

Standard Operating Procedures for addressing child labour risks at distribution sites in Jordan

Photo: Plan International

This case study describes a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) developed in Jordan to prevent child labour and identify at-risk children during distributions.

Background

In Jordan, in 2014, regular distributions of food and non-food items (NFIs) would attract many children who collected items on behalf of their families as well as children who were not registered on a family card, such as unaccompanied children. Persons with disabilities would also struggle to access distributions safely and would often call upon children to collect distributions on their behalf. To prevent and respond to child protection, child labour and disability risks and to uphold the fundamental principle of “Do No Harm”, UNHCR and inter-agency partners in the camp developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for supporting children during distributions in Za’atari refugee camp.

Standard Operating Procedures for Distributions

To ensure safe access to relief items for all families and to protect children from child labour, the SOPs included the following procedures:

1. Children’s booths

At the entrance of each distribution site, a children’s booth was installed where children entering the site were screened. All staff working in the children’s booth were trained on the child protection and gender-based violence referral pathways and prepared to take immediate actions, including ensuring that relief items for unaccompanied children were registered on their foster family’s ration card. Children who arrived alone to collect relief items on behalf of their own or another family were registered and interviewed to determine their gender, age, reasons for collecting the items, family situation, vulnerability and the presence of other persons above the age of 16 years in their family who could collect distributions.

Based on the situation of the child, the following steps could be taken:

- **Children under the age of 12 years old** were not allowed under any circumstances to access the distribution sites. If they had a family member above the age of 16 years in the family who could collect the items, children were sent home with a brochure for their parents/caregivers with information on why children are not able to collect distributions, alternative pick-up collections and the Alternative Collectors Scheme (see below). If children indicated that they did not have a family member who could pick up the items, the child would be directly referred to UNHCR Community Services for support.
- **Children between 12 and 16 years old** who did not have a family member who could collect the relief items could qualify for a “special case” eligibility to pick up items on behalf of their family if nobody was available to do so. However, if they had a family member above the age of 16 years in the family who could collect the items, children were sent home with a brochure for their parents/caregivers.
- **Children above the age of 16 years old** were permitted to access the distribution site and pick up the items on behalf of their own family after age verification.

2. Alternative Collectors Scheme

- The Alternative Collectors Scheme was put in place to ensure that households with nobody above the age of 16 years to collect the items in person could still receive distributions. Eligible households were identified through direct identification and referral from UNHCR Community Services, Protection and Field teams; children’s booths; through Handicap International; partners of the Age and Disability Taskforce; Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and other protection and child protection actors. Some vulnerability criteria included female-headed households, households headed by older persons, households headed by persons with impairments, and other specific vulnerabilities. Vulnerable households were identified on an ongoing basis and referred to Community Services for registration.
- All identified cases were referred to a selected partner for a home visit to determine eligibility and to identify a nominated alternative collector, such as:
 - another available adult family member not on the same ration card;
 - a non-family member, such as a neighbour, identified by the vulnerable household.
 - UNHCR registered all approved alternative collectors on the same ration cards of the family and (partner) distribution lists, so that staff could verify the eligible collectors during distributions.

3. Community mitigation steps

- To increase awareness about the SOPs, community awareness-raising was undertaken by all families prior to all distributions about collection of relief items, eligibility and procedures. Messages were effectively spread through children’s booths, communal centres, youth centres, child-friendly spaces and community mobilisers.

4. Monitoring and follow-up

- Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) by phone was used to ensure that all vulnerable families had received their relief items and to collect feedback about the process. Whenever a family had not received the relief items, follow-up actions were taken to assess why this had not happened, and, where needed, nominate an alternative collector. The identified at-risk children were supported by child protection partners and monitored as part of the case management services.

Resource

- ◇ NRC, IRD, IRC and UNHCR (2014). Inter-agency standard Operating Procedures for Protection Support to Vulnerable Refugees in Assessing NFI Distribution Sites (2014)