



As part of implementing MHPSS pilot services in two target districts – Haripur and Kohat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – 13 Hamdard Force training workshops have been conducted in each district during the month of October, 2025. The training workshops were facilitated by eight trained clinical psychologists from Handicap International and supervised by the MHPSS team at the MHSP&C Unit. The training workshops have been supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through GIZ in Pakistan and its implementing partner, Handicap International.

The objectives of the training workshops were to recruit, train, and mobilize approximately 400 Hamdard Force members across the target districts of Haripur and Kohat to promote accessibility, acceptability, and scalability of mental healthcare at the level of the community. After securing nominations from respective organizations, a total of 435 community mental health workers registered on the MHPSS portal – 331 women and 104 men. More than half of them are healthcare workers, others include teachers, school leaders, university students, community volunteers, and staff of humanitarian agencies. Their ages vary between 19 to 60 years.



So far, 392 have completed the Hamdard Force online courses – 269 have completed the course in Urdu, and 152 in English. After training, they are expected to provide basic psychosocial support in the community settings; identify and refer people with mental healthcare needs through the Hamdard Force mobile application. Each Hamdard Force member received a hard copy of the Hamdard Force Guide as well.



The selection of community members was based on predefined criteria. The minimum educational criteria was high school (equivalent to FA/FSc), but around 50 nominated healthcare workers neither fulfilled this criterion, nor were tech-savvy. As a result, they faced difficulties navigating the digital platforms and the interactive quizzes.

A major barrier for online training was unreliable internet connectivity, which caused repeated login failures and interruptions during course completion. Despite the provision of internet devices by the implementing partner, the issue persisted in the district of Kohat due to security-related restrictions, resulting in significant disruptions and sometimes extending the course duration to almost 6 hours instead of the expected 2-3 hours.