



UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
JPO Request Form



Otoxha, Belize, 2024. UNICEF. FrankDejongh

Training and Learning Plan

- ✓ Participation in a one-week JPO Induction Programme in New York;
- ✓ Guidance and advice in relation to training opportunities within the field of expertise;
- ✓ Use of yearly JPO training funds for internal/external training opportunities;
- ✓ Participation in the Mentoring, Coaching, and Career Counselling and Career transition programmes;
- ✓ Encourage field mission and/or stretch assignment during and after the 2nd year

In addition, the JPO will benefit from the following specific learning opportunities in the receiving office:

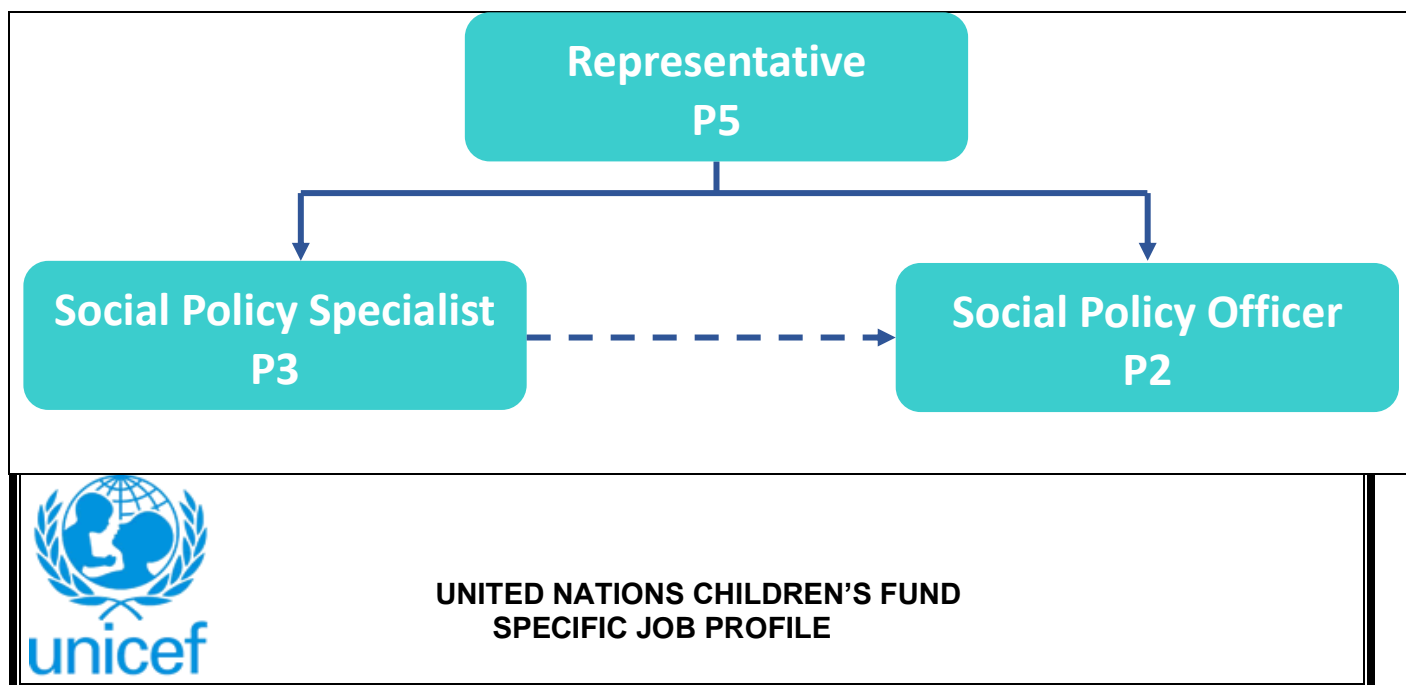
- ✓ Regional trainings in the area of social policy and social protection
- ✓ Regional network and other meetings in the area of social policy and social protection
- ✓ Mandatory Agora trainings
- ✓ Learning opportunities as per the Office Learning and Development Plan

Working at UNICEF Belize as a Social Policy Officer presents an exceptional career opportunity, particularly as social policy plays an important role in achieving impacts at scale leaving no child behind, which is the

focus of UNICEF's new Strategic Plan for 2026-2030. At the country level, UNICEF Belize supported the government in developing a National Social Protection Strategy and created evidence to advocate for increased public spending to address child poverty in all its forms. Hence, programmatically, it is an essential moment to strengthen the social protection system in the country and enhance public finance for children. Under the direct supervision of a P5 Representative—an experienced leader in managing young professionals—and through matrix management by a P3 Social Policy Specialist with over 14 years in social policy programming at UNICEF, the JPO will gain valuable knowledge and experience to foster professional growth. UNICEF Belize is committed to retaining the JPO following successful performance, underscoring its dedication to career development.

Information and living condition of Duty station: [For Filed Office locations only]	
General Information	Belize is a Caribbean country located on the northeastern coast of Latin America. Formerly a British colony, known as British Honduras, Belize gained its Independence from the United Kingdom on 21 September 1981. The country is bordered on the north by Mexico, on the east by the Caribbean Sea, and on the south and west by Guatemala. Majority of the population is of Creole African-descent and Latinos, along with diverse cultures and languages spoken, with English being the official language of Belize. Politically, Belize is a parliamentary multi-party democracy and a constitutional monarchy, as it remains a member of the Commonwealth. Tourism and Agriculture are the major industries contributing to the economic development. Belize City is the duty station for several UN agencies, with UNICEF's presence since 1954. Belize has a tropical climate with pronounced wet and dry seasons, although there are significant variations in weather patterns by region.
Security	While Belize is a beautiful, sunny, affordable and easygoing haven, it also has its challenges in areas of local crime with the Security Level classified as Moderate (Level 3) as per the UN Security Management System. Major concerns and law enforcement revolve around criminal activities engaged in gang violence and drug-related crimes.
Housing	Housing and accommodation in Belize City are available through apartments, standalone houses, and gated community homes. They may be furnished and/or fully serviced or unfurnished. Rental options and leasing arrangements can be made based on commodities and amenities requested with a residential security clearance provided by the UN Agency.
Schools & Childcare	The Belizean Education system is generally based on British curriculum and divided into 6 standards (8 years) in Primary education, and 4 forms of secondary education. There are both Government and private schools as available options. Admission and enrollment procedures vary from school to school. Space is often limited, and preference may be given to students based on nationality. Tuition tends to be costly based on local standards, but offers high standards of learning, boasts smaller class sizes, with extracurricular activities and facilities available for students. A list of licensed childcare facilities can be found here .
Work for spouses & partners	Employment opportunities is limited but available, dependent on the area of expertise. Spouses for internationals require a work visa, which is completed through the hiring organization and the Labour department. However, volunteer work does not require any approval.

Reporting line of the JPO



I. Post Information	
Job Title: Social Policy Officer Supervisor Title/ Level: Representative, P5 Organizational Unit: Programme Post Location: Belize City, Belize	Job Level: P2 Job Profile No.: Job Classification Level:
II. Strategic Office Context and purpose for the job	
<p>The fundamental mission of UNICEF is to promote the rights of every child, everywhere, in everything the organization does — in programs, 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.</p> <p><u>Strategic office context:</u></p> <p>UNICEF Belize's current Programme Document was approved in February 2022, for a period of five years, from 2022 to 2026. Its goal is to support the Government of Belize (GOB) and other national partners in achieving equitable outcomes – for children of all families – that address policy, systems and access to and demand for climate-smart and gender-responsive services. It is aimed at helping Belize to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate results for children while building resilience to further shocks and addressing development deficits.</p>	

The country programme has three components: (a) every child, including adolescents, is protected from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and harmful practices; (b) every child, including adolescents, learns and acquires skills for the future; (c) every child including adolescents, survives and thrives, with access to nutritious diets, quality primary health care, nurturing practices and essential supplies and has access to inclusive social protection and lives free from poverty.

Cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality, climate change and disaster risk reduction, are embedded in programme design and focus on the most disadvantaged, girls and boys; those living with disabilities; those living in crime hotspots; children affected by emergencies; child migrants; and children living in poverty and/or children living with other socioeconomic disadvantages, and their families.

Belize is a higher middle-income country with gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of BZ\$ 13,968.¹ After a severe recession in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was strong growth of 17.9 percent in 2021 and 8.7 percent in 2022², which has created fiscal space for the expansion of social protection.

On the other hand, the Belize economy has several structural vulnerabilities, including a small domestic market, low levels of economic diversification, export concentration, and an over-reliance on tourism. This leaves many businesses and workers highly vulnerable to external shocks and fluctuating demand in just a few key markets. Furthermore, climate change, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation threaten the natural resources and assets on which key sectors of the economy rely.

Of the working-age population, 71 percent of men and only 45 percent of women participate in the labour force; and, among women, domestic duties or caring for a child or elderly person are typically stated as the main reasons for not participating in the workforce.³ The unemployment rate is 4 percent overall and is highest amongst female youth at nearly 10 percent. Of those employed, 37 percent are engaged in informal employment. The majority of these are 'own account workers' or 'self-employed without hired help', and the largest sectors of informal employment are wholesale and retail trade, and repairs.⁴

The population stood at 397,483 in 2022⁵ (approximately 110,719 households) and is still fairly young. Overall, the dependency ratio in Belize is predicted to reduce slightly over the next ten years as the proportion of older people will increase, the proportion of children aged 0-13 years will decline faster.

The most recent comprehensive poverty assessment was based on the living standards measurement survey carried out in April and May 2009. This found 41 percent of the population to be poor⁶ and 16 percent to be severely poor⁷. In 2018/19, key poverty indicators were updated, based on the 2018/19 Household Budget Survey. This found that the severe poverty rate had decreased to 9 percent, but that the poverty rate had increased to 52 percent⁸ meaning that approximately 206,000 people would be living below the poverty line if this poverty rate persists today. Some limited analysis was carried out of variations by locality, age, household size, ethnicity and education), but no comprehensive poverty assessment was conducted at this time.

¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=BZ>

² Hon. John Briceño, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Minister of Finance (2024), Budget Speech, 8 March 2024

³ SIB, 2023

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ SIB (2024) https://sib.org.bz/press-release_census-launch/

⁶ Defined as living below the general poverty line, which represents the minimum cost of a food basket needed to provide a healthy diet plus an allowance for non-food expenditure. The 41% includes the 16% who are severely poor.

⁷ Government of Belize and Caribbean Development Bank, 2010. Severe poverty defined as living below the food poverty line, which represents the minimum cost of only a food basket needed to provide a healthy diet, with no allowance for non-food expenditure.

⁸ SIB, 2021a <https://sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/PovertyStudy2018.pdf>

The most recent poverty analysis used a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) measure from data collected in the September 2021 Labor Force Survey⁹. This used 17 indicators across 4 dimensions (education, living standards, employment, and health) to identify people suffering from deprivations. The conclusion was that approximately 36 percent of the population of Belize (approximately 143,000 individuals) were living in multi-dimensional poverty. It should be noted that this is an official national statistic, but not internationally comparable. (According to the global Multidimensional Poverty Index¹⁰, a far lower 4.3 percent of the Belize population lives in multi-dimensional poverty, slightly lower than the Latin America and Caribbean average of 5.6 percent)

Secondary analysis of the available data is reported in UNICEF (2022), which notes that, whilst poverty is generally lower in urban than rural districts, there are pockets of urban deprivation where poverty rates may have risen particularly rapidly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, 44 percent of children in Belize City South Side were living in poverty in 2020, up from 25 percent in 2019.¹¹ The final report of the Out of School Children Initiative¹² finds that fewer than half of children in Belize attend preschool; and that while almost all students complete primary school in Belize, there is a significant decline in secondary school attendance with only two-thirds of students completing school at this level.

On the other hand, the social protection coverage is low with only 32 percent of the population of Belize being covered by at least one social protection benefit (social insurance or social assistance).¹³ Belize is characterised by relatively high coverage of social insurance and low coverage of social assistance, compared to comparator countries in the region.

Income support within the social protection system in Belize is currently dominated by the contributory schemes of the SSB and the non-contributory Pension Plan for Public Officials (PPPO). Belize has effective social protection schemes for formal sector workers, but social protection coverage of those outside formal employment is low, and, consequently, many workers in the informal sector and their families lack social protection. Furthermore, the coverage of women is lower than of men. Only 24 percent of women are covered by at least one social protection benefit, compared to 37 percent of men.

In this context of the high level of persistent poverty and deprivations, low coverage of social protections and weak social protection system, UNICEF Belize's social protection programme is supporting the Government in addressing poverty and deprivations by strengthening its social protection system. In this regard, UNICEF, jointly with the Government, UN agencies and other partners, including IFIs, is in the process of finalizing a first-ever Social Protection Policy and Strategy, which is expected to be rolled out in 2025.

The National Social Protection Strategy offers a framework to alleviate these vulnerabilities, ensuring the resilience of individuals and communities. By investing in social protection, Belize can foster inclusive growth, enabling marginalized groups to access opportunities and participate meaningfully in the economy. This, in turn, contributes to overall societal well-being and stability. Social protection measures, such as quality healthcare and education support, are essential for the development of human capital, which is crucial for long-term sustainable development. Investing in these areas yields returns in terms of improved productivity, innovation, and economic competitiveness. Strengthening social protection mechanisms enhances the resilience of Belizean society against various risks, including natural disasters, economic downturns, and health crises. This resilience is vital for maintaining stability and fostering sustainable development.

⁹ SIB, 2021b

¹⁰ <https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/MPI/BLZ.pdf>

¹¹ UNICEF, 2022, p.10

¹² UNICEF, 2017

¹³ This is the first indicator in the series used to measure progress against SDG target 1.3.1, and has also been selected as the headline measure of effective social protection coverage in the series of World Social Protection Reports (ILO). latest available data as of May 2024. Sources of data i) SIB SDG dashboard [sib https://sib.org.bz/data-portals/bnss/](https://sib.org.bz/data-portals/bnss/); and ii) ILOSTAT Explorer <https://ilostat ilo.org/topics/social-protection/>

Hence, building on the existing work UNICEF will continue supporting the GOB in the implementation of the strategy, including strengthening the national capacity, providing strong technical assistance, and knowledge sharing, evidence-based policy advocacy to garner political support and commitment for the NSPS. Further, UNICEF will support establishment of a robust coordination mechanism among various stakeholders, including IFIs. Hence, UNICEF needs a stronger social protection team, which is currently led by the Social Policy Specialist at P3, who has also the role of Programme Coordination and composed of a short-term national consultant. Support from a donor Government in the form of JPO will be of strategic importance in advancing the rights of children in Belize by alleviating poverty and deprivations and ensuring them with essential income support and social services.

Purpose for the job:

Under the general guidance of the supervisor, the Social Policy officer is accountable for providing technical support and assistance in all stages of social policy programming and related advocacy from strategic planning and formulation to delivery of concrete and sustainable results. This includes programmes aimed at improving (a) public policies to reduce child poverty; (b) social protection coverage and impact on children; (c) the transparency, adequacy, equity and efficiency of child-focused public investments and financial management; and (d) governance, decentralization and accountability measures to increase public participation and the quality, equity and coverage of social services. This encompasses both direct programme work with government and civil society partners as well as linkages and support to teams working on education, health, child protection, water and sanitation, and youth.

More specifically, in line with UNICEF's Strategic Plan (2022-2025) approach to social policy and the Country Programme Document of UNICEF Belize (2022-2026), the JPO will be responsible for the following key functions/accountabilities under the direct supervision of the Representative (P5) and guidance and support from the Social Policy Specialist (P3):

- Improving data on child poverty & vulnerability for increased use for policy and programme action.
- Strengthening social protection coverage and impact for children
- Improving use of public financial resources for children
- Strengthening the capacity of the government to plan, budget, consult on and monitor child-focused social services.
- Strengthened advocacy and partnerships for child-sensitive social policy

III. Key functions, accountabilities and related duties/tasks:

Improving data on child poverty & vulnerability for increased use for policy and programme action

- Supports the collection, analysis and user-friendly presentation of data on multidimensional and monetary child poverty, including strengthening national capacity to collect routinely, report and use data for policy decision-making.
- Provides timely, regular data-driven analysis for effective prioritization, planning, and development; facilitates results-based management for planning, adjusting, and scaling-up specific social policy initiatives to reduce child poverty.
- Analyzes the macroeconomic context and its impact on social development, emerging issues and social policy concerns, as well as implications for children, and proposes and promotes appropriate responses in respect of such issues and concerns, including government resource allocation policies and the effect of social welfare policies on the rights of children

Strengthening social protection coverage and impact for children

- Supports the development of social protection policies, legislation and programmes with attention to increasing coverage of and impact on children, with special attention the most marginalized.
- Identifies, generates and presents evidence to support this goal in collaboration with partners.
- Supports strengthening of integrated social protection systems, providing technical support to partners to improve the design of cash transfers and child grants and improve linkages with other social

protection interventions such as health insurance, public works and social care services as well as complementary services and intervention related to nutrition, health, education, water and sanitation, child protection and HIV.

- Supports improved monitoring and research around social protection impact on child outcomes, and use of data and research findings for strengthening programme results.

Improving use of public financial resources for children

- Undertakes budget analysis to inform UNICEF's advocacy and technical assistance to Ministries of Finance, planning commissions and social sector ministries to improve equitable allocations for essential services for children. Works with sector colleagues to build capacity to undertake costing and cost effectiveness analysis on priority interventions to help inform policy decisions on child-focused investments.
- Supports the identification of policy options for improved domestic financing of child-sensitive social protection interventions.
- Undertakes and builds capacity of partners for improved monitoring and tracking of public expenditure to support transparency, accountability and effective financial flows for essential service delivery, including through support to district level planning, budgeting and public financial management as well as facilitating community participation

Strengthening capacity of the governments to plan, budget, consult on and monitor child-focused social services.

- Where national decentralization processes are taking place, collaborates with central and local authorities to improve policies, planning, budgeting, consultation and accountability processes so that decisions and child-focused service delivery more closely respond to the needs of local communities.
- Collaborates with the central and local authorities to strengthen capacity on quality data collection, analysis for policy development, planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring of essential social services, with emphasis on community participation and accountability.

Strengthened advocacy and partnerships for child-sensitive social policy

- Supports correct and compelling use of data and evidence on the situation of children and coverage and impact of child focused services – 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 the Convention of the Rights of the Child and to achieve global UN agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Identifies other critical partners, promotes awareness and builds capacity of partners, and actively facilitates effective collaboration within the UN family.

IV. Impact of Results

The efficient and effective technical support provided to the development and implementation of strategic advocacy and planning & formulation of social policy programmes/projects and the achievement of sustainable results, contributes to achievement of goals and objectives to create a protective environment for children and thus ensure their survival, development and well-being in society. Achievements in social policy programmes and projects in turn contribute to maintaining/enhancing the credibility and ability of UNICEF to provide programme services for mothers and children that promotes greater social equality in the country.

V. Competencies and level of proficiency required

Core Values

- Care
- Respect
- Integrity
- Trust
- Accountability
- Sustainability

Core competencies skills

- Demonstrates Self Awareness and Ethical Awareness (1)
- Works Collaboratively with others (1)
- Builds and Maintains Partnerships (1)
- Innovates and Embraces Change (1)
- Thinks and Acts Strategically (1)
- Drive to achieve impactful results (1)
- Manages ambiguity and complexity (1)

VI. Recruitment Qualifications

Education:	A university degree in one of the following fields is required: Economics, Public Policy, Social Sciences, International Relations, Political Science, or another relevant technical field.
Experience:	A minimum of two years of relevant professional 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.
Language Requirements:	Fluency in English is required. Knowledge of another official UN language is considered as an asset.