

Child Protection Update

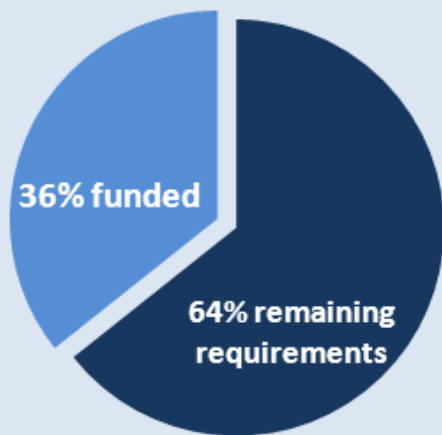
May 2014

Key Figures

546,738	registered refugee children
77%	of registered children are under 11
25%	of registered children are at risk

Funding

UNHCR total requirements: USD 468 m



Protection requirements: USD 106 m

May developments

Identification and referral of children-at-risk:

- This month the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) endorsed practical guidance on child protection case management and the emergency referral and care of children at risk. This was the culmination of months of advocacy work in coordination with both UNICEF and other relevant ministries. The guidance will now be integrated into the national child protection system.
- 319 children at high risk including accompanied minors and separated children were identified and provided with basic assistance including psycho-social counseling by case management agencies.
- 35 children at risk and their families benefited from cash assistance provided by INTERSOS to facilitate their reintegration in the community.
- In May, IRC identified and assisted 117 street-children and working children, helping them access psychosocial support and material assistance.

Training/coaching:

- IRC conducted training for 122 staff from different NGOs to strengthen their case management skills in responding to child labour related issues. This included skill building for the safe identification and referral/removal of children from dangerous working environments.
- In the Bekaa, 60 refugee outreach volunteers (ROVs) were trained on basic child protection skills aimed at enhancing their capacity to safely identify, prioritize and refer child protection cases from the community to case management agencies for assistance.

Achievements: January - May

Activity	reached January- May	2014 Target
Identified children at risk referred and assisted	1,367	1,515
Training for persons working with refugee children (# individuals trained)	321	600

Needs

Many refugee children are in need of psycho-social support due to their exposure to violence and other traumatic events. Refugee children who need assistance require proper identification for referral. Their needs include prevention and response to physical violence, verbal harassment, or pressure,

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Syrian Refugees boy, sorts vegetables at a groceries store in Bebnine, Akkar @UNHCR /A. McConnell

particularly among adolescent boys, to return to Syria to fight. Refugee children subject to sexual violence, child labour and early marriage also require correct identification and referral for assistance by appropriately trained professionals. Separated or unaccompanied children need safe living arrangements and assistance to help locate and reunite them with their families, whenever possible.

Educational opportunities, support to parents, activities targeting adolescents and youth can contribute to protect refugee children against negative coping mechanisms and a wide range of child-specific protection risks.

Challenges

Dispersed refugee population:

Since refugees live in over 1,700 different locations in Lebanon, outreach to refugee children to identify and respond to their needs is both a challenge and priority. Outreach is crucial to ensuring that refugee children are registered with UNHCR and have access to basic services. It is also important in ensuring that parents register the birth of newborns, and that school-aged children living in remote areas and those with specific protection risks have access to education, health care and other services.

Protracted displacement:

With limited access to livelihood opportunities, and dwindling resources, some families resort to child labour and other negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage. As their time in displacement prolongs, the lack of educational opportunities for the majority of school-aged Syrian children presents a significant challenge. Currently, there are over 200,000 school-aged refugee children who lack access to age-appropriate education due in part to the fact that the capacity of the public education system is overstretched.

Fragile national child protection system:

The national child protection system is struggling to provide appropriate care and services to refugee children at risks of abuse and exploitation and children survivors of violence. The Union for the Protection of Children is the only organization mandated by the Ministry of Justice to investigate cases involving child abuse and violence. UNHCR works together with implementing partners to provide support to both refugee children and national institutions providing services to refugees.

Strategy

UNHCR works to ensure that refugee children at risk and/or victims of violence have timely access to appropriate services by:

- Improving outreach to ensure identification and safe referral of children at risks and victims of violence through training of refugee outreach volunteers, frontline workers and others providing services to refugee children;
- Building capacity of child protection actors to better prevent and respond to child protection needs particularly through the establishment of a coaching mechanism for social workers;
- Strengthening national child protection system to ensure emergency referral and provision of adequate care for children at high risks, and reinforce to existing services such as psychosocial support and legal counselling;
- Mainstreaming child protection into all activities carried out within refugee and host communities especially within the health, education and shelter sectors;
- Advocating for expanding access to services for both refugee and Lebanese children;
- Contributing to the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave child rights violations committed in Syria;

UNHCR co-leads the inter-agency working group on child protection together with the Ministry of Social Affairs and UNICEF, and works to ensure the complementarity of interventions benefiting refugee children.

UNHCR implementing partners

Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center (CMLC), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), International Relief and Development (IRD), International Rescue Committee (IRC), INTERSOS, Amel Association-Lebanese Popular Association for Popular Action (AMEL), Makhzoumi Foundation, Restart Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, Social, Humanitarian, Economical Intervention For Local Development (SHEILD), Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE).

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