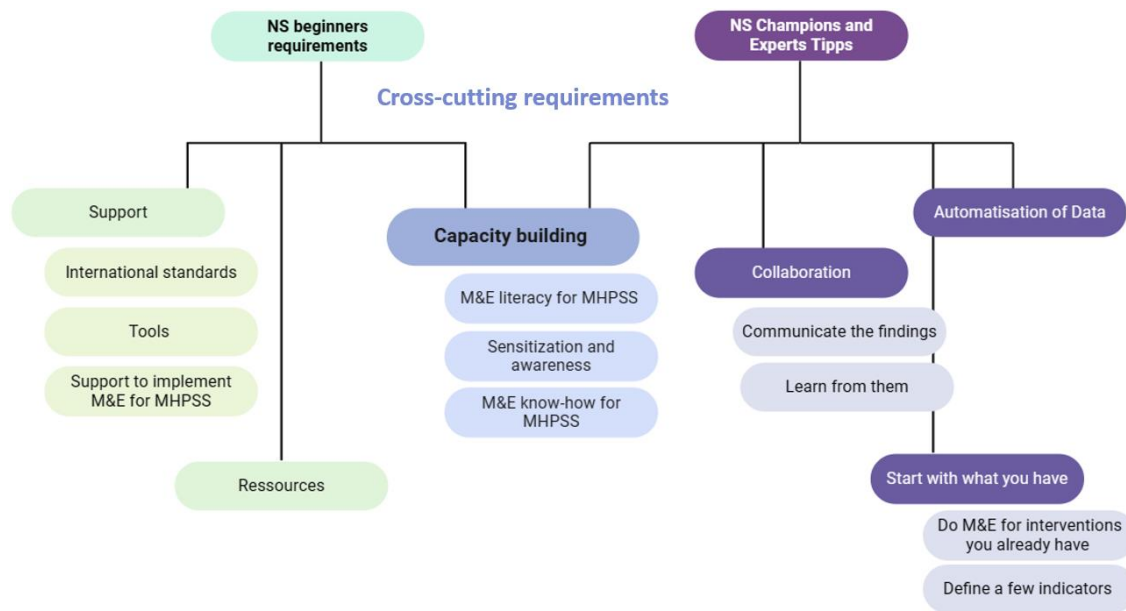
Successful Strategies from Champion National Societies:



M&E-Related Solutions (in blue): Champion NSs have embedded M&E into their organizational culture, including tailored frameworks and capacity-building measures.

External Strategies (in antique pink): Champion NSs have addressed structural challenges through centralized M&E practices that foster collaboration with government entities and stakeholders, aligned with the PMER cycle for comprehensive oversight and mutual learning. This collaboration facilitates the securing of sustainable funding, engages leadership, and advocates for M&E's critical role in ensuring the legitimacy of interventions.

Requirements for Effective M&E in MHPSS:



The needs of NSs engaging in M&E can be categorized into three main themes:

- First, there is a requirement for various forms of support, including the dissemination of best practices, user-friendly tools, and assistance in implementing M&E for MHPSS initiatives.
- Second, adequate financial resources are necessary to enable effective M&E activities.
- Third, there is a collective focus, in collaboration with champions and experts, on capacity-building efforts to enhance skills and expertise in M&E practices.

Next Steps:

To address the barriers and improve M&E practices, several key actions are required:

- **Advocacy:** Continue to promote M&E as a crucial component of MHPSS interventions for effectiveness and accountability.
- **Capacity-Building:** Expand contextualised (online) training resources to equip NSs with the skills needed for effective M&E.
- **Collaboration:** Foster cross-NS collaboration and knowledge exchange (e.g., community of practice), enhancing localized support. Establishing regional MHPSS Hubs could provide localized support, offering tailored resources and guidance to address specific regional and cultural needs and strengthen MHPSS initiatives.
- **Sustainable Funding:** Engage donors in outcome-focused funding discussions, reinforcing the need for M&E integration.
- **Leadership and Academia:** Build stronger collaborations between NSs, leaders, and universities to support ongoing research, close knowledge gaps, and reinforce MHPSS legitimacy.