

# Strategic Priorities in Practice

## 9—Evidence and research for child protection and accountability

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On June 22, the Alliance 2022 Annual Meeting for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action held a Strategic Priorities in Practice session on ‘Evidence and research for child protection and accountability’. With an aim to demonstrate the diversity of child protection approaches, the Alliance invited presentations from **World Vision International on *Children in Decision-Making in Fragile Contexts - A case study on Syria and Faith leaders matters in achieving child sensitive social protection*** and the **University of Bath on *Localising the protection of displaced and conflict-affected children: Findings on neglect from community-level research in Jordan and Palestine*** to share their findings and experiences.

## CHILDREN IN DECISION-MAKING IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS—A CASE STUDY ON SYRIA

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Joy Cheung from World Vision International Syria started the presentation by introducing participants to the Analysis Design and Planning Tool for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPHA ADAPT), a unique World Vision tool specially applied in long-term humanitarian crises. With this analysis tool, Joy and her team have identified top CP risks in North-West Syria. She reported that for girls under 18, the top three risks are exposure to drugs, child marriage and forcible engagement of

smuggling or selling restricted products; while for boys the second biggest risk is child labor and other two others remain the same.

Further, Joy highlighted that confronting challenges like extreme poverty, devaluation of education and lack of law; NGOs have become common protective factors in Northwestern Syria. In the future, part of World Vision's plan is to implement projects to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors.

## LOCALISING THE PROTECTION OF DISPLACED AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED CHILDREN: FINDINGS ON NEGLECT FROM COMMUNITY-LEVEL RESEARCH IN JORDAN AND PALESTINE

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**Neglect is widely understood as the most prevalent form of maltreatment that children are exposed to globally.<sup>1</sup>**

Mohammed Alruzzi from the University of Bath explored his team's child neglect project in his presentation, and mainly shared their findings on physical neglect with the audience. Through interviews and workshops, Alruzzi's team has discovered that the prejudices of public servants, unstable employment, intervention from outside actor such as Israel government in Palestine area all contribute to neglect against children.

One of the most important messages conveyed by Mohammed was that protection issues in any context should be identified through deep engagement with local context. He also pointed out that focus is needed not simply on caregiver needs but also on how the system supports or hinders caregivers from providing support — "I think it's important for us humanitarian actors...to shift our attention to the system as a whole. How the system is protecting or not protecting children."

# FAITH LEADERS MATTER IN ACHIEVING CHILD SENSITIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

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**Evidence shows faith leaders play a very influential role in changing beliefs, attitudes, and practices that undermine child protection.<sup>2</sup>**

Speakers from World Vision International Lebanon described their research results related to faith fathers' role in protecting children. Mike Kirakossian first emphasized the necessity of engaging faith fathers in CP and highlighted this through their specific discoveries. According to their study, most faith fathers believe violence against children is unjustified and unacceptable, yet some still think physical punishment is needed. Moreover, some faith fathers hold the belief that girls should be subject to harsher discipline. In addition, almost all faith fathers stated that their main role in preventing violence against children lies in preventive approaches, such as educating parents and offering support as representatives of their communities. Arsho Tenbelian later explained the successes and difficulties of their study; for instance, the general diversity of participants' background and the lack of female faith leaders' voices. She also gave some insights into the decisions of religious courts where children and women are not well centered.

The session concluded with the emphasis on listening to children's voices, facilitating dialogues between children and adults, and valuing the close relationship between women and children especially in religious humanitarian settings.

## SOURCES

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1. Executive Summary from [\*Neglect and Protection of Refugee Children: A report on research in Jordan and the Gaza Strip, Palestine\*](#)
2. Abstract on [\*Perceptions and Attitudes of Faith Leaders Around Violence Against Children\*](#)