

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH INNOVATIONS IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING

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INTRODUCTION

Over 475 million people in the WHO South-East Asia (SEARO) and Western Pacific (WPRO) regions face significant mental health challenges, including low mental health spending, large treatment gaps, and severe workforce shortages.

Regional policy frameworks have emphasised expanding community-based, people-centered mental health care, while countries have increasingly adopted innovations such as digital interventions, task-sharing models, and integrated primary care approaches; though the regional landscape remains fragmented and poorly mapped.

Our study aimed to **generate evidence on mental health innovations in Asia, identifying challenges and opportunities, and inform policies and collaborations** to strengthen and scale effective solutions.

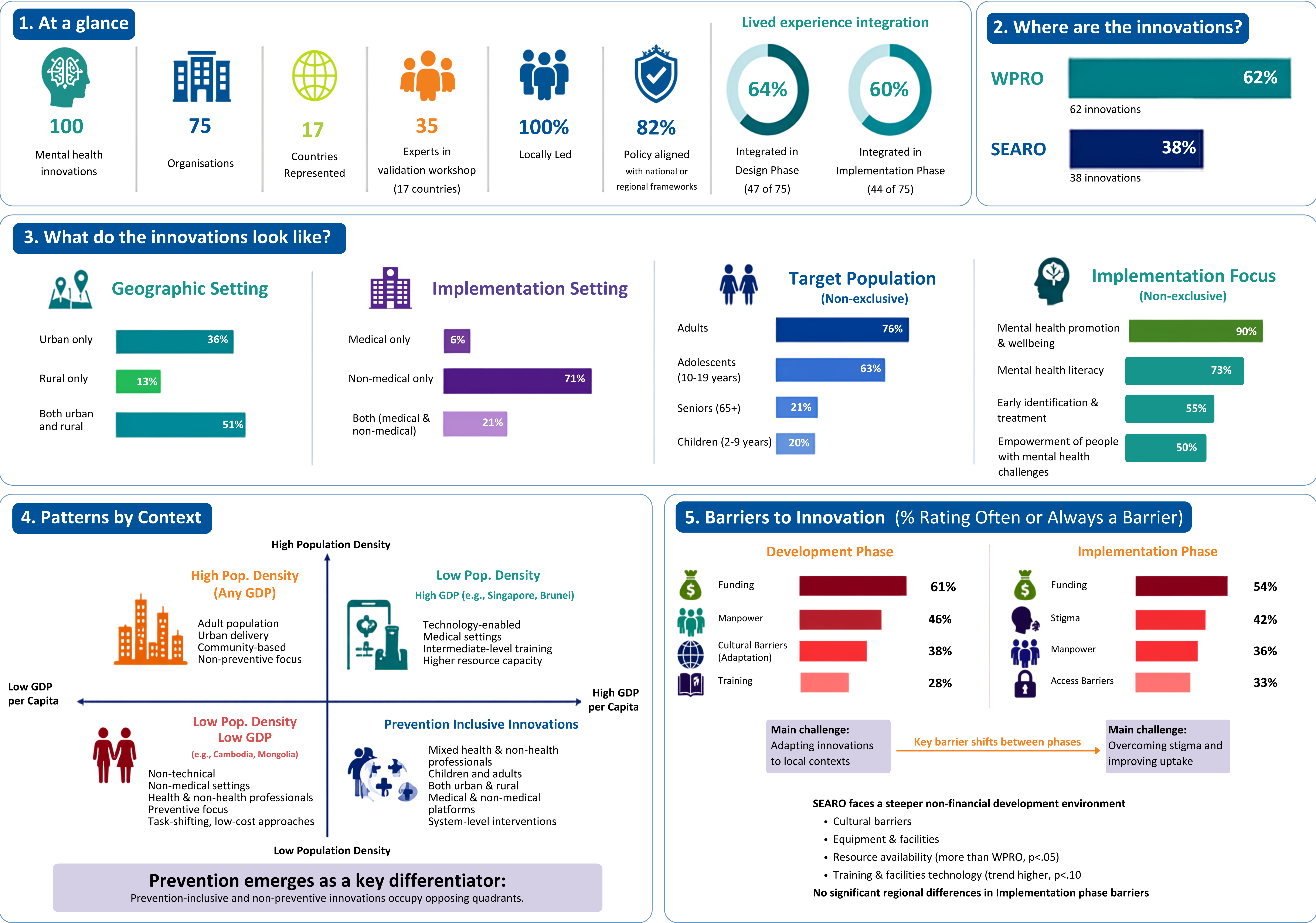
METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods approach was employed, including an **online survey** administered in English between August 2024 and July 2025 to capture innovation characteristics, implementation challenges, and perspectives on the mental health landscape across Asia. A virtual **validation workshop** was convened in November 2024 to examine and validate key challenges and opportunities for regional collaboration.

This non-comprehensive mapping includes innovations identified from SEARO and WPRO member countries (excluding China)

Analysis involved integrating **thematic analysis** of survey and workshop data with **descriptive statistical analysis**. **Multiple correspondence analysis (MCA)** was done to identify additional associations across innovation characteristics.

RESULTS



OPPORTUNITIES

Sustainable funding and capacity-building: Long-term, flexible funding that supports implementation, evaluation, cultural adaptation, and organisational capacity-building, alongside stronger government commitment to mental health financing.

Addressing stigma through sustained education and community engagement: Ongoing, education-based approaches embedded throughout the innovation lifecycle rather than one-off awareness campaigns.

Strengthening regional collaboration and lived experience leadership: Greater investment in cross-sector partnerships and the meaningful integration of people with lived experience should be recognised as core principles of mental health innovation across the region.

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