

Psychosocial support in emergencies in the Baltic Sea Region

Red Cross Baltic Sea Regional PSS Specialist

4 day-training for volunteers and staff experienced in PSS interventions
in the National Societies in the Baltic Sea Region

27-30 October 2020

Minhauzena Unda , Latvia

<https://viesunamiem.lv/en/minhauzena-unda>

Background

The Baltic Sea Region (BSR) covers a significant area of northern Europe and its EU member countries represent nearly a fifth of the EU population. Over the past few years, issues of preparedness have emerged strongly in the region. The region shares common features and challenges, including similar risks of emergencies and crisis that can have national but also regional implications. These include the effects of climate change, socio-economic instability, migration, terrorism and geopolitical tension, as highlighted in several studies. Many of these risks are also noted to be growing. Against a changing risk landscape, there is a need to further develop regional preparedness dimension through enhanced quality and interoperability of response capacities as well as by stronger cooperation with Red Cross and authorities.

In response to civil emergencies and crisis, advanced rescue services typically handle first response. The contemporary role of the Red Cross tends to focus on secondary support functions, such as integrated psychosocial support (PSS), which is part of National Societies capacities and plans in the BSR. People directly and indirectly affected, even though not physically harmed, are often not prioritized by the authorities, that often focuses on rescue activities. In some scenarios, this group could amount to thousands of people, warranting a response that often only the Red Cross with its volunteers can mount.

Aim of the training

Overall aim: To build increased Red Cross capacities and interoperability in Psychosocial Support in emergencies in the Baltic Sea Region.

Specific objective 1): Strengthening course participants' capabilities in PSS methodologies and intervention to a specialist level. The trained volunteers and staff will be able to bring back the PSS technical understanding and methodologies to each of the NSs and give the opportunity to facilitate integration of the regional learnings in the National Societies domestic activities.

Specific objective 2): Strengthening the regional ability to mobilize Baltic Sea Regional PSS specialists in case of emergencies supporting other national societies responses.

By the end of the training, participants will:

- 1) be able to work according to the standard operational procedures and meet criteria as stated in IASC Guidelines Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in emergencies; through introduction to:

Mental health and psychosocial consequences of emergencies

- Assessment of needs and risks also in protection, inclusion and gender
- Planning and launching relevant psychosocial activities for all age groups
- Engaging with Red Cross volunteers as well as spontaneous volunteers
- Ensure knowledge on tracing/Restoring Family Links is disseminated
- Establishing safe spaces in reception centres and organizing psychosocial areas in i.e. shelters
- Liaising with local authorities

- 2) have increased their understanding the respective roles and responsibilities of National Societies respective as regards PSS interventions in emergencies.

Role of PSS Specialists, when regionally deployed

- PSS activities for affected people of own nationality as part of an emergency response operation by a National Society
- Initiation of follow-up activities in own National Society to emergency response activities carried out in another country
- Operational and technical advice to a National Society engaging in PSS activities in a domestic emergency situation
- Supporting preparedness activities as trainings, exchange of experiences and lessons learnt from domestic emergency response situations

Content of training course

In times of a Baltic Sea emergency the psychosocial specialist will be responsible for supporting assessment, planning and leading the psychosocial interventions as part of the emergency responses with the Red Cross response teams and authorities and be able to lead the implementation of volunteer based psychosocial activities in an emergency.

The training will be based on practical exercises, role plays, scenarios mixed with presentations, small and larger group discussions to best prepare PSS responders for working in a field setting. Participants need to dedicate at least a full day for preparation that will be referred to throughout the training.

The training introduces the participants to practical field work as well as planning etc. by focusing on:

Acute phases of accidents and emergencies in Baltic countries

- The auxiliary mandate of the Red Cross in emergencies
- Baltic Sea National Societies' PSS activities and roles in emergencies

Psychological first aid and psychoeducation in Baltic disasters

- Tracing and Restoring Family Links
- Psychosocial support to those experiencing loss and grief
- Psychological first aid in disasters
- Psychoeducation
- Child protection and Safe Spaces in humanitarian settings

Emergencies with longer term impact

- Rapid protection and psychosocial assessments
- Development of assessment questionnaires for different target groups
- Practicing assessment interviews
- Planning PSS interventions for different target groups

Engaging, caring for, training and supervising volunteers

- Support to volunteers - engaging with different categories of volunteers
- Creating a plan for PSS training of volunteers
- Group PFA for staff and volunteers after critical events

Next steps and regional mobilization

- National Society teams plans for next steps in own National Society
- The role of the Baltic Sea Regional PSS specialist

Where and when

The PSS specialist training course will take place in Latvia from 27-30 October 2020 in Minhauzena Unda in Latvia. Arrival of participants either on the 26 October or before noon on the 27 October. Departure will be in the afternoon on the 30 October.

More information on training venue: <https://viesunamiem.lv/en/minhauzena-unda>

Call for applications

Each National Society can nominate two participants, a gender balanced nomination is recommended. The training course is targeted and open to staff and volunteers in accordance with the minimum requirements for selection of candidates.

Minimum requirements for the selected candidates:

- Active volunteer or employee of a National Society with a few years of experience
- Red Cross induction trained and having good knowledge of the Movement
- PSS trained in National Society and preferably also involved in Red Cross activities where PSS intervention and methodology are included
- Ability to communicate effectively
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Good working knowledge of English
- Basic IT skills
- Available for short term regional deployment in case of emergencies or as part of National Societies preparedness cooperation

Application process

Each National Society should carry out their own internal selection process of participants ensuring they are familiar with the above aims, content and expectations.

When relevant participants are selected, application forms and personal CV from each participant are sent to **Susanne Berendt**, sbere@rodekors.dk. **Please note that the deadline for application is 31st of August.**

The course fee (consisting of accommodation fee as well as meals and transport between Riga and Minhauzena Unda Resort) is part of the BALTRPEP budget of each National Society.

More information

For information regarding selection of participants and training course topics please contact technical advisor for the PSS activities Ea Suzanne Akasha eaaka@rodekors.dk phone +45 24457616 or project manager Susanne Berendt sbere@rodekors.dk phone +4523654095.

Practical and logistical information regarding the training in Latvia as well as information on pre-study materials will be forwarded to selected participants before the training

The specialist PSS trainings are funded by the European Commission through a project called: *“Enhancing regional preparedness and response capacity for major accidents in the Baltic Sea region – BALTPREP”* which links seven Red Cross Societies along the Baltic Sea Region.

The participating National Societies are Finnish, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, German, and Danish Red Cross.

Please see the BALTPREP project site: www.redcross.fi/baltprep