Iraqi unaccompanied and separated children in Jordan

Challenges in urban settings

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Background information

- Jordan: not a signatory to 1951 convention
- Camps exist only for Palestinians
- Estimated 0.5 million Iraqis in Jordan  
  (as of May 2007, FAFO survey)
- Only 55,000 registered with UNHCR as of September 2008
- Approx. 100 UAC/SC registered with UNHCR as of Oct 2008
Procedures in place

- UAC/SC identified through registration process or through outreach teams
- Rapid assessment of best interests of UAC/SC conducted upon registration
- BID conducted for cases identified as urgent (UAC, SC with elderly caregiver, survivor of SGBV or organized violence, etc.)
- Referral to services provided by partners
- SOPs for BID recently finalized with reference to the new BID guidelines
Group home care for UACs

- Difficulty in finding potential foster family in urban settings – group home as the only alternative arrangement available
- Most of UACs are adolescents (between 16 and 18 years old)
- Dropping out from non formal education
- Adolescents helping one another and establishing close friendship
- Lack of durable solutions hinders long-term planning
Regular monitoring and support for SC living with extended family

- Situation of children change with time (separation with parents, remarriage of parents, parents’ illegal travel to West)
- SC identified through registration are referred to Questscope for regular home visits and mentoring project and to other partners for material and psychosocial support
BID panel

- BID panel meets regularly
- Panel members from different units of UNHCR as well as case workers from partners
- The new BID guidelines partially implemented
- Cases with complexity find no answer in the guidelines
- Not only resettlement cases discussed
- Limited time and resource for BID
Challenges in urban settings

- Identification of UAC/SC (lack of community structure, lack of awareness among community members and partners)
- General fear and security problems (lack of confidence in UNHCR)
- Maintaining contact with refugees
- Lack of accurate figures
- Lack of safe space for children
Specialized psychosocial support for children

- Gap exists in expertise in child psychology and child psychiatry
- Stigma attached to psychosocial problems
- Situation in Jordan is not conducive for recovery (lack of security, uncertain future)
- Music and drama therapy have shown positive outcomes among children with different levels of distress