

Fostering resilience through faith-based support

EPW core priorities and flagships

Protecting against health emergencies
Promoting health and well-being
The Mental Health Coalition 🇮🇱

WHO collaboration

Facilitating dialogue
Country mission

Since October 2023, the crisis in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory has intensified mental health challenges in both Jewish and Muslim communities. The trauma resulting from the violence, coupled with the stigma surrounding mental ill health, has created barriers to accessing support. The role of trusted religious leaders in such a situation is crucial, but their ability to provide effective mental health guidance was initially limited by a lack of resources and training.

In January 2024 the Regional Office partnered with Mosaica, an Israeli nongovernmental organization (NGO), to engage with over 700 religious leaders in Jewish and Muslim communities. Together, they reached approximately 2 million followers, encouraging them to access mental health support if needed. Additional guidance helped to develop mental health training programmes and facilitate dialogue between religious leaders and trauma psychologists, creating a network for addressing the mental health needs of communities.

The impact

The collaborations yielded tangible and far-reaching results. Over 75 meetings between religious leaders and mental health professionals were organized, resulting in the treatment of over 200 Jewish and Muslim youth who might otherwise have been overlooked. Additionally, more than 2000 young people attended community sessions led by religious leaders, where they learned coping strategies and received guidance on how to access further professional help.

Lessons learned

- Engaging religious leaders was key to increasing acceptance of mental health services and reducing stigma.
- Tailored mental health tools for Jewish and Muslim communities enhanced the effectiveness of interventions and proved key for building social cohesion.
- Flexible outreach strategies, continuous support and relationships built on trust were essential for success in a rapidly evolving environment.

Donors and partners

Mosaica; local religious leaders; mental health networks



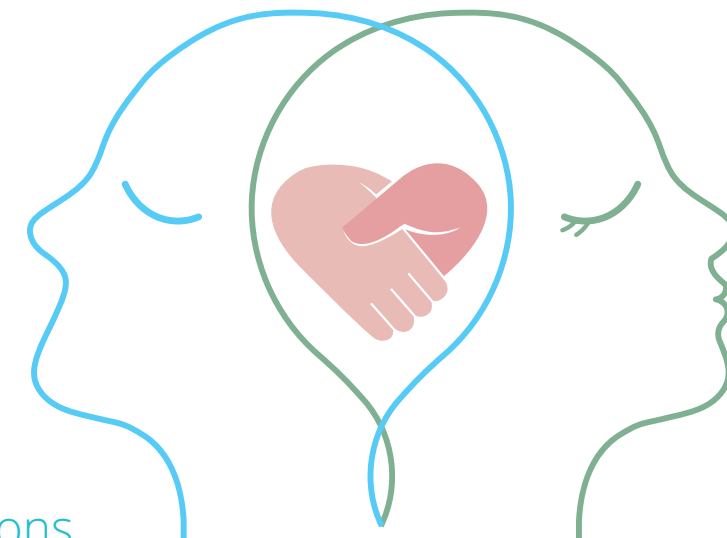
European Region

1500

religious leaders
amplified mental
health messages

100

mental health sessions
conducted in community
centres, mosques and
synagogues



“Thousands have been impacted so far, and the project has answered a need that unfortunately continues to be relevant, so efforts to expand and replicate the model are ongoing.”

Rabbi Dr Daniel Roth, Director of Mosaica, Israel

What's next?

Mosaica plans to expand this model to other sectors of Israeli society. With the Regional Office's continued support, the initiative aims to further empower religious leaders to combat mental health stigma and enhance community resilience in the face of ongoing challenges.