

Terms of Reference – Teachers Without Borders Finland

DISTANCE POSITION / occupied Palestinian region

Location	East Jerusalem and the West Bank
Host Organization	Finn Church Aid (FCA) Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories (IOPT)
Length of Posting	3 months
Time of Deployment	March until June 2025
Number of Positions	4
Title of the Position	Education Adviser (TWB Volunteer)

NOTE the realization of the positions is conditional to securing funding, and the global and local health security situation.

Context and background

Palestinian children face significant challenges due to the ongoing conflict, which threatens their rights to education and safety. While initial school enrolment rates are high, the education system suffers from inadequate infrastructure, limited teacher training, and restricted access to schools in marginalized areas. Mobility challenges and risks of violence further exacerbate these difficulties. As of recent, there has been an increase in school dropouts and around 416,000 people need emergency educational support, whereby children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable due to a lack of accessible services and facilities.

The Teachers Without Borders (TWB) network aims to improve inclusive, quality, and special needs education in private schools and universities throughout the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The initiative strongly emphasizes disability inclusion and incorporates Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) into the work, especially for students and local educators. The goal is to address students' diverse needs, enhance their overall well-being, and foster a supportive learning environment. Recently the TWB collaboration efforts were concentrated on building the capacity of school counsellors to provide adequate support and preparing schools to address emergent challenges and crises.

Description of TWB collaboration

The TwB collaboration will maintain its commitment to consolidating the concepts of inclusive and special needs education while raising awareness of the differences between learning difficulties and disabilities. This will be achieved with local experts who mentor and coach educators in implementing practical strategies. Before these implementations, the project will highlight the importance of foundational elements such as classroom management, positive

pedagogy, learner-centered approaches, and fostering a positive physical classroom environment. The TWB education experts will not only focus on teachers but also extend their efforts to school principals. By equipping them to establish a solid framework for inclusion, schools will be able to effectively address the diverse needs of students, children, and parents. This comprehensive approach, with close collaboration from local experts, ensures that no aspect of inclusive education is overlooked.

Moreover, as the focus shifts to education in emergencies, TWB education experts will prioritize enhancing the capacity for inclusive distance education and blended learning. This commitment ensures that education remains accessible and effective, even in the face of challenging circumstances and school closures, demonstrating the adaptability and resilience of the initiative.

Additionally, the initiative seeks to enhance the professional capacity of pre-service teacher educators by supporting and contributing to teacher education training at Birzeit University. This will involve conducting workshops to improve pre-service students' knowledge and skills, first by familiarizing them with the Finnish education system and then by applying this knowledge within the context of inclusive and special needs education. The training sessions and skills development activities will focus on societal awareness-raising and structural development, empowering future teachers to implement inclusive education effectively. Most importantly, the initiative aims to equip university students, particularly those studying special education, with the essential knowledge, skills, and perspectives needed to support children with hidden disabilities in inclusive educational settings, enabling them to translate inclusive education into practice.

TWB education experts' main tasks may include:

Based on a needs assessment and insights from previous volunteer observations, the TWB education experts will have a tailored plan to address the specific challenges faced in the educational context. Generally, each TWB education expert will focus in one or more of the following tasks:

1. Develop a mentoring and coaching plan with the local educators, supporting inclusive teaching practices, and building the capacity for effective classroom management and positive pedagogy.
2. Plan and conduct trainings on inclusive distance education and blended learning, ensuring that schools are prepared to continue learning during emergencies, even when schools are physically closed.
3. Create essential training materials for blended learning focused on inclusive education, special needs education, and distance education.
4. Collaborate with school principals, aimed at establishing a supportive structure for inclusion that can effectively meet the needs of students, parents, and the wider school community.
5. Facilitate workshops for pre-service teacher educators at Birzeit University to enhance their understanding of the Finnish education system and its application in inclusive and special needs education. Additionally, design and implement training sessions that concentrate on inclusive education practices, societal awareness, and structural development, specifically tailored to the needs of pre-service students.

Position-Specific Qualifications and Competencies

For the 4 distance TWB positions, we are seeking for the following expertise:

1. Expertise and experience working with inclusive and special needs education, supporting students with learning difficulties and disabilities OR
2. Demonstrated experience in distance education and blended learning methods and pedagogies with basic knowledge in inclusive and special needs education OR
3. Experience working as a school principal or supporting school principals, with a particular focus on inclusive school structures OR
4. Experience working in or with pre-service teacher training institutions with a focus on inclusive and special needs education.

Additionally, all applicants should have the following qualities:

1. A degree in Education, Special Education, Inclusive Education, Educational Psychology, or a related field.
2. Experience in teacher training, peer-mentoring, or coaching.
3. Willingness and interest to work collaboratively with local experts to co-develop strategies and solutions for inclusive education.
4. Able to communicate well and conduct trainings and workshops from distance.
5. Ability to present complex concepts in a clear and accessible manner which is suitable for educators and school leadership.
6. Strong verbal and written communication skills in English.
7. Proven ability to work effectively in teams and with other educators and stakeholders.
8. Ability to manage stress and maintain a positive attitude in challenging situations, providing a role model for local educators and students.
9. International experience in educational contexts and background working with resource-constrained or crisis-affected settings is a strong asset.

Supervision and Support

In addition to the assistance provided by the Helsinki office, particularly from the TWB Network Coordinator, the TWB Project Coordinator based in IOPT, Nadine Nashashibi, will play a crucial role in supervising and supporting the volunteers and coordinating efforts among all, including the local experts, the schools, and all key stakeholders.