Seamless MHPSS

PROTOTYPE B

APRIL 2021

We are facing a dramatic increase in forceful displacement and migration. Among displaced populations, those who are on the move face greater difficulties in accessing services. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support services (MHPSS) are life saving for those who have experienced extreme adversity before, during, and after migration. The Seamless MHPSS Cross-border Care (CBC) project seeks to identify viable solutions to create a continuum of care along migration routes.

The project consists of four stages:
  1. What is known?
  2. What is being done?
  3. What is the community saying?
  4. Co-design

Through these four stages, the Seamless MHPSS CBC project has attempted to address issues that prevent scale, quality and access to services, including: lack of trained providers, ignorance/non-adherence to MHPSS standards, lack of culturally grounded approaches, and exclusion from available supports due to legal status. And it will also gain insights in the issues that prevent scaling and improving, by asking directly those that are transiting or have transited through the migration routes. This document provides a description of the prototype refinement (see p. 2-5) and a final prototype (as part of the current project) as a suggestion for next steps (see p.6-7).

PROTOTYPE B
A second iteration of the prototype was developed by the project team based on stakeholder feedback and included a more detailed description of each of the components (see Box B and Fig 1).
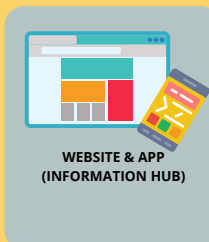
BOX B. PROTOTYPE B COMPONENTS AND DESCRIPTION

CONNECTING LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- virtual and physical platform for organisations to support each other and share experiences/expertise
- increase ease of referrals
- MHPSS training (incentive to join initiative)
- link to peer-to-peer support and virtual counselling
- organisations vetted for joining to ensure they meet a minimum quality of service

MIGRANT SUPPORT

- backpack or website version (through creation of user ID to verifty youth migrant status - via code from local/international organisations)
- information on available services
- language basics
- information on how to talk about experiences and feelings with friends and family
- stories from other youth about their experience of migration
- inclusion of SIM card to provide access to internet and initiative services (backpack only)
- pens and paper (backpack only)

WEBSITE & APP (INFORMATION HUB)

- youth friendly, up-to-date information on relevant services and events
- mobile friendly format with app to allow information to be viewed offline
- links with social media (e.g. Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok)
- link youth and families to local and international organisations
- youth reviews of services (through creation of user ID to verify youth migrant status - via code from local/international organisations)
- virtual connection of organisations to share information on services provided
- virtual connection to existing, relevant online services (e.g. dulingo)

PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT

- secure online portal for youth sharing and support (through creation of user ID to verify youth migrant status - via code from local/international organisations)
- youth trainined in psychological first aid at time of joining
- groups facilitated by trained MHPSS counsellors (sensitive to cultural issues)
- link to physical services to allow youth to meet each other
- support social networks in destination locations

VIRTUAL COUNSELLING

- available outside office hours
- youth referred for counselling by local organisations or peer support MHPSS counsellors
- link to physical services
- possibly provided by local organisations (or in partnership with them)
- ongoing provider training, support and supervision

LISTENING STATION (STORY SHARING)

- curated stories of migration and its impact as told by youth
- option to record one's own story for anonymous inclusion in the story library
- physical pop-up locations along migration routes and in destination locations
- stories also available on social media (e.g Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok) and initiative website

FIGURE 1. PROTOTYPE B ENTRY POINTS AND CARE PATHWAYS

All components of Prototype A, except a visible initiative logo, were deemed important by youth and organisation representative stakeholders. The resulting prototype (Prototype B) focuses on youth focused, and organisational focused interventions to improve MHPSS and support youth in navigating their new environments during and after migration. Organisation representatives stressed the importance of not encouraging youth to migrate and so the majority of prototype components would only be available to youth during migration and settlement. However, the website with information of existing services would be publicly available.

Vital to the provision success of the prototype is the building of a community of local and international organisations under the umbrella f the Youth Together Initiative. Incentives to join the initiative include MHPSS training and support, access to a network of related organisations to foster capacity-building through the sharing of experiences and greater referrals through a unique understanding of the skills and services provided by specific organisations, increased visibility among youth and their families, and access to youth feedback on services for quality assurance and improvement. An initiative joining process would be undertaken to establish the legitimacy of organisations and the type and quality of services they provide. This would act as a quality seal that youth and their families could trust.

Once in contact with organisations linked to the initiative, youth would have access to initiative support materials, provided in a backpack or virtually through the initiative website. In addition to providing relevant information, a pre-paid SIM would be included to enable access to the initiative website and virtual support. Art materials such as pens and paper would also be included to support creative exploration during the migration journey.

The initiatve website would act as an information hub and link to existing services, both virtual and physical, by initiative-linked organisations and others (e.g. government websites, banking, education, language training) relevant to youth on the move. This information would be publicly available. Youth would also have access to a private portal to access peer support and counselling using a secure user ID and password. Accounts are created with the support of staff of initiative-linked organisations. This provides added security through the validation of users as migrating youth. Youth accounts also allow them to provide reviews of organisations and services to help other youth make informed decisions and support organisations in evaluating their services. The website would be mobile friendly and also accessible via an app to ensure access to information when offline. It could developed to work with existing platforms like Miniila app (refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/miniila/), a collaboration between the Refugee Council and others, which provides tailored information for unaccompanied children in migration.

A peer support platform would be available to youth through a third-party provider (e.g. Togetherall, https://togetherall.com/en-gb/). This would allow for peer support facilitated by trained counsellors. Youth would have access to this through their youth account on the initiative website. Those in need of increased support could be provided virtual counselling through the third-party provider or one of the initiative-linked organisations.

Finally a story sharing component would allow youth to hear curated stories by youth on their experiences of migration and, possibly share their own. Stories would be curated by initiative-linked organisations. They would be made available via the initiative website, social media (e.g. Twitter, Instagram and Tiktok), and at phone booths (i.e. listening stations) which would move around initiative-linked organisations. This would provide the storyteller a chance to voice their experience and the listener a chance to learn that they are not alone in their experiences and feelings. This would also increase empathy and

awareness by the general public.

Points of entry for youth into the prototype would be through initial contact with organisations on the ground, the initiative website, or curated stories on social media.

The Seamless MHPSS CBC project has deepened our understanding of the key challenges organisations face in providing continuous and consistent support to youth and their families as well as the barriers youth and families experience in identifying and accessing this support. Through the project prototypes six interventions have been identified which have the potential to address these challenges and barriers: (1) connecting local and international organisations; (2) migrant support; (3) information hub website; (4) peer-to-peer support; (5) virtual counselling; (6) listening stations. Most importantly, these interventions have been identified as essential needs and have the support of stakeholders.

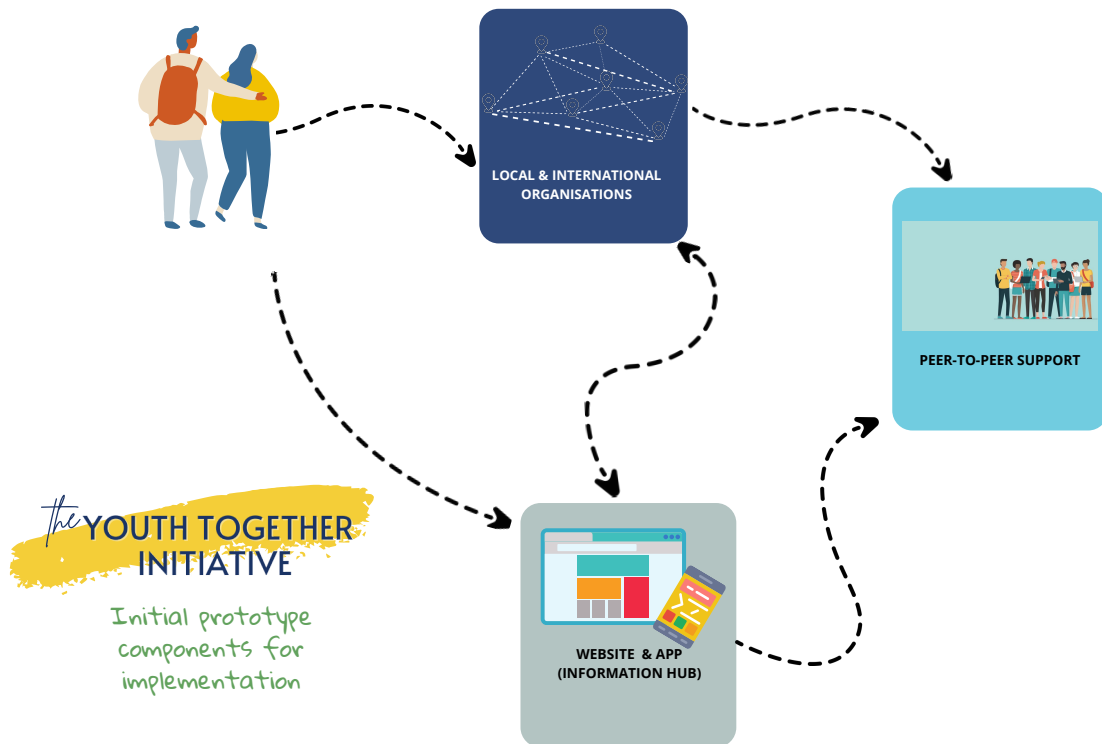Two primary project questions were:

1. How can we bring stakeholders together to efficiently and effectively coordinate responses and ensure quality and continuity of care along routes for migrating children and families?
2. How can children, families and youth initiating migration journeys become aware, as soon as possible in the process, of the potential MHPSS needs they might encounter, the types of support that can be provided and the communication lines that might exist for peer support and specialized support access?

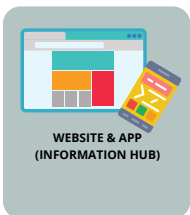In moving forward, it is imperative that we address these two questions by identifying feasible components for short-term (i.e. 1-3 year) scale. Under these constraints we recommend focusing on three interventions in the first instance, with the possibility of extending to the implementation of the remaining interventions in subsequent years (see Fig 2). The connection of local and international organisations, information website and peer-to-peer support platform will provide a strong foundation for youth to identify and interact with services providing quality care and build a social network of other youth with experience of migration.

In order to continue with this work, it is essential that youth be brought on board as members of the development team and further testing and refinement of the prototype take place prior to wider implementation and evaluation. The next questions to consider in development should include:
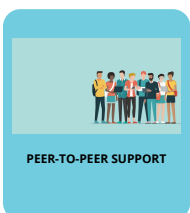
- Which organisation(s) will assume responsibility for the initiative (e.g. development/maintenance of website & app, identifying and vetting organisations for affiliation, training organisation staff in MHPSS, training youth in psychological first aid, facilitating peer support)?
- What are the primary outcomes on which the initiative will be assessed?
- How will the initiative interventions link/partner with existing similar products?

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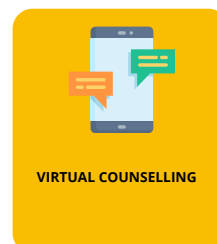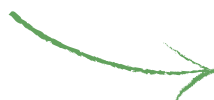- support social networks in destination locations

FIGURE 2. THE YOUTH TOGETHER INITIATIVE OVERVIEW