

Terms of Reference

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, P3, Port Sudan, Sudan

MISSION LOCATION

Duty Station: Port Sudan, Sudan (with travels to field locations)

DURATION

6 months

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Sudan experiences a severe and prolonged crisis due to armed conflict, political instability, economic fragility, food insecurity, and natural disasters. The situation worsened significantly in April 2023, leading to massive displacement, with over 10 million internally displaced people and over 2 million fleeing the country. Approximately 24.8 million people, half of Sudan's population, require urgent humanitarian aid in 2024. The crisis has severely damaged systems, services, and infrastructure, with long-term impacts expected. The humanitarian needs, particularly in health, protection, education, and livelihoods, are immense and unmet.

Amidst all these needs, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) needs are massive. The crisis caused immense psychological distress among children (potentially impacting their long-term mental health and education progress)ⁱ as well as among adults, with GBV survivors being at high risk.ⁱⁱ The Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2024 highlights these needs in various sectoral chapters on education, child protection, protection, GBV and health.

The existing national systems to respond to mental health and psychosocial issues were, even before the current conflict, poorly developed. The existing mental healthcare system, already weak was concentrated in Khartoum and had a very low number of mental health specialists, has now almost completely collapsed. Within systems for social protection limited attention was paid psychosocial support and these systems have also collapsed.ⁱⁱⁱ The people of Sudan have always relied strongly on mutual social and psychological support within families and communities. However, these systems have been eroded by the massive violence and displacement.

Given the dysfunctional state systems it is important to include MHPSS within various sectors of the humanitarian response. A multi sectoral Technical Working Group for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support is active, currently supported by an MHPSS deployee who is hosted by the World Health Organisation. A major tool for integration of MHPSS within the humanitarian response is the IASC minimum service package for MHPSS (2022). Within the health sector, clear packages of priority clinical interventions are available which are currently being integrated within the humanitarian health response.^{iv} One of the areas of focus in the HNRP 2024 is to increase support to and engagement with grassroots communities in Sudan through innovative and conflict-sensitive approaches, including through expanded capacity-strengthening efforts on technical aspects of programming including psychosocial support and social emotional learning (SEL).^v MHPSS is critical to enhance protection outcomes^{vi}. The integration of MHPSS within protection work should be strengthened, which requires technical support.

The current request for a deployee to the Protection cluster aims to strengthen the integration of MHPSS within the humanitarian response in protection and other cluster and to promote multi-sectoral collaboration around MHPSS.

AIM OF THE MISSION

To support the Protection Cluster in Sudan by advocating for, coordinating, and building capacity around MHPSS, incorporating MHPSS elements into multi-sectoral assessments and services, developing scalable community focused MHPSS approaches, and strengthening referral pathways to specialized MHPSS services.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

To enhance the capacity and coordination of protection actors in Sudan by integrating mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into their programs, ensuring comprehensive and effective support for vulnerable populations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The position is to be deployed to the Protection Cluster in Sudan and under the supervision of Senior Protection Cluster Coordination Officer to support with the following tasks:

- Actively work within the multisectoral MHPSS Technical Working Group in Sudan and the Protection Cluster to support advocacy, coordination, capacity building and monitoring around MHPSS.
- Support the incorporation of mental health and psychosocial support elements in multi sectoral needs assessments and service mappings. In particular: do a rapid assessment of current activities and competencies around MHPSS in protection actors.
- Support protection actors (in Protection Cluster and AoRs) and other humanitarian actors to incorporate the Minimum Service Package for MHPSS in their programming. This includes the incorporation of MHPSS approaches in community centres, child friendly spaces, and women and girl friendly spaces.
- Develop and introduce brief curricula (contextually relevant tools and methodology) for community-focussed and scalable MHPSS approaches to be used by humanitarian actors in building capacity of community-based networks, IDP-led organisations and other local actors to provide basic psychosocial support to people in their communities, both rural and urban settings and camp and out-of-camp settings.
- Develop a capacity building scheme to enhance the capacity of MHPSS focal points within protection partners on MHPSS and provide supervision to support them in implementation of MHPSS activities.
- Explore options to strengthen psychosocial support with case-management for protection, child protection and GBV, including the use of scalable psychological interventions in case management.
- Strengthening capacity of protection partners to identify and refer persons in need of more specialized MHPSS support and in close collaboration with the MHPSS TWG develop referral pathways to clinical MHPSS services by national and state counterparts and humanitarian agencies.

PROFILE

Experience

- Strong experience in (community-based) protection in humanitarian settings.
- Experience in multiple complex humanitarian emergencies.

Essential requirements

- MHPSS professional (social worker, psychologist or other relevant professional).
- Proven track record in capacity building around community based MHPSS and utilizing integrated tools for MHPSS.

Personal Characteristics

- Knowledge of Arabic language is an asset.

ⁱ Education Sector need assessment for IDPs children in White Nile State, June 2023; PACT July 2023 PACT and Partners in Development Service (PDS) Sudan Situational Assessment July 2023; Rapid Needs Assessment in Al Gezira State by Voluntas June 2023; Inter-Agency/Cluster Rapid Needs Assessment Report White Nile State.

ⁱⁱ Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2024, [page 35]

ⁱⁱⁱ Bilo C, Machado AC, Bacil F. [Social protection in Sudan-system overview and programme mapping](#). Research Report; 2020.

^{iv} See for example WHO/UNHCR (2015). mhGAP Humanitarian Intervention Guide” Clinical Management of Mental, Neurological and Substance Use Conditions in Humanitarian Emergencies.

^v “Increased support to and engagement with the grassroots communities' networks in Sudan through innovative and conflict-sensitive approaches, including, but not limited to, flexible and area-based coordination arrangements (complementary to the IASC humanitarian coordination system), expanded capacity-strengthening efforts on technical aspects of programming (e.g. psychosocial support, including Social Emotional Learning (SEL), education in emergencies, monitoring and evaluation, etc), and facilitating direct access to funding opportunities.” (HRP 2024, page 13/14)

^{vi} Harrison, S. et al (2020) [MHPSS and protection outcomes](#): Why joint action to improve mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of people affected by conflict, violence and disasters should be a priority for all protection actors. Policy Discussion Paper, Global Protection Cluster.