

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Child Protection National Consultant / Right of the Child to Live in a Family in Emergencies

Individual Consultant is expected to perform this assignment remotely with possible field missions based on needs.

Duty Station: Yerevan CO, Armenia

Supervisor: UNICEF Child Protection Policy Specialist

Time-frame: from 20 May 2024 to 19 November 2025 (Duration: 18 months)

Purpose of Activity/Assignment:

It is a known fact that all types of emergencies significantly affect families' ability to ensure a protective environment for their children that guarantees their wellbeing and ability to cope with potential crises. Children can easily become separated from their parents, relatives or usual caregivers in emergencies – whether rapid or slow in onset, or resulting from armed conflict, natural disaster or other situations. Lacking the care and protection of their families, unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) are at increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. Indeed, such children have urgent needs: to be identified, to be provided with appropriate alternative care and to be reunited with family. It is imperative that further family separation is prevented and that an immediate and comprehensive response to the needs of these children is a priority in all emergencies, beginning with preparation for emergencies and prevention of separation. To be effective, these interventions should be implemented as part of a broader child protection response and integrated within an overall protection response.

2020 conflict in and around Nagorno Karabakh, recurrent escalations on the borders of Armenia and geopolitical tensions around the conflict, as well as the displacement of the population of Nagorno Karabakh to Armenia in September 2023 (around 115,000 people, out of which 35,000 children), increased the risk of separation of children from families due to exacerbated vulnerabilities disproportionately affecting families and children, especially those who were already facing difficult situations. To date 30 unaccompanied/separated children from NK have been identified. Over 50% who were initially placed in residential care were subsequently placed in family-type care within the first weeks of the emergency. Other children were placed in the state-run child and family support/crises centres.

To ensure an appropriate and effective response to the emergency, the UNICEF Country Office in Armenia has scaled up its Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPHA) component, supporting the Government and other actors in all directions related to protection of children and their families. To coordinate this unprecedented emergency response the Government of Armenia and UN in Armenia have established a coordination structure comprising of working groups and sub-working groups. Within this coordination structure, UNICEF has been co-leading (together with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - MLSA) the Child Protection Sub-Working Group (CP SWG). The CP SWG worked to support partners to develop and scale up effective and coordinated emergency interventions to ensure affected children and their families have access to timely, effective and quality child protection services. One of the main protection needs of affected populations identified by the child protection actors were the prevention of family separation, prevention of unnecessary placement into large-scale residential institutions, timely and effective identification of and assistance to unaccompanied/separated children or those at risk of separation, including through family tracing, reunification, referral and placement in family-type care.

While currently the Government and UN agencies, including UNICEF are in a process of transition from humanitarian response to development assistance, the importance of emergency preparedness is not being underestimated, taking into consideration the high probability of further military hostilities in and internal

displacement from the borderline communities and settlements, but also other potential emergencies, such as natural disasters (e.g. earthquake) and other (pandemic etc.).

To support the Government in its efforts in strengthening the child protection system (ongoing significant legislative reform, continuous capacity building etc.), UNICEF requires specialized technical support in the area of implementation of the right of the child in the family in emergencies, which has been identified as a critical need not only in UNICEF Core Commitments For Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs), but also in the UNICEF-Government 2021-2025 Country Programme of Cooperation, UN-Government Refugee Response Plan and the draft Transition Plan etc. This is also an institutional priority for UNICEF in Armenia and globally. UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (UNICEF ECARO) has recently published a White Paper on “Development of Foster Care in Europe and Central Asia” (White Paper), defining foster care as one of the important tools to reduce reliance on harmful institutional care for children who need alternative care.

As a result of continuous collaboration between MLSA and UNICEF support, significant progress has been achieved in the de-institutionalization of care of children without parental care and in strengthening the foster care system and community-based child protection services. Recent emergencies revealed that the child protection system, especially in remote and borderline communities, still has challenges in timely and adequately responding to the needs of affected children and families. Issues remain in terms of coverage and quality of services, efficiency of referral mechanisms, and shock-responsiveness. Despite this progress, around one thousand children still remain in residential institutions instead of a family environment that would better guarantee their protection and resilience.

Working under the leadership and supervision of the UNICEF CP Specialist, the CP Consultant will support the UNICEF Country Office in Armenia and Child Protection team to expand support to the Government in enhancing mechanisms for protection of children from increased risk of separation from families during emergencies, operationalization of procedures for identification and referral of unaccompanied and separated children, promotion of family-based care and strengthening capacity of child protection actors in prevention of separation of children from families during emergencies, in line with the best interests of the child and taking into consideration the lessons learned during the emergencies.

Scope of Work:

Under the direct supervision of the UNICEF CP Programme Specialist, the Child Protection Consultant on the Right of the Child to Live in a Family in Emergencies (hereinafter CP Consultant) is expected to produce specific deliverables that will contribute to high quality, effective and efficient implementation of interventions and services in the field of the right of the child to live in a family and de-institutionalization of care, with a special focus on prevention of separation of children from families during emergencies. S/he will be responsible for interventions aiming at assessment of the needs, building capacity of social service workforce, support to effective coordination and quality assurance of relevant interventions with implementing partners and other counterparts. CP Consultant will work closely with the members of the UNICEF Child Protection Team, UNICEF partners - including Government, iNGOs and NGOs, and will coordinate with other key UNICEF sectors to support the improvement of quality and coverage/accessibility of services for affected children and their families. The CP Consultant will also contribute to fundraising and project planning activities of the CP Section. Specifically, the consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

- contribute to the implementation of relevant activities included in the UNICEF-Government 2024-2025 workplan and development of new plans as relevant,
- support CP team in the development and/or revision of projects and partnerships as necessary and contribute to quality assurance of interventions in the relevant field,
- provide expertise during the development of secondary legislation on child protection and child rights taking into considerations the findings in the White Paper and other relevant guiding documents with a focus on the rights of the child to live in a family, developed by UNICEF ECARO,

- participate in the works of the National Commission for Protection of Children’s Rights and its relevant working/expert groups and propose possible ways of ensuring children’s participation in the works of the Commission,
- contribute to the implementation of Comprehensive Programme on the Rights of Children for 2024-2029,
- develop recommendations on expansion of the coverage and accessibility of community-based child and family support services,
- provide expertise to awareness raising and communication interventions in the field of the right of the child to live in a family,
- contribute to ongoing assessment, analysis and mapping exercises implemented by UNICEF,
- consolidate available resources and materials, identify key areas for knowledge and skill building and propose relevant interventions,
- assist in the content development and logistical coordination of training sessions, including scheduling, venue setup, and managing training materials for easy accessibility, maintain detailed and accurate records of training sessions, participant attendance, and evaluations, and prepare reports on training outcomes for monitoring purposes,
- travel to regions in order to provide quality assurance, capacity building, liaison, and monitoring of UNICEF-supported interventions,
- prepare quality and comprehensive reports and briefings, when and if it is needed,
- participate in relevant coordination structures and de-brief the CP team,
- contribute to the development of fund-raising proposals, concept notes, and sector reports.

Budget Year:	Requesting Section/Issuing Office:	Reasons why consultancy cannot be done by staff:
2024-2025	Child Protection Section, Armenia CO	In the view of emergency response interventions being significantly expanded, implying wide geographical coverage, a large number of stakeholders and partners and the need to ensure cross-programming and coordination with other UN agencies, international and local organisations involved in the implementation of interventions in the context of emergency response and beyond, the Section needs a dedicated workforce to ensure coordinated and coherent implementation of relevant interventions in the field of implementation of the right to live in a family, with a focus on prevention of separation from the family during emergencies. The assignment requires profound professional knowledge and deeper expertise in the field of the right of the child to live in a family and de-institutionalization of care, especially in emergency context, which is beyond the scope of duty expected from staff. The assignment is of a temporary nature. Outputs are measurable; and the tasks are to be performed and completed within a limited and specified period.

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Timeline	Estimate Budget
Contribution to the timely start, efficient and effective implementation and quality assurance of relevant partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least one partnership document developed, launched and implemented - Participation in at least 12 monitoring and quality assurance missions conducted; - At least 12 trip reports submitted, with detailed information on progress, identified gaps, recommendations for improvement/revision of partnerships. - At least 6 meetings with relevant actors in the field organized and facilitated. 	<p>At least 1 mission per two months</p> <p>At least one coordination meeting per quarter</p>	
Consolidation of available awareness raising and capacity building resources and materials, identification of key areas for knowledge and skill building and proposition of relevant interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inventory of available resources prepared (and regularly updated as relevant), - Recommendations on identified key areas for further capacity building provided 	Within 3 months (and update throughout the assignment)	
Contribution to capacity building and knowledge sharing interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 6 training sessions and events organized/facilitated, and accurate records of training sessions submitted; - 18 monthly reports with detailed information on progress, identified gaps, recommendations for improvement/revision of partnerships 	At least one training sessions per quarter delivered	
Contribution to the expansion of interventions in the field of the right of the child to live in a family (expansion of child and family support services, strengthening of foster care system)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revision of ongoing partnership documents conducted, - Report on the results of the revision of the ongoing and new partnership documents with relevant recommendations, - Revision of new partnership documents conducted. 	18 months	
Contribution to fund-raising efforts in the field of the right of the child to live in a family / deinstitutionalization	Contribution to at least three fund-raising proposals, concept notes, and sector reports	18 months	
Contribution to inter-agency coordination and reporting efforts of CP team (participation in the works of the National Commission, CP SWG and other working groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 18 coordination meetings attended and briefings developed 	18 months (one per month in average)	

Contribution to the development of secondary legislation on child protection and child rights	- Contribution to the development/revision of at least 10 legislative acts provided	18 months	
Contribution to the development of awareness raising and communication interventions in the field of the right of the child to live in a family	- At least three discussions with the MLSA, UNICEF Communications team and relevant CSOs conducted	18 months	

<p>Minimum Qualifications required:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>Enter Disciplines: Relevant advanced academic background in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - social sciences, - pedagogy, - human rights, - humanitarian action. 	<p>Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 5 years child rights programming experience for children and families: experience in emergency/humanitarian contexts is an asset, - Good knowledge and understanding of humanitarian principles, child safeguarding measures and established international standards in the field of child protection, - Demonstrated experience managing complex relationships and building collaborative efforts across groups and sectors, - Strong organizational and facilitation skills whether face to face or remotely with diverse stakeholders, - Comfortable to work independently while coordinating closely with different teams, - Experience conducting needs assessments, reviews and documentation of best practice, - Ability to travel, - Full command of spoken and written English and Armenian.
<p>Terms of the application: The deadline for the submission of applications is 24 April 2024. Applications should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover letter; • CV; • Financial Proposal. <p>All qualified applicants should apply online, using the UNICEF E-Recruitment system and following the online application link. Incomplete applications will not be considered.</p>	