

Terms of Reference
Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Specialist -P3 (Temporary Appointment)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

SUMMARY

Title	Child Protection Specialist- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Temporary Appointment (TA)
Purpose	The purpose of the post is to strengthen MHPSS programming for UNICEF Ethiopia primarily in child protection & working closely with education, and health sectors, including strengthening coordination and MHPSS systems aligned to UNICEF’s strategic guidance.
Post Category	P3
Funding Source	SC230807 (valid:15/06/2027) SC240208 (Valid 30 June 2027) SC230441 (valid 28 August 2025) Master Card Foundation (Grant TBA)
Location	Addis Ababa, with frequent missions to regions across the country
Duration	364 Days
Start Date	Jan 8, 2025
Reporting to	Child Protection Manager, Systems and VAC with close technical links to the Learning and Development Specialist and the Health Specialist.

SUMMARY OF KEY FUNCTIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

<p>The Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Specialist provides technical and coordination support to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical assistance 2. Programme development and planning 3. Programme management, monitoring, and quality control of results 4. Innovation, knowledge management, and capacity building
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BACKGROUND AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Globally, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) is an [institutional priority for the UN](#) and UNICEF. The [UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#) identifies MHPSS as a priority area for children, caregivers, parents and young people, building upon existing programming through child protection, health and education with a focus on addressing inequities related to gender and disabilities. Technical leadership for this cross-sectoral programming area is situated in Child Protection programming.

In Ethiopia, large numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) due to inter-ethnic conflict, drought, and flood-induced emergencies, and the resultant situation drew attention to significant MHPSS needs. UNICEF has since engaged critical stakeholders, including the Federal Ministry of Health, the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI), the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA), to systematically address MHPSS issues in the country.

While great strides have been made in implementing MHPSS, more still needs to be done to keep pace with the moving trends and support MHPSS systems. This post will, therefore, support the strengthening of MHPSS systems within and across the child protection, health, and education sectors. The responsibilities will include strengthening interventions and services as part of a systems approach to

MHPSS across development and humanitarian settings, leveraging and building on existing MHPSS programming and coordination across the sectors mentioned above, capacity building and community engagement consistent with UNICEF's MHPSS Technical Note (2019) and the ESARO MHPSS Programme Note and work plan (2023-2025).

The post will support ECO teams in designing and delivering programmes whose results meet the thresholds set in reporting templates.

Justification of TA post

ECO's MHPSS portfolio has increased in response to COVID-19, conflict, and climate change-induced vulnerabilities (drought/floods induced negative coping, loss of livelihoods, etc.). The UNICEF sections of Child Protection, Education, and Health have thus increasingly infused MHPSS as a part of core implementation priorities. The increased need for MHPSS responses requires an MHPSS systems approach, including community-based tested but contextualised MHPSS models for various settings, strengthening coordination across sectors and with multiple partners.

To advance this work, a technical specialist with child protection expertise must be positioned as the cross-sectoral MHPSS programming focal point, working with three separate line ministries and their corresponding bureaus. These partnerships require concrete and explicit MHPSS interventions, including the setting up of concrete age-appropriate validated MHPSS models, linking MHPSS with employability and MHPSS contributions to safer schools, and strengthening the capacity of the social workers to provide more advanced MHPSS functions in line with case management expected competencies.

Therefore, the TA Specialist will enable the ECO to deliver on urgent MHPSS obligations while building MHPSS systems. At the core of the post will be strengthening internal MHPSS capacities to promote learning and infusion of MHPSS principles and actions within the functions of FT staff.

Specific Tasks

Under the overall leadership of the Chief of Section and with the direct supervision of the Programme Manager (Systems & VAC), the incumbent will support the Country Office in the following main areas of work:

1. Technical assistance
2. Programme development and planning.
3. Programme management, monitoring, and quality control of results.
4. Innovation, knowledge management, and capacity building.

Technical Assistance

- Provide technical support to child protection partners in implementing low-intensity psychological interventions.
- Develop and adapt MHPSS implementation guidance documents for the Ethiopian context, including incorporating regional-level contextual factors.
- Support the design and implementation of an MHPSS supervision framework focused on building MHPSS competencies among Social Workers and community-level non-specialist MHPSS service providers.
- Collaborate with SBC to develop and disseminate advocacy messages on MHPSS for internal and external stakeholders.

Programme development and planning.

1. Lead the development of an ECO-level MHPSS plan informed by the MHPSS Minimum Service Package to foster cross-sector collaboration in implementing and reporting MHPSS initiatives.
2. Strengthen knowledge management and develop and improve monitoring and evaluation systems to better measure the impact of MHPSS interventions in Child Protection and allied health and education sectors.
3. Strengthen cross-sectoral approach to case management through review and inputs to the sector-specific plans and strategies to ensure linkages between MHPSS and case management in health, education, and child protection.
4. Work closely with Education Specialists to design and implement school-level Violence Against Children (VAC) initiatives, including linkages with the Case Management System (NMS) and provision of universal and targeted MHPSS initiatives.

Innovation, knowledge management, and capacity building

5. Enhance the Child Protection Section leadership role in MHPSS by building the capacity of the child protection team members to integrate MHPSS across functions, including MHPSS interventions design logic, implementation, monitoring, and reporting.
6. Strengthen ECO MHPSS innovations on topical issues related to back-to-school and youth employment agenda.

Programme management, monitoring, and quality control of results.

- Contribute to planning and reporting functions of the Child Protection Team, including development and monitoring of annual work plans.
- Contribute to drafting of funding allocations, ensure timely fund disbursement to partners, and proper utilization as per plans, reporting, and liquidation of resources.
- Monitor programs/projects to assess progress, identify bottlenecks and potential problems, and make timely decisions to resolve issues and refer to relevant officials for timely resolution.
- Serve as a focal point on MHPSS issues for children, including legal reform for child protection and migration.
- Contribute to resource mobilization by developing or inputting into funding proposals and submitting/preparing program/project reports to donors and other partners to inform them on program progress and critical issues.

Work relationships

The CP Specialist (MHPSS) will work under the supervision of the Child Protection Manager (VAC/Systems P4) in close consultation with the Chiefs of Protection, Health, and Learning and Development Sections.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES:

Education:

- An advanced university degree in any of the following fields: Social Work, Psychology, Social Sciences, or similar relevant discipline.

Work Experience:

- At least five years of MHPSS programming, including in humanitarian contexts is required.

Desirables:

- Strong child protection expertise, including in Case Management & VAC prevention.
- Solid knowledge and understanding of programming in education, health, and child protection, including social work systems, humanitarian principles, child safeguarding measures, and established international standards on mental health and psychosocial support for children, including adolescents.
- Capacity to work multisectorally and across functions.
- Strong coordination, organisational, relationship-building, and facilitation skills, face-to-face or remotely, with diverse stakeholders involving senior government, UN and NGO/INGO, and academics.
- Demonstrated experience with multi-sectoral programme design and knowledge management, including remote coordination.
- Comfortable to work independently while coordinating closely with different teams.




Language Requirements:

- Full command of spoken and written English is essential.
- Excellent analytical, communication, writing, and editorial skills in English.
- Proficiency in an additional official United Nations language is an asset.

Core Values: · Care · Respect · Integrity · Trust · Accountability · Sustainability

Core Competencies:

- Demonstrates Self Awareness and Ethical Awareness (1)
- Works Collaboratively with others (1)
- Builds and Maintains Partnerships (1)
- Innovates and Embraces Change (1)
- Thinks and Acts Strategically (1)
- Drives to achieve impactful results (1)
- Manages ambiguity and complexity (1)

	Prepared by the Chief of Child Protection	Reviewed by HR	Approved by
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Signature			
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