



Annual Report 2022

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Message from the Board

We are delighted to present the Annual report of 2022. This year we have observed an increased interest in Community Based Sociotherapy as an evidence-based methodology in the field of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and Peacebuilding, and an increasing demand for training and expertise. It was an exciting year filled with cultivating skills of new facilitators and strengthening Community Based Sociotherapy (CBS) skills and knowledge of professionals in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda and Liberia. We have established new partnerships and reinforced existing ones.

At an organizational level, Institute for Community Based Sociotherapy (ICBS) has made some important changes as well. An incredible team of people are committed and ready to transform ICBS into an organization ready to grow stronger while leading the organisation in line with the principles of community-based sociotherapy. Practically, this means aiming for a democratic, less hierarchical, inclusive and transparent organizational structure, processes and culture. We are currently in a transitional phase, where the acting board members are gradually handing over tasks and responsibilities to a new independent supervisory board.

In line with these developments, we decided to change our name to Institute for Community Based Sociotherapy (ICBS). The rationale behind this decision is that the term “international” is perceived as hierarchical and embedded in the assumption that “international” is better than “local”, a perspective which we oppose. The change of our name will be fully visible in the coming year, as it will come with changes in our logo, website and email addresses.

While so many positive changes are taking place, we would like to express our gratitude to all those who have contributed to our work in 2022. We have worked with several volunteers, assisting us with legal and financial support. We made the first steps in changing our website, which will be continued in 2023. We are thankful for the collaboration with donors to start new community based sociotherapy projects in various countries. The new board members, who have already provided so much inspiration and input to the projects in development and the organizational structure we are changing. A special thanks to our partners and members, who are doing incredible impactful work in their respective communities and who are contributing to dissemination of knowledge and skills. We are looking forward to a new year in which we can continue to contribute to the knowledge exchange on community based sociotherapy methodology worldwide.

On behalf of the Supervisory Board

Carolien Grootendorst



Our Mission

To contribute to the psychosocial well-being of people living in areas that are disrupted by humanitarian crises, by providing access to community-based sociotherapy: a methodology based on group dynamics that strengthens and restores feelings of safety, trust, and dignity and contributes to social cohesion in the community

Our Vision

People whose lives have been disrupted by war, violence, natural disasters, or other daily stress factors have the ability to live their lives in peace and to have meaningful relationships in their social environment

Our Strategy

ICBS provides support to organizations worldwide on training of sociotherapy facilitators and trainers, program and project development, contextualization of the approach, fundraising, monitoring, evaluation and research about the effects of CBS in communities. ICBS works according to the quality criteria laid down in the Handbook “Training in Community-based Sociotherapy” developed by Cora Dekker in 2018.

ICBS aims to further develop and share quality standards in order to guide implementing organizations in doing their work according to evidence-based standards, ensuring that people participating in CBS receive the highest quality service.

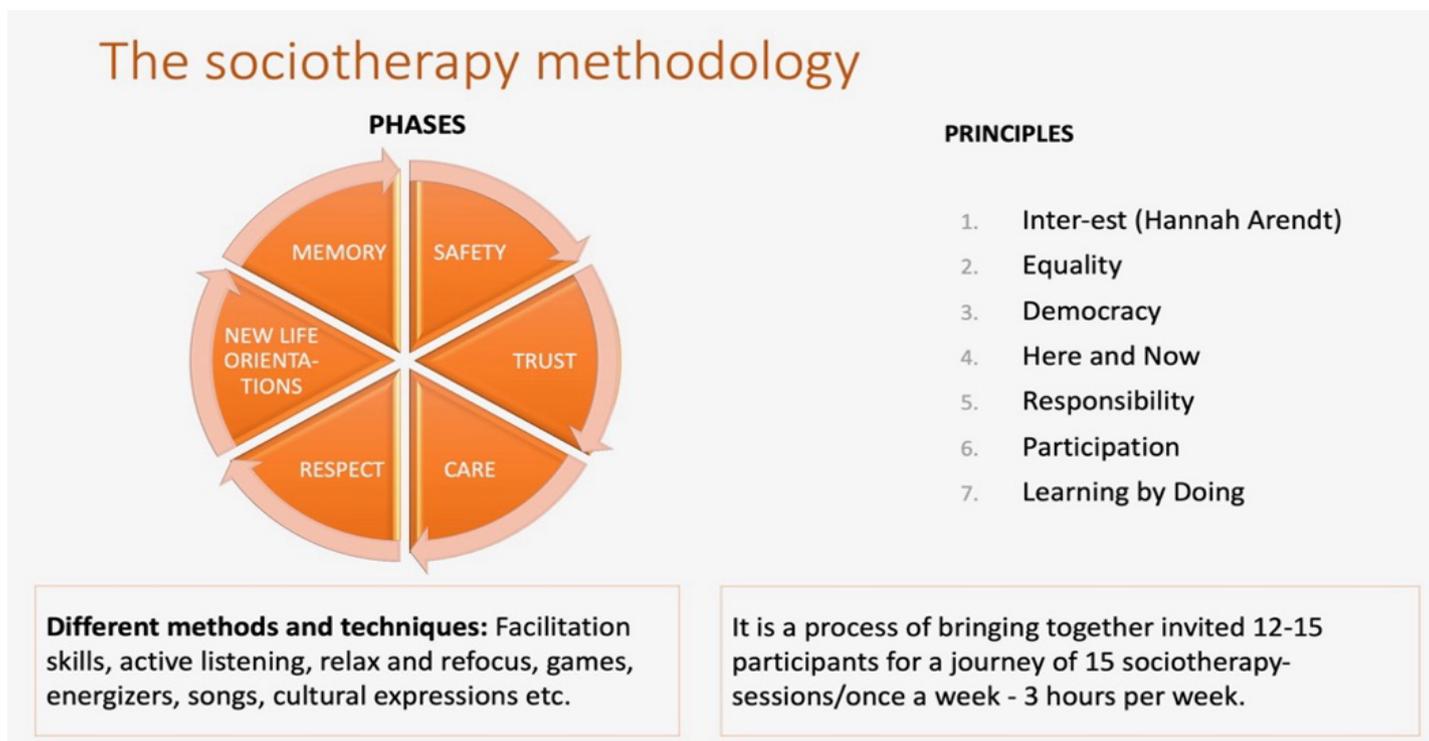
Practically, ICBS reaches its objectives through the following strategies:

- Develop and promote quality standards and organizational systems based on the philosophy of CBS;
- Facilitating access to a database of training manuals, CBS guidelines, research reports and other relevant documentation;
- Facilitate a network and database of CBS professionals;
- Facilitate training for trainers and facilitators in facilitating the CBS method;
- Supporting partners worldwide in project design, implementation and monitoring & evaluation of CBS projects.
- Developing localized research approaches and tools and conducting research to increase the understanding of how CBS works as an integrated MHPSS and peacebuilding approach.

The Community Based Sociotherapy methodology

Community-based sociotherapy (CBS) is a psychosocial methodology aiming at restoring and strengthening safety, trust, dignity and social cohesion in societies affected by violent conflicts or natural disasters. CBS is a method that is carried out in groups of 10-15 people who voluntarily participate, facilitated by two trained facilitators. The facilitators, who guide the groups, are selected based on selection criteria. The facilitators originate from the communities where the methodology is applied, therefore they have a profound understanding of the cultural sensitivities in this area. The CBS cycle lasts 15 weeks, during which the group goes through six phases: safety, trust, care, respect, new life orientations, and processing emotional memories. The method is based on seven principles that recur throughout the 15 weeks in all exercises and steps that the group makes. The seven principles are: equality, democracy, participation, responsibility, here and now, learning by doing, and inter-est.

The community-based sociotherapy method was developed by Cora Dekker together with the team from the Anglican Church of Rwanda, Byumba Diocese. CBS was implemented in Rwanda for the first time in 2005. Since then, the method has been implemented, adapted and evaluated in various regions in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and Uganda.



Community based sociotherapy contributes to the psychosocial wellbeing of people whose lives are affected by conflict, war and/or natural disaster. It facilitates a process of healing, interpersonal reconciliation and social cohesion (psychosocial peacebuilding). The sociogroup is used as a therapeutic medium to establish a safe environment for discussion and participation, trust building, peer support and building relationships, increasing problem solving capacity within the social fabric, and (re-)discovery of meaningful perspectives.

A year in action

Growing Capabilities of CBS Implementers

Ethiopia

In 2021, ICBS was invited by ZOA Ethiopia to provide the first CBS basic training in Gambella. Since then, the trained facilitators have been facilitating community-based sociotherapy groups in the region. In 2022, ICBS provided an intermediate training in CBS in Gambella for 22 facilitators and 5 ZOA staff members. The aim of the intermediate training is to reflect on the experiences gained by the sociotherapy facilitators during the first cycles of sociotherapy. The trainers look back with the facilitators at the difficulties they encountered and create space to discuss these during the training. Important topics from the basic training are addressed based on the facilitation experience and new topics are introduced. Important changes took place during the training such as open attitudes and newly established relationships among the facilitators. Facilitators were also able to reflect on changes observed in the communities they are working with. During the training crucial topics that may arise during the CBS process were discussed. This includes receiving and addressing a variety of strong emotional experiences by participants such as crying or remaining silent during the session. Confronting challenging past and renegotiating relationships requires emotional processing that may trigger a variety of responses. It is common for some people to prefer silence especially during first weeks of group work as the group is still establishing safety and trust. Crying indicates a perception of safety and trust that those feelings and expressions are welcome and can be held by the group.



Relax and refocus exercise "greeting the neighbor from the other hill"

Some challenges were experienced by the implementers with regard to administration and logistics. Recommendations for improvements were formulated in the training report, so that the challenges can be appropriately addressed.

Advanced training was also scheduled for 2022. However, due to the staff turnover at the implementing organization the training was postponed.

"There is a man who has two wives who used to live in conflict but today, they have changed, they live peacefully, and they said it themselves" (a facilitator said, one of the wives joined the sociotherapy group)

A training in CBS M&E also took place with the objective to grow ZOA's capabilities in development and implementation of evidence-based monitoring and evaluation of CBS. The training consisted of a 5-day training, focusing on development of a M&E plan, including a theory of change, quantitative and qualitative tools, and preparing focus group discussions, which was also practiced during field visits that were part of the training. An extensive training report, including tools were shared with ZOA to further the roll out of the M&E plan.

Liberia

The implementing partner ZOA in Liberia was closing its country office by the end of 2022. A support visit was carried out with several objectives to promote sustainability of the methodology following ZOA's departure.

A Training of Trainers for 8 CBS trainers took place to prepare for the follow up training for local leaders and officials on CBS. The objectives of the training were to refresh the knowledge and skills of the local leaders acquired during the basic training. This included a review of good governance and CBS principles application and practice by local leaders in their workplaces. It also aimed to deepen the understanding of the CBS methodology. A training module was developed on CBS for leaders and government officials. The training module included a tailor-made program to inform local leaders and government officials on the CBS methodology, how it is applied in the Liberian context, and what the benefits are according to participants.

Another objective of the visit was to provide support to the CBS trainers in establishing their own organization in Liberia. CBS was introduced in Liberia in 2013. Several facilitators became CBS trainers over the past few years and inspired by the methodology felt the need to organize themselves and register the organization in Liberia to be able to continue working as CBS trainers.

The visit also provided support with a review of CBS in schools for Peace Club members initiative. The Peace Clubs are youth groups at schools supported by YMCA (one of the partners in Liberia). ZOA and YMCA introduced CBS to Peace Clubs and requested ICBS to review the application of the methodology for further improvements.

Finally, ICBS provided some additional on the job capacity strengthening of facilitators where needed. Although the partner ZOA will close the office, ICBS will remain connected to the CBS trainers who are establishing an organization focusing on CBS, with YMCA who have been running CBS projects as well and the newly established organization Sustaining Peace through Development Initiatives (SPDI), initiated by some former ZOA staff to be able to continue some of the impactful in the region.



TOT CBS for local leaders

South Sudan

ICBS has supported ZOA-DORCAS and partner AWACE in Bor to start a new CBS project. The first visit was the inception visit. The 10-day visit focused on meeting relevant stakeholders, organizations, staff and holding focus group discussions in the communities where CBS would take place. The meetings and activities were a joint effort of ICBS and the implementing organizations. The objective of the inception period is to understand the local context where the CBS methodology will be introduced. Before doing so, it is important to meet the people involved and the communities where CBS will take place. The meetings held during the inception inform the trainers on particularities relevant for development of the training manual (which remains adaptable throughout the training). Important factors explored are conflict dynamics at community level, communication, culture, language (both the type of languages spoken, but also exploring the meaning of certain definitions that are a part of the training). The foundation was built to support the planned CBS intervention later this year.

The basic training was conducted between March and April for 24 facilitators, 1 delegate from the Peace and Reconciliation Committee, 1 delegate from the Ministry of Peacebuilding, 2 AWACE staff members and 3 ZOA staff members. The training was provided to 2 groups simultaneously. The engagement and commitment of the participants was very strong, and facilitators have expressed their appreciation for the new insights they gained.

“I used to make decisions alone all along, but I have realized that involving my family members would give us a bright and concrete decision... I also learnt that admitting your mistake opens up ways to reconnection with people around you” (facilitator South Sudan)

The intermediate training took place between August and September. The engagement at the intermediate training was inspiring and facilitators became well prepared to start the second cycle of sociotherapy sessions.



Drawing as one - exercise to reflect on working relationships

“In our group the older female participants acknowledged that they used to blame the younger generation for their behaving for not respecting their culture, they would talk about them instead of talking to them. After discussing the Onion Diagram, they started to open the discussion with them to better understand each other and communication is improving” (facilitator, Anyidi)

Uganda

In Uganda ICBS works together with TPO Uganda to introduce CBS in refugee settings in West Nile and South West Region in Uganda, funded by UNHCR. The inception was conducted by 2 experienced trainers in both regions. During the inception, various meetings were organized with stakeholders in the different areas to connect to the communities where CBS would be introduced, to understand the dynamics in the community and settlements, to understand the languages spoken and explore definitions used for topics recurring during the CBS training. Based on the information gathered and relationships build, preparations for the development of the basic training started.

The partner intends to gradually expand the CBS approach to more regions. Observations and challenges were recorded, and mitigation strategies discussed with the implementing partner. Immediately after the inception, the basic training started. The training took place in the refugee settlements Rhino Camp, Imvepi (Northern Uganda) and Nakivale (South West Uganda) simultaneously, conducted by 4 trainers. The training was well received by the newly recruited facilitators.

“Because of lack of trust, I was like living in my own settlement-while surrounded by communities (many and different tribes) I knew I could not trust and they could not trust me. For many days I could not sleep because I felt not safe-and there is no doubt many people are still like me before I gain from sociotherapy. Here in the training a lot has changed, I can trust and hope with sociotherapy- the wished changes where we can cohabitate will become reality.”(male trainee, Nakivale)



Facilitator meeting in Rhino settlement

A planning for the first cycle was made and the intermediate training was planned once the first cycle is completed. The intermediate training took place between July and August. This intermediate training has strengthened the knowledge and skills and resulted in increased confidence of the facilitators. Also, during this time attention was paid attention to address challenges and planning for the coming period. With the ambitions of TPO Uganda to further expand the CBS methodology, an advanced training and training of trainers is planned for 2023. An extensive report with observations and recommendations has been shared to continue to improve the CBS project in Uganda.

“In our community there was a father who had a young child, he did not care for his child and people in his neighborhood were taking the child in and feeding it. The father was drunk most of the time and did not take care of himself and his child. I kept inviting the father to the sociotherapy group and finally convinced him to join at the third session. Since that session he gained interest and stayed until the 15th week. He started to take care of himself and his child. He became a true inspiration of the community; his neighbors were very surprised at his complete change” (Female facilitator, Rhino Camp)

Knowledge Exchange

ICBS participated in multiple fora and conferences related to MHPSS and Peacebuilding. The overall goal was to exchange knowledge and expertise with other organizations and academics working in, or studying, (post)conflict or disaster affected areas. A selection of the different symposia is presented below.

World Congress of the World Association of Cultural Psychiatry

ICBS presented perspectives on resilience and reconciliation in the aftermath of disaster, with CBS approach as an example of an effective group intervention.

Management Team conference ZOA country directors

ICBS was invited to a Management Team conference for ZOA directors to present the work of ICBS and our experiences with CBS as part of various ZOA projects. The aim was for Country Directors to familiarize themselves with the CBS to be able to determine whether it would be a valuable addition in any of the country programme.

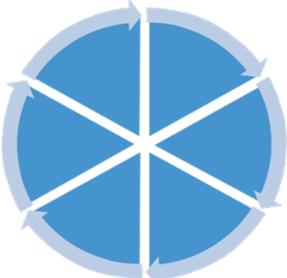
Community Based Sociotherapy Conference 2022 - Beyond Trauma: Intergenerational Healing and Community Reconciliation in the Great Lakes Region

Some CBS staff attended the conference online, another board member physically represented ICBS at the conference aimed at exchanging knowledge and experience with CBS.

The ICBS Network

In 2022, ICBS has built new partnerships with TPO Uganda, AWACE in South Sudan, and ZOA South Sudan. The aim is to establish long-term partnerships to amplify the impact of CBS.

Our current network members:

Africa Restoring Bridges Initiative (ARBI) – DR Congo	
	<p>ARBI is an NGO led by committed humanitarians committed to breaking the cycle of violence in communities affected by ethnic, socio-political, ideo-religious, cultural and racial violence (The organisation was founded in 2011 in response to the successive wars in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo.</p> <p>ARBI's vision is to see healed, reconciled and prosperous communities living together in peace in the DRC and other affected regions of Africa. CBS is one of the approaches that ABRI applies to accompany communities in driving a peaceful future.</p>
Community Based Sociotherapy Rwanda	
	<p>Community Based Sociotherapy Rwanda has been founded in 2016 with the aim to build upon successes of past CBS initiatives.</p> <p>CBS Rwanda aims at being a knowledge, training, research and coordination center, supporting organizations that are using the community-based sociotherapy approach in Rwanda and beyond, with the purpose of assuring that the quality and integrity of the method can be preserved. CBS Rwanda builds strategic partnerships with universities and research institutions to further develop the evidence and knowledge base on CBS and its contribution to peacebuilding, psychosocial wellbeing and transitional justice processes.</p>
Duhumurizanye Iwacu Rwanda	
	<p>Duhumurizanye Iwacu Rwanda (DIR), a Community Transformation and Development Institute (CTDI) is a non-profit civil society organization based in Nyamata Sector, Bugesera District. Its motto is <i>"You heal me, I heal you, we care for each other! Together we are empowered towards our own sustainable peace and development"</i>. The organization was founded in 2008 by a group of dynamic and like-minded sociotherapists to address the needs of communities in Bugesera.</p> <p>DIR is implementing community based sociotherapy, livelihood and community development, advocacy, training and research programs. The organization pioneered the use of sociotherapy as a tool to bring unity, healing and reconciliation in four refugee camps hosting Congolese refugees, including Nyabiheke, Kiziba, Kigeme and Mugombwa since 2015.</p>
Paix et Développement Durable (PDD)	
	<p>Located in Bukavu, South Kivu, in the East of DRC, Paix et Développement Durable (PDD) is a non-denominational and non-political NGO, working for the restoration of human dignity, and the trust and confidence of people in post conflicts areas. It was founded in 2014 by a group of sociotherapists.</p> <p>The organization is currently working in Kalehe, Idjwi and Walungu territories where it has introduced the community-based sociotherapy approach in the context of different projects with its international partners. The organization has gained attention of numerous partners based on the results it has attained through the sociotherapy approach.</p>

Sustaining Peace through Development Initiatives (SPDI)

Sustaining Peace
through

Sustaining Peace through Development Initiatives (SPDI) was founded and legally registered in May 2021 by Liberians working with ZOA Liberia as ZOA phased out of Liberia. This effort is geared towards promoting continuity, sustainability, and localization.

SPDI is a part of the Liberian civil society network working on issues of peacebuilding. SPDI is also a strategic partner to the Liberia Peacebuilding Office (PBO), a government agency situated in the Ministry of Internal Affairs that coordinates peacebuilding work across the governmental institutions.

Eglise Anglican au Rwanda Diocese Byumba (EAR-D/Byumba)

EAR-D/Byumba was established during the Rwandan civil war in 1991. At the time, Byumba was an area where many internally displaced Rwandans were seeking shelter. In the beginning the Diocese's major aim was to feed and support the internally displaced. During the 1994 genocide Byumba became a battlefield. From 2004 onwards, the Diocese' activities shifted from relief interventions to sustainable development projects. These socio-economic activities are still one of the two spearheads of the Diocese; the other one is sociotherapy, which became part of the Diocese's main activities in 2005.

Sociotherapy approach was introduced in Rwanda in 2005 from Netherlands. In Netherlands it was implemented in clinical setting while in Rwanda it was adapted to become a community-based approach. In the process of adapting the approach, it was implemented by the Anglican Church of Rwanda Byumba Diocese (EAR-D/Byumba) in collaboration with the Dutch sociotherapy professional, the late Dr. Cora Dekker and researcher, Prof. Annemiek Richters. Since 2005 E.A.R. Byumba Diocese has not only been the pioneer of the Community based Sociotherapy in Rwanda, but also one of the key organizations implementing the approach around the country and in the region.

Meet the Supervisory Board

With the growing number of projects being implemented by ICBS we recognized the need to change the organizational structure. Most of the management work was done by the three founders and board members of ICBS. In 2022 we have made effort in recruiting independent board members. This resulted in engagement of 5 new board members who are officially taking over the positions in the Supervisory Board in 2023.

Moses Mukasa Bwesige



Moses serves as Chair of the Board. He brings extensive expertise in the field of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in humanitarian settings and a strong network of professionals in the Great Lakes Region. In his decade long experience he has focused on community-based psychosocial support and suicide prevention. He holds a Master of Science in Clinical Psychology and a Master of Arts in Public Health.

Annemiek Richters



Annemiek is professor emerita in culture, health and illness at the Leiden University Medical Center and a staff member of the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research, University of Amsterdam. Her work took her around the world, working in the fields of medicine, society, gender, and violence. Annemiek has made substantive contributions to leadership development in community-based sociotherapy. Much of her research over the past years focuses on themes that emerged from practice of sociotherapy in post-conflict societies.

Christine Ogutu



Christine is a finance specialist with more than 15 years of experience in non-profit accounting and financial management. She has worked around the world on financial compliance, risk management and business analysis in support of humanitarian operations. Christine serves as the board treasurer. She holds a Master's in Business Administration in Strategic Management and is a Certified Public Accountant.

Nina Goričar



Nina is an aid professional with over 15 years of experience in humanitarian and post-conflict settings. She specializes in organizational development and quality, integrity and accountability systems. She brings a passion for inclusive and people-centered leadership, fostering cultures of belonging and has a keen interest in new models of global solidarity. Nina serves as the board secretary. She holds a Master of Arts in Decolonial Thought.

Hendrik Kaptein



Hendrik is associate professor emeritus of jurisprudence at Leiden University. He taught and published on criminal law theory, legal ethics and argumentation, rhetoric and logic. Part of his teaching and research is devoted to peace building rhetoric and its practical principles. Hendrik is an active board member / treasurer of a number of non-profit organizations. His forthcoming book is a guide to non-profit financial administration.

A special Thank You

In 2022, ICBS has worked with a number of volunteers through “De Nieuwe Gevers”, a company facilitating a network of volunteers, who provide their expertise for specific tasks. We have worked with several volunteers on different subjects.

1. A legal advisor supported us with improving our contracts. We have reviewed all existing contracts and completed our collaboration with drafting a new contract template for future contracts with partners and consultants.
2. A financial advisor assisted ICBS with drafting the financial report 2021 in collaboration with our treasurer.
3. A communication advisor supported us in drafting a communication plan.
4. A communication expert provided support with review of our website based on stakeholder consultation. A new website design has been developed as a result, which will be implemented in 2023.

Looking ahead

When looking ahead, ICBS is working on developing itself at various levels. First, ICBS has the ambition to work on development of its organizational capacity. We are currently establishing a new supervisory board and re-structuring the organization. Until date, we have been operating as a start-up and we are now ready to take ICBS to the next level. We have visualized organizational development plan in the figure below.



We are initiating a new governance structure, inspired by sociocracy and self-managing teams. Our updated strategy provides further detail on our structure and the principles behind it. The key objective for 2023 is to implement this new structure and adapt and improve based on trial and error. We are preparing ourselves for the next years aiming to build a small but strong intercontinental team of committed staff working towards building a knowledge institute for CBS professionals worldwide.

ICBS will also work on communication strategy over the coming year with the aim to better connect to other professionals, donors, facilitators and trainers working at the intersection of MHPSS and peacebuilding.