Lorenzo La Spada

Geneva, Switzerland | Nationalities: Swiss and Italian

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Languages: French (native), English (C1), Italian (C1), Japanese (B2), Chinese (B1), Spanish (B1)

PROFILE

Senior UNHCR programme professional with over 12 years of experience at headquarters and in complex field operations, including DRC, Ukraine, Pakistan and Chad. Experienced in leading programme units, managing multi-partner portfolios, supporting protection-sensitive programming, and coordinating with authorities, UN agencies, NGOs, development actors and technical partners in volatile and politically sensitive environments. Strong background in results-based planning, risk analysis, partnership management, resource allocation, narrative and financial reporting, and data-informed decision-making. Field experience includes forced displacement, returnee and IDP contexts, refugee-hosting areas, emergency response, basic services, livelihoods, cash assistance and community-based protection.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Programme management • Durable solutions and reintegration support • Forced displacement operations • Protection-sensitive programming • Partnership management • Inter-agency coordination • Resource allocation and donor reporting • Risk analysis • Context analysis • Results-based management • Monitoring and evaluation

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – UNHCR

Senior Programme Officer (P4) – Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo | February 2024 – Present

- Lead programme oversight for North and South Kivu in one of UNHCR's most complex forced displacement operations, marked by conflict, internal displacement, return movements, access constraints and pressure on host communities.
- Manage a multi-partner portfolio of over USD 16 million, supporting protection-sensitive programming for displaced and affected populations.
- Coordinate planning, implementation monitoring, budget follow-up and donor-funded activities across multiple partners and sectors.
- Contribute to risk mitigation and operational adjustments in a volatile conflict environment, including access constraints, funding reductions, partner performance issues and rapidly changing local dynamics.
- Engage with authorities, NGOs, UN agencies and inter-agency coordination mechanisms in an operation where UNHCR leads key clusters, including Protection, Shelter/NFI and CCCM.

Programme Officer (P3) – Geneva, Switzerland | February 2023 – January 2024

- Managed and monitored five multi-year partnership agreements funded by DG ECHO, ensuring financial follow-up, compliance, reporting and coordination with global shelter partners.
- Supported annual planning, strategic reviews and resource prioritization in coordination with partners and institutional donors.
- Developed financial and monitoring tools to improve transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision-making across multi-country programming.

Programme Officer (P3) – Quetta, Pakistan | August 2022 – January 2023

- Led the Programme Unit in Quetta during the Afghan regional emergency and the 2022 floods, coordinating multi-sectoral programming in a politically sensitive context.
- Reviewed, negotiated and formalized eight partnership agreements under tight timelines, covering shelter, WASH, health, education, livelihoods, cash assistance and community-based support.
- Maintained coordination with authorities, partners and technical teams to support implementation in refugee-hosting, flood-affected and operationally sensitive areas.

Programme Officer (P3) – Sloviansk / Vinnytsia, Ukraine | February 2022 – July 2022

- Led programme coordination during the onset of the full-scale invasion, supporting relocation, emergency planning and rapid operational scale-up in a context of mass internal displacement.
- Negotiated and formalized new partnership agreements and established planning tools for emergency shelter, non-food items and cash-based interventions.
- Supported the adaptation of programme delivery modalities to respond to rapidly evolving displacement patterns, urgent shelter needs and access constraints.

Programme Officer (P3) – N'Djamena, Chad | August 2021 – January 2022

- Supported response to the influx of more than 11,000 Cameroonian refugees following intercommunal conflict, in the context of a Level 1 emergency declaration.
- Contributed to emergency planning, reception arrangements, field assessments, funding documents and coordination with the Regional Bureau and local governmental actors.
- Participated in early return-preparedness activities, including “go-and-see” visits and coordination with local authorities and partners to assess conditions and inform operational planning.

Programme Analyst (P2/P3) – Geneva, Switzerland | October 2014 – July 2021

- Provided global programme analysis and technical support to regional bureaux and headquarters divisions on planning, resource allocation, performance monitoring and reporting.
- Produced global and regional analytical reports supporting senior management decision-making and corporate performance reviews.
- Contributed to the development of RBM methodologies, monitoring tools and planning guidance used across operations.

Associate Prog. Analyst (UNOPS/ICA) – Geneva, Switzerland | February 2014 – August 2014

- Produced budget and performance analyses informing headquarters and field decision-making.
- Delivered analytical inputs for global, regional and country-level planning processes.
- Supported evidence-based programming through analytical systems, data consolidation and performance monitoring.

University of Geneva / Neuchâtel / Graduate Institute

Applied Research and Policy Analysis – Switzerland | 2009–2013

- Conducted applied research and policy analysis with the University of Geneva, University of Neuchâtel, the Graduate Institute and external partners.
- Worked on projects related to ODA, international organizations and policy evaluation, including assignments linked to SDC, SECO and the Austrian Development Agency.
- Carried out quantitative and qualitative analysis, survey and tool design, literature reviews, data interpretation and preparation of policy-oriented research outputs.

EDUCATION

- Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS) in Diplomacy, Negotiation and Policy – Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland (2026–2027, ongoing)
- DEA (Master's-level postgraduate degree) in International History and Politics – Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, Switzerland (2006)
- Bachelor's degree in Intercultural Communication – Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan (2004)
- Certificate in Modern Chinese – Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China (1999)

CERTIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Contemporary Challenges to the Classification of Armed Conflicts – Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights (2026)
- Mastering Complex and High-Stakes Negotiations – Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (2026)
- Applied AI for Negotiation – Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (2026)
- Generative AI: How to Use It and Why It Matters – Harvard Kennedy School (2026)
- EU Immigration and Asylum Law and Policy – Université libre de Bruxelles (2019)
- Management, Security and Operational Training – UNHCR/UNDSS (2016–2024)

TECHNICAL SKILLS

MS Office • Advanced Excel • Microsoft Power BI • SharePoint • Data Cleaning and Analysis • Dashboard Design • Budget and Performance Monitoring Tools • Generative AI Tools

PUBLICATIONS

- Schoenenberger, A., Zarin, M., Ouni, M., & La Spada, L. (2012). «Wirtschaftliche Auswirkungen der Österreichischen Entwicklungshilfeleistung 2010» http://www2.unine.ch/irene/page-30200.html
- Carbonnier, G., Schoenenberger, A., Zarin, M., Ouni, M., & La Spada, L. (2012). «Effets économiques de l'aide publique au développement en suisse.» International Development Policy | Revue internationale de politique de développement. http://poldev.revues.org/1284
- Carbonnier, G., & La Spada, L. (2012). «Achats de biens et services des organisations multilatérales» (p. 36). Genève. www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource_fr_217725.pdf