Session 2B: Children in the Camps in Thailand

Speakers:
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Major Key Points and Themes:
- Child Protection needs to be implemented within the context of broader protection concerns. It needs to be integrated and systematized into overall protection strategies.
- Currently, Best Interest Determinations are not being utilized as a protection tool. They are still closely tied to resettlement.
- The current BID model that exists in Thailand is the largest in the world. A great deal of effort and resources have been devoted to its development. How can this model be sustained in Thailand and replicated in other locations? How can it become part of a larger systematized, coordinated, and collaborative effort?
- How is child protection carried out in collaboration with others?

Challenges to the process include:
- Negative perception of the BID process;
- Need for continuous training of staff;
- Beginning of BID process cannot wait until a durable solution is required;
- Ongoing need to balance efficiency and comprehensiveness in the process;
- Limited child welfare expertise and capacity within UNHCR;
- Incomplete data collection;
- Sustaining and strengthening a collaborative approach to data collection;
- Difficulty of tracing.

Lessons Learned:
- Refugee communities are able to take of themselves and benefit from support and guidance.
- Community participation is crucial for a child protection framework.
- Community needs to be involved in training efforts.
- Child protection system has to be flexible and cannot be a one size fits all approach.
- The Child Protection Committee needs support.
- Broad collaboration is needed to establish a systematized approach.
- BID assessments should make recommendations based on an evaluation of the reality of the child in question’s current care situation.
• Assessing BIDS for children with parents across the border requires a weighing and balancing of several elements: age of child; length of separation from parents and last contact with parents.

Notetaker: Elizabeth O’Brien