



International Conference on Mental Health Support in Conflicted Areas

Theme:

Building Resilience of Conflict Affected Vulnerable Groups through Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

February 9th-10th, 2026 in Laguna Grand Hotel & Spa Songkhla, Thailand

A. BACKGROUND

Globally, more than 1.8 billion people live in fragile and conflict-affected settings, where prolonged insecurity, displacement, and armed conflict disrupt daily life and access to essential services (World Bank, 2023). Evidence indicates that approximately one in five individuals in these areas experiences mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety disorders, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (WHO, 2025). The psychological impact of conflict extends beyond the individual level — eroding social cohesion, undermining educational outcomes, reducing workforce participation, and limiting economic productivity. These effects create a cycle of vulnerability that hampers peacebuilding, recovery, and sustainable development.

Addressing mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in fragile settings requires an integrated, multisectoral approach. This means not only strengthening clinical services but also addressing the social determinants of health — such as social exclusion, gender inequality, and limited access to education — that contribute to psychological distress.

In the Deep South of Thailand, more than two decades of protracted conflict have led to significant psychosocial trauma, economic hardship, and intergenerational impacts on affected populations — including children, widows, and entire communities. Initiatives since 2020, supported by the World Bank, Royal Thai Government, and civil society partners, have focused on strengthening psychosocial service delivery, building provider capacity, and piloting interventions linking livelihoods with mental health recovery. These efforts have laid the groundwork for trust-building, improved referral systems, and local leadership engagement to reduce stigma around mental health. However, coverage remains uneven, and scalable, evidence-based models for long-term implementation are still needed.

Against this backdrop, the **International Conference on Mental Health Support in Conflicted Areas** will be convened under the theme **“Building Resilience of Conflict Affected Vulnerable Groups through Mental Health and Psychosocial Support”**. The event is co-hosted by the World Bank Group, and ThaiHealth Academy (THA), Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth)

The conference will take place from February 9th-10th, 2026, in Laguna Grand Hotel & Spa Songkhla, Thailand, serving as a platform to position Thailand’s Deep South experience as a regional case study. By connecting local lessons to global knowledge, the conference aims to catalyze a new phase of evidence-informed, community-centered programming that integrates mental health and livelihood strategies to strengthen resilience in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

B. OBJECTIVES / EXPECTED OUTPUTS OF THE CONFERENCE

Objectives:

- To strengthen participants' understanding of key elements and good practices for delivering psychosocial services in conflict-affected areas.
- To provide a platform for sharing experiences, lessons learned, and practical approaches among national and international experts, practitioners, and organizations.
- To build and expand peer networks to foster collaboration and referral pathways for future psychosocial support initiatives.

Outputs:

- Participants will learn key elements of good practice for delivering psychosocial services in conflict-affected areas.
- Participants will be able to apply and adapt the knowledge and lessons from the conference into their country or local context.
- Participants will build peer-to-peer connections and networks with national and international experts to strengthen future collaboration.

C. LOGISTIC INFORMATION

C.1 Conference Venue;

Laguna Grand Hotel & Spa Songkhla, Thailand

Address. 481/1 Moo2, Phawong, Muang Songkhla, Songkhla 90100

C.2 Contact;

Email: wb_epsadmin@thaihealth.or.th

Website: <https://www.epsproject-tha.com/>

No admission fee for participating in the International Conference.

The host organizations will be responsible only for meeting package, including two coffee breaks and lunch, and welcome reception for the full duration of the conference

Participants are responsible for **all other expenses**, including but not limited to:

1. International and domestic airfare
2. Local transportation costs within their province or country and incurred within Thailand
3. Other related expenses, such as passport issuance, visa fees, health insurance, and incidental costs
4. Hotel accommodation
5. Per diem and personal expenses during the conference period

Participants are kindly requested to make their own travel and accommodation arrangements accordingly.

D. CONFERENCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Day 1: February 9 th ,2026	Program Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program Introduction and Welcome remarks<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Setting the scene: “Regional Imperatives: Mental Health, Psychosocial Support, and Livelihoods in Conflict-Affected Areas”• Keynote Presentation: “Rethinking Psychosocial Support: Integrating Culture, Care, and Livelihoods in Conflict-Affected Areas”• Panel Discussion: “From Blueprint to Impact: Asia Lessons in Planning, Implementing, and Scaling Psychosocial Interventions in Conflict-Affected Area Contexts”<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oral Presentation-Sharing notable examples of case study movements: “From Knowledge to Action: Learning from Asian Best Practices in Psychosocial Services”• Group Dialogue• Welcome Reception
Day 2: February 10 th , 2026	Learning from Best Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group Dialogue : From Dialogue to Policy Pathways• Policy Recommendations



International Conference on Mental Health Support in Conflicted Areas

“Building Resilience of Conflict Affected Communities through Mental Health and Livelihood Support”

February 9th-10th, 2026 in Laguna Grand Hotel & Spa Songkhla, Thailand

Day 1: February 9th, 2026 – Building Shared Understanding and Showcasing Best Practices at Laguna Grand Hotel & Spa Songkhla , Thailand

Time	Topics	Details/Responsible Person(s)	Learning Objectives/Key Message
09.00-09.05	Opening Ceremony	Opening Ceremony	
09.05-09.30	Program Introduction and Welcome Remarks	<p>Program Introduction and Opening Remarks <i>by Dr. Nantawat Sitdhiraksa, Professor in Psychiatry, Mahidol University, Project Director and Managing Director, ThaiHealth Academy</i></p> <p>Group photo All</p>	<p>Introduction of the overall 2-day conference program</p> <p>Welcome and opening of the conference</p>
09.30-10.00	Setting the Tone for Regional Collaboration	<p>“Regional Imperatives: Mental Health, Psychosocial Support, and Livelihoods in Conflict-Affected Areas” <i>by Representative from World Bank</i></p> <p><i>Emphasizes the developmental and economic rationale for integrating MHPSS with livelihood and economic reintegration strategies, highlighting evidence that mental health recovery accelerates socio-economic stability in conflict-affected settings.</i></p>	<p>Setting the Tone for Regional Collaboration —from key representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This international conference represents a key milestone in Thailand’s to strengthen health

10.00-10.15		<p>“Regional Imperatives: Mental Health, Psychosocial Support, and Livelihoods in Conflict-Affected Areas” by <i>Representative from Thailand –TBC</i></p> <p><i>Highlights the role of health systems in institutionalizing psychosocial services through inclusive, accessible, and culturally responsive referral systems.</i></p> <p><i>Focuses on operationalization and sustainability, ensuring that referral pathways effectively reach vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas.</i></p>	<p>systems and social resilience in conflict-affected areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on years of collaboration between the World Bank, and civil society partners, the conference highlights “the urgent need to integrate mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) with livelihood and economic reintegration strategies” • inclusive referral system
10.15-10.45	Networking Refreshment		
10.45-11.30	Keynote Presentation:	<p>Keynote Presentation: " Rethinking Psychosocial Support: Integrating Culture, Care, and Livelihoods in Conflict-Affected Areas"</p> <p><i>by Dr. Andrea Bruni, the Mental Health Regional Advisor, WHO South-East Asia Regional Office</i></p> <p>Goal: This session will offer practical pathways for countries seeking to build integrated, multi-sectoral, and culturally grounded MHPSS systems in conflict-affected contexts.</p>	<p>In this keynote, Dr. Andrea Bruni, Mental Health Regional Advisor at the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office, will explore how global mental health systems are being reimagined through a rights-based, person-centered, and community-driven approach.</p> <p>Drawing from the latest WHO policies and regional guidance, he will highlight the critical shift toward culturally responsive, community-based psychosocial support in conflict-affected areas, emphasizing empowerment, inclusion, and the reduction of social and structural inequalities. Dr. Bruni will also underscore the importance of integrating mental health with livelihood recovery and key government sectors to</p>

			address the social determinants of distress and strengthen long-term resilience.
11.30-12.30	Panel Discussion	<p>Panel Discussion: “From Blueprint to Impact: Asia Lessons in Planning, Implementing, and Scaling Psychosocial Interventions in Conflict-Affected Area Contexts”</p> <p>Panel Discussion of multisectoral speakers sharing notable examples of psychosocial services movements in Asia context (deep dive into how to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate the movements)</p> <p>Panelist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dr. Katy Robjant, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Vice president of vivo international</i> • <i>Dr. Nantawat Sitdhiraksa, Professor in Psychiatry, Mahidol University, Project Director and Managing Director, ThaiHealth Academy</i> • <i>International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)’s representative (TBC)</i> <p>Moderated by <i>Bon Jakobsen</i></p>	<p>To examine experiences and notable examples of psychosocial service delivery in conflict-affected settings, with a focus on multisectoral collaboration and evidence-based approaches to planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.</p> <p>To critically examine the key challenges and persistent barriers in delivering psychosocial services in conflict-affected settings, with particular attention to gaps between program design, implementation, and long-term sustainability.</p>
12.30-14.00	Healthy Lunch - Poster Presentations and Referral System Board		
14.00-16.30	Oral Presentations	<p>From Knowledge to Action: Learning from Asian Best Practices in Psychosocial Services</p> <p>Sharing notable examples of case study movements in Asia. Each presenter will deliver a 30-minute presentation, sharing practical experiences, key challenges, and outcomes to translate</p>	<p>This session brings together case studies from across Asia, including Thailand’s Deep South and other conflict-affected contexts, to examine how community-centered psychosocial services are designed, implemented, and sustained in practice.</p>

		<p>knowledge into actionable insights for programs, and frontline practice. <i>(Each presenter will deliver a 30-minute presentation)</i></p> <p>Representatives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Thailand</i> 2. <i>Philippines</i> 3. <i>Sri Lanka</i> 4. <i>Myanmar</i> 	<p>Speakers will share operational experiences, challenges, and outcomes, with a particular focus on trust-building, cultural responsiveness, and community engagement.</p> <p>Through comparative learning across countries, the session aims to move beyond theory toward actionable insights that can inform policy, program design, and frontline practice in diverse conflict-affected settings.</p>
16.30-16.45	Light Refreshment		
16.45-18.00	<p>Group Dialogue (Issue based)</p>	<p>Groups of 9–10 participants will be formed around specific thematic issues relevant to the project</p> <p>Each table will be facilitated to guide discussion, with participants rotating after each round to build on others’ ideas.</p> <p>Guiding Questions (for all tables)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the top 3 challenges in promoting psychosocial well-being and sustainable livelihoods in your country or region? • What interventions or approaches could effectively address these challenges? • How can these (mental health, livelihood, and resilience strategies) be better integrated to support conflict-affected area? 	<p>This Group Dialogue session is designed in a World Café format, enabling participants to engage in rotating, issue-based discussions that foster cross-regional learning and co-creation of solutions.</p> <p>Groups of 9–10 participants will be formed around specific thematic issues relevant to the project (e.g., stigma reduction, referral systems, livelihood integration, youth and children, or women in conflict-affected settings). Each table will be facilitated to guide discussion, with participants rotating after each round to build on others’ ideas.</p> <p>Issue based: Table</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can policymakers do to strengthen systems-level responses? <p>Format & Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round 1: Identify challenges (20 minutes) • Round 2: Share and refine interventions (20 minutes) <p>Harvesting Session: A facilitator from each table will deliver a 2–3 minute presentation summarizing the key challenges and proposed interventions.</p> <p>Expected Takeaways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3–5 actionable insights that participants can bring back to their own contexts. • Strengthened understanding of how knowledge sharing can inform scaling up evidence-based psychosocial and livelihood programming. • A collective synthesis of regionally relevant, community-centered strategies for mental health and resilience. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mental Health 2. Livelihood 3. Resilience 4. Referral System 5. Community Healing , Culture, Family 6. Youth & Education 7. Gender & Empowerment 8. Reintegration
19.00-20.30		<p>Welcome Reception</p> <p><i>Welcome remarks: by Dr. Prakasit Kayasith, CEO Assistant at Thai Health Promotion Foundation and Project Director (TBC)</i></p> <p>Venue: Laguna Grand Hotel & Spa Songkhla, Thailand</p>	<i>Dress code: Casual</i>

Day 2: February 10 th , 2026			
09.00-12.00	<p>Group Dialogue Summary Presentation</p> <p>Policy Recommendations</p>	<p>From Dialogue to Policy Pathways Presentations from participant representatives, who will share the outcomes of their small-group dialogues from Day 1</p> <p>Policy Recommendations: Policy maker will engage in a reflective discussion to synthesize insights into actionable policy recommendations, and outlining future directions for collaborative, multisectoral action.</p>	<p>The session aims to translate practitioner-level experiences into concrete policy directions and identify future pathways for collaborative, multisectoral action to strengthen the resilience and wellbeing of conflict-affected area.</p>
12.00-12.30	Closing Ceremony		
12.30-14.00	Healthy Lunch		



International Conference on Mental Health Support In Conflict Areas

Building Resilience of Conflict Affected Vulnerable Groups
Through Mental Health and Psychosocial Support