

Child Safety Audit – Key Findings March 2015

Terre des Hommes Italy, Harshm Camp, Erbil

Overview

Harshm camp was set up in September 2014 as a response to the influx of Iraqi IDPs, in Erbil city. The camp currently holds 1408 individuals, 54% of whom are children under 18.

The Safety Audit was conducted to assess the overall security risks children face in Harshm camp. TdH Italy's team of social workers carried out a Child Safety Audit in February and March 2015 throughout the whole camp.

Child Safety Audit

The child safety audit was a tool developed by the CPWG in order to understand the risks to which children are exposed and for organizations to advocate for changes and improvements to ensure the safety of children.

The child safety audit goal is to identify risks for children in camps and sites throughout the region. The tool assesses the risks through observation of the environment and community, and through focus group discussions, which focus on the six key areas: Overall camp/site layout, shelter, WASH, community, child friendly areas, and fire safety.

Findings

Overall camp

- Children (along with women) are scared of leaving their houses at night due to the lack of lighting and the presence of drunk men on the roads.
- There is police present at entrance of camp but the community does not experience the entrance as safely guarded.
- A large number of mice is visible in the camp, and the community indicated that scorpions emerge during the summer. However, it is important to note that the children do not seem to be touching them or playing with them they know they are vectors of diseases
- As mentioned above, lighting is missing from most sectors of the camp.
- The common toilets are lacking lights as well. Families have had flashlights provided to them all but most people indicated that they are still scared of using toilets or going around at night by themselves.
- The road at the end of the camp is not graveled. Dirty water and mud do not allow access to it and this is creating a health concern.
- The most relevant issue raised by the camp community is that of alcohol abuse amongst men, which causes a protection concern for the community at large, especially for women and children.
- Numerous electric wires are hanging low in the camp which can cause dangerous situations.

- The fence at the Eastern side of the camp is broken which means people can enter and exit the camp without the knowledge of the camp security.
- Numerous children and camp residents are jumping over the fence/wall of the camp to exit/enter the camp.

Shelter

- The caravans allow to be easily locked from the inside, which means children can lock themselves in the caravan.

WASH

- Wash facilities (both toilets and showers) are broken and not lit, and, in general, not easily accessible, especially for persons with disabilities.
- Privacy screens have sharp edges and the community indicated that children have gotten hurt by them.
- Toilets are far for most camp residents. Moreover, they are dirty and leak dirt, they have no water (cold or warm), no light, most locks are not working and they are not gender segregated. Most people indicated they are therefore not comfortable using the toilets.
- Most children are being washed in their own homes and do not use the showers, as some are broken, lack water and aren't clean.
- Problem with open defecation especially amongst children, as a result of the aversion against using the common toilets.
- Some water points have dirty water which has caused some children to get sick
- Some families are digging open holes as they are building their own latrine, which causes a dangerous situation for children as they can fall in the hole.
- No latrines are available in the CFS and Informal education sites.

Community

- Children are, in general, left to play unsupervised around the camp.
- Visible dirty water throughout the camp which causes a risk of diseases and infections.
- Distributions seem to be happening through cars which cause a security risk as children attach themselves to the cars and get hurt.
- Numerous holes and ditches throughout the camp are cause for concern and danger for children, especially since the children play everywhere unsupervised.

Child Friendly Areas

- No school is open in the camp.
- There is one child friendly space available for all children in the camp.

Fire Safety

- Children have received awareness on fire safety
- New fire extinguishers have been distributed to the community

Recommendations:

The pressing issues that are to be addressed within Harshm camp to reduce risks for children residing within the camp are WASH related issues, as outlined above, concentrating on the cleanliness and maintenance of WASH facilities and ensuring easy accessibility for all. Lighting is to be inserted in and around the WASH facilities to provide safety for children and the community at large. Open defecation is a large problem particularly amongst children and can possibly be addressed through improving the WASH facilities, as well as increasing of the hygiene awareness in the camp

Fumigation to ensure the eradication of mice should take place within the whole camp as soon as possible. It is important to consider the arrival of summer, and, thus, of snakes and scorpions and the danger they will provide to the camp residents.

Alcohol consumption within the camp is to be address in order to ensure the safety and protection, particularly of the most vulnerable, and to guarantee the residents to feel secure in their movements, particularly in the evening. This can be done through awareness raising in the camp community, as well as a more active approach to stop the gathering of groups of men drinking together in public places in the camp.

The numerous holes and ditches, together with the dirty and greywater that collect in these, are cause of concern as they can be vectors of disease, especially for children playing in their vicinity.

Distributions taking place through cars within the camp should be prohibited, in order to ensure the safety of the children. Furthermore, distribution actors in the camp should be made aware of the problem and act appropriately to make sure the children do not climb their cars when they are in the camp.

For the new WASH facilities, privacy screens with round edges should be considered to avoid risks for children.

Other issues to keep in mind are the lack of facilities for children with disabilities, and the importance of accessibility of services for them and people with disabilities in general. Also, the lack of a school and another playground for the children residing in the camp should be addressed. Finally, the camp community should be made aware of the dangers children can face when playing unsupervised, particularly around dangerous areas.

In general, a participatory approach should be taken to better address protection concerns within Harshm camp.