INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION

Iraqi government military operations to retake the city of Fallujah from ISIS began in May 2016. The battle caused massive destruction and displacement displacing hundreds of thousands. To this day, 124,000 people remain displaced across Anbar, more than 98% of which are from areas of origin within the governorate (IOM). According to the Iraq Formal Settlement Monitoring Tool Gap Analysis, of the 67 sites assessed in Anbar in October 2017, 87% of sites were assessed as having medium - very high gaps in child protection and 91% had medium -high gaps in the education sector, making it one of the governorates with the greatest needs in Iraq.

Children who have fled areas like Fallujah, Ramadi and Hit have missed out on years of school or have never been to school at all, while many are severely traumatized and exhibit problematic behaviors such as increased aggressiveness and violence, or antisocial behaviors. Many children have lost their fathers, and single mothers often have difficulty caring for their children alone given the trauma of displacement and economic hardship many families face.

Despite immense needs, there are few education and/or child protection humanitarian actors responding in camp locations across Anbar. The protracted displacement in Anbar is becoming increasingly dire as valuable resources are primarily allocated to other crises around the country.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Objectives

- To better understand if children in camps are accessing education, the quality of this education, and the main barriers out-of-school children are facing
- To identify child protection concerns for children and families, and to understand the behaviours children are exhibiting
- To better plan an education and/or child protection intervention in the camps, and to report information in order advocate for further humanitarian assistance

Core Questions

- What are the main barriers preventing children from accessing education?
- What are the most significant child protection needs and concerns?
- What is the feasibility of implementing education and/or child protection programming in camp settings in Anbar safely and appropriately?
METHODOLOGY

Key Informant Interviews
The education and child protection assessment team used closed questionnaires administered to key informants within internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps. Key informant respondents were purposively sampled, ensuring that community leaders, teachers, as well as mothers and fathers conveniently selected were sampled across the assessment locations. A total of 38 key informant interviews (KII) were completed; 14 from Habbaniyah Tourist Centre (HTC), 12 from Amiriya Al-Fallujah (AAF) camp, and 12 from Kilo 18 camp. Of the protection key informants, 50% of the respondents were female, and 50% male.

In-depth interviews
In-depth interviews were conducted with two child friendly space facilitators (1 male, 1 female) working with Danish Refugee Council in HTC. A second KII was conducted in Baghdad with two Norwegian Refugee Council education officers. Both interviews served to deepen the IRC’s understanding of education and child protection issues communities face in camp locations in Anbar, as well as to better comprehend the work humanitarian organizations are currently doing to respond to these needs.

Focus Group Discussions:
Two focus group discussions (FGDs) were completed; one with a group of 10 IDP women in Amiriya al-Fallujah camp, a second with 12 IRC child protection community mobilizers who work in a variety of camp locations in eastern Anbar, who themselves are residents of the camp. Focus group discussions were completed with the IDP population in order to provide more in-depth information regarding the community’s perception education opportunities and barriers, and protection risks and concerns for children.

Limitations
Certain limitations are expected to have compromised some of the findings, which must be taken into account when analysing and interpreting the results. These limitations were:
- Due to programmatic and timing constraints, the teams collecting data via the assessment tool were only able to receive a brief training on the tool.
- The two main investigators had limited time in Baghdad and Anbar to complete this assessment therefore key informant interviews took place alongside the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Had time permitted it would have been more beneficial to first complete the key informant interviews and analyse this data, then follow up with in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. This would have allowed the FGD and interview to be more focused, enabling the assessment team to collect more rich data.
- The focus group discussion in AAF camp was facilitated with the help of IRC’s Women’s Protection and Empowerment team who run programming in the camp, meaning there were only female participants in this FGD.
- The KII were not always able to be randomly selected therefore KII were often purposively sampled with community leaders and teachers, and convenience samples with mothers and fathers within the community.
- Due to insecurity in the area and the length of time to travel through checkpoints, the team had a limited amount of time for data collection which impacted the total number of interviews that were completed and it limited the number of FGD that were completed during that time.

KEY FINDINGS
The assessment was conducted between the 7th and the 9th of August 2017. The IRC visited Habbaniyah Tourist Centre, and Amiriya Al-Fallujah camps in Anbar. Security access did not permit a visit to Kilo 18 camp at the time of the visit to conduct in-depth interviews, however staff visited at a later date to conduct the key informant interviews.
**RISKS AND DANGERS**

Of the key informants interviewed, 89% (34/38) stated that environmental factors posed the greatest risk for children in camps. For example, in HTC it was explained by interviewees that children play near the lake, which is quite dangerous. Respondents also referenced health risks, as the lack of purified water in the camp leads people to drink the lake water, which is unclean and is also used for bathing. Many parents reported their children were suffering from skin conditions due to poor hygiene. Extreme weather in both summer and winter which pose risks and hazards across all locations was also frequently mentioned by respondents as main danger for children.

Child labour was also cited as a top risk, being reported by 82% of respondents (31/38). Many children must work to support their families, but many respondents noted that children are often working outside of the camps, which increases risk. Mothers reported that children are mostly selling small goods (sweets, tissues, etc.) to make money.

82% of respondents (31/38) also listed neglect and exploitation as causing a high risk for children in camps. A group of mothers noted that it is very common for them to beat their children, and punish them with work. For example, once monthly rations of oil run out, the oil is too expensive to buy in the camp so children will be sent outside the camp to purchase, which can be very dangerous for children.

---

**PSYCHOSOCIAL DISTRESS**

95% of respondents (36/38) noted very concerning changes in the behaviour of both girls and boys since displacement. For females, the most frequent behaviour change reported was sadness, grief, depressed mood, and crying (34/38), followed by unwillingness to go to school (27/38), antisocial behaviour/isolating themselves (26/38), and disrespectful behaviour in the family (15/38).

---

**Risks Children face in camps**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect/exploitation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child labor</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early marriage</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual violence</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No risks</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmful traditional practices</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment armed groups</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

“Young girls as young as 12 put on makeup to try and find men because they will survive”.

-Mother in focus group

---

**FROM HARM TO HOME | Rescue.org**

December 2017
For males, the most commonly observed behaviours include unwillingness to go to school (31/38), sadness, grief, depressed mood, and crying (25/38), more aggressive behaviour (24/38), and antisocial behaviour/isolating themselves (22/38).

- Crying, sadness, depressed mood, grief
- Unwillingness to go to school
- Anti-social, isolating themselves
- Disrespectful behavior in the family
- Less willingness to help caregivers and siblings
- More aggressive behavior
- Engaging in high-risk sexual behavior
- No change
When given the opportunity to go into more detail around changes in children’s behaviour, focus group discussions painted a slightly different picture regarding behaviour with almost all parents repeatedly expressing concerns around children’s violent behaviour and aggressive tendencies. Of note, it was repeatedly emphasized that girls exhibited far more aggressive and violent behaviours to boys. In comparison, during key informant interviews this issue ranked 6th for females (7/38), and as mentioned 3rd for males (24/38).

Parents noted that children are violent and act aggressively towards other children. For example, they destroy one another’s belongings such as books, hit one another, and throw mud at one another. One mother noted that violence is often perpetrated by the fathers, and now that there are no fathers or older brothers present in the camps, young boys feel they are the men of the family, and that they are old enough for this responsibility. In turn, they abuse and humiliate people younger than them.

Another parent noted that a home, children had a good life but now here in the camp they have nothing- no clothes, no toys. They feel humble and shy because of their circumstances, which also leads them to act out. Many parents felt that children had resorted to violence because there is nowhere to go in the camp, and nothing for the children to do. Another reoccurring theme from both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions was nightmares; one father shared that his children wake up in the night and “they cannot breathe because they heard gunfire and they remember Fallujah”. Another parent described their child’s nightmares saying they wake up at night and feel “not good”. Similarly, during the day, parents shared that when younger children hear an airplane in the camps, they are afraid and run away and hide.

EDUCATION AND CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

71% (27/38) of respondents stated children were out of school because the school was too far away. An additional 61% (21/38) stated there simply was no school, while 68% (26/38) mentioned lack of transportation as a barrier for children. All three issues are closely intertwined, pointing to a lack of physical access to school as the main barrier preventing children from attending school. An additional 61% (21/38) stated no textbooks, and no school supplies as additional reasons for children to be out of school.

Parents in focus group discussions echoed similar sentiments, noting that if there was a school available in the camp it was often too far away, and too dangerous for children to travel. In particular, parents were concerned with children having to travel through the market to reach school, as key informant interviews noted that markets are the most dangerous location in the camps. In particular, mothers said it was not safe
for young teenage girls to walk across the camp and/or through the market themselves because man abuse and exploit girls. As many households are women-headed single-parent households, mothers simply do not have the time to accompany their daughters twice a day to and from school.

In addition to challenges in physically accessing schools and security on the route to school, many parents are aware that the school is often of a poor quality. Parents noted that teachers in the government schools are not qualified and do not teach well and rely on poor teaching methods. One parent noted that her daughter is in first grade and still does not know the alphabet, while another parent shared that not a single child passed final exams in the camp.

From a financial perspective, many children are out of school as the family’s level of income is prohibitive to attendance. There is a severe shortage of textbooks, with many children sharing one single book. Children and teachers also do not have the proper stationary and materials for teaching and learning.

While all camps visited had a child friendly space, frequently the camp was simply too large to support one single CFS, which resulted in the CFS being too far for many children to attend. Additionally, the capacity of the CFS was often limited, and was only able to accommodate a small number of children. Parents often complained in the FGD that there was no CFS in their section of the camp, therefore their children cannot participate as they are not registered as participants. Every day they noted there are large numbers of children outside the CFS fence, watching children play but who are unable to participate themselves.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

There are significant education and child protection needs in the camps assessed which are currently not being addressed. More humanitarian resources must be allocated towards the increasingly protracted displacement in Anbar to ensure all children are availing of their right to education, and are receiving appropriate structured psychosocial support.

More education and child protection facilities and programs must be made available, as well support is needed to assist formal schools in camps to ensure the education delivered is of a high quality.

Education and child protection actors should coordinate with the members of other clusters to highlight and advocate for the needs of the residents of Anbar camps around increased access to child protection services, and the provision of high quality education programming.

Camp management officials, municipal authorities and other relevant actors should be engaged to support the safety of children at camp sites and sites of IDP settlements. This should include but not be limited to the provision of safe play areas for children and adolescents, erecting barriers to unsafe areas, awareness raising around dangerous environmental factors with parents and children and ensuring access to schools are not hampered by environmental concerns or that barriers to access to school are addressed. Similarly, relevant parties should coordinate with camp officials to winterize and summarize IDP settlements.

Specialised child protection support is required to support children suffering from psychosocial distress, engaged in child labour, abuse and neglect.