

UNICEF-UNHCR Regional CPiE Workshop Syrian Crisis 2015

Alternative Care in Emergencies Lebanon November 2014- May 2015



Background + AC Pilot Save the Children Lebanon

- In Lebanon 30.000-40.000 children in institutions for socio-economic reasons, lack of national framework for family and community based care;
- The CPRA in 2013 and the emergency response highlighted the need for addressing the gaps of alternative, family and community based care for children affected by the crisis
- The Child Protection Case Management Taskforce, established under the CPIEWG began to advocate for this with key stakeholders

Save the Children is leading work on ACiE:

- ✓ Carry out desk review to document legislation, policies and practices around AC in Lebanon, including for non-Lebanese children, main gaps and needs and way forward;
- ✓ Develop guidance on the process and roles and responsibilities regarding placements and follow-up of children in AC as part of the Emergency Practical Guidance for Case Management Services/National SOPs;
- ✓ Develop tools to support family and community based care;
- ✓ UNICEF supported ACiE Pilot Project in North of Lebanon.

Summary Key Findings Desk Review

Civil Legislation:

- Law 422 is “mostly” a juvenile justice law
- ✓ Includes legal protection for children “threatened or at risk”
- ✓ Children at risk and protection provisions in the law are not clearly defined nor distinguished from measures for children in contact with the law: the law is inconsistently applied;

Religious Law:

- ✓ Religious courts deal with personal status matters: divorce, custody, legal guardianship, heritage etc;
- ✓ No common state law covering family matters; no state oversight of decisions taken by religious courts;

Implementation of the law:

- ✓ Limited # of social workers/case workers mandated to intervene/support children at risk;
- ✓ No regulations/procedures for children at risk and alternative care placements in place;
- ✓ High underreporting of children at risk of/exposed to abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation.

Summary Key Findings Desk Review: continued

NGO and Community Involvement:

- ✓ More scope for involvement national and community based organisations.

Other issues:

- ✓ Strong religious and cultural norms, children belong to families/families belong to religious community;
- ✓ Best interests of the child not always primary consideration;
- ✓ Informal family based care practiced, but no data available and lack of documented and formalized practices around community/family based care;
- ✓ Very limited family/community-based alternative care options and support services for vulnerable families available;
- ✓ Very limited possibilities to provide safety and care for urgent protection cases in need of immediate interventions, especially for non-Lebanese children.

What are the main patterns, causes, impact & risks of separation for non-Lebanese children affected by the humanitarian/Syrian crisis?

Main Patterns/ causes:

- Children sent ahead for safety or (seasonal) work;
- Children/family unable to (re-) enter Lebanon due to border regulations;
- Divorce, remarriage, family breakdown/weakened coping mechanisms & community safety networks;
- Majority of children in contact with parents.

Impact:

- Psychosocial distress, lack of care/ abandonment, malnutrition, discrimination, child labour/exploitation, incl street based children, abuse, child marriage

Risks:

- Lack of care & protection for children requiring urgent alternative care and/or mid-term alternative care solutions; Trafficking, exploitation, abuse, discrimination, child marriage

UASC in the context of the Syrian crisis

- Number of identified Syrian UASC children is relatively low;
- No accurate data available to inform prevention & response:
 - # UASC (girls/boys/age trench)
 - # UASC in types of care arrangement (informal/formal care with relatives/foster family/ CHH, residential care)
- Not enough information/evidence on practices around foster care/kafala in Syria before the crisis;
- Care provided by relatives/ other families often short term due to economic reasons;
- Less attention for/ recording of CHH/supervised care;
- Limitations in foster care with non-biological families due to religious beliefs/practices especially related to gender/age;
- Families caring for children need specialized/tailor made support, including economic strengthening: challenging in Lebanese context.

Emergency Case Management Services/Good practices

- Case Management Taskforce under CPWG at national level
 - “Practical Guidance for Child Protection Case Management Services in the Emergency Response in Lebanon” and key standardized inter-agency case management tools endorsed by MOSA
 - Standardized CM Coaching Programme/ extensive training for case workers;
 - National CM SOPs developed by MoSA with support of UNICEF
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- Alternative Care components will be incorporated in existing case management guidance and tools

Results of Save the Children's Pilot Work

- Paving the way for alternative care including with longer term perspectives through planned roundtable with MoJ and MoSA to clarify the law and process for alternative care placements;
- Draft Standardized Alternative Care tools in place;
- Increased community awareness and engagement re alternative family/community based care;
- ACiE assessment underway to collect more evidence on practices around care and key needs for support;
- Draft ACiE Training materials developed, incl. Foster Family Training Manual:
- Inter-agency ACE Toolkit translated into Arabic, ready for dissemination.

Way forward

Advocacy

- Continued advocacy for increased capacity of statutory organisations to implement law and provisions for children at risk

AC Process, guidance & tools

- Emergency Guidance Note for Alternative Care + Standardized tools endorsed;

Capacity building:

- Continued training of Government/NGOs/INGOs;
- Further engagement of national NGOs and communities in family/community based alternative care;

Economic Strengthening & Social Protection:

- Support vulnerable families and increase access to services, including families caring for UASC to prevent family breakdown and secondary separations on case by case basis.

Way forward- continued

Data collection and evidence:

- Improve data collection: collect segregated data regarding UASC, types and numbers of informal and formal care arrangements, number of children reunified, in the different regions
- Collect evidence and document concrete examples of family-based alternative care in Lebanon

Service mapping & Referral:

- Improve available service mapping and referral pathways, including alternative care options/procedures: suggest developing a standardized template cross location;

Other issues:

- Exploring alternative care options, notably for adolescent girls and boys.