

ALEKSANDAR LAZOVSKI

Social Policy Consultant

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Independent consultant with over 15 years of experience advising governments, UN agencies and development partners on social policy, social protection reform, public finance for children and programme management. Geographic focus on the Western Balkans and Türkiye, with additional experience in Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Combines systems-strengthening expertise – legislation, targeting, benefit adequacy, public financial management, M&E and institutional capacity development – with applied humanitarian experience in cash-based responses using national systems. Strong focus on equity, child rights and reducing child poverty, with proven ability to work across government, UN Country Teams, international financial institutions and civil society.

KEY AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Social Policy and Social Protection Reform

- System design and reform: legislation, governance, institutional arrangements
- Child-sensitive social protection and social protection floors
- Linking social protection with child protection, education and social care services

Shock-Responsive Social Protection and Emergency Cash Transfers

- Shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) readiness assessments and guidelines
- Vertical and horizontal expansion of national schemes during crises
- Humanitarian cash transfers and cash-plus approaches

Public Finance for Children and Social Sectors

- Public finance analysis and advocacy for child-focused investments
- Human capital and fiscal space analysis
- Budget monitoring, parliamentary engagement and PFM capacity development

Programme Design, Management and M&E

- Results-based programme design and implementation
- Monitoring and evaluation frameworks, operational manuals and SOPs
- Stakeholder engagement, facilitation and high-level policy dialogue

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

- Led technical support to North Macedonia's social protection reform, contributing to new legislation, improved targeting and expanded child benefits.
- Supported Kosovo's Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers to develop the country's first Shock-Responsive Social Protection Guideline.
- Steered a Public Finance assessment in Serbia on municipal capacities to finance climate-related public works and child-focused investments, including a PFM training manual for Parliament.
- Developed M&E frameworks, operational manuals and SOPs for social protection programmes across five Caribbean SIDS, strengthening routine delivery and crisis response.
- Led a readiness assessment of Türkiye's social protection system for delivering humanitarian cash transfers during crises, with a UNICEF internal cash preparedness action plan.
- Contributed to human capital and distributional analyses with UNICEF, the World Bank and academic institutions, assessing impacts of the war in Ukraine and COVID-19 on children in Serbia.
- Pioneered a disability assessment model for children in North Macedonia based on the International Classification of Functioning (ICF).

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Independent Social Policy Consultant

2021 – Present

Providing advisory services to governments, UN agencies and development partners on social policy, social protection reform, public finance for children and shock-responsive systems.

Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands (2025)

- Conducted an independent outcome-level review of the regional ECHO-funded programme on shock-responsive education, child protection and social protection systems in the Caribbean.
- Assessed effectiveness and sustainability of UNICEF's support to four UK Overseas Territories in strengthening SRSP.

Kosovo (2023–ongoing)

- Supporting the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers to develop Kosovo's first SRSP Guideline.
- Developing case studies and capacity-building trainings on humanitarian cash transfers and SRSP principles.
- Advising UNICEF on internal cash transfer preparedness, including SOPs, tools and inter-agency coordination.
- Contributing to UNICEF's strategic positioning in social protection reform within the UN Kosovo Team.

Serbia (ongoing)

- Leading a Public Finance assessment of municipal capacities to finance climate-related public works and child-focused investments.
- Contributed to a Human Capital Review with UNICEF and the World Bank, focusing on social protection for children.
- Collaborated with European academic institutions on financial impact analyses of the war in Ukraine and COVID-19.
- Leading development of a Public Finance for Children training manual for Parliament in partnership with the Ministry of Finance.

Türkiye (Jan–Jul 2025)

- Led a readiness assessment of Türkiye's national social protection system for humanitarian cash transfers, drawing on lessons from the 2023 earthquake, COVID-19 and refugee programming.
- Produced an analytical report with entry points for HCTs, risk mitigation, preparedness actions and a UNICEF internal cash preparedness action plan.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (2022–2024)

- Developed M&E frameworks for social protection systems under shock conditions.
- Supported design of an Operational Manual and SOPs for all major social protection programmes.
- Led beneficiary consultations and designed implementation tools.

Anguilla (2024)

- Designed grievance redress mechanisms for social protection programmes.
- Created M&E frameworks and delivered training for government officials.

Caribbean Regional – Programme Assessment (2024)

- Served as Programme Assessor for a multi-agency initiative supporting SRSP across four Caribbean SIDS.
- Assessed sustainability of programme outputs and provided evidence-based recommendations.

UNICEF Ukraine – Social Policy Specialist

Apr–Jun 2022

Emergency deployment during the escalation of the conflict.

- Supported design and implementation of a large-scale humanitarian cash initiative reaching approximately 50,000 households.
- Contributed to a hybrid implementation model linking national systems with UNICEF's operational capacities.
- Designed an online registration platform and integrated the HOPE cash transfer ecosystem for remote enrolment.

- Developed a payment strategy enabling secure direct transfers to beneficiaries' bank accounts.
- Worked through the Cash Working Group to establish a unified payment framework including a Minimum Expenditure Basket and beneficiary de-duplication.

UNICEF North Macedonia – Chief of Social Policy

2014–2021

Led UNICEF's social policy and social protection portfolio, focusing on systems reform, child poverty reduction and inclusive social services.

- Provided sustained technical assistance to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in reforming the national social protection system, including drafting primary and secondary legislation.
- Guided improvements to targeting and adequacy of benefits, including child benefits, contributing to expanded coverage for vulnerable children and families.
- Led COVID-19 impact analyses to inform policy responses and targeted interventions.
- Advocated for fiscal space expansion for social protection and supported scaling of the child benefit programme.
- Partnered with Columbia University to refine a case management model, enhancing capacities of social workers.
- Designed a disability assessment model for children based on the ICF framework.
- Coordinated UNICEF's contribution to the European refugee and migrant response, including SOPs for unaccompanied children.

UNICEF Zimbabwe – Social Protection Specialist

2019

Emergency deployment for the Hurricane Idai response.

- Helped position UNICEF as a key partner for designing multi-purpose cash grants to affected households.
- Conducted a market assessment on feasibility of humanitarian cash in a context of currency crisis and cash shortages.

UNICEF Eastern Caribbean – Social Protection Specialist

2017

Humanitarian response to Hurricane Maria.

- Designed and implemented a humanitarian cash transfer programme using the national social protection system for vertical and horizontal expansion.
- Developed a beneficiary registry reaching approximately 8,300 households and 6,000 of the most vulnerable children.

UNICEF HQ – Social Protection Specialist (Short-Term)

2016

- Contributed to linkages between social protection and child protection, particularly social support and care services.

OSCE/ODIHR – Project Officer

2012–2014

- Worked on a regional initiative to promote Roma inclusion across social protection, education, housing and employment.
- Managed EU-funded programmes (€3.3 million) to support social change across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and North Macedonia.

UNICEF North Macedonia – Child Protection Officer

2010–2012

- Co-led a multi-stakeholder task force on trafficking in children, resulting in a national action plan.
- Designed and scaled a national in-service training and licensing programme for the social welfare workforce.
- Contributed to a Management Information System for social support and care services.

OSCE Mission to Skopje – Rule of Law Officer

2004–2010

- Conceptualized and operationalized a national referral mechanism for victims of human trafficking.
- Supported establishment of the country's first shelter for victims of trafficking and the Office of the National Rapporteur.

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MSc International Development – University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom

Graduated Political Scientist (Master equivalent, pre-ECTS) – Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje

Selected certifications and training:

- IMF Certified PFMx: Public Financial Management (Fiscal Affairs Department)
- Oxford Policy Management – Public Finance for Children Global Learning Programme, Florence
- UNICEF & WFP Joint Emergency Response Simulation and SSAFE Training, Brindisi
- World Bank Global Course on Social Safety Nets, Washington DC

LANGUAGES

Macedonian (native) | English (fluent) | Serbian/Croatian (fluent) | German (intermediate)