

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT

Post Title:	Social Policy Specialist
Post Level:	P3 TA
Contract Duration:	364 Days
Duty Station:	Damascus
Supervisor:	Chief, Social Policy

BACKGROUND

The long-running and multidimensional crisis in Syria has had devastating consequences for the country and its people, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized, including displaced populations, resulting in protracted and multifaceted humanitarian needs, and regression of development indicators. Harsh winter conditions are compounding civilian suffering. Humanitarian access remains a critical issue due to security risks and logistical challenges.

The recent shift in Syria's political landscape, with decentralized control and diminished authority of the previous regime, presents an opportunity to rebuild the country's fractured social protection system. The ongoing changes has created space for the international community to support the countries in promoting the establishment of equitable and transparent systems for aid distribution. This rapidly evolving environment highlights the urgent need for a strategic approach that addresses the multifaceted challenges faced by children and communities throughout Syria, with a focus on protection, resilience and long-term recovery linking to Syria Early Recovery Strategy.

UNICEF continues to engage with the current authorities following the UN guidance on engagement with new leadership – to ensure that our efforts reach those most in need. Our focus is on life-saving interventions and responding to the needs of newly displaced persons (IDPs), as well as supporting those returning from the Lebanon crisis. At technical level, UNICEF is engaging with the transitional government authorities across different governorates. UNICEF Syria will ensure the centrality of protection by placing protection at the center of all actions and mainstreaming it throughout all sectors and activities for the affected population. UNICEF's positions are aligned with Core Commitment for Children and the adopted positions of the UN represented by the decisions made at Syria HCT and the different inter-agency platforms for Syria (including regional and headquarters decisions). The UN leadership, particularly the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) and the Designated Official (DO), as well as Regional RC/HC for Whole of Syria, will be kept informed on engagements with ANSAs to ensure strategic UN coordination.

PURPOSE OF ASSIGNMENT

The Social Policy Specialist reports to the **Chief of Social Policy** for general guidance and supervision. The Specialist provides technical and operational support for a systematic, planned and evidence-based strategy, process and implementation for UNICEF's cash assistance and social protection programming. Under the general guidance of the supervisor, she/he is responsible for assisting the Chief, Social Policy on the design, management, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all stages of social protection programming and related advocacy from strategic planning and formulation to delivery of concrete and sustainable results.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. **Lead, in coordination with the relevant sections, the development and implementation of UNICEF's cash plus interventions:**
 - **Ensure the design, implementation, and coordination of the cash transfer programme:** Lead, in coordination with the section and operations, facilitating the design and implementation of a cash plus programme including technical design, targeting, registration, payment and complaints/grievance system in order to improve sectoral objectives;
 - **Supervise and support monitoring, reporting and evaluation activities:** Work closely with monitoring and evaluation system for cash transfer programme and implement recommendations to improve the efficiency and quality of programmes; undertakes field visits to monitor and assess programme implementation and decides on required corrective action; organize review meetings with partners and counterparts; ensure the timely preparation of donor reports; develop a comprehensive monitoring system to ensure quality monitoring of UNICEF's cash transfer intervention in collaboration with implementing partners.
2. **Provide technical support to the operational management of cash transfer activities:**
 - **Conduct regular operational analysis:** identify areas of poor performance, bottlenecks, and identify solutions such as design improvements, additional trainings, and technical support; Develop risk-informed approach for the implementation of cash transfer activities,
 - **Undertake a risk assessment and identify risk mitigation:** In close collaboration with the office operation team support the financial reporting and liquidation process; establish and maintain sound internal controls and coordinate financial and supply management requirements and accountability
3. **Ensure Partnership, Communication and Liaison, and Collaboration for Social Protection Interventions**
 - **Develop partnership and collaboration with internal and external counterparts,** including those of the UN and national partners, to ensure the efficiency of the programme (explore and identify joint activities to be implemented and/or coordinated with UNHCR and WFP) in order to improve the ability to collect and disseminate data and information, exchange information on programme/project status and implementation.
 - **Develop links and provide technical support to other sections:** strengthen coordination within the office on this issue; Technically support the use of the cash modality within the different sections of the office (i.e multi-sector and sector-specific) including in emergencies
 - Represent UNICEF country office in the cash forums, and internally to other office sections
 - Prepare relevant programme reports required for management, donors, budget reviews, programme analysis, annual reports, etc.
4. **Social Protection Policies, Strategies and Programmes Development**
 - Supports the development of social protection policies, legislation, and programmes with attention to increasing coverage of and impact on children, with special attention to the most vulnerable. Identifies, generates, and presents evidence to support this goal in collaboration with partners.
 - Support design and development of a child grant programme in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and partners
 - Promotes strengthening of integrated social protection systems, and improve linkages with other social protection interventions such as health, nutrition, SBCC and social care services.
 - Undertakes improved monitoring and research around social protection impact on child outcomes, and use of data and research findings for strengthening programme results.

- Support capacity building of the Country Office and partners in the area of shock responsive social protection through enhanced understanding of social protection concepts, strengthening the use of analysis to inform strategy, enhance Country Office capacity for social protection policy engagement
- Supports correct and compelling use of data and evidence on the situation of children and coverage and impact of child-focused social protection – in support of the social policy programme and the country programme overall.
- Establishes effective partnerships with the Government, bilateral and multilateral donors, NGOs, civil society and local leaders, the private sector, and other UN agencies to support sustained and proactive commitment to social protection for children, the Convention of the Rights of the Child and to achieve global UN agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Establish and sustain constructive dialogue and partnerships between international and local social protection stakeholders, to provide effective protective environment for the most vulnerable children. Identifies other critical partners, promotes awareness and builds capacity of partners, and actively facilitates effective collaboration within the UN family.
- Cultivate resource mobilization opportunities and produce proposals, reports and other materials to support resources mobilization. Contribute to mobilizing human resources for social protection, including staff, consultants and external vendors.
- Identify, recruit and supervise consultants, vendors and other technical expertise to support delivery of social protection activities. Plan, use and track the use of resources and verify compliance with organizational guidelines and standards.

Minimum Required Qualifications:

Education:

An advanced university degree in one of the following fields is required: Economics, Public Policy, Social Sciences, International Relations, Political Science, or another relevant technical field.

Work Experience:

- A minimum of five years of relevant professional work experience is required.
- Experience working in a developing country is considered as a strong asset.
- Background and/or familiarity with emergency is considered as a strong asset.
- Experience in cash transfers is considered as a strong asset.

Language Skills:

Fluency in English is required. Knowledge of Arabic is desirable.