

Child Safety Audit Finding –Baharka Camp

Overview

Baharka camp was opened in July 2014 as a temporary camp in Erbil for internally displaced persons (IDPs) who had fled from armed groups. At a later stage, it has become a permanent IDP camp. The main area of origin of the resident IDPs is Ninewa Governorate. Currently, there are 3,721¹ individuals residing in the camp. Children (any individual under 18) represent 53.7% of the total population.

Save the Children team with the support of UNICEF facilitators has conducted this safety audit to assess the safety and security issues that children face in the camp. The safety audit methodology was based on interviews with children and adults in addition to a number of focus group discussions.

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 six key areas: Overall camp/site layout, shelter, WASH, community, child friendly areas, and fire safety.

General views about child safety in the camp:

- Lighting at night: Many people complain from missing lighting night, streets seem dark and the walkways seem not comfortable, this makes movement at night very dangerous and children cannot go out at night. Working on the electricity to cover more areas in the camp at night would reduce this danger.
- Electricity: the power is connected to all the camp and nobody complain from not having electricity.
- There are some ditches and trenches that need to be covered because children play around them, and this increases the risks of getting infections and communicable diseases when playing with dirt.
- There is a need to spread pesticides in the camp to get rid of the rodents because they are dangerous and transfer serious viruses to people and cause diseases.
- Main entrance: The camp has safe entrance with police point.

1. Shelter

- The tents cannot be locked from inside which gives a sense of insecurity to children and the parents. Single mothers are the most vulnerable category that feels insecure.

2. Water and sanitation

- Many families let their children bring water from water points to the tents and that hurt the children (especially younger children because of the heavy load and staying for long time under the sun) .More focus on raising awareness (during parents' meeting- awareness inside the camp) should be on this issue and try to explain how it affects children physical development.

¹ SOURCE: Baharka IDP Camp -Erbil –Iraq (Camp Profile), May 2015_UNHCR Field Unit - CCCM Cluster

- Some latrines need maintenance due to overuse and lack of responsibility to wash them when they have been used.
- Adults must accompany the children when they go to latrines at nights to make them feel safe and comfortable.
- Parents need to make children aware of the importance of using the toilet correctly and keeping the camp and latrines clean.
- There are no available latrines in the CFS. This raises a safety concern since children are left unattended using public WASH facilities. This exposes them to different forms of abuse including sexual abuse.

3. Community:

- Children do not use the safest roads to pass to local shops or access services.
- Due to the garbage in the camp, blunt edges and items that can hurt children are seen in the streets.
- Children are going out of the camp for playing which might cause a security risk if they are left unattended.

4. Child friendly areas:

- Children have access to formal school in the camp
- There are two child friendly spaces available in Baharka Camp.

5. Fire Safety :

- There is lack of awareness on fire safety among children inside the CFSs and the school.
- The fire extinguishers are available in the camp, but a number of families reported not being aware of that.

Recommendations

The main issues that need to be addressed to ensure the safety of children in the camp are related to the insects and pests that spread viruses. Insecticides should be sprayed to ensure the eradication of pests and insects. The cleanliness and maintenance of WASH facilities should be improved inside the camp. Parents need to make their children aware of the importance of using the WASH facilities properly and on keeping the camp and latrines clean. This issue can be addressed through awareness in the school and child friendly spaces as well.

Lighting is to be inserted in and around the WASH facilities to provide safety for children and the community at large.

There should be dissemination of information and awareness rising among children on fire safety so that children know what to do if a fire happens in the school or in a tent. Taken that it is summer time, fire incidents are likely to increase. Fire extinguishers need to be checked for their functionality and families need to know how to use them in case of fire.

The numerous holes and ditches, together with the dirty and grey water that is collected in them is considered a high risk for children as this water can be vector of diseases, especially for children playing nearby. The ditches and holes need to be filled in adequately.

Latrines need to be installed in the CFSs in the camp so that the risks on children are mitigated. Lack of latrines has been raised by families as a safety and security concern.

Awareness should be raised about the risks of having children playing unattended and unsupervised inside or outside the camp. More focus is needed on the needs of children with disabilities and actors in the camp are advised to make their services inclusive.

The entire community and the different actors working in the camp need to cooperate more, in order to mitigate the risk on children and to enhance their safety. Child participation is vital in the whole process and in all the activities that might be done to improve their safety.