

**UNICEF Mexico Country Office
Temporary Appointment
Terms of Reference [TOR]**

Post Title	Child Protection Specialist (Children Associated with Armed Groups)	Post Level	Level 3
Supervisor's title	Child Protection Chief	Supervisor's Level	Level 4
Contract duration	24 months	Duty Station	Mexico City

JOB ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT AND PURPOSE FOR THE JOB

The fundamental mission of UNICEF is to promote the rights of every child, everywhere, in everything the organization does — in programmes, in advocacy and in operations. The equity strategy, emphasizing the most disadvantaged and excluded children and families, translates this commitment to children's rights into action. For UNICEF, equity means that all children have an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential, without discrimination, bias, or favoritism. To the degree that any child has an unequal chance in life — in its social, political, economic, civic, and cultural dimensions — her or his rights are violated. There is growing evidence that investing in the health, education, and protection of a society's most disadvantaged citizens — addressing inequity — not only will give all children the opportunity to fulfill their potential but also will lead to sustained growth and stability of countries. This is why the focus on equity is so vital. It accelerates progress towards realizing the human rights of all children, which is the universal mandate of UNICEF, as outlined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, while also supporting the equitable development of nations.

In 2015, 10.4% of adolescents surveyed indicated that they were invited to be part of criminal groups in the place where they live, with a higher incidence in male adolescents (13.5%) than among adolescent women (7.8%). Out of the adolescents in detention centers surveyed in 2017, 35% said they were part of an organized criminal group; and 27% said they had committed a crime in association with members of the gang they were part of in the neighborhood where they lived. Despite the lack of comprehensive hard data on association of children with armed groups, available data en studies point at a total number of children associated between 30,000 to 45,000 children and up to 145,000 at risk nationally (REDIM). Despite Mexico's broad regulatory and institutional framework, gaps persist in the legal and policy frameworks and an absence of comprehensive approaches and programs to prevent recruitment and promote reintegration.

Mexico's 2019-2024 Action Plan to End Violence Against Children includes as the prevention of recruitment and reintegration of children associated with organized crime as a priority action. As part of this process, the Council of the National Observatory for the Prevention of recruitment of children and adolescents led by the Federal Secretary of Public Security was established in October 2021 which has requested UNICEF's support to the implementation of its work plan. As such, UNICEF Mexico has prioritized the prevention of recruitment and reintegration of children associated with organized crime and armed groups. The prevention of child recruitment is an integral part of the federal Peace and security Strategy 2018-2024. UNICEF has supported the National Observatory to draft a national recruitment prevention strategy and a demobilization and reintegration protocol among other key draft documents.

UNICEF's objective for the next federal administration will focus on advocating for the adoption of the first national public policy for the prevention and response to child recruitment in Mexico.

Job organizational context: The Child Protection Specialist will work for UNICEF Mexico Country Office (CO) where the Child Protection Programme is a component of the Country Programme. The Specialist reports to the Chief, Child Protection (P4).

Purpose for the job: Under the supervision of the Chief of Child Protection, the Child Protection Specialist on children associated with armed groups will provide technical support to the National Observatory for the Prevention of Child Recruitment by Organized Crime in the implementation of its work plan, will provide technical support in planning and managing UNICEF related support programmes, and will support technically interventions in priority states with higher violence rates. The Specialist supports the development and preparation of the Child Protection programme(s) and is responsible for the management, implementation, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of the child protection programmes/projects within the country programme. The Specialist provides technical guidance and management support throughout the programming processes. H/She facilitates the administration and achievement of concrete and sustainable contributions to national and international efforts to create a protective environment for children against all harm, and to protect their rights to survival, development and well-being as established under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, international treaties/frameworks and UN intergovernmental bodies. The Specialist contributes to the achievement of results according to plans, allocation, results based-management approaches and methodology (RBM), and UNICEF's Strategic Plans, standards of performance and accountability framework.

For information of the work of our organization in Mexico, please visit our website: [UNICEF Mexico](#) and the video of our amazing results in 2023: [Informe Anual 2023: un buen sexenio para la niñez](#)

KEY FUNCTIONS, ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RELATED DUTIES AND TASKS

Summary of key functions/accountabilities:

1. Support to programme/project development and planning
2. Programme management, monitoring and delivery of results
3. Technical and operational support to programme implementation
4. Networking and partnership building
5. Innovation, knowledge management and capacity building
 1. Support to programme/project development and planning.
 - Lead the development of UNICEF Mexico's next 5-year plan and programme cooperation framework (Country Programme) with the Government of Mexico regarding armed violence and the prevention and response to child recruitment by criminal groups.
 2. Programme management, monitoring, and delivery of results.
 - Design, implement, monitor, and evaluate all Country Programme and Annual Work Plans armed violence and child recruitment related activities.
 3. Technical and operational support to programme implementation.

- Provide technical support in the planning, design, and implementation of UNICEF partnerships and provide technical advice and assistance to key government institutions on armed violence and child recruitment prevention and reintegration.
4. Networking and partnership building.
 - Build and sustain close working partnerships with government actors, civil society, academia, and communities to support the implementation of UNICEF’s armed violence and child recruitment strategy.
 5. Innovation, knowledge management and capacity building.
 - Develop targeted training programmes for institutional capacity building of UNICEF and partners for effective programme delivery, including integration and coordination with other government sectors and activities. Lead capacity building initiatives for counterparts on armed violence prevention and child recruitment.
 - Lead UNICEF’s research agenda on armed violence and children and child recruitment.

DELIVERABLES / OUTPUT

The main results expected by the end of the two-year temporary appointment include:

1. Develop and implement localized adaptation plans for UNICEF’s Child-Specific Recruitment Prevention and Reintegration Strategy (2026-2031) by organizing regional workshops with local NGOs and community leaders to tailor the strategy to the unique socio-economic and violence patterns of different Mexican states.
2. Incorporate feedback loops and iterative assessments into the Theory of Change for the National Observatory and Work Plan by Dec 2025, and facilitate annual strategy reviews with key stakeholders, including local government representatives and child rights organizations
3. Integrate psychological support and long-term monitoring into the Child Reintegration Strategy for the National Observatory, and partner with local mental health professionals to develop a comprehensive support network for sustained well-being and community acceptance.
4. Develop an advocacy strategy for UNICEF and the Observatory by creating multimedia campaigns to raise awareness and influence public opinion on child recruitment issues, and hosting public forums and discussions with policymakers, community leaders, and affected families to advocate for change
5. Conduct a legal analysis of the criminalization of children associated with organized crime by providing recommendations for legal reforms, advocating for their adoption within the Mexican legal system, and organizing workshops and training sessions for Mexican law enforcement and judiciary on child rights and protections in the newly elected National Congress.
6. Create a UNICEF publication on the impact of armed violence on children by focusing on the specific effects of organized crime and violence in Mexico, including actionable recommendations, and

- developing a documentary series that highlights personal stories and challenges faced by children in affected areas.
7. Support the implementation of UNICEF programs in Guerrero and Michoacán by integrating community-based approaches to ensure local engagement and ownership and creating local advisory committees to guide and monitor the programs.
 8. State plans on child recruitment are drafted in Chihuahua, Michoacán and Chihuahua and adopted in at least one state
 9. Support state laws on displacement by offering technical assistance and policy advice to strengthen the laws and ensure they meet international standards and conducting workshops and training sessions for policymakers and civil society organizations on best practices in displacement law.
 10. Strengthen State Responses and develop a joint work plan with the National Commission on Search and Enforced Disappearances by providing technical assistance and policy advice to enhance legal frameworks, and conducting workshops and training sessions for policymakers, law enforcement, and civil society organizations on best practices for preventing and addressing enforced disappearances.
 11. Develop programs that focus on strengthening community resilience in high-risk areas, including educational support and economic opportunities for families.
 12. Develop a strategy for child protection among Indigenous communities affected by armed violence that addresses their unique challenges and needs
 13. Enhance Donor Support for Child Protection Initiatives by developing targeted fundraising strategies and engaging potential donors through tailored outreach and communication campaigns and establishing transparent reporting mechanisms to ensure effective use of funds and build donor trust.
 14. Act as child protection section Officer in Charge as required.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An advanced university degree, preferably, in one of the following fields is required: international development, human rights, psychology, sociology, international law, or another relevant social science field.
Work Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A minimum of five years of experience in child protection programmes. ▪ A minimum of three years of experience in demobilization and reintegration, child recruitment prevention or child protection in emergencies is required. <p>Desirables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experience with crisis management, economic recovery or in any area related to the management of armed groups.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experience working within peacebuilding or development programmes operations. ▪ Relevant experience in programme development in child protection related areas in a UN system agency or organization. ▪ Developing country work experience and/or familiarity with emergency.
Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluency in Spanish and in English
UNICEF VALUES AND COMPETENCY REQUIRED (BASED ON THE UPDATED FRAMEWORK)	
<p>Core values of care, respect, integrity, trust, accountability and sustainability (CRITAS).</p> <p>UNICEF competencies required for this post are:</p> <p>(1) Builds and maintains partnerships (2) Demonstrates self-awareness and ethical awareness (3) Drive to achieve results for impact (4) Innovates and embraces change (5) Manages ambiguity and complexity (6) Thinks and acts strategically (7) Works collaboratively with others (8) Nurtures, and, leads and manages people (8) Nurtures, and, leads and manages people.</p> <p>UNICEF is committed to diversity and inclusion within its workforce, and encourages all candidates, irrespective of gender, nationality, religious and ethnic backgrounds, including persons living with disabilities, to apply to become a part of the organization.</p> <p>We offer a wide range of benefits to our staff, including paid parental leave, breastfeeding breaks, and reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities. UNICEF strongly encourages the use of flexible working arrangements.</p> <p>UNICEF has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UNICEF, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, and discrimination. UNICEF also adheres to strict child safeguarding principles. All selected candidates will be expected to adhere to these standards and principles and will therefore undergo rigorous reference and background checks. Background checks will include the verification of academic credential(s) and employment history. Selected candidates may be required to provide additional information to conduct a background check.</p>	