

Prevention and Response to Child Protection (CP) September 2019

Background

As of August 2019, Jordan hosts some 748,000 refugees of which over 80% are refugees from Syria. Now, in its ninth year, the situation across Syria remains precarious. Jordan is also home to 56 other nationalities of refugees, predominantly from neighboring Iraq, Yemen, and Sudan and Somalia, all of whom live in urban areas. Children account to 48% of the overall refugee population in Jordan with over 10% registered as children at risk or unaccompanied or separated children.

Host countries, like Jordan, are struggling to maintain social and economic stability. Over 80% of the urban refugee population remains below the national poverty line of (\$100) per capita per month. Despite the growing needs, due to limited funding many are instead facing potential cuts to services such as health assistance, education and cash assistance. As a result of large and protracted displacement crises, refugees are at heightened risk of depletion of resources, exploitation, lack of livelihood opportunities as well as increased levels of violence. Recent studies show that extended stay in Jordan for many refugee populations results in decreased levels of support and opportunities. In this context, children are exposed to various protection risks, including exposure to abuse and neglect, separation from parents and other family members, exposure to harmful coping mechanisms, including child marriage and child labor, high levels of psychological distress and lack of positive development opportunities.

Child Protection

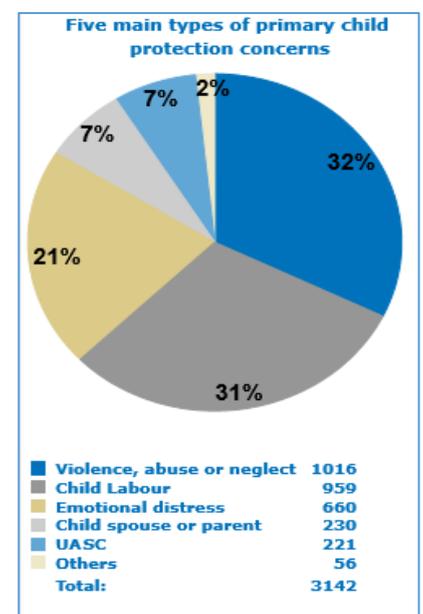
Child Protection within emergencies or humanitarian contexts aims at preventing and responding to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children and to ensure the wellbeing of children. Within the humanitarian context child wellbeing is a dynamic, subjective and objective state of physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and social health in which children:

- are safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence;
- meet their basic needs, including survival and development;
- are connected to and cared for by primary caregivers;
- have the opportunity for supportive relationships with relatives, peers, teachers, community members and society at large, and have the opportunity and elements required to exercise their agency based on their emerging capacities.

Main Child Protection risks in Jordan

According to the Child Protection Information Management System where core Child Protection case management agencies store information and data of children at risk and those unaccompanied or separated, over 3,100 children were supported with comprehensive case management services between January and June 2019. Main Child Protection risks include:

- Children's exposure to physical, emotional and sexual violence in private or public spaces
- High levels of child neglect by family members often related to harmful cultural practices as well as inability to cope with affects of displacement and psychological distress of parents/caregivers
- High number of children exposed to child labor and exploitation, including worst forms of child labor
- Increasing numbers of child marriage affecting mainly girls between 15-17 years



- Separation of children from parents/caregivers due to safety concerns, displacement or social norms
- High levels of psychological distress (lack of hope, limited educational opportunities and stability)

Child Protection Strategy

- UNHCR’s Child Protection and Youth Development strategy is based on four pillars: **response, prevention, coordination and leadership and national system strengthening.**
- **Response:** Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, UNHCR has been directly providing case management services for children at risk and those unaccompanied and separated from biological parents or care givers. This has been complemented through partnerships with local and international NGOs who provide child-centered case management services, psychosocial support as well as recreational activities for children at risk and those unaccompanied or separated from family members.
- **Prevention:** throughout 2019, UNHCR aims at strengthening preventative and innovative programs to address Child Protection concerns, including through a community-based Child Protection network of volunteers to reach children at risk in underserved areas of Jordan as well as through diverse awareness programs on child rights and child protection. Through its Youth Program, UNHCR also aims at building the awareness of adolescents and youth on Child Protection, build their capacities and allow for their development.
- **Coordination:** UNHCR co-chairs the national Child Protection Sub-working group as well as several field coordination structures, contributing to efforts to strengthen the overall Child Protection response in Jordan through the development of coordination tools, sharing of good practices and global Child Protection standards. UNHCR also co-chairs the national Child Protection Information Management System (CP IMS) Taskforce that includes Child Protection case management agencies who collect and store information and data of Child Protection Case Management services. Through the CPIMS TF reports, Child Protection risks in Jordan are systematically analyzed.
- **National Systems Strengthening:** UNHCR Jordan continues its focus on building national and partner capacity to ensure the best interests of children is maintained through all activities. Specific efforts were placed on building the capacity of case management agencies through 5-day training rounds on assessing and determining the best interests of refugee children. Similarly, through targeted advocacy and dedicated programs with governmental partners, UNHCR ensured the systematic assessment of the best interests of children.



Source: JRF; Soft skill session at QRFCC, 2018.

Gaps

Although Child Protection services are available, gaps remain with regards to the implementation of children’s best interests, access to services in remote locations as well as limited, short-term funding. The following areas should be prioritized:

- Maintaining comprehensive Child Protection Case Management services to ensure all children exposed to violence, abuse or exploitation are receiving age, gender and disability sensitive services;
- Enhancing national capacities of line ministries to strengthen Child Protection services in line with global Child Protection standards, including on alternatives to detention and alternative care to reduce institutionalization of children;
- Innovative, multisectoral prevention programs to build community knowledge and skills on Child Rights/Protection and foster community responsibility, particularly addressing high levels of child labor and child marriage;
- Community-based CP programs, including outreach programs in urban and underserved areas.