

MARIA SALEM

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*I adhere to the Professional
Code of Conduct of the Canadian
Association of International
Development Professionals*



PROFILE

International Peacebuilding and Development expert with 20 years of leadership and management experience across a wide range of industry thematic areas including: peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, child protection, population, gender, youth, environment, education, health, poverty, humanitarian relief, mine action, social advocacy, citizenship, culture, civil society and telecom sector restructuring, and human resources, all the while committing to strategic goals in achievement of expected results.

KEY SKILLS

- ◆ Peacebuilding and Development Strategies and Policies
- ◆ Conflict/post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation policies
- ◆ Monitoring and Evaluation
- ◆ Results-based Programme design and management
- ◆ High-level meetings / Professional and Technical Reporting / Publishing
- ◆ Development research / Data management
- ◆ Restructuring and change management
- ◆ Human resources management
- ◆ Organizational design and governance
- ◆ Consultancy / Training / Capacity building
- ◆ Procurement / Purchasing operations
- ◆ Multilingual: English / French / Arabic

CAREER PORTFOLIO

Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist

United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA)

Chaired by the United Nations Mine Action Services (UNMAS) – New York HQ

Jun 2019 – to date

Responsible for the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism that assesses the progress of the global United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019-2023, endorsed by the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA) of 12 UN organisms serving mine action in 30 countries and three territories. As an M&E Specialist I provide technical support for the development of relevant tools and frameworks to be used to assess progress, identify trends related to the implementation of the Strategy, and propose and implement up-to-date M&E approaches, practices and techniques.

Internal Governance Consultant and Trainer

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) - Switzerland

Mar 2019 – Apr 2020

Provided services as an Internal Governance Consultant and Trainer for WILPF's partnership with the Syrian Women's Political Movement (SWPM) throughout its transitional process of internal capacity-building and institutionalization. During the assignment I assessed SWPM's internal governance and developed institutional guidelines including the SWPM's goals, strategic outcomes and strategy for the years 2021-2024, organizational structures, and internal operational processes, and trained its board members on best practices of leading and governing a successful feminist political movement towards the achievement of the mandate.

Senior Policy Consultant

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA)-Lebanon and the region

National Agenda for the Future of Syria Programme – Peacebuilding and State Building Post-Conflict

May – Sep 2019

Designed and compiled the Policy Gap Analysis (PGA) document, a comprehensive assessment of national level policy gaps in conflict-affected Syria, in priority themes and sectors that serve peacebuilding such as return of refugees, local response, institutional recovery, reconciliation and rehabilitation of infrastructure. The PGA highlights challenges for the peacebuilding phase in Syria by examining the impact of the conflict on 4 different nexus themes from a national and a regional perspective, while also considering the cross-impact of those nexus. The document proposes policy recommendations to bridge the gap towards the rebuilding and development of the country.

The Programme created a participatory platform to discuss scenarios and develop governance, economic and social policy options to address the challenges of post-conflict transition from peacebuilding to state building in Syria at the national, regional and international levels. It turned out to be the lead programmes on the subject worldwide and it was able to mobilize USD10.5 million over six years and included 1600 experts, 175 participating NGOs and over 3000 stakeholders and partners.

- **Programme design, management and leadership:** substantively designed the programme structure and strategic outcomes and lead and managed a working group of 26 experts towards achieving the outputs across more than 11 thematic subtitles under reconciliation and social cohesion. The result was a consolidated "Strategic Framework of Policy Options for Syria Post-conflict", which covers more than 57 governance, economic and social policy sectors, and an interactive platform of technical dialogue.
- **Technical Output and advisory role:** creatively conceptualized innovative initiatives, and produced and supervised the writing of technical reports, substantive documents and research materials. Acted as a resource person on issues related to the Programme's scope.
- **Resource mobilization:** participated in technical cooperation dialogues with international partners aiming at advocating for the programme and mobilizing resources.
- **High-level representation:** dynamically represented the programme at the highest political and technical levels, internationally and regionally, and strategically contributed to expanding its network of experts.
- **Advocacy:** actively promoted and advocated the Programme's mandate and statement of ethics derived from the International Declaration of Human Rights in meetings, conferences, roundtables.

National Project Director

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - Syria - Support to Juvenile Justice Project

2011 - 2012

A UNDP-supported programme to reform the juvenile justice sector in Syria in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Interior. The Project was able to modify the Juvenile Delinquents Act (Juvenile Law) of 1974 and a submit it to the parliament for endorsement.

- **Project management:** successfully assumed the overall responsibility of project management including financial and human resources towards the achievement of expected results against a budget of USD200k over two years. The project outcomes were achieved as expected.
- **Technical output:** supervised a pioneer comprehensive comparative assessment of the juvenile justice system, in collaboration with concerned ministries and recommended child-centered policy priorities to protect children in conflict with the law, which were submitted for the Parliament's endorsement as the modified Juvenile Delinquents Act (Juvenile Law) of 1974.
- **Training, capacity building and networking:** worked on building the institutional capacities of seven pilot Juvenile Centers and other mandated institutions.

Policy Advisor/ Assistant Representative

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) - Syria

2008 - 2009

I was responsible for the follow up on the implementation of the country programme in areas of Population and Development, Reproductive Health and Gender.

- **Programme management:** actively lead and supervised the design and implementation of the country programme as per organization's set strategic objectives.
- **Technical output:** successfully delivered programme activities including but not limited to: • setting up the first National Family Protection Unit • establishing the first National Observatory for Gender-Based Violence • supervise the delivery of training for 80 NGOs staff on population-related issues • supervising the training of 130 media staff and journalists to improve population communication messages • advocating population issues with parliament members
- **Resource mobilization and advocacy:** dynamically contributed to the advocacy and strategic partnership building, which resulted in an increase in the Government Trust Fund contribution to the cycle of assistance (2007-2011) from 15 % to 50

%, as well as committing to increase the Government contribution to the procurement of contraceptives from the central health budget by annual allocations of \$700,000 totaling to \$2,800,000 for the whole cycle.

- **Representation and advisory role and HR guidance:** represented the organization in national and international fora and brought to the front and advocated the strategic objectives of UNFPA. As advisor to the senior management, provided day-to-day technical input and supported the HR department in enhancing its function.
- **Research and reporting:** Successfully supervised the production various report and researches including: • First ever National Population Report • First national quantitative research on Gender-Based Violence • A comprehensive assessment of the capacities of NGOs working the Eastern Region of Syria • Syrian Youth Needs from a Gender perspective research • A Joint UN Mapping of the Ultra Poor • Country Office Annual Report (COAR)

Senior Organization Development Consultant (short-term consultancy assignment)

German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ) Advisory Service

Support to the Ministry of Housing & Constructions (MHC) – Syria

2007

Providing technical and institutional support to the Ministry of Housing and Construction and affiliated establishments, within the framework of macro-economic shift towards the new market economic.

- Delivered a document "**Organizational Evaluation, the New Role, and Recommendations for change - Case Study: Pilot Assessment of the Investment Budget Cycle and the Institutionalized Financial Procedures at the Ministry and Establishments**". The study is a comprehensive assessment of procedures, systems, and instruments available at MHC to support its efforts in implementing the 10th 5-year investment plan for the years 2006-2010, and to recommend improvements
- Produced the guidelines for an "**MHC Communication strategy: Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives**" together with the organizational implications and human resources development and training plans.

Organization and HR Expert / HR Senior Consultant (consecutively)

European Commission (EC) - Telecom Sector Support Programme (TSSP) – Syria

2003 - 2006

Provided technical assistance to the Syrian Telecommunication Establishment (STE). I successfully worked on the design and roll out of the HR and Training functions in STE, the overall organizational structure, procured and rolled out the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System, and procure and set up the new training center.

- Successfully created and implemented the **human resources function** in the establishment, which included assessing the existing functions, designing the new structure, shifting to the newly established function, re-assigning staff, building their capacities to match the new structure and job descriptions and producing relevant guides and manuals.
- Effectively participated in creating the overall **organizational structure** of the Establishment.
- Effectively collaborated with colleagues to design and deliver the **new training function**.
- Designed and delivered a nation-wide **management training programme** to build the capacity of the establishment's senior management across 13 provinces.
- Successfully provided support to the introduction of the **new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System** in STE.
- Actively collaborated with STE concerned divisions to **procure new Training Center** in the establishment.

PREVIOUS PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1998 - 2003

Previous professional experience included research and support functions with the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Refugees Study Centre at Queen Elizabeth House – Oxford University.

EDUCATION

Master of Science in Applied Development Studies

2001

Graduate Institute of International Development and Applied Economics, University of Reading, UK

Higher Education Diploma and Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences

1998

Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences, Damascus University, Syria

English: Fluent - **French:** Fluent - **Arabic:** Native