

Resume

Ms. Shumaila KANWAL (She/Her)

Senior Human Resources & Operations Expert | International Consultant Human Rights & Gender Justice

📍 Syria / Lebanon | 🌐 International Mobility/Remote Work | ✉️ shumylakanval@gmail.com

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- ✓ **Member at** [HRCP - Human Rights Commission of Pakistan](#)
- ✓ **Member at** [International Society for Human Rights \("ISHR"\)](#)
- ✓ **Member at** [Institute of Human Resources Management-Syria](#)

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Senior HR and Operations professional with 13+ years of progressive leadership across complex humanitarian, emergency, development, and corporate environments in Syria, Lebanon, Pakistan, Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. Currently serving as Country Head of Human Resources for a French Humanitarian Organization (SIF)-Syria and Lebanon Mission, with cross-border assignment in Lebanon (Beirut) for 5 months on official work visa, supporting multi-donor, multi-sector humanitarian programming.

Proven expertise in managing HR and operational components of large, multi-project, multi-donor portfolios, including UN agencies, pooled funds, EU/ECHO, bilateral donors, and private institutional funding. Strong background in budget oversight, donor compliance, workforce planning, safeguarding (PSEA), investigations, and labor law compliance in fragile and high-risk contexts.

Recognized for aligning people management with program delivery, strengthening donor confidence through compliance, audits, and reporting, and supporting senior management in emergency scale-up, recovery, and transition phases. Brings a rights-based, gender-sensitive, and DEI-driven leadership approach.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Tax Law (Multiple Countries) | Labor Law (Middle East, Asia, Africa) | International Human Rights Law | International Humanitarian Law & Gender Justice | International & National Labor Law (Middle East, Africa, Asia) | Multi-Donor Project & Grant Support (UN, EU/ECHO, pooled funds) | HR Budgeting & Cost Control (Emergency & Development Programs) | Strategic HR Leadership in Emergencies | Workforce Planning & Scale-Up/Down | Donor Compliance & Audit Readiness | Safeguarding, PSEA & Investigations | Policy Development & HR Systems (HOMERE, Zoho People, Wrike, HRIS) | Cross-Border Operations & Duty of Care | DEI, Gender & Protection Mainstreaming

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Position: Head of Human Resources – Country Level

Org: French Humanitarian Aid (SIF) – Lebanon & Syria Mission

Contract: January 2024 – Present

Projects/Donors: [UNICEF](#), [OCHA](#), [UNHCR](#), [AFD](#), [WFP](#)

Scope: National HR leadership for a long-standing humanitarian mission (since 2008) implementing multi-sector, multi-donor programmes across shelter, WASH, education, protection, and basic assistance.

Key Responsibilities & Achievements: Appointed as first international (Expat) HR Coordinator / Head of HR for SIF Syria, leading the full systematization and restructuring of HR functions at mission level. | Designed, drafted, and rolled out a comprehensive HR Manual aligned with Syrian labour law, SIF internal regulations, humanitarian standards, and donor compliance requirements.

Resume

Developed and institutionalized core HR policies and procedures, including: | Recruitment & Selection Procedures (transparent, merit-based, donor-compliant) | Training & Development Policy (capacity building, performance-linked learning) | Volunteers Policy tailored to Syria mission operational needs | Consultancy & Service Providers Selection Procedures | IT & Data Protection Policy (HR data protection and confidentiality) | Protection & Safeguarding Policy (mission-level implementation) | Ongoing development of **Gender Policy** aligned with DEI and protection principles | Led HR internal audits, compliance reviews, and corrective action plans to strengthen governance, accountability, and donor confidence. | Led digitalization of HR systems, transitioning from paper-based records to structured digital HR files and databases. | Lead country-wide HR strategy supporting multiple concurrent humanitarian projects funded by UN agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF, OCHA), pooled humanitarian funds, institutional donors, and private funding. | Member of the Country Management Team (CMT), contributing to budget planning, HR cost projections, donor proposals, project revisions, and risk management. | Directly manage HR budget lines across projects, ensuring donor eligibility, cost efficiency, and audit readiness. | Oversee workforce planning for emergency and recovery phases, including recruitment surges, contract harmonization, and staff restructuring. | Ensure HR compliance with Syrian labour law, international labour standards, humanitarian principles, and donor regulations. | Lead safeguarding, PSEA implementation, and sensitive misconduct investigations in coordination with HQ and donors. | Represent SIF in HR coordination forums, inter-agency working groups, and external compliance discussions.

Cross-Border Assignment-Lebanon:

- Undertook 5-month official assignment in Beirut supporting SIF Lebanon mission under valid work visa.
- Provided HR and operational support to multi-donor projects including food security (Ramadan food vouchers), emergency cash/NFI assistance, shelter rehabilitation, child protection, livelihoods, and women's empowerment programs.
- Supported HR compliance, staffing, and coordination for projects funded by UN agencies, AFD, WFP-linked interventions, and institutional donors.

Position: Country Deputy HR Director

Org/Company: ISMMART Group of Companies – Singapore

Contract: Oct 2023 – Jan 2024

Donor: Self-Funded, Investments, Multiple projects, Industrial and F&B

Key Achievements: Led HR operations for a multi-entity corporate group, managing both expatriate and national staff across headquarters and field offices. | Directed HR budgeting, payroll, workforce planning, performance management, and compliance, ensuring alignment with Singapore employment legislation. | Managed Ministry of Manpower (MOM) processes, including submission, monitoring, and renewal of S Pass and Employment Pass applications for expatriate staff, as well as cancellations and regulatory follow-ups. | Developed and institutionalized HR policies and procedures for the Singapore entity, ensuring full compliance with local labor laws, corporate governance standards, and operational realities. | Strengthened contracts, HR manuals, and internal regulations, supporting audit readiness, risk mitigation, and organizational governance. | Advised senior management on HR strategy, labor compliance, expatriate administration, and organizational structuring to optimize operations and maintain regulatory compliance. | Enhanced workforce efficiency and employee engagement through structured HR processes, clear guidelines, and proactive advisory support.

Position: Global Head of Human Resources – Africa & Asia

Org: Center for Evaluation and Development (C4ED) – Germany

Contract: Feb 2023 – Oct 2023

Project/ Donor: European Commission, UNICEF, WFP, IFAD, ILO, World Bank German, GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), UN Capital Development Fund, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Key Responsibilities & Achievements: Directed and coordinated HR operations across Ethiopia, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Zambia, and Pakistan, supporting multi-donor evaluation and development projects with over 500+ staff in diverse, high-stakes contexts. | Provided strategic HR leadership for multi-donor projects commissioned by EU/EUTF, World Bank, UNICEF, ILO, WFP, IFAD, and other multilateral partners, ensuring compliance with donor regulations and

Resume

organizational policies. | Developed and implemented cross-country HR policies and procedures, including Gender Equality, PSEAH (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment), workforce planning, staffing structures, and performance management systems. | Oversaw HR budgeting, contract management, and workforce forecasting, ensuring efficient allocation of human resources across multiple countries and projects. | Advised senior management on HR risk management, compliance, and operational strategy, improving decision-making and strengthening organizational governance in diverse regulatory environments. | Led recruitment, onboarding, and talent retention strategies for senior management and project staff, fostering high-performing teams across Africa and Asia. | Enhanced cross-country coordination and capacity-building, mentoring HR teams and establishing standard operating procedures for consistent HR practices across multiple missions. | Ensured donor compliance and reporting, supporting audits, evaluations, and funding continuity for large-scale, multi-country programmes.

Position: Country Human Resources Coordinator / Head (Emergency Mission)

Org: CESVI – Italy | Pakistan Mission

Contract: Oct 2022 – Feb 2023

Project/Donor: EU/ECHO AICS (Italian Agency for Development Cooperation) FAO Pooled-Fund Projects RAFAA (EU-funded Climate Resilience Project)

Key Achievements: Successfully established 5 major field offices across Pakistan, setting up operational and HR frameworks from scratch. | Recruited and onboarded senior management and specialized program staff, ensuring high-performing teams aligned with donor standards. | Developed and implemented HR policies and procedures, including Gender Equality, PSEAH (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment), and staff conduct guidelines, ensuring a safe and inclusive workplace. | Designed and delivered trainings and awareness sessions on compliance, safeguarding, HR processes, and staff well-being, enhancing staff capacity and engagement. | Streamlined HR operations across multi-donor projects (EU/ECHO, AICS, FAO, pooled-fund), improving efficiency and compliance. | Oversaw HR budgeting and resource planning, ensuring optimal allocation across multiple projects and strict donor compliance. | Built capacity of field HR teams through mentoring, coaching, and targeted workshops, strengthening local leadership pipelines. | Ensured full donor compliance for staffing, reporting, and HR audits, contributing to successful project evaluations and sustained funding. | Facilitated cross-office coordination between country HQ and field offices, improving operational cohesion and rapid response during emergencies.

Position: Country Human Resources Officer

Org: Secours Islamique France (SIF) – Pakistan Mission

Contract: Jan 2022 – Sep 2022

Project/Donor: Flood Emergency Response Projects funded by WFP, French Government, UN agencies, and institutional donors

Key Achievements: Managed a workforce of 350+ staff across 14 field offices during large-scale flood emergency operations, ensuring smooth HR support under high-pressure conditions. | Led rapid recruitment, onboarding, and deployment of emergency staff to critical flood-affected areas, meeting urgent program timelines and donor requirements. | Oversaw payroll, contracts, and benefits for all staff, ensuring timely disbursement and full compliance with internal policies and donor regulations. | Implemented HR policies and procedures, including Gender Equality, PSEAH (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment), code of conduct, and safeguarding measures, ensuring a safe and inclusive working environment. | Designed and delivered capacity-building initiatives, trainings, and awareness sessions for staff and managers on HR systems, compliance, and emergency response protocols. | Ensured donor compliance and reporting, coordinating with WFP, French Government, UN agencies, and other institutional partners for HR-related audits, staffing plans, and rapid deployment updates. | Supported emergency HR scale-up by optimizing staffing structures, resource allocation, and field HR coordination to meet rapidly changing operational needs. | Facilitated cross-office coordination and communication, bridging HQ and field offices to streamline HR processes and enable timely program execution. | Enhanced staff retention and morale through active engagement, problem-solving, and support in challenging flood-affected operational environments.

Resume

Position: HR Manager (Interim) / Country HR & Legal Officer

Org: Médecins du Monde (MdM) – Pakistan

Contract: Dec 2017 – Dec 2021

Projects / Donors: Health, SRHR, Maternal Health, COVID-19, and Refugee Health Projects funded by EU/ECHO, UN agencies, and public institutional donors

Key Achievements: Managed HR operations for 200+ staff across multiple project sites, ensuring effective staffing, performance management, and compliance with organizational policies. | Oversaw legal and regulatory compliance, including contracts, labor law adherence, audits, and risk mitigation for all HR operations. | Implemented HR policies and procedures, including Gender Equality, PSEAH (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment), code of conduct, and safeguarding measures, creating a safe and inclusive work environment. | Led recruitment, onboarding, and staff deployment for critical health and COVID-19 response programs, ensuring alignment with donor and project timelines. | Conducted staff trainings and awareness sessions on HR processes, compliance, safeguarding, and workplace ethics, strengthening staff capacity and engagement. | Contributed to HR budgeting, payroll management, and resource allocation, ensuring cost efficiency and donor compliance across projects. | Supported HR audits and investigations, addressing grievances, disciplinary matters, and safeguarding cases in line with organizational and donor requirements. | Facilitated coordination between HQ, field offices, and donor teams, ensuring timely reporting, staffing plans, and compliance documentation. | Enhanced staff morale and retention through proactive engagement, mentoring, and problem-solving in challenging operational contexts, including refugee health and emergency response settings.

Position: Country HR Manager

Org: IDEA – Disaster Management, Pakistan

Contract: 2016 – 2017

Projects / Donors: IDPs, Refugees, Education, Shelter, and Livelihoods Programs funded by UNHCR, CARE, Diakonie, and other institutional donors

Key Achievements: Managed HR, administrative, legal, and logistics operations for up to 400 staff across multiple field sites, ensuring smooth program delivery under complex humanitarian contexts. | Led recruitment, onboarding, and deployment of staff for emergency response, shelter, and livelihoods programs, meeting urgent project timelines. | Oversaw payroll, contracts, and HR compliance, ensuring alignment with organizational policies, labor laws, and donor regulations. | Implemented HR policies and procedures, including Gender Equality, PSEAH (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment), code of conduct, and safeguarding measures, promoting a safe and inclusive workplace. | Designed and facilitated staff trainings, awareness sessions, and capacity-building workshops on HR systems, compliance, safeguarding, and emergency operations. | Managed performance appraisals, staff engagement, and grievance resolution, enhancing morale and staff retention in challenging operational environments. | Coordinated with HQ, field offices, and donor teams, ensuring timely reporting, staffing plans, and compliance documentation. | Optimized HR operations and resource allocation across multiple projects, improving efficiency and ensuring donor requirements were met during emergency and development programs.

Position: Senior Assistant HR, Administration, Finance & Logistics

Org: Mohmand Community for Education & Development (M.CED) -FATA/KP, Pakistan

Contract: Feb 2011 – Sep 2016

Projects / Donors: Education and Community Development Projects funded by multi-donor partners in fragile and conflict-affected areas

Key Achievements: Managed integrated HR, administration, finance, and logistics operations for multi-donor projects, ensuring seamless program implementation in challenging and high-risk environments. | Oversaw recruitment, onboarding, personnel files, contracts, payroll preparation, attendance, leave management, and HR reporting, supporting over 150 staff. | Supported project finance functions, including expense tracking, cash requests, basic bookkeeping, voucher preparation, and coordination with finance officers for audits and donor reporting. | Contributed to budget monitoring, project accounting, procurement coordination, and asset tracking, ensuring compliance with donor and organizational procedures. | Coordinated logistics and administrative support for field

Resume

activities, staff trainings, workshops, and community interventions. | Implemented HR policies and procedures, including Gender Equality, PSEAH, and safeguarding measures, fostering a safe and inclusive working environment. | Acted as focal point for NADRA partner elections, liaising with government counterparts and ensuring proper documentation and regulatory compliance. | Enhanced operational efficiency by streamlining HR, finance, and logistics workflows, improving reporting accuracy, and reducing delays in field operations. | Provided training and guidance to junior staff on HR, finance, and logistics processes, strengthening field capacity and program delivery.

EDUCATION & DEGREES

Master in Social Sciences- Int Human Rights in Human Development & Gender Justice | Completed

University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

MA International Relations & Affairs | In Progress final year

University of Peshawar, Pakistan

LL.B -International Human Rights & Labor Law | Completed

University of Peshawar, Pakistan

B.A (English Jurisprudence and Islamic Studies) | Completed

AWKM University, Pakistan

Postgraduate Certification in HR Management | Completed

Preston University, Islamabad, Pakistan

PROFESSIONAL TRAININGS

- **International Law in Action: Investigating and Prosecuting International Crimes** – Leiden University (2025)
- **Human Rights Defender** – Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2023)
- **Leadership & Team Management** – Médecins du Monde (2020)
- **Human Resource Management** – NBDP / SMEDA (2019)
- **Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)** – UNHCR (2019)
- **Organizational Communication** – Médecins du Monde (2018)
- **Human Resources, Administrative Law & Labor Economics** – Pakistan Institute of Management (2018)

LANGUAGE'S

- **English:** Fluent – professional working proficiency
- **Urdu, Hindi, Pashto:** Fluent – native-level communication in multicultural contexts
- **Arabic:** Intermediate – able to communicate effectively in operational settings

References available upon request....