



MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES  
無國界醫生

2025 June Issue

# BORDERLINE

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What if  
**Melodies can Heal**






# Preface

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## Sing for people's wellbeing



In every relief response, each dose of vaccine or medication administered to prevent infectious diseases, every screw inside medical or water facilities, or every leaflet produced for health promotion among local people may not be grand achievements in themselves. But these efforts by our frontline field workers are all part of protecting those in urgent need of medical care, helping them to stay healthy.

And what if we tell you that our field workers will sing, dance and play music on the frontline areas struck by natural disasters, conflicts, or epidemics? Does that fit your expectations of what field workers do?





Music indeed plays a role in our work: we transform lengthy epidemic prevention information into catchy melodies and lyrics that the public can remember; we soothe wounded hearts by playing mellow songs with instruments when people are mentally exhausted and speechless after facing immense trauma; we participate in and even organise musical events to connect with the public, drawing their attention to global crises and get their support for our work of humanitarian issues; when our field workers face too many life-and-death moments with patients, they would immerse themselves in familiar songs after work to alleviate homesickness and remind themselves of their reason for being there.

Consultations, wound dressing, surgeries, drug dispensing.....is that all they do routinely on the front line? In fact, lifesaving work can be delivered in the form of music.



## PART 1 - Community Cohesion

**“Music is a medicine that you cannot find from the doctor. It’s entertaining and at the same time it de-stresses. You feel yourself calm.”**

**Driver and keyboardist of MSF  
Themba Mncube**



In Kwazulu-Natal Province, South Africa, the devastating floods in May 2022 took away many lives. Some locals were still living in the shadow of the flood and were terrified when it rained – they would recall how the water flowed like boiling mud and washed away houses and people.

Themba Mncube is an MSF driver. He said after the floods, the locals were depressed because they used to work hard for themselves, but now they had to depend on aid for a living. MSF’s mental health team therefore brought music to some of the community halls and churches in which those who lost their homes have been sheltering.

“Visit some shelters, you find people there singing, trying to entertain themselves. I play piano, I direct the choir, and I thought about it, then I said, ‘Maybe we can go a long way, supporting those people.’”



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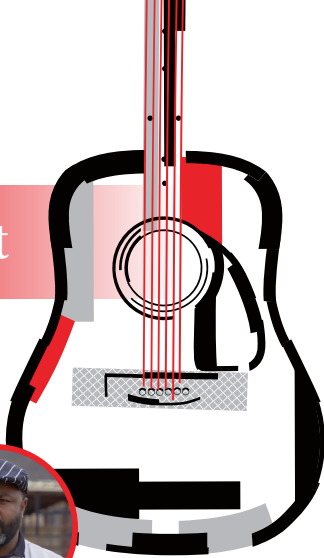
**Menzi Mngoma is a driver for a ride-hailing company and an opera singer! He was invited to put on a music programme in a shelter after singing along with an MSF worker during a ride.**



# Part 2: Psychological Support

**“We need to build confidence and let them trust themselves. When we link these to the dance... It creates some kind of positive energy.”**

**MSF Mental Health Activity Manager  
Germando Kagomba**



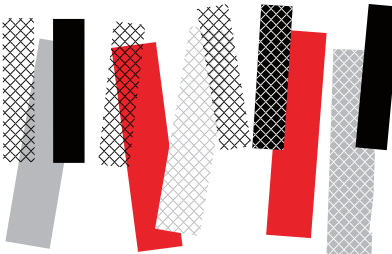
©Isaac Buay/MSF

After joining the music therapy, most of the participants said that they had never tried it before. It was joyful when they sang along with the children.

While primary healthcare is scarce in South Sudan, mental health services are even more limited. In South Sudan, mental health issues are overshadowed by neglect, poverty, violence and displacement. Many people face their struggles in silence, enduring a daily battle that goes unseen and unheard. Authorities in South Sudan sometimes even imprison people with mental health issues, which may worsen their problems.

Germando Kagomba, MSF Mental Health Activity Manager in Lankien, Jonglei State, brought music therapy to the locals, and raised their awareness about mental and psychological health matters. “Responding to the different situations of the patients, we try to bring them hope and joy.”

MSF is one of the few organisations providing mental health service in South Sudan. Kagomba said MSF received patients with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and postpartum depression. Between January and July 2024, MSF provided more than 9,600 mental health consultations in South Sudan.





## IMS Interview

# One step more to dispel local peoples' misconceptions

© Gale Julius Dada/MSF



## Part 3: Health Promotion

Since South Sudan officially declared a cholera outbreak in October last year, the disease has spread to seven of the ten states in the country at an alarming rate. Asta Man, the Operational Support Officer in MSF Hong Kong, went to South Sudan as a Health Promoter for two months. She stayed in Juba, the capital, and Old Fangak to respond to the outbreak.

To prevent cholera, just as with many other infectious diseases, we were taught to drink and use safe water, wash our hands frequently, and seek medical attention as soon as we have watery diarrhea symptoms. A lot of people there are already aware of these measures, so why do we still “preachomote” these health messages?

### People Refused to seek healthcare just because they couldn't hold in their stool



**“Health promotion is not lecturing.”** said Asta. To her, the information itself is only a small part of the job. What matters most is the way it's conveyed.

“Preparation work is the most time-consuming part of doing health promotion. To be honest, the ways to prevent cholera are more or less common sense, so when we go into the community, we need to find out WHY people choose not to use the “Aqua tabs” (for water purification), or WHY people are unwilling to see a doctor when cholera symptoms appear.”

Asta added that the local people had heard misinformation about aqua tabs being bad for their kidneys, so they chose not to use them even when the team distributed the tablets. Another example is that local adults, especially men, felt ashamed about having diarrhea with loose stools because people think that only children cannot hold theirs in. This was the reason why people would choose to seek medical treatment only when their condition became very severe, and were reluctant to inform their families. Since cholera can be fatal within hours when dehydration occurs to a patient, delaying treatment is extremely dangerous.

“We always heard them say, *‘this is our culture, and you cannot change it.’* But if we understand their ‘culture’, we will know the way to find the right approach to dispel their misconceptions, rather than simply telling them all the time to wash their hands and seek medical attention promptly. Of course, it's very difficult to change their habits in a short space of time, but when you address their concerns, they will listen to you more.”





## Use music for health promotion when it fits the need

After engaging and interacting with the communities, Asta and the health promotion team learned a lot about their habits and what they were used to, which helped them tailor different types of health messages. While the same health message can be presented in one hundred ways, some of them might be by transforming the health message into music or other formats of popular culture? Asta takes up the theme.

"I know that MSF has used or combined music in health promotion projects of other regions. For example, in 2014, when Ebola was rampant in Liberia, MSF invited a local musical group called 'Talented Young Brothers' to create a hip-hop song entitled 'Ebola is real' to raise awareness among the local people about Ebola symptoms, and remind people to wash their hands frequently and avoid contact with the corpses of Ebola victims.



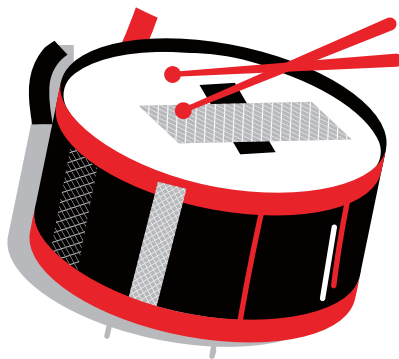
It is a unique song with outstanding dancing steps to draw people's attention to Ebola.



### Tom Brown Recipe

We believe that everyone in the community needs to understand how to make Tom Brown, so that malnutrition can be prevented in the long term.

In South Sudan, people often sing at weekends to entertain themselves. If we want to add music into our health promotion, it will really depend on what specific message the team is promoting. Then we need to sort out practical issues such as how to broadcast the music. Besides music, I believe using drama may also be an entertaining and effective method to promote health messages to the public."





## Part 4 – Sync with music

To people in need, music can be one of those "medicines that doctors can't prescribe". However, frontline field workers can also learn more about people from different cultural backgrounds through music. Jennifer Tong and Luke Chu, frontline field workers from MSF Hong Kong, tell us more about their musical experience with local people during their work.



**Orthopedic surgeon**  
Jennifer Tang

“

In Kabul, Afghanistan, we improvised with brooms, carpets, and pots, and added our own rhythm to mimic the Dragon dance, the traditional act during the Chinese New Year. It was a kind of a cultural exchange and to build rapport.

While working at a hospital in Gaza, I organised some drawing and singing sessions for the hospitalised children in the afternoons. One child, who lost an arm, had low self-esteem due to his physical disability. We invited him to sing along with a Bluetooth microphone, to help him regain confidence and joy.”



“

During my frontline field work in Afghanistan, I was lucky enough to be invited to join Eid al-Fitr with the people there. Participating in a local tradition was an unexpected experience and made me very happy!

Afghanistan is a traditional Muslim country, we could only drink soft drinks (not alcohol), people behaved quite reservedly at first. However, once the music was played, the people participating enjoyed the singing and dancing, which made me feel like I was back at a school party — everyone was so cheerful and excited!”



**Water and sanitation expert**  
Luke Chu



# What music means to IMS?



**Chiu Chuek Pong**  
Nurse

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**Endless**  
Supper moment

**Discovery**  
Rubberband

**Stubborn**  
Mayday

**You are Your Legend**  
Charmaine Fong

**Fly away**  
Fish Leong

“

Music is essential to my life; I play relaxing music every morning when I wake up.

During my frontline relief work, I will make my breakfast and listen to music on my weekly day off. It helps relieve the stress of the entire week and motivate me.

Although I know that relief work often doesn't go as planned, and changes are not guaranteed by what you have done, music gives me the courage to keep going.



“



**Tobey Lee**  
Nurse

I've been learning to play the piano since I was a child, and music has truly accompanied me throughout my life.

Frontline relief work always make us feel disheartening and exhausting. No matter it's a sad, lyrical, or uplifting song, music always helps heal my emotions.

In an Inpatient therapeutic feeding centre (ITFC) in South Sudan, some malnutrition children were so weak that can barely eat. The local staff created a 'Meal Song' for them, which they sang whenever it's time to eat. It helps the children to feel like eating is a joyful experience, rather than something difficult.

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**Beautiful World**  
Westlife

**BABY SONG**  
Eason Chan

**Black Rainstorm**  
Ronald Cheng

**Halo**  
Beyoncé

**P.S.**  
C AllStar

“



**Krystal So**  
Midwife

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**Let us go then you and I**  
Serrini

**We all are**  
Mirror

**Always willing**  
Yoyo Sham

**Fly**  
Yoyo Sham

**You Gotta Screw Up At Least Once**  
Kiri T

Music is a medium that brings people closer together. For me, music is a companion that keeps me from feeling lonely in frontline —especially Cantonese songs, which cure my homesickness.

Music is also a tool that connects people of different ages, genders, and skin colors.

While in Gaza, due to limited resources, we could only play songs in areas where it was relatively safer, allowing children to sing and dance together. We hoped this would help to relieve their stress and support their mental well-being.





# Lifesaving Without Pause

## 7.7 MSF Day

When wars persist, disasters strike, and epidemics spread, MSF remains on the frontlines, delivering urgent medical aid to those in crisis. For over 50 years, we have upheld our principles of independence, neutrality, and impartiality, never wavering in our mission despite immense challenges.

**MSF**

### "Lifesaving Without Pause" Exhibition

Date

**July 5 – July 11, 2025**

Location

**2/F Atrium, The Wai, Tai Wai**

The welcoming ceremony will take place on both July 5 - 6, from 2 PM to 4 PM, featuring International Mobile Staff sharing their relief stories. Local musicians will embody the spirit of "Lifesaving Without Pause," uniting compassionate hearts through music and raising awareness of global humanitarian crises. As long as support continues, the symphony of rescue efforts will never cease.

### Exhibition Highlights

On July 5 and 6, visitors can enjoy interactive experiences and hands-on souvenir-making activities. Create your own unique keepsake and take home a lasting reminder of the powerful messages and stories behind the exhibition.

**Please support humanitarian aid — never stop.**

Donate in support of 'MSF Day' to receive a Rescue Mission Wristband.

**Learn More**





# Sharing Love Without Borders Wedding Favour Donation

Make your big day shine even brighter! Transform traditional wedding favours into donations to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and help those in need! Your heartfelt gift supports medical humanitarian assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict.

## Double the happiness with a touch of love!

Make your big day shine even brighter by joining MSF's Wedding Favour Programme! In a special collaboration with Lenus Studio 《大大與小妹》, we are launching a revamped Wedding Favour Programme. Donors can choose from the original designs or a limited-edition version thank-you card for their guests. We will also offer special keepsakes for specific donation amounts. Your selfless support can help MSF provide free medical humanitarian aid to people around the world — especially those affected by war, natural disasters or disease outbreaks.

Your support for the MSF Wedding Favour Donation will help sustain MSF's humanitarian work in over 70 countries. Planning your big day? Scan the QR code to learn more!



Support MSF Wedding Favour Donation and you will get:

- **Limited Edition-Thank-you Cards**
- **Memorable Keepsakes\***  
(Includes Lenus Studio Limited Edition Tote Bags and Reusable Chopsticks)

\*For donation of specific amount or above



Learn More



Contact Us

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✉ [fundraising@hongkong.msf.org](mailto:fundraising@hongkong.msf.org)



**Please share this Borderline with others who may want to learn about unacceptable suffering in crisis situations.**

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"Borderline" is online at [msf.hk/en](https://msf.hk/en)  
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22/F, Pacific Plaza, 410 - 418 Des Voeux Road West, Sai Wan, Hong Kong  
Donation hotline: (852) 2338 8277  
Fax: (852) 2337 5442  
Email: [office@hongkong.msf.org](mailto:office@hongkong.msf.org)

### Please Support Us Now. With Just A Little, We Can Save More Lives.

- ☐ I would like to make a ONE-OFF gift of
- ☐ HK\$500 can help MSF to buy enough emergency health kits include basic supplies such as oral and topical medicines to treat 30 patients.
  - ☐ HK\$1,300 can help MSF to send doctors to provide medical care for people in urgent need, and to train local medical staffs.
  - ☐ Other amount HK\$ \_\_\_\_\_

If you are an EU citizen, or if you are residing or currently located in an EU Member State, please go to our webpage ([msf.hk/eudonationform](https://msf.hk/eudonationform)) to download another form for submission. If you are not, please fill in the form below. Thank you.

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