

Child Protection Network (Community-based Child Care Center) Nepal

Child Protection

The Community based Child Care Center (CCCC) program trains host parents to provide full-time care for a maximum of 15 and 10 children in Beldangi and Sanischare camp respectively. Children should not stay for longer than 6 months. The temporary care arrangement ensures that each child has access to specialized services to address their individual needs, until a longer-term care arrangement is found.



UNHCR/ Pukar Ghimire

Background

During the census exercise held in 2006/2007, 536 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) were identified. Subsequently, a rapid assessment was undertaken to identify vulnerabilities and to determine protection needs among this group. During the assessment, lack of adequate care for children was identified as the most prevalent protection concern. In some cases, the situation would be particularly aggravated, i.e. the child was abandoned, neglected or not in an appropriate care arrangement.

In order to address the most severe cases, the CCCC was established in Beldangi-I camp in 2009.

As a result of a child protection mapping exercise in 2010, as well as a general observation of an increased need, it was decided to establish a second CCCC in Sanischare Camp.

Location Beldangi-I and Sanischare camps

Time & Duration Beldangi-I: 2009 – present
Sanischare camp: Since 2012

Population Groups Refugees and asylum-seekers

Actors UNHCR, Bhutanese Refugee Women's Forum (BRWF), Lutheran World federation (LWF)



Description

The Centers provide immediate housing and care options for children who need to leave and/or be removed from their current situation immediately, but who do not have such a risk that they need to leave the camp entirely.

The children who meet the criteria and are approved by the Admission Panel (see more information below) reside on a short-term basis (maximum six months as a standard) at the center while a long-term solution to their situation is identified through a Best Interest Assessment (BIA) and development plan for each child.

While staying at the center, children are cared for in a home environment by the host parents. Host parents have a weekly routine for recreational activities for children. To the extent possible, children continue to go to school while staying at the center (this used to be somewhat challenging as some children reside in another camp location). Some of the children may be school dropouts and efforts for re-enrolment in school are made as a part of their reintegration while they stay at the center.

Community-based organizations such as the Bhutanese Refugee Children's Forum (BRCF) and the Youth Friendly Centre (YFC) involve children staying at the Center in their activities (e.g. sports), and visit the Center regularly to engage peers through trainings and provide tutoring sessions. While staying at the CCCC, the child's ration is transferred temporarily to the CCCC from their hut.

One set of parents is responsible for a maximum of 4 children. If the number of children hosted by the CCCC exceeds this number, more host parents are hired on a temporary basis. A roster has been created with trained host parents.

Impact and results

- Children-at-risk and possibly in need of this service may be identified through a number of channels, e.g. through the camp based Child Protection Working Group (which involves representatives from the refugee community, camp based organizations, implementing partners and UNHCR) or through any of these actors outside the working group.
- Best Interest Assessment (BIA) is conducted by child protection staff.
- If removal from their current care arrangement is recommended, this is proposed to the Admission Panel, consisting of one representative each from UNHCR (Child Protection Unit), LWF (Community Services) and CARITAS. In cases of emergency, UNHCR may make a decision without convening the panel.
- Throughout the stay, services are constantly assessed and opportunities to improve them are always sought.
- Throughout the stay, if appropriate and applicable, efforts are made to work with caregivers to improve the home situation, making it possible for the child to return. If not appropriate or possible, other durable solutions are sought.
- Once the protection issue(s) is resolved or a durable solution is identified, the child can be discharged from the CCCC.

Impact and Results

- 25 vulnerable children (15 in Beldangi-I) and (10 in Sanisshare) can receive temporary services at once in the camps.
- Since the establishment of the CCCC in two camps (i.e. 2009 in BeldangiI and 2012 in Sanisshare) a total of 44 (26 girls and 18 boys) children benefited from the CCCC program. Of these, 9 were girl survivors of SGBV. The duration of stay varies between 3-6 months. Some have on an exceptional basis stayed longer than that.
- The Center provides not only accommodation and care, but also a range of other activities such as: play, psychosocial support, educational activities, and recreational activities (different age group/different activity). Depending on the situation, the child may continue regular classes in school.

- Remaining in the camp under the care of community members enables the children to more easily reintegrate once they are discharged from the Center.
- The Center has offered a safe haven for several children at risk as well as contributed to decreased vulnerability upon discharge and identification of durable solutions.
- Of the children who have received support from the CCCC, 22 found a durable solution through resettlement (the majority under the Unaccompanied Minor Programme to the US), 11 children reunified with their family members and 11 are still receiving support at the Center.

Constraints

There is a high turnover of trained host parents, mainly due to their involvement in the on-going resettlement program, which creates challenges in recruitment, retention and capacity building.

As it may be perceived by parents/caregivers that the center offers better opportunities for their child(ren), there have been requests for admission where the child does not meet the criteria and some individuals have tried to drop their children off for day-care.

Lessons Learned/Keys to Success

The program has generally been effective for children-at-risk, ensuring a safe, home environment while solutions are sought. The program has been less effective where parents/caregivers have engaged in severe substance abuse or there are very complex family dynamics. In such cases, the ability to reduce protection risks and/or identify durable solutions has proved challenging.

To reduce the high turnover of trained host parents, UNHCR has increasingly identified and trained couples constituted by a Nepali national and a refugee, as resettlement processes in these cases are usually lengthy. This is particularly true for couples, where the Nepali national is the man.

