

# Case Study: Ten Lessons Learned while Carrying Out a MHPSS Intervention with War-Affected Children in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2011

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## INTRODUCTION

Protecting and improving people's mental health and psychosocial well-being in humanitarian crises has recently emerged from its 'humanitarian ghetto' (Wessells, 2009) towards acceptance as a fundamental and essential part of any post-humanitarian emergency provision. Yet, this newly emerging field of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) has a long way to go before acceptance and full integration as an evidence-based component of all post-conflict and post-disaster interventions. This is because this incipient field is hampered by gaps in practitioners' field experience (IASC, 2007), a scarcity of rigorously evaluated research studies (Jordans, Tol, Komproe, Lasuba, Ntamutumba, et al. 2010) and inadequate training of international humanitarian psychologists who deliver these MHPSS interventions in the field (Wessells, 2009). In order to avoid the many pitfalls of inadvertently causing harm through good-intentioned yet ultimately detrimental practices, there is a need to incorporate new emerging insights (IASC, 2007) and learn from the experiences and oversights of others.

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## Lesson 1: Do Not Leave your Bags Unattended in an Embassy

Key findings from the case study indicate that leaving bags unattended in an embassy is a significant risk factor for the safety of staff and clients. This lesson emphasizes the importance of maintaining a secure environment and ensuring that all personal and professional belongings are properly secured at all times.

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## Lesson 2: Divide your Money into Small Bundles when Travelling

Key findings from the case study indicate that carrying large amounts of cash is a significant risk factor for the safety of staff and clients. This lesson emphasizes the importance of dividing money into small, secure bundles to minimize the impact of theft or loss.





