

UNICEF Concept Note

Section 1. Concept note overview

Field	Information
Name of prospective partner	Integrated Humanitarian Safety Initiative
Type of concept note	Response to UNICEF-issued CFEI <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	CFEI ID: (Insert CFEI ID number)
Concept note title	Child Protection Case Management and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) for children, youth and adolescents in South Sudan
Geographical coverage	South Sudan (targeting conflict-affected and high-displacement areas with focus on states with highest reported child protection concerns)
Planned Programme duration	Start: July 2025
Programme budget (cash + Supplies) (USD)	Contribution from prospective partner: \$45,000
	Contribution requested from UNICEF: \$455,000
	Total: \$500,000

Section 2. Programme Strategy

2.1 Rationale/Context (400 words max)

South Sudan continues to face a severe child protection crisis with an estimated 4.9 million children requiring urgent protection assistance in 2025 (2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan). Children are exposed to multiple protection risks including family separation, recruitment by armed groups, sexual and physical violence, child marriage, and exploitation. These vulnerabilities are compounded by ongoing armed violence, economic instability, displacement, and recurring climate shocks, particularly flooding.

Recent assessments indicate alarming rates of violence against children, with thousands documented as unaccompanied and separated from their families. Children living dangerous lives – those on streets, associated with armed forces or gangs, and in conflict with the law – are particularly vulnerable, often falling outside existing protection mechanisms.

Mental health and psychosocial impacts of prolonged crises are evident, with children exhibiting symptoms of distress, anxiety, and behavioral changes that affect their development and wellbeing. Without appropriate support, these conditions can lead to long-term negative outcomes.

Current child protection systems in South Sudan remain fragmented and under-resourced. Case management services are primarily delivered by humanitarian organizations with limited integration into government structures, creating challenges for sustainability and national ownership. The shortage of qualified social workers and limited capacity of government institutions to manage

protection cases independently presents significant barriers to ensuring comprehensive protection for vulnerable children.

This project aligns with South Sudan's National Development Strategy and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), both of which recognize child protection as fundamental to national development. It supports UNICEF's 2023-2025 Country Programme (extended to 2026), which prioritizes protecting children from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, and harmful practices.

The project directly responds to UNICEF's strategic shift toward strengthening national systems and enhancing government leadership in delivering essential child protection services. By embedding social workers within the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare (MoGCSW) structures while maintaining NGO technical support, the project addresses both immediate protection needs while building sustainable national capacity in line with UNICEF's upcoming Strategic Plan (2027-2030).

2.2 Implementation Strategy & Technical Guidance (400 words max)

The Integrated Humanitarian Safety Initiative will implement a comprehensive child protection approach addressing immediate needs while building sustainable national systems. The strategy is built around two core components:

- 1. Strengthened Case Management Services:** We will implement quality case management services using qualified social workers embedded within MoGCSW structures. This approach includes:
 - Recruiting, training, and deploying 30 social workers to operate from MoGCSW premises under joint supervision arrangements
 - Establishing clear MoUs between our organization and MoGCSW defining roles, responsibilities, and supervision structures
 - Implementing the nationally-endorsed case management approach using standardized forms and tools
 - Utilizing the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS+) for case documentation and tracking
 - Providing continuous mentoring and technical support to strengthen government capacity
 - Conducting weekly case conferences to ensure quality case management and build technical skills

- 2. Youth Centers and MHPSS Services:** We will establish 10 youth-friendly safe spaces to deliver integrated child protection and MHPSS services using UNICEF's "Take 5" wellbeing methodology. These centers will:

- Target adolescents living dangerous lives while remaining accessible to all vulnerable youth
- Employ trained "inspirators" who will facilitate daily structured activities focused on building relationships, creating safe spaces, developing skills, and promoting prosocial behaviors
- Serve as entry points for identification and referral of child protection cases

- Offer culturally appropriate psychosocial support activities, recreational opportunities, and basic skills training
- Connect youth to additional services including education and vocational training opportunities

The implementation strategy will follow UNICEF technical guidance on child protection case management and MHPSS in humanitarian settings. We will adapt the "Take 5" methodology to the South Sudanese context, incorporating local cultural elements while maintaining fidelity to the evidence-based approach.

Population focus and beneficiaries:

- Direct beneficiaries: 5,500 children (0-18 years) receiving case management services; 3,500 adolescents and youth participating in youth center activities; 800 caregivers receiving support
- Indirect beneficiaries: Approximately 30,000 community members benefiting from improved protection systems

Innovative approaches include:

- Mobile case management teams to reach remote communities
- Digital case documentation with offline functionality for areas with limited connectivity
- Peer support models for adolescents to expand psychosocial support coverage
- Integration of traditional community protection mechanisms with formal systems
- Incentive-based model linking social worker stipends to caseload benchmarks and quality standards

2.3 Capacity Development (400 words max)

The Integrated Humanitarian Safety Initiative recognizes capacity development as essential to both effective programme delivery and sustainable outcomes. Our capacity development priorities during this programme period include:

Internal Organizational Capacity Development:

- **Technical Expertise:** Strengthen technical capacity in specialized areas of child protection (children associated with armed forces, survivors of sexual violence, children in conflict with the law) through targeted training and engagement of technical specialists
- **Financial Management:** Enhance our financial tracking systems, particularly for managing social worker stipends and activity-based budgeting, through improved software solutions and staff training
- **PSEA and Safeguarding:** Further develop our safeguarding mechanisms with particular focus on child-friendly reporting systems and community-based accountability measures
- **Data Management:** Improve our capacity to securely manage sensitive case information and analyze protection trends through advanced training on the CPIMS+ system and data security protocols

Implementation Approach:

- Monthly capacity building sessions for all staff on key technical areas
- Engagement of specialized consultants for targeted training in priority areas
- Participation in UNICEF-led capacity building initiatives
- Staff exchange programs with partner organizations
- Learning documentation and knowledge management systems

Government Capacity Strengthening:

The programme will simultaneously build capacity of MoGCSW staff through:

- On-the-job mentoring by experienced case management staff
- Joint case management reviews and technical support
- Collaborative development of standard operating procedures
- Gradual transfer of supervision responsibilities with ongoing quality oversight
- Supporting enrolment of non-qualified government staff in certified social work training programmes

Community Capacity Enhancement:

- Training community child protection committees on identification and referral
- Developing youth leadership skills through peer educator approaches
- Building capacity of local organizations to support community-based protection initiatives

Sustainability Measures:

- Documenting all capacity building approaches for replication
- Establishing capacity development progress indicators and regular assessments
- Creating sustainability plans for each programme component with clear capacity benchmarks
- Developing a phased transition approach for each technical function

2.4 Other Partners involved (400 words max)

The Integrated Humanitarian Safety Initiative will implement this programme through structured collaboration with the following key partners:

Government Partners:

- **Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare (MoGCSW):** Primary government counterpart for the programme. We will establish formal MoUs outlining joint supervision arrangements for social workers, information sharing protocols, office space provision, and coordination mechanisms. This partnership is central to the transition approach.
- **State and County Child Protection Authorities:** Local government structures that will be engaged in coordination, monitoring, and eventually assuming greater oversight of case

management processes.

- **Ministry of Health:** Partner for specialized mental health referrals and health service access for children with protection needs requiring medical attention.
- **Ministry of Education:** Collaboration on child protection in schools and educational reintegration of out-of-school children identified through case management.

UN and International Organization Partners:

- **UNICEF:** Lead technical agency providing funding, capacity building, and coordination support. UNICEF will provide technical guidance on both case management and the "Take 5" methodology implementation.
- **UNHCR:** Coordination on protection of refugee and IDP children, particularly for family tracing and reunification cases.
- **IOM:** Collaboration on displacement tracking and accessing children in hard-to-reach areas.

Local Civil Society Partners:

- **South Sudan Child Protection Network:** A coalition of local organizations that will support community mobilization, awareness raising, and monitoring activities.
- **Youth-led organizations:** Will contribute to youth engagement strategies and peer support mechanisms.
- **Women's groups:** Will support gender-sensitive approaches and assist with identifying and supporting girl survivors of violence.

Academic and Technical Partners:

- **University of Juba Social Work Department:** Will support professional development of social workers and potentially provide practicum opportunities for social work students.
- **National Association of Social Workers:** Will provide guidance on professional standards and support accreditation processes.

The Integrated Humanitarian Safety Initiative does not intend to sub-contract any aspects of this programme. All activities will be directly implemented by our organization in collaboration with the partners listed above.

2.5 Gender, equity, and sustainability (250 words max)

Gender Rating: Significant

Narrative: Gender considerations are integrated throughout programme design and implementation. The case management approach will include gender-sensitive protocols for responding to the different protection risks faced by girls and boys. Staff recruitment will ensure gender balance among social workers and youth facilitators to provide appropriate support options for all children. Youth centers will offer both mixed and separate activities for girls and boys, with targeted outreach to ensure girls' participation despite cultural barriers. Gender analysis will inform all protection assessments, and

gender-disaggregated data will be systematically collected and analyzed to ensure equitable service access and address any gender-based gaps.

Equity Rating: Principal

Narrative: Equity is a central focus of the programme, with explicit targeting of the most marginalized children including those living on streets, children with disabilities, children formerly associated with armed forces, and those from minority ethnic groups. The programme will implement targeted outreach strategies to identify and support children facing the greatest barriers to protection services. Mobile teams will ensure coverage of remote areas, and additional support measures (such as transportation assistance) will be provided for children with disabilities. Case management approaches will be adapted to address the specific needs of different vulnerable groups.

Sustainability Rating: Significant

Narrative: Sustainability is embedded through the government transition approach, with social workers operating from government premises under joint supervision arrangements. The programme builds national capacity through mentoring, knowledge transfer, and systems strengthening rather than creating parallel structures. Community-based protection mechanisms will be strengthened to provide ongoing support beyond the project timeframe. Documentation of processes, tools, and learning will support continued implementation.

2.6 Risk management (250 words max)

Social & Environment:

Risk: Youth centers may inadvertently increase stigmatization of certain groups if perceived as targeting only "problem youth."

Proposed Mitigation Measures: Implement inclusive programming open to diverse participants; engage community leaders in center design; utilize positive messaging in all communications; balance targeted outreach with general participation.

Financial:

Risk: Currency fluctuations and inflation may reduce purchasing power and impact stipend values.

Proposed Mitigation Measures: Include contingency budget line; regularly review and adjust stipend rates based on market conditions; prioritize essential activities; maintain flexible budget allocations.

Operational:

Risk: Seasonal flooding and insecurity may limit access to implementation areas.

Proposed Mitigation Measures: Develop seasonal access plans; establish remote management protocols; train community focal points for continuity during access constraints; pre-position essential supplies.

Organizational:

Risk: Difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified social workers in remote locations.

Proposed Mitigation Measures: Competitive compensation packages; professional development

opportunities; partner with educational institutions; implement graduated responsibility approach for promising staff.

Political:

Risk: Government restructuring or policy changes may affect partnership arrangements.

Proposed Mitigation Measures: Engage multiple levels of government; maintain relationships with diverse stakeholders; document agreements clearly; regular context monitoring.

Strategic:

Risk: Transition to government supervision may compromise service quality if capacity is limited.

Proposed Mitigation Measures: Implement phased transition with quality benchmarks; maintain NGO technical oversight throughout process; regular quality assessments.

Safety & Security:

Risk: Staff and beneficiaries may face protection risks in conflict-affected areas.

Proposed Mitigation Measures: Comprehensive security management plan; regular risk assessments; staff safety training; community acceptance strategies; flexible working modalities.

2.7 Partner non-financial contribution

The Integrated Humanitarian Safety Initiative will make significant non-financial contributions to enhance programme effectiveness and sustainability:

- **Technical Expertise:** Our organization's senior technical specialists will provide additional mentoring hours beyond those costed in the budget. These specialists have extensive experience in child protection systems in South Sudan and will contribute to quality assurance and capacity building.
- **Training Resources:** We will contribute our extensive library of contextualized training materials on child protection, case management, and MHPSS that have been developed and refined through our previous programmes in South Sudan.
- **Community Networks:** Our established relationships with community leaders, youth groups, and local structures in target areas will facilitate rapid programme start-up and community acceptance.
- **Operational Resources:** Partial use of our existing vehicles and office infrastructure in field locations will support programme implementation while reducing operational costs.
- **Knowledge Products:** Access to our documentation of lessons learned, best practices, and contextual analyses from previous child protection interventions in similar settings.
- **Coordination Mechanisms:** Our active participation in national and sub-national coordination forums will enhance programme visibility, coordination, and learning exchange.
- **Local Partnerships:** Established relationships with local women's groups, youth organizations, and community-based entities that can support outreach and sustainability.

2.8 Key personnel

Name and position	Relevant qualifications/experiences
Name: James Ladu	Master's in Child Protection with 10 years of experience managing protection programmes in South Sudan. Previously served as Child Protection Coordinator with international NGOs and as technical advisor for case management systems. Experienced in government engagement and system-building approaches.
Position: Programme Director	
Name: Agnes Keji	MSW with 8 years of experience in child protection case management. Certified trainer in case management and MHPSS approaches. Experience supervising social workers and developing contextualized tools. Previously worked with MoGCSW on national case management guidelines.
Position: Case Management Specialist	
Name: Peter Deng	Bachelor's in Psychology with 6 years of experience implementing youth programming and MHPSS activities. Certified in the "Take 5" methodology and experienced in adapting global approaches to the South Sudanese context.
Position: MHPSS Coordinator	
Name: Susan Yar	Master's in Public Administration with 7 years of experience in financial management and compliance for humanitarian programmes. Expert in donor financial requirements including UNICEF procedures.
Position: Finance Manager	

2.8 Other (250 words max)

The Integrated Humanitarian Safety Initiative is a registered national NGO established in 2013 with extensive experience implementing child protection programmes in South Sudan. We are currently active in 4 states and have existing partnerships with UNICEF, UNHCR, and several international NGOs.

We have been an active member of the Child Protection Area of Responsibility since 2014, regularly participating in coordination mechanisms at national and sub-national levels. Our organization has completed the PSEA capacity assessment on UNPP with a medium capacity rating.

Our organization maintains a workforce of 90% South Sudanese nationals, with strong representation of women in both technical and leadership positions. We are committed to developing national technical expertise and supporting the localization agenda in humanitarian response.

We currently maintain valid registration with the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission and all other required governmental authorizations. Our most recent external audit confirmed sound financial

management systems and compliance with donor requirements.

The Integrated Humanitarian Safety Initiative has experience implementing similar transition approaches with other protection services, including gender-based violence response and family tracing and reunification programmes. This experience positions us well to support UNICEF's strategic shift toward government leadership in child protection systems.

We confirm our commitment to UNICEF's zero-tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse and have comprehensive safeguarding policies in place. We have no conflicts of interest to declare in relation to this call for expressions of interest.

Section 3. Expected results, performance indicators, activities, implementation period and budget

3.1 Result statement: Children, including adolescents, in South Sudan are protected from violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect through strengthened and sustainable nationally-led child protection systems and services.

Programme Outputs	Performance Indicators (including baselines, targets, and means of verification)	Activities	Implementation Period	Cash Contribution from prospective partner	Cash Contributed requested from UNICEF
Programme Output 1: Quality child protection case management services are delivered by social workers embedded within government structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of children receiving quality case management services (Baseline: 0, Target: 5,500, Means of Verification: CPIMS+ database)
 • % of cases with regular follow-up as per standards (Baseline: N/A, Target: 85%, Means of Verification: Case file audits)
 • # of social workers successfully embedded within MoGCSW structures (Baseline: 0, Target: 30, Means of Verification: MoUs, staff records) 	Activity 1.1. Recruit, train and deploy qualified social workers to work within MoGCSW offices at state and county levels	Months 1-3	\$5,000	\$45,000
		Activity 1.2. Provide comprehensive case management services including identification, assessment, case planning, referrals and follow-up	Months 2-12	\$8,000	\$92,000
		Activity 1.3. Conduct weekly case reviews and provide technical mentoring to social workers	Months 2-12	\$4,000	\$26,000
Programme Output 2: Youth centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of youth centers established and operational (Baseline: 0, Target: 10, Means of 	Activity 2.1. Establish/rehabilitate and equip youth	Months 2-4	\$7,000	\$73,000

Programme Outputs	Performance Indicators (including baselines, targets, and means of verification)	Activities	Implementation Period	Cash Contribution from prospective partner	Cash Contribution requested from UNICEF
deliver integrated MHPSS and protection services for adolescents living dangerous lives	<p>Verification: Site reports)
• # of adolescents regularly participating in center activities (Baseline: 0, Target: 3,500, Means of</p> <p>Verification: Attendance records)
• % of participating youth reporting improved wellbeing (Baseline: N/A, Target: 75%, Means of</p> <p>Verification: Pre/post assessments)</p>	centers in target locations			
		Activity 2.2. Implement daily structured Take 5 activities focusing on wellbeing and skills building	Months 3-12	\$6,000	\$64,000
		Activity 2.3. Identify and refer child protection cases from youth centers to case management system	Months 3-12	\$2,000	\$18,000
Programme Output 3: Community structures are strengthened to address child protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of community child protection committees established/strengthened (Baseline: 0, Target: 20, Means of Verification: Committee records)
• # of community-led protection initiatives implemented (Baseline: 0, Target: 40, Means of 	Activity 3.1. Establish and train community child protection committees	Months 2-4	\$3,000	\$27,000

Programme Outputs	Performance Indicators (including baselines, targets, and means of verification)	Activities	Implementation Period	Cash Contribution from prospective partner	Cash Contribution requested from UNICEF
and GBV issues	Verification: Activity reports) • % increase in case referrals from community structures (Baseline: TBD, Target: 50% increase, Means of Verification: Referral tracking)				
		Activity 3.2. Support community-led prevention and awareness activities	Months 4-12	\$4,000	\$46,000
		Activity 3.3. Facilitate regular coordination between community structures and formal case management system	Months 3-12	\$2,000	\$18,000
Programme Output 4: Coordination, oversight, and data systems for child protection are enhanced to support government leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of coordination meetings led by MoGCSW (Baseline: 0, Target: 24, Means of Verification: Meeting minutes)
 • % of cases properly documented in CPIMS+ (Baseline: N/A, Target: 90%, Means of Verification: System reports)
 • # of joint monitoring visits conducted (Baseline: 0, Target: 12, Means of Verification: Visit reports) 	Activity 4.1. Support MoGCSW to lead coordination of child protection activities at state and county levels	Months 2-12	\$1,000	\$19,000

Programme Outputs	Performance Indicators (including baselines, targets, and means of verification)	Activities	Implementation Period	Cash Contribution from prospective partner	Cash Contribution requested from UNICEF
		Activity 4.2. Implement and maintain CPIMS+ in all operational areas	Months 1-12	\$1,000	\$9,000
		Activity 4.3. Facilitate joint monitoring and evaluation activities	Months 3-12	\$1,000	\$9,000
Programme Output X: Effective and efficient programme management	N/A	Activity X.1. In-country management and support staff costs, pro-rated to their contribution to the programme (representation, planning, coordination, logistics, admin, finance)	Months 1-12	\$1,000	\$19,000
		Activity X.2. Operational costs, pro-rated to their contribution to the programme (office space, equipment, office supplies, maintenance)	Months 1-12	\$0	\$10,000
		Activity X.3. Planning, monitoring, evaluation and communication costs, pro-rated to their contribution to	Months 1-12	\$0	\$10,000

Programme Outputs	Performance Indicators (including baselines, targets, and means of verification)	Activities	Implementation Period	Cash Contribution from prospective partner	Cash Contribution requested from UNICEF
Total Cash budget		the programme (venue, travels, etc.)		\$45,000	\$455,000

3.2 Supply Contribution Plan

Item Details	Provided by UNICEF/Partner	No. of units	Price/unit	Total Price
1. Case management kits (includes tablets, forms, bags)	UNICEF	30	\$500	\$15,000
2. Recreational kits for youth centers	UNICEF	10	\$750	\$7,500
3. Office equipment for social workers at MoGCSW	Partner	10 sets	\$500	\$5,000
Total Supply cost				\$27,500