

Curriculum Vitae – Firass Kalash

Personnel Information

Email: Firass.kalash1991@gmail.com

Hold Work permit and Residency Permit in Turkey Address: Turkey and have ability to travel to MENA.

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About

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) professional with over ten years of managerial and technical experience in project implementation and MERL, I have a strong track record of developing and implementing institutional learning, monitoring, and reporting systems as well as evidence-based programs. My expertise lies in designing and implementing mixed methods research targeting hard-to-reach populations and producing products that inform strategy for governments, donors, and development/humanitarian organizations. Throughout my career, I have worked on large programs and projects funded by USAID OFDA & FFP and various other donors such as UN and EU, with a particular focus on interventions in Syria, Turkey, Germany, Libya, and Tunisia.

I have an extensive experience in conducting research and evaluations, and providing humanitarian, peacebuilding and stabilization advisory in developing countries. I have led research and evaluation teams in reputed international organizations and overseen the execution of a diverse set of wide-scale impact/outcome evaluations across various thematic areas.

In addition to my technical skills, I have strong coordination, negotiation, and representation experience at the senior level with government, UN, and donors. I have experience managing substantial budgets and multiple grants, as well as leading multidimensional and multicultural teams and local implementation partners. I am fluent in English and a native speaker of Arabic and Turkish. I have excellent interpersonal and negotiation skills and proven supervisory, organizational, and leadership abilities.

Context & Program Experience Summary

Deployments Turkey, Syria, Tunisia, Germany, and Jordan.

Remote support Libya, Yemen, and Iraq

Technical sectors Humanitarian and Emergency. Early recovery and development programs, counter-extremism, violent prevention, peacebuilding & stabilization and media.

Expertise Full-cycle project and grant management; stakeholder engagement and partner identification; evaluations, research, DQAs, strategy development; preparedness (risk management); monitoring, evaluation and learning; workshop facilitation (remote and in-person); donor cultivation.

Professional Experience

March 2022 – Present

Project and Learning Manager – at International Bridge to Justice – Turkey

Manages the technical implementation of a large, EU funded project focused on human rights in Syria. I was responsible for all aspects of project, technical, and personnel management. I was responsible for overseeing the completion of all deliverables required under the project as well as overall compliance with the contract. I write final reports and manage international and local subcontracts, as well as ensure Do No Harm principles are incorporated into all aspects of project implementation.

Skills: · Process Improvement · Scenario Planning · Partnership-building · Field Grant & budget management · Reporting · Cross-functional Coordination · Risk Analysis · Program managing & Strategic Planning · Team Leadership

March 2019 – 2022

International Research and M&E Expert – Consultant

Conducted and led various research and evaluation studies in MENA

Sept 2016 – March 2019

Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist/Advisor at Chemonics International – Turkey

I led the Research, Analysis, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning components for a 68-million-dollar USAID OTI-funded project implemented in Syria. I developed a M&E system for the activities, managed field program assistants in North Syria, produced periodic reports, and wrote the final evaluation reports. I also managed high-level program cluster studies and evaluations to inform the USAID program strategy.

I managed and provided technical supervision to subcontractor partners conducting quantitative and qualitative research, with a budget of almost 600,000 dollars for the partner research firm.

As part of the ICAM program with Dexis embedded with SRP USAID OTI project, I was responsible for overseeing all research and M&E activities across the program, including ad-hoc research. I produced thematic reports and community profiles detailing local governance, service provision, community engagement, community resilience, and early recovery in key areas in Syria for USAID/OTI. I managed subcontractor partners and data collection through surveys, interviews, and open-source research, and provided strategic advice on issues related to forced displacement and technical input on methodology, data visualization, and interpreting qualitative and quantitative results. I aggregated and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data, drafted a summary of main takeaways, and briefed project and donor management on key findings. I produced research reports based on in-depth analysis using regression and cross-tabulation methods.

Skills: · Stakeholder Relations · Donor Engagement · Research & M&E · Analysis & Reporting · Cross-functional Coordination · budgeting · Peacebuilding and stabilization advisory

April 2018

Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor at Chemonics International – Berlin, Germany

I provided monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning advisory services for the SCSI program in Berlin, which included developing an M&E system, designing M&E plans, data collection tools, and writing final evaluation reports and activity success stories.

In addition, I led the analysis of large-scale in-country quantitative perception surveys and gathered information on OTI interventions to evaluate their impact in Syria. I examined and compared quantitative data from three provinces in northern Syria to identify drivers of early recovery, stabilization, and community inclusion/cohesion. The results were used to advise program staff on opportunities and constraints, propose innovative stabilization activities, and help USAID/OTI refine its country strategies and program objectives. They also informed the SCSI's future programming strategy, including understanding the needs and priorities of local Syrian IDP and resident communities.

Skills: Interagency Coordination · Strategic Communications · Donor Engagement · Research & M&E

Dec 2017 – Feb 2018

Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor at Chemonics International – Tunisia.

For the Libya Transition Initiative (LTI) program, I worked as an M&E advisor for a short assignment of two months. In this role, I provided technical assistance to the Libya M&E team on the analysis of quantitative data and visualization of survey results in final evaluation reports, report writing, and other M&E deliverables. I supported the M&E director in cluster evaluation analysis that fed into the final governance evaluation report.

In addition, I trained M&E specialists and field staff in Arabic on general M&E concepts and the use of remote data collection. I also produced a series of Arabic tutorial videos covering the topics of mobile data collection, advanced data analysis and visualization, and quantitative analysis using regression and cross-tabulation techniques.

Skills: · Capacity building · Donor Engagement · Research & M&E

March 2016 – Sept 2016

Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation Manager at Mentor Initiative – Turkey.

I oversaw the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for the management of control and treatment strategies for leishmaniasis in Syria, targeting both local inhabitants and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). As part of this role, I was responsible for establishing effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms and systems for a hybrid managed medical humanitarian program funded by USAID, DFID, and ECHO.

I managed over 19 M&E staff in Turkey. I wrote English bi-weekly and quarterly reports for three donors (BHA/USAID, UK, and ECHO) as well as monthly reports for the home office. I also developed the first M&E guidelines for the organization and trained M&E staff on these guidelines.

Skills: Interagency Coordination · Strategic Communications · Donor Engagement · M&E · Medical Research

Oct 2014 – March 2016

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at Global Communities –

Turkey.

For USAID OFDA, HPFs, ECHO, and UNHCR funded programs, I led the establishment of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system for GC Turkey and Syria, as well as the start/set-up operations/projects.

In terms of management, I supervised three M&E Managers in Turkey and oversaw a team of over 15 inside of Syria, all hired via GC's local partners. I conducted regular progress review meetings with partners to ensure that project activities were implemented according to agreed log frame, and work plans, and ensured timely and accurate reporting of program activities, achievements, and challenges.

In terms of M&E and reporting, I worked on developing systems for screening and selecting beneficiaries, including assisting in the design of relevant tools when necessary. I wrote English bi-weekly and quarterly reports for donors, as well as monthly reports for the home office.

Skills: Interagency Coordination · Strategic Communications · Donor Engagement · M&E · Partner Capacity building · Reporting

March 2013 – Oct 2014

Senior M&E /Data management at Mercy Corps Syria

As a team leader responsible for a team of 23 people, I was responsible for assessing and monitoring the distribution of food items for Syrian IDPs (DFID and FASD Food Programs). I supervised M&E activities such as rapid assessment, baseline survey, evaluation, and impact assessment conducted in MC Syria.

I implemented monitoring and evaluation activities through a variety of methods, including site monitoring and observation, conducting one-on-one surveys/interviews with beneficiaries, and conducting and documenting meetings with community groups. I conducted sector-specific rapid assessments and compiled weekly and monthly reports on all USAID project activities. I identified and trained enumerators on data collection, documentation of service delivery through monthly reports, and final reports. I generated periodic progress reports highlighting the achievements of each project/program against its targets and core indicators.

I ensured that programs collected accurate data/information and conducted data analysis to inform program management for improvements in the programs. I trained relevant staff on using data management tools and worked on tracking matrices for all programs. I developed monitoring tools based on the nature of the project, including field visits, interviews with stakeholders, and other methods. I identified potential and actual problems and alerted the senior management team about major shortcomings, issues, problems, and deficiencies.

Key Competencies

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

- Developing M&E Frameworks, including indicator matrices, activity work plans, participant

counting tools.

- Planning or leading evaluations and preparing evaluation terms of reference.
- Designing data collection tools, including household surveys, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews, for purposes such as post-distribution monitoring, assessing needs, or evaluation.
- Developing or providing feedback on program logic and design, including Theories of Change, Results Frameworks, and Logframes.
- Working with technical specialists to support technical data collection exercises, such as Rapid Gender Analyses; Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice surveys; or inter-sector rapid needs assessments.

Policy & Strategy

- Drafting data protection policy, data sharing agreements, and advising on data protection and privacy best practice for community-based ME(AL) work.
- Developing ME(AL) strategies and objectives, including work approach/style, team planning and development.
- Drafting of narratives, logic frameworks, budgets, stakeholder analyses, activity plans and ME(AL) plans as part of the proposal development process, including coordinating partner inputs.

Learning & Training

- Pursuing a practical approach to learning that assesses gaps and needs in ME(AL) systems, as well as the interests and preferences of ME(AL) staff, to develop a useful, iterative, micro-learning approach that focuses on completing tasks and the practical application of knowledge.
- A training/mentoring style that is interactive and practical, focusing on what teams need to know to successfully do their jobs, practicing these tasks, and providing post-training mentorship as these skills are put into practice.

Reporting

- Leading and supporting the compilation of progress, mid-term, and final donor reports; lesson learned reports; evaluation and review reports; needs assessment reports; baseline and end line reports; evaluation reports; monitoring and analytical reports; 5Ws or other coordination reporting; situation reports

Team Management

- Planning, recruitment, and training of ME(AL) teams.
- Remote management of geographically dispersed ME(AL) teams, including multi-country teams and staff in inaccessible or insecure locations

Technical Skills

- Statistical programs (STATA, SPSS, Advanced in Excel, PowerBI)
- Research and M&E Trainer
- Qualitative Research Expert & Facilitation and participatory methodologies
- Project Management.

EDUCATION INFORMATION

Education	Additional Information
Aleppo University (BA.), Computer Engineering · (2009 - 2013)	Arabic and Turkish Native Speaker Speak English Fluently
Anadolu University (BA.), International Relations and Foreign Affairs (2019 – 2022)	
Hasan Kalyoncu University Master's in international Relations and Political Sciences (2023)	

Training

1. September 2013: Project Management Training (4days), completed with the PMD Pro Certificate, MC training, Turkey	2. May 2014: Accountability training, Interagency, Turkey
3. November 2013: Food in Emergencies Training, MC, Syria	4. April 2014: Devinfo Program Training, Turkey
5. December 2013: Gender Mainstreaming in Emergencies Training, MC, Syria	6. September 2014: Community Accountability and Response Mechanisms (CARM), Turkey
7. January 2014: Advanced Monitoring and Evaluation Training, MC, Syria	8. October 2014: Community engagement and protection, Global Communities training, Turkey
9. March 2014: Community Mobilization MC training, Turkey	10. September 2014: Mobile data collection method and mechanism, Global Communities, Turkey.
11. April 2014: Cash Transfer Programming, MC training, Turkey	12. December 2014: M&E concepts training, Global Communities, Turkey.
13. October 2014: Agriculture technique training, Global Communities, Turkey	14. January 2018: Evaluation Report Writing by TRASS International
15. November 2014: Participatory assessment training, UNHCR, Turkey.	

Nationality: Syrian, Male

References Upon Request