

## Findings of the Participatory Assessment with Children in Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Malawi



November 2005



## **Acknowledgements**

The participatory assessment with children, held in Malawi from 31 October to 4 November 2005 in Dzaleka Refugee Camp, is part of a larger initiative to assess children's perceptions and experiences of violence in a refugee context in Southern Africa. A study using a similar methodology was undertaken in Angola, South Africa and Zambia in 2005, the findings of which were contributed to the United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children. The participatory assessment held in Malawi was the first in a series of workshops for the five remaining countries in UNHCR operations in Southern Africa.

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And, lastly, our warmest thanks to the children who took part in the participatory assessment and allowed us to present their stories and artwork in the reports. Their invaluable contribution will enable others to better understand the problems that they face. The information in the report also provides an opportunity for UNHCR and its partners as well as other relevant stakeholders in Malawi to act on the children's solutions by expanding existing programmes and initiating new ones designed to provide more effective protection and assistance to refugee children in Malawi.

The artwork in the report was drawn by the children who participated in the workshops. The children gave permission for their work and photos to be used in the report. All drawings were returned to the children.

## **Explanatory Note**

This participatory assessment was initiated to examine how refugee children perceive violence in Dzaleka Refugee Camp. The discussions documented in this report portray life in the camp, through the eyes of a small group of children. The reports from the children who participated in the assessments are taken very seriously. In order to assess the claims made by the children, UNHCR and partner staff will work with the community and follow-up activities will be organised with refugee children and adults, camp staff, and local authorities.

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## Definitions

### Child/children

All persons from birth to 18 as defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

### Violence

A means of control and oppression that can include emotional, social or economic force, coercion or pressure, as well as physical harm. It can be overt, in the form of a physical assault or threatening someone with a weapon; it can also be covert, in the form of intimidation, threats, persecution, deception or other forms of psychological or social pressure. (UNHCR Guidelines for Prevention and Response: Sexual and Gender-based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, May 2003)

### Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

Violations of fundamental human rights that perpetuate sex-stereotyped roles that deny human dignity and the self-determination of the individual and hamper human development. They refer to physical, sexual and psychological harm that reinforces female subordination and perpetuates male power and control. (UNHCR Guidelines for Prevention and Response: Sexual and Gender-based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, May 2003)

### This report has two parts:

- Part 1: reports on the findings from the participatory assessment with children in Dzaleka Refugee Camp on their perceptions and experiences of violence
- Part 2: is a detailed description of the approach and activities used in the participatory assessment

## Executive Summary

### Background

The findings presented here are based on a UNHCR participatory assessment conducted with children in the Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Malawi in November 2005. The report is divided into two parts: Part 1 presents the findings from the participatory assessment, including excerpts from the discussions with refugee children held throughout the workshops, and Part 2 describes in detail the approach used for future replication of similar participatory assessments.

The methods used in these workshops reflect a participatory approach originally developed for a UNHCR research study, the findings of which were submitted to the United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children.

The focus of this assessment was to gather information from refugee children about their perceptions and experiences of violence. Included in the themes explored were the activities that the children do in the camp, the forms of violence that children witness or experience themselves, the protection strategies they employ, and suggestions they have for making the camp safer for children.

Twenty-five children in the Dzaleka Refugee camp participated in the two workshops. Artwork and drawing were used as the medium for the children to begin sharing information about themselves. Specific techniques (described in Part 2 of the report) were employed to help the children illustrate and discuss their daily lives and experiences.

A capacity building component was conducted alongside the participatory assessment, in which UNHCR and partner staff were trained on how to work with children. The goal of this training was to increase the number of facilitators in the region who have the skills to conduct further activities with children.

### Key Findings from the Workshop

The most common problems identified by the children include:

*Harassment/sexual harassment of girls:* Both boys and girls describe groups of teenage boys abusing their power, calling out to girls and even chasing them. This happens all over the camp and creates daily fear for girls, particularly the younger girls who fear that the boys may rape them.

*Sexual exploitation of girls:* This includes girls having sex with older men in exchange for clothes or money. This practice is sometimes encouraged by parents in a context of deep poverty. Girls also describe how it is sometimes difficult to say no to sexual advances from boys as the boys use physical strength. Girls also told stories of sexual exploitation related to food distribution.

*Rape:* Younger and older girls fear rape. This is a particular fear when they are sent out by parents late at night or when collecting firewood in the forest. They described how rape is often not reported, parents choosing instead to get a payout from the man or even forcing the girls to marry the man. Police were not seen as effective when rape was reported as they most often release the perpetrator after being paid.

*Forced marriages:* Forced marriages of girls as young as thirteen were reported. These were either arranged by parents who 'sold' girls in exchange for goods such as a milling machine or saw it as a way of reducing the number of children in the family. This practice seemed to be widely accepted and girls feared it happening to them.

*Trafficking of girls:* All the groups of children were familiar with at least one case of a girl who was sold by her parents and trafficked out of the camp. Men from outside of the camp were said to enter the camp looking to buy girls to be their wives.

*Clinic and hospital services:* The supply of medicine was brought up by both the girls and boys as being inadequate and often linked to bribery. Hospital care was identified with negligence and ambulance services were not available for refugees.

*Unaccompanied/separated children:* All children discussed the situation of unaccompanied/separated children as being problematic. They were neglected or exploited by foster families who do not treat them as their own children but rather often deny them access to school as well as food.

### Protection strategies

Children had a number of protection strategies such as:

- walking with friends or siblings to avoid sexual harassment
- taking an escort when collecting firewood
- avoid walking at night
- attending and doing well in school
- behaving well to avoid punishments/fights
- participating in after school activities and sports
- reporting abuse to parents or teachers

### Solutions

The solutions proposed by the younger age group include:

- the presence of more security personnel throughout the camps
- education of parents on children's rights
- the construction of more boreholes
- education of youth on respecting one another
- education for non-refugees about the local refugee context
- the reduction of corruption at the health clinics along with a wider variety of medicine
- more textbooks, stationary, and items for school

The older children suggested the following solutions:

- education for parents about children's rights
- life skills training for youth
- income generating activities and the creation of job opportunities
- bus services for children living at a distance from their schools
- improved health services including more medicine and an ambulance
- education on issues relating to orphans
- the provision of stoves and cookers
- prohibition of alcoholic beverages
- the need for more recreational facilities

### **Follow-up action**

The report was studied by UNHCR and partner staff in Malawi who have proposed a number of activities that are detailed in Part 1, Section 4. These activities will consist of collaborative efforts by all stakeholders and will be part of an ongoing initiative around the issue of children's rights. Some of the priority activities include:

- UNHCR protection staff will investigate the comments made by children regarding sexual exploitation at food distribution, the identified problems at the health centre, and the exploitation, neglect and abuse of unaccompanied/separated children.
- The final report and child-friendly version will be shared with stakeholders, community members and the children who participated in the workshops.
- UNHCR/partner staff, community leaders, committee members and refugees, including children, will be briefed on the outcomes of the AGDM exercise held in November 2005.
- A series of awareness campaigns on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and HIV/AIDS will be organised for the community.
- A series of workshops/education programmes will be conducted on how to deal with the forms of violence children face (based on the findings of this participatory assessment) for the SGBV Committees and selected groups.
- UNHCR will follow up with the recruitment of a female police officer in the camp.
- UNHCR has planned to designate an office in the camp where IEC materials relating to children, youth and parents will be available for refugees.
- UNHCR has received funds from UNFPA for SGBV and reproductive health activities for youth in the camps.
- Age sensitive video tapes have been provided by the UNHCR Regional Office and are being shown to youth in the camp.
- Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) has received some funds from Family Planning International, which is being used for Home Based Care and Orphan and Vulnerable Care, in Dzaleka camp and among nationals around the camp.
- Drama activities for the children will be expanded to involve messages on children's rights and the dangers of child abuse and exploitation.
- To strengthen police capacity in handling SGBV cases, UNHCR has initiated a record keeping book at the police where all SGBV cases reported from the camp are registered.

# Part 1: The Findings of the Participatory Assessment

## 1. Introduction

This report is based on discussions held with children in Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Malawi as part of the annual UNHCR participatory assessment.

The participatory assessment is part of the UNHCR strategy for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming. The overall aim of age, gender and diversity mainstreaming is to promote gender equality and the rights of all refugees. The specific goals are to:

- Implement a UNHCR system-wide approach to refugee participation to strengthen the voice of refugees in operational planning and support age, gender and diversity mainstreaming.
- Strengthen the institutional capacity to ensure that all staff take responsibility for promoting gender equality, the rights of refugee women and refugee children.
- Further operationalise the Agenda for Protection by supporting a rights and community-based approach to working with refugees to reinforce the age, gender and diversity mainstreaming strategy. (*UNHCR 2004-2006*)

The participatory assessment is the key tool for gathering information about refugee populations' needs, concerns, protection risks, capacities and solutions. It involves a Multi-Functional Team (MFT) approach in which staff involved in programming, protection and community services from various agencies and institutions work together in conducting focus group discussions, interviews and observations that are then systematically recorded. One of the key populations who are involved in the assessment is children.

In 2005, UNHCR conducted a research study in Zambia, South Africa and Angola with refugee and returnee children. This study was submitted to the United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children. The methodology developed for the study was found to be an effective way of understanding the situation of children, particularly in the context of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). The decision was taken, therefore, to apply the methodology as part of the participatory assessment in the other countries in the region. This publication is a report on the findings from Dzaleka Refugee Camp. A child-friendly version of the report was also produced for the children who took part in the workshops. In addition to these reports the information gathered was reflected in the formal participatory assessment reporting and integrated into programme planning.

The methodology used is outlined in detail in Part 2 of this report. The focus of the participatory assessment was violence, SGBV in particular.

It is important to note that the definition of violence used in this work was a broad one:

A means of control and oppression that can include emotional, social or economic force, coercion or pressure, as well as physical harm. It can be overt, in the form of a physical assault or threatening someone with a weapon; it can also be covert, in the form of intimidation, threats, persecution, deception or other forms of psychological or social pressure. (*UNHCR May 2003*)

Twenty-five children in the Dzaleka Refugee camp took part in the participatory assessment. Two 2-day workshops were held, with approximately six boys and six girls. During the workshops, the children took part in a number of activities which were mainly based around drawing. The activities are described in detail in Part 2 of this report.

The first workshop was organised for a younger age group (10-13); whereas the participants of the second workshop were from an older age group (14-17) to ensure that the approach was age-specific. Although the boys and girls attended the same workshop, they were separated for the discussions to promote a more open environment in which the children would be comfortable to share personal information and observations about life in the camp.

## 2. Refugees in Malawi

There are currently an estimated 5,500 refugees and asylum seekers in Malawi. The majority of refugees/asylum seekers originate from Rwanda, with significant populations from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo also represented.

The participatory assessment presented in this report was conducted in Dzaleka Camp, the larger and more populated of the two camps located in Malawi. Women constitute approximately 50 percent of the population, with children (ages 0-17) representing an estimated 50 percent of the overall population.

The infrastructure of Dzaleka Camp is relatively developed, with all the necessary services including a fully functional primary school (run by the Jesuit Refugee Service), a refugee counselling centre, children's clubs, trainings and workshops for awareness raising, small businesses/income generating activities, and electricity in most homes. The primary school in particular has produced outstanding results with regards to national examinations and the number of children continuing to secondary school.

SGBV has been addressed in a number of ways in Dzaleka Camp, most noteworthy of which is the establishment of separate SGBV committees among each of the ethnic groups. A Voluntary and Counselling Unit has also been established, to the significant benefit of refugee women.

## 3. Findings

The findings from the Dzaleka Camp are presented below. Details of the children who participated in the workshops are given in Appendix 1. The findings are presented under the following themes:

- Activities children do in the camp;
- Forms of violence children are experiencing;
- Coping and protection strategies that children employ; and
- Suggestions they have for preventing and responding to violence in their community.

The participatory assessment took place in the school library and an adjoining office. The children of both ages were relaxed and did not take long to warm up to the facilitators. The school was clearly a place in which they felt safe and at ease, a fact that their descriptions of their lives confirmed.

**Note on the following discussions:** The discussions held during the participatory assessment were tape recorded and later transcribed. The following discussions were taken directly from the transcripts. The facilitators' questions are in bold. When more than one child is involved in the discussion, this is indicated by a dash. Explanations are inserted in square brackets. Initials are used to replace a full name for confidentiality purposes. All of the discussions and quotations stem from the drawings done by the children.

### Activities that children do in the camp

All the children who participated in the assessment attend school. The younger boys go to school and church. They also go to the weekly market, sometimes looking for work there such as carrying parcels for people. They also swim at the river and spend time playing football with friends. They do

some chores at home but mostly the housework is done by their sisters. A few of the younger boys helped with informal income generation activities at home such as selling peanuts or home-made beer.

Older boys go to school, some walking a long distance to the secondary school. Most do some chores at home such as fetching water and others do washing. They sometimes pay to watch videos at the video shop. They also swim at the river and play football. Some visit girlfriends after school and talk together, though most do this without the parents of the girls knowing.

*I do go at about 16 hours, but her parents do not know that she is my girlfriend. So I send someone to call her and then we stand around and talk about things. I send my friend who is used to that house and they know him very well there. We go far from the house to talk. (boys 14-17)*

Both boys and girls describe how girls do far more household work than boys. The girls are responsible for cooking, cleaning the house, washing clothes, looking after babies and fetching water.

*I make bed, I sweep, I look after baby and the boys don't do anything. (girls 10-13)*

*- Going to fetch water is hard work. We have 8 gallons, to fetch water to fill all of them, when you finish you have a headache and sometimes you get sick.*

*- **How long does it take you to fetch water?***

*-Almost 1 hour.*

*- **And the boys, did they fetch water?***

*- Not all of them, some will say that the work at home is for girls. (girls 10-13)*

In some homes boys fetch water and firewood. Girls also talked about selling at the market.

*I sell charcoal, cassava, mangoes and other things in the market. (girls 14-17)*

All of the children attend church on Sunday with some also attending choir practice during the week.

The children also talked about the activities of adults in their families. Many mothers work in the fields, some fathers sell and look for other work, many stay at home.

School is discussed in more detail later under protection strategies but all groups of children also take part in activities at school such as netball, football and the wildlife club. They also use the school library for reading after school.

## **Forms of violence children are experiencing**

### **Harassment/sexual harassment of girls**

Harassment of girls in the camp was mentioned by all groups, even by the boys aged 10 to 13.

*I am seeing the boys can abuse his power because he knows that he is strong and he can see a girl having maybe 100 or 200 Kwacha [.75-1.50 USD] in her hand, she is walking and going to the market and when she is inside the market and she wants to buy something, the boy can abuse his power and catch her and take that money. After taking that money, he can run away and the girl cannot follow him. (boys 10-13)*

Younger girls talked about harassment by groups of teenage boys while they are on their way to school and the market.

*- **When you go to the market do you encounter any problems?***

*- Yes, sometimes boys start disturbing you and I run and they run after me.*

- **Which boys, are they same age like you or big boys?**
- Big boys.
- **How old?**
- Eighteen.
- Yes, they are like 15; 13; 14; 17; 18 years.
- **Are they boys out of school?**
- Yes.
- **Is it a big group or just one or two boys?**
- One or two.
- **What did they say when they chase you?**
- They say 'come' and chase me.
- **Why do they want you to come?**
- I don't know.
- **A, did you have that happening to you?**
- Yes.
- **What do they want?**
- I don't know, they only run after us.
- **What did they say?**
- They ask me to come and when I refuse they run after me.
- **Did you have that?**
- Yes.
- **Who else has had boys shouting at her?**
- When they send me in the evening and I meet them sitting somewhere and they call me. If you ignore them they will come and run after you. After they will hide somewhere waiting for you and when you come back, they will chase you again and if they caught you they rape you.
- Every place you go, you will find them not in one place.
- You will find them on the way.
- **Are they boys from the refugee camp or are they Malawian?**
- They are both refugees and Malawian.
- **Are they working together?**
- No, you will find one side are refugees and the other side are the Malawians. (girls 10-13)
  
- Here I was going to the market when I met a group of boys that tried to run after me and throw stones at me.
- **How often does that happen?**
- A lot.
- It might start at school. Or if they have a chance to see you out of school like when you are on your way to the market then they will chase you away.
- **How old are these boys?**
- Around 15.
- **The boys that chased you, do they go to school?**
- Yes. Some are going to school and some others are not.
- **Is it the same group of boys?**
- No, it is different groups of boys.
- When they are calling us they call one person and say come, come we want to sleep with you. But they are different groups. (girls 10-13)

For the younger girls the harassment is linked to a fear of rape.

- We were playing netball and I was accused of being lazy and clumsy and after that I went home. On my way from school I was pursued by a group of boys but I didn't want to stop, so I went on running away.
- **What do you think those boys would do if they caught you?**
- They would rape me.
- **So you think they would rape you? Have you heard of any girls who were raped?**

- Yes.

- **Tell me about it.**

- *One day the girl was sent by her parents at a nearby shop. It was during the night when she met some boys that raped her and now she is pregnant. (girls 10-13)*

Older girls also describe this problem.

- *Maybe you're going to school or you're coming from school then you meet some boys, they can beat you, or fight you, saying if they have asked you for love and you refuse, they catch you on the way, waiting if you pass. Or they call, will you marry me.*

- *Usually it is ok because there are lots of us and there are people around, but sometimes when I go to school I can be late or alone, nobody can be there. There is a time when no people used to pass the road. Sometimes I can be late; those boys might be there. It will be a problem. (girls 14-17)*

When the girls were asked how big a problem this was for them, they said they thought about it whenever they went anywhere in the camp.

### **Sexual exploitation of girls**

The older boys group talked about how girls are sexually exploited in the context of poverty. They described how girls have relationships with men for economic reasons, and how these relationships lead to pregnancy and forced marriages.

*If we look at this school where we go to school, there is a high drop-out of students mostly girls due to no other reason but poverty because maybe a girl may need to be looking very nice and looks for a man who can provide. That's why she is willing to have sexual intercourse. He may have what she wants. If that occurs [sex] you may find that the girl gets pregnant. Once he's found to be the one, the parents really try to talk to the man so that he may marry her and only due to money because they [parents] want to get money. Most of the girls are being married and are undergoing sexual abuse due to lack of property. (boys 14-17)*

Boys perceive peer pressure on girls as greater, particularly with regard to the need to have money for nice clothes and hair products, and they give this as one reason for sexual exploitation of girls.

*Girls are abused mostly because they are the ones who can easily be abused, they even need more care but for me I can even do with one piece of clothes wash it at night and put it on the next day. To do that for me would be easy but for them to do that ...for example if other girls in the classroom are putting chemicals on their hair all would like to do that. (boys 14-17)*

Girls and boys describe how parents encourage girls to have sex for money.

*Also it comes from the parents who are poor. Suppose they have a girl who is about to be grown up, to live with the girl is not a joke. The parents expect her to make an effort. There is nothing they can do, you see they've got that girl and she's a grown up. They'll expect her to sell herself to make some money. (boys 14-17)*

*No, sometimes there's a mother who used to send girls to boys; [she says to the girl] 'they will give you money and you'll come [back here with the money] so that we get something to eat.' You cannot refuse because it is your mother. (girls 14-17)*

The older girls described how many men trapped girls into sex for money.

- *Even big ones do this [ask for sex for money].*

- *Sugar canes!*

- We call them sugar canes or sugar daddies.
- **Tell me about the sugar canes.**
- [laughter]
- They are those men who try to trap the girls.
- **Why do you call them sugar daddies?**
- Because they are big men! They're having even children more than our age!
- **So where do they come up to you at the road like teenage boys? How do they tell you that they want to have sex with you?**
- They just want to cheat girls with money.
- **With money? Oh, so there's money involved? How does it work?**
- For example, they can ... sometimes you can be going to school without eating then they can sometimes give you money: 'you can take this money for you to go to eat during break time.' And you don't even think when you take the money. Tomorrow they will tell you that 'I gave you my money...' [laughter]
- And you don't have money... [laughter] it is time to pay back.
- **So what do you do?**
- They say 'just give us sex' to pay the money. It's credit.
- **It's credit?**
- Yeah! It's a big credit.
- **Has that ever happened to any of you? Have men ever come up to you and said that? Have other girls told you?**
- Yeah, other girls in the camps. (girls 14-17)

They also described how teenage boys coerce girls into sex.

- There are many boys in the camp who used to come to fool me, this and that, 'I need friendship between you and me'. Then they force you.
- One day I was followed by a certain boy and that boy he asked me for friendship, then I refused. That boy said 'Ok, I see you've refused, you used to walk in the night, I will catch you and rape you.' (girls 14-17)

Older girls told stories of sexual exploitation related to food distribution.

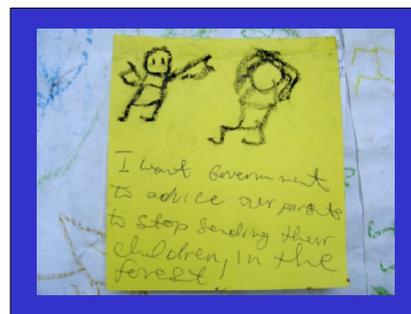
- There at the distribution of food, so other people who help distribute – not the ones who work there but those who help, like the Red Cross members who are workers. They tell some women that they will give some bags of flour if they allow to do sex with them.
- **So they're Malawians the men who do this?**
- Yes.
- Those who used to distribute paraffin. They do give beautiful ladies paraffin.
- **But everyone is beautiful!**
- But there are some who are more beautiful, and the most beautiful.
- God made all of us beautiful but other people don't care about that. There's segregation. Those who they say are beautiful get paraffin.
- They choose.
- They choose and tell that person and if one allows she goes.
- **So if you also go and say I want paraffin, they give you?**
- No, if you're not beautiful, they can't. [Laughter] (girls 14-17)

## Rape

The younger girls described their fear of rape in the forests. They described often sleeping without food because they are too afraid to go and collect wood. Older girls also raised this issue.

- **Do you go to look for firewood?**
- No, we are scared because if the people looking after the forest catch you, They will beat you up and you won't even bring the firewood.

- **So how do you prepare food?**
- *When you have money, you will buy firewood and sometimes you can sleep hungry while you have food because of lack of firewood.*
- **Did anybody see those people in the forest or it is just talk?**
- *They chase us, we have already seen them. And sometimes, when you go to the village to buy firewood or charcoal, when coming back, they might take it and they won't even give you your money back. If you insist, they will beat you and after they will leave.*
- **Did it happen to you?**
- *Yes.*
- **How many times?**
- *Twice. (girls 10-13)*



Children discussed the issue of reporting rape. This is dealt with in more detail below.

- *Girls are the ones who are mostly abused, even pastors abuse people. A month ago a pastor abused a girl and when they went to the police the parents of the girl went to report, the police told them to go and sort the problem in the community.*
- **What abuse are you talking about?**
- *Sexual abuse.*
- **The pastor had sex with the girl?**
- *Yes*
- **How old was that girl?**
- *17, about 17. (boys 14-17)*

They also talked about how rape was often not reported.

*Sometimes when something like that happens, sometimes it does not even reach the public. Sometimes only those with money, sometimes the girl's parents cheat. That man comes and gives money so they talk. And for some girls it just ends like that. Even if people have known about it they just force that girl not to complain about that one and it's over. So the case ends like that provided money has been given. (boys 14-17)*

### **Forced marriages**

The issue of young girls being forced to marry by parents was another issue that all groups raised. Even the younger boys talked about this as if they had first hand knowledge in their families.

#### **Can you tell us why some girls are not at school?**

*Some girls are not at peace because of their parents who force them to get married in order to provide the parents with some money. So when they come to school, they are not at peace. By her denying to get married, they will beat her. So even when she is in class she cannot concentrate and when she goes back home, it is the same message of inciting her to get married in order for the parents to get the money. (boys 10-13)*

Younger girls also talked about forced marriage after rape.

- **And what do parents do once they have gone to the police, what do they do then? Is there anything they would do after going to the police?**
- *Sometimes when the boy has paid a fine the matter is over, but other parents prefer to send the girl to live with the rapist.*
- **So sometimes it is okay if the boy pays a fine but other times they make you marry the man. Is that right?**

- Yes, it does happen. When the girl has grown up enough. They would wait for the girl to be a bit more grown up. When you are young you can stay at home but the two families would automatically become enemies.
- It is not right [to make the girl marry]. It is not right because most of the time you might not be able to carry on schooling and when you stop you will become ignorant and people will be laughing at you, especially those who were with you at school. (girls 10-13)

Older girls talked about forced marriages too and how it was essentially seen as part of their identity as girls, even from birth.

- And also there are some parents who like money. If they see their daughter is growing up they tell her to stop going to school so that she may decorate herself and they may, she may be married and they may get money. As a result, she drops out of school at an early stage.
- **What age would these girls be?**
- Even thirteen.
- Yeah, some eleven.
- **And who do they marry? Young men or old men or ...**
- Old men.
- **And why do the parents do that?**
- They give them a milling machine.
- **The girl for a milling machine?**
- Yes.
- **So now do any of you worry about that happening to you?**
- Yes, We are really worried. Also here in the camp most of the girls are called 'ibigayo'.
- If a woman grows, they say she has grown a 'chigayo'.
- So they are given a nickname. In other words, you are a 'chigayo'. A girl child. It is expected that you will bring money. [This discussion refers to the cultural practice of labelling a girl as a commodity.]
- **What's the name for the boy?**
- We don't know.
- There's no name. (girls 14-17)

### **Trafficking of girls**

All groups mentioned a particular case of trafficking where a girl of 12 had been sold by her parents to a man who took her to Zambia. She had recently returned pregnant and lost the baby. Another case of a girl who had been taken in a similar fashion was also discussed. This girl had not been found.

The younger girls' group talked about men coming into the camp to buy wives.

- For example in the camp there are people from other countries with lots of money. They give the money to the parents and the girl doesn't know anything about that, and they say for example, the parents tell that girl to go with those people, they lie and they tell the girl to go with those people to buy something in Lilongwe and they go to the rich country where the money is and they start living together as his wife.
- **Have you seen somebody or do you know someone that it has happened to?**
- Yes, to two or three.
- **Which countries do those men come from?**
- Others come from Mozambique others from Zambia.
- Some other young men when they receive their food they sell it and go to Zimbabwe and get money and come back and buy the girls.
- **And do they keep those girls for themselves or do they sell them?**
- Most of the time they become their wives. (girls 10-13)

## **Alcohol abuse**

Older girls talked about alcohol abuse amongst adults and how this caused violence and problems for children. They also described how girls were encouraged to drink by adults.

*When there are so many people drinking around, when people are drinking they used to do prostitution, they leave children at home. They go there two days during the night and children are at home without eating, up to the time they would come back. They start beating children, 'What were you doing?' they haven't even left anything for them to cook. (girls 14-17)*

*-You know sometimes we have got parents who do drink. Sometimes, they do send us to go there at the bar. You find some other people drinking and tell us to drink. Sometimes we do refuse but they give us the alcohol by force.*

***-So when you go to the bar they make you drink something?***

*-Yeah. They tell you that it won't harm you. (girls 14-17)*

## **Clinics and health services**

The children all talked about the inadequate health services in the camp. A particular problem mentioned by children was the lack of medicine.

*There is inadequate medicine...and the types of medicine being provided are no more than three types, no matter how serious a disease one has, the same medicine is administered, but we do not know why. We can complain about the problem in the health sector but there is no change. The common medicines are panadol [pain killer], aspirins and ORS [Oral Rehydration Salts]. Apart from these medicine there are no others being provided at our clinic. (boys 14-17)*

Corruption related to medicine was also mentioned.

*That is at the hospital and you might be very sick and you need medicine but when you come then they don't have medicine, but surprisingly another will come and they will give them medicine. This is at the clinic in the camp. If I have money to corrupt a nurse or a doctor I will get the medicine I am looking for. But if I have no money than I will not get medicine. (girls 10-13)*

Another common complaint was the reluctance to make the ambulance available to refugees.

*- One day I was with my father. He was beaten at 12 midnight. We asked some security people who were there to assist us to phone the ambulance but they said we had to use our own transportation. We don't have an ambulance. The things are there, but the government and some people who work there are the ones who are not performing.*

*- They report most of the time during international days like Refugee Day. They always report about the clinic, they always complain about the ambulance. I remember I had escorted my sister. She had a problem and we used the ambulance but when we went there we saw containers of beer coming out of the ambulance. (boys 14-17)*

One of the girls in the older girls group had recently lost her father because of negligence in the hospital.

*I just forgot to say one thing. The way my father died. He wasn't sick or anything, he just fell down. He called me, that day I was eating. He told my sister to go call the doctor. When we got there, the doctor said he needs to come by himself because he is the one who is sick. We asked them to give us something to carry him and they refused. We took a door and carried him to the hospital. We wanted an ambulance to take him to Doa but they refused to phone*

*the driver. We looked for transport to take him to Doa and when we reached there they tested him and said he lost blood. He died in the hospital. (girls 14-17)*

### **Discrimination and xenophobia**

In contrast to some of the other countries in the region where xenophobia from local people was a common form of violence, in Malawi the children from the camp experience little discrimination. The only account given was by the younger girls.

*They [local people we meet] say you are refugee and you run away from your country and what did you come to do here. And like those who usually come to work here in the camp, if we meet them at the borehole, they will accuse us of leaving our country because of hunger and that now we are eating food that we didn't pay for or we didn't farm to get it. We come here to finish the existing food of their village and the food, which was made to be given to them, now they are giving to you. They also told us to go back to our country that they no longer need refugees. (girls 10-13)*

### **The situation of unaccompanied/separated children and children in foster care**

All groups talked about the problems faced by unaccompanied and separated children. The younger boys' group described how some of these children were often left by foster parents to find their own food.

- *For example that boy is orphan, he hasn't any parent. So, he can't find food for himself.*
  - ***But that orphan, does he live with other people here in the camp?***
  - *Yes.*
  - *But they don't feed him and he goes to the market and carries heavy loads and they give them some money and they go to buy some food.*
  - ***Did they come with people or did they come alone in the buses or in the trucks?***
  - *They came alone.*
  - *They are treated badly by people they live with.*
  - ***Do they report?***
  - *They report.*
  - ***Where?***
  - *To the police station.*
  - ***They report to the police station. What do the police do with those mistreating them?***
  - *They just punish the one who is treating badly those orphans.*
  - ***What do you think, what could be the solution for these children?***
  - *Maybe the administrator can just build a house for them and just give them some food.*
- (boys 10-13)*

The younger girls talked about how foster children often do not go to school.

- *When they live with foster parents the 'family-children' are well treated, but you, there was no shoes, no clothes, so it is a problem.*
- ***Are there many children here in the camp living with foster parents?***
- *Yes, there are many.*
- *Sometimes those children will have to stay at home and prepare food for the family-children.*
- *Those children [foster children], most of the time they are at home while the other children go to school. When the parents come back if the food is not ready yet those children can be punished. (girls 10-13)*

Older girls described how they turned to prostitution.

- ***What are the problems faced by children who don't have parents?***

- They go astray because they sometimes live without food and some girls get exploited by men who give them money and they end up having sex with them.
- Some boys steal because they are poor and get arrested, sometimes beaten badly.
- **What makes it uncomfortable [for you] at times?**
- Lack of money to buy my needs. My grandpa is very old and cannot farm so it's difficult to live and the food we receive is not enough.
- **So orphaned children and those living without their parents are more needy?**
- Yes, they also lack protection because if you have lost your parents then you still need to be protected as your parent was doing but here no one can take care of a person you don't know.
- **Is it more difficult to stay with a foster parent? Someone not related to the children?**
- Yes, because the foster parents do not treat them as their own children.
- **You say they treat them badly. What do they do?**
- For example their own children go to school but they do not allow the adopted children to do the same or they do not buy him or her clothes. If a foster child asks the foster parents for money then they don't give them but when their own children ask them then they do give them. They also accuse the foster children of stealing from them even if it's their children who did it. Then they also insult the foster children.
- **Do you think that people in the community know about it?**
- Yes, people know about it. Some foster parents say they are the ones taking care of the children and if anyone has a problem with the way they do it then they can take those children and take care of them
- **What do you think the solution is?**
- Mistreated orphans should have a place where they can stay, built for them. Orphans can live better lives if they are in their own houses for orphans. (girls 14-17)

### **Bullying and lack of respect for children**

Bullying by older children was the most common problem for the younger boys.

- **I see in this school, they are some boys and some girls who are big, how do they look at you small children?**
- They will beat us saying that we are small children.
- **Why?**
- Because they are stronger than us.
- **What do you do if these big boys and girls beat you?**
- I report to the office.
- Sometimes, they beat us while going home.
- I just leave them.
- Like for swimming, when we meet those older than us, they will tell us to go because they cannot swim with us and send us back home. And sometimes, you are beaten. (boys 10-13)

Younger children also described a general lack of respect from adults in the camp. This was often related to water collection and food distribution.

*When you go to fetch water at the pump, while you are still getting the water and your gallon is not yet full if an adult come, he can take your gallon and throw it away. As you want to get water, whenever you try to put it again he refused and let other people get water before you and you just leave him. (boys 10-13)*

*When the truck just arrive and people run to carry the bags, the elder who want to carry it will push the younger one and the younger one might fall down. The elder will carry that bag and put it down. We get no chance. The elder was coming and push me and take that good and carry it. Maybe when you have finish to carry it they give you some money one is 20 Kwacha [15 US cents], 15 Kwacha or 5 Kwacha. The elder, I don't know his name but they call him M. This guy when he saw you with the money he just stop you and tell you 'give me*

*and if you don't want I will beat you.' So you give him by force. So he force you and just take that money. (boys 10-13)*

***Are there any problems when fetching water at the pump,...***

*Yes.*

***What problems?***

*Someone will say I have to get water before you ... even if it is your turn to get water, an adult will come and tell you he has to get the water and you denying will result in you being beaten. (girls 10-13)*

They also described being exploited when they did work for adults.

*It is not enough money, maybe something they brought there, some clothing maybe. So, when you carry it, he or she gives you 5 Kwacha. Maybe it is 15Kg or it is going to be also 20. So, he or she gives you 5 Kwacha. You find that that money is not enough but you do it. I feel bad, sometimes he or she won't even give you some money. He tells you that I can even carry it myself, I didn't tell you to carry this so just go away. So you find that it is not good at all. (boys 10-13)*

The older girls also mentioned the issue of lack of respect for children at the water points.

*On the borehole, I have drawn a woman fighting with a child because of water. Me, I can say that most of the women think they are more powerful than a child, so if a child wants to fetch water, a woman will say that 'No, you have found me here; you will not fetch water before I fetch' and then the woman starts fighting with the child. (girls 14-17)*

Older and younger children talked about how adults steal money from children at the market.

*Just the thieves. You send your daughter or son of maybe five to ten years to the market, if you meet a big guy he will just say 'Give me the money' if you don't obey, the big man will just begin to violate the little child until he gets the money. (girls 14-17)*

### **School-related problems**

Corporal punishment was reported from children who attend secondary school, but in the local camp school no corporal punishment was evident. Punishments included cleaning toilets, drawing water from the pump or working in the vegetable garden. Though the older boys did describe how sometimes they were sent away from school as punishment and they felt this was unfair as they missed work.

*When some people have done the wrong things, they are sent home for one week. I think it is violence because if you send a pupil home for one week, he may not manage the exam well because he has missed on the topics that were being taught. (boys 14-17)*

Generally, the children were aware of the reason for punishment and understood that they were given to help them.

The only complaint about the school was that children struggled with sharing text books. It appears that there are enough books for everyone, but teachers keep some books to preserve them and the children have to share, which they found frustrating.

The school in the camp plays an important socialising role in the lives of the children. Generally, both boys and girls expressed strong values related to self respect that they seem to have learned from school. This is discussed in more detail under protection strategies below.

The older boys talked about how many boys work instead of attending school. The older boys' group discussed this as an issue for boys.

- *Another abuse that's occurring is due to poverty. Most of the boys in the camp do not study because of lack of funds. Most run other people's businesses so that they may get money for survival. They have no right to education. They haven't enough property. There is no way you can be coming here at school so you find like during the cold season most of them come to school almost naked, put on singlets [shirt] without a jacket. So you find most of the boys running other people's businesses.*

- *The other abuse for boys is that if a boy does not have anything let's say money, clothes, then he says 'I want to be grazing your cattle and if I graze them, you'll be giving me money' then that person accepts and then instead of sending that boy to school he accepts to have the boy graze the cattle. (boys 14-17)*

Older girls also talked about how girls were often forced to drop out of school because of poverty.

- *You know here is a camp. We're having some problems of food. Sometimes they give us food and the food does not last for one month. Then there is a need for cultivation. Sometimes a child may say I am going to school, but the parents may refuse him or her to go to school for him or her to go to the farm, so that he or she may go to cultivate. And sometimes they say if you go to school without eating, you will not benefit. So it means that chap will not go to school for maybe a week. It means that the chap will not improve his or her mind.*

- ***So the parents say you've got to go to the fields? Does that happen to children quite a lot?***

- *It is a common thing.*

- ***Does it happen more to girls than to boys?***

- *Yeah.*

- ***Why?***

- *Because they have to respect the rules of their parents.*

- ***Because girls are more obedient?***

- *No, they want to respect the rules. Everything their parent has said, they know to do it. (girls 14-17)*

The long distance to the secondary school was an issue raised by the older boys and girls.

*As we Form Ones [grade 8] we're wondering because of that place where the secondary school is. That's a very bad place. If you are not selected [for boarding school], you will go that way. That's where a person used to go on foot. But when you're selected you'll go to boarding schools. It is about 5 kilometres. It's far. Early in the morning you walk there, come back in the afternoon. A person may reach home at 3 o'clock and going for prep. It's a big problem. (girls 14-17)*

Girls also talked about the issue of light for homework.

- *There's also another problem which us the refugee children who are at school face. You know here we receive paraffin once a month and even sometimes they give us the paraffin once per two months. Then if the paraffin is over, the children who are at school may not find light for them to revise their notes.*

- *And also the electricity which is there is not for everyone. If you don't have money you don't get the electricity. (girls 14-17)*

## Coping and protection strategies

Older and younger children talked about walking with friends to avoid sexual harassment. Younger ones talked about walking with older brothers and sisters. The older girls said they took an escort of two or three boys or men when they go into the bush to collect firewood.

*Being alone is not good because you may meet some accidents or something that might violate your right. Then, on the part of the bush, it is good for someone to go with an escorter – to be two, three or more because being one, if you're a girl, like ourselves, you may go to the bush to fetch some more pieces of wood and you may find some boys there who violate our rights. (girls 14-17)*



The younger boys also discussed how they could behave well and this would protect them from punishment and fighting with their parents.

*We avoid to walk at night and avoid something which is bad like stealing, beating some children who are younger than us. So if I can beat that child, the owner of that child can beat me so I cannot be safe. So I avoid doing things, which are bad as I said like avoiding stealing and walking at night or beating a child who is not my sister or brother. (boys 10-13)*

When discussing their protection strategies, the children identified the important role that the local primary school played in their lives.

During the workshops the children expressed pride in the results earned by children at the school, which is known to be one of the best in Malawi. They had a strong work ethic and were willing to attend the extra lessons given at the school. This was largely because the children were very motivated to get into secondary school and if possible earn sponsorship to boarding school. Most saw this as the best way out of the camp.

In addition to encouraging learning, the school also provided a number of after school activities such as clubs and many children came to read in the library. Boys and girls in the camp play sports. Girls play netball at school and football. Boys play football. Children also talked about the Wildlife Club. Children described staff as supportive and motivating and they seemed to spend a lot of time at the school after formal learning was over. The school was clearly a safe haven for the children.

In addition, the older girls, in particular, expressed strong values related to a sense of self worth which seemed to come from the school and to some extent the church. Some of the values were related to religion but much of what the girls expressed was the idea that they were valuable people and needed to look after themselves by earning their own money and standing up for themselves.

*- As I am here, there are many boys in the camp who used to come to fool me, this and that, I need friendship between you and me, but to me, I don't see anything that a boy can trick me with – because I know how to look for money by myself – nothing that a boy can give me that I cannot get for myself.*

*- How do girls keep themselves safe then? What do you do to keep yourself safe from these kinds of boys and men?*

*- On my side, I may say it's just a decision. If I am not at school, if I am not in the library, I am at church, or I am at home. I have to occupy myself.*

*- So you keep yourself busy?*

*- Yes. And I respect myself. If you don't respect yourself, no one will respect you.*

- *A person can make her future by him or herself. (girls 14-17)*

Having said this, the girls also agreed that sometimes girls did not have the power to decide as in rape, but where they did as with boyfriends they would exercise their power.

- *Boys and men have power.*
- *Fighting power.*
- *The physical power.*
- *They are powerful more than girls.*
- *The muscles.*

*[The facilitator discusses a project in Tanzania where girls are taught physical self defence skills and the girls respond enthusiastically to this idea.]*

- *We would like to learn self defence. (girls 14-17)*

The older girls also discussed the fact that knowledge they had gained at school protected them and gave them some power.

- ***Do you think it's the girl's fault that bad things happen to her?***

- *No, sometimes there's a mother who used to send girls to boys; [she says to the girl] 'they will give you money and you'll come [back here with the money] so that we get something to eat.' You cannot refuse because it is your mother.*

- *But myself, I can refuse because she has already made her future, why can't I make my future by myself? I am like that because nowadays there are many diseases. You need to abstain and make good things to be in a good manner or in a good way – not just to be going any time without even thinking. (girls 14-17)*

In spite of knowing about certain diseases, when the facilitator probed, the girls did not have detailed, explicit knowledge about how to protect themselves from HIV and AIDS. Most of the education they had received seemed to rest on an abstinence message. The discussion revealed that the girls and boys are clearly involved in relationships that involve sexual exploration.

- *You're sending your boy or daughter to fetch water, you suggest go and bring water quickly, quickly and then the girl will say okay, I am going. By that time she had an appointment with a boy. By the time she arrives there she will start talking with that boy. Sometimes they leave the jerrican there and go somewhere to enjoy; by the time she comes back she will find the jerrican already stolen.*

- *Yes. They just go there to meet boys, or boys to meet girls.*

- *On the part of the library there, in the library, as usual it is always quiet. At the library it is quiet. You see someone sitting here – a boy sitting there and a girl sitting here. But they are sitting closer like this. Others have gone to the library to read the books, but others will just be giving appointments or ...*

- *Kissing.*

*[Laughter]*

- *Kissing internet style.*

*[Laughter] (girls 14-17)*

Children were asked if they were aware of how and who to report abuses to. Most children indicated that they would first tell their parents but many also mentioned that teachers would be a good first step for reporting abuse of any kind.

The older girls had some knowledge of the need to seek medical help after rape and knew that this was linked to the danger of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) but none of them knew anything specific about post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) or the need to get help within 72 hours. Though this strategy would only be significant if they had access to such medical interventions.

- **If, let's say somebody rapes you in the bushes, what would you do?**
- I would cry and run.
- **Yes, you would and then, who would you tell?**
- My parents, my mum.
- **You'd tell your mum, parents...**
- The police.
- You just go inform your parents. After informing your parents, you know what to do. If you tell them and they don't want to help you, you just help yourself.
- **How?**
- How? On my side, if it happened to me and I tell my parents but they don't want to help me, I will go to the police to report.
- **What would your parents do, do you think?**
- They just report.
- They would take me to the hospital.
- **They would take you to the hospital? And why would you need to go to the hospital?**
- To check for STDs.
- Maybe that person [who raped you] is sick. You need to get medicine before the time.
- **Tell me about the medicine – what is it? Why is it important to go to the clinic or hospital?**
- For example, if a person has got STDs, when it is the first time, when you see that you're not well, you need to go to the hospital to be checked so that diseases should not go very far in your body to destroy your body.
- **What else do you know about that?**
- Also for first aid.
- **Anything else?**
- [Silence].
- [The facilitator then explains about PEP and the need to also prevent pregnancy after rape. Then she asks]
- **Has anyone ever told you any of these things before?**
- No. (girls 14-17)

Children in the older boys' and older girls' groups talked about the difficulties of reporting to police.

- **What do they [the police] do with these rapists, people raping girls?**
- They just arrest them you know most of the time, money talks. Once one has raped a girl and is caught and charged, and has money escapes prison and runs away out of the camp and tries to survive elsewhere due to corruption.
- Yes, that is true in the camp. I can say that there is no police, once you give them money then your problem is solved. They don't concentrate much on your problem.
- According to me what they [police] need is only profit, because if any, they are lazy because even if you give them one packet of cigarettes... what they want is only money. They don't know what is....they are only looking for the money.
- Sometimes when something like that happens, sometimes it does not even reach the public...sometimes only those with money, sometimes the girl's parents cheat. That man comes and gives money so they talk. And for some girls it just ends like that. Even if people have known about it they just force that girl not to complain about that one and it's over. So the case ends like that, provided money has been given. (boys 14-17)
- But they [the police] do not help people so much.
- There's bribery.
- If you report to the police that this one has stolen things, just they will arrest the person for only one day and another day they take him or her out when he or she has given them money. (girls 14-17)

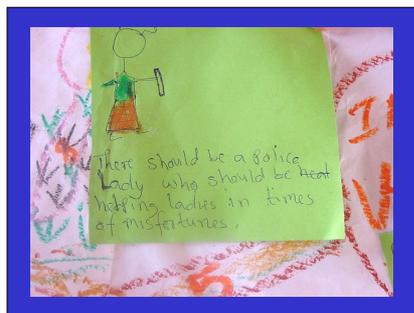
*Police in the camp are receiving bribes, if someone steals from you and you report him to the police, that person is arrested for one day and gets released the following day. (girls 14-17)*

### **Children's suggestions**

When asked about solutions for preventing and responding to violence against children in their community, the children proposed a number of suggestions.

#### **Younger children's solutions**

Younger children identified Government or UNHCR as the main actors to provide solutions to their problems. Their solutions most often included the need for a watch man or security presence who could protect children.



*We need to put a watch man and if he sees people beating the children they must take that person to the police. And we want to draw water peacefully. (10-13)*

*What you see here is the market and this is a thief and this thief is stealing the money. So I want the government to put security at the market so they can catch people stealing money and they can arrest him. (10-13)*

They did, however, also mention the need for education of parents around children's rights.

*And here I want UNHCR to advise our parents to stop forcing the children to stop school and get married. (10-13)*

*This is a mother who is sending her child to the forest and I want the government to start advising the parents not to send their children to the forest because it is dangerous. And here is the fish pond where people can swim but when we get there we find older people who chase us away, so we want UNHCR to advise people that is not just for some people. (10-13)*

Another common request was for more boreholes as they saw this as the solution to the long queues that made them late for school.

*And this picture is showing the problem of water in the camp. There are few boreholes, as a result of which children are late to go to school because they go to draw water. This problem can be solved by adding more boreholes so that there are fewer people at the boreholes. (10-13)*

Younger girls asked that boys learn to respect girls.

*Here, I was late because I went to the market because when you go to the market boys run after you when they want to rape you. Here, I wrote as a solution that we need to love each other. Boys have to see girls as their sisters and girls have to see boys as their brothers. (10-13)*

Another request was for education programmes for Malawians about who refugees are and why they are here.

*Here it is about fetching water. Because many times when refugees are going to get water and when they meet Malawians there, they usually accuse them of leaving their country because of hunger. So here I wrote that the government have to mediate between refugees and locals and explain to the locals that we are all same even though we left our country*

*because of war. They mustn't accuse us of running away because of hunger because it hurts. (10-13)*

They also talked about the need to reduce discrimination and corruption at the clinic and hospital.

*Here about the hospital, I wrote that the UNHCR have to bring more medicine because when a patient go to the hospital, the doctors don't give them medicine saying that the medicines are finished. Yet when some else go to ask for medicine, they will give him. That is why I wrote saying that UNHCR have to remove or chase away those doctors who are behaving like that and bring new ones who can do better the work. (10-13)*

*I also talked again about this problem at the hospital; UNHCR have to inform the personnel at the hospital that the refugees have the right to get medicines when they are sick and take care of them because a sick person needs to get medicines and be looked after. They mustn't steal medicine and sell them and lie that they have given them to the sick refugees. (10-13)*

Finally, they wanted more textbooks and stationery.

*This is a school. I wrote that I like JRS because it is helping children by giving them books and pens and also if they can provide some more. (10-13)*

### **Older children's solutions**

Older children also asked for education for parents.

*I would like our parents to be sensitised about children's rights. (14-17)*

*I'll start with the problem of not allowing children to go to school in the camps. Children don't go to school because maybe they are orphans or because of the starvation in the camp that forces them to go look for food instead of going to school. The solution is to have organisations that teach parents on the importance of sending their children to school. (14-17)*

*People should also be taught about children's rights, so that they stop abusing children. (14-17)*

They also asked for education for young people.

*We should have seminars to educate boys and girls on how to take care of themselves. (14-17)*

Another solution was related to income generation.

*Many people in the camp are educated but there are insufficient jobs for them to earn a living. The solution would be to create job opportunities. (14-17)*

School-related solutions included the following:

*Providing a bus to transport children who walk long distances to schools. (14-17)*

Solutions to the problems with the health services included:

*The problem in the clinic is insufficient medicine and an ambulance. We also need medical assistants since we have very few of them at the hospital. (14-17)*

*There is insufficient space at the clinic. We also need enough medicine in the clinic for the sick people. People should be given the medicine they require for their sicknesses and not just any medicine. Medicine should not be sold, but they should be used to treat the sick. (14-17)*

There was extensive discussion around solutions for unaccompanied/separated children. The main suggestions were for education about their needs and the need for special help which would include separate places to stay.

*The people who live in the camp such as the orphaned children find it very difficult to live in the camp because of so many problems such as not going to school, lack of food. They should receive help so that they can attend school. (14-17)*

The following solutions were also suggested:

*Some parents send their children to go look for firewood and this could lead to rape. The solution is to provide us with stoves and cookers to prevent this violence. (14-17)*

*People in the camp should stop selling beers such as the “kuchekuches”, “kanyangas” and “mogoigoi” because this leads to rape of young girls by drunken adults. (14-17)*

The older children talked a lot about the need for recreational facilities such as soccer balls, netballs, a proper soccer ground and access to media such as television.

*We only have 2 DSTV's for around 1000 people so if everyone had one this would help us. [Laughter] (14-17)*

Though this suggestion that every family should have a TV understandably aroused laughter, the children went on to discuss how television was important as it gave them information about the world outside the camp which was important for them if they were to ever move away from living in a refugee camp.

#### **4. Follow-up action**

The children's descriptions of their problems and their solutions were given to the Multi Functional Team (MFT) in Malawi, consisting of UNHCR and partner staff. The team convened a meeting to review the findings and recommendations of the report and to formulate a plan of action. The following action plan has been devised to address the identified issues as the first step in the process to follow-up on the workshops, and will be regularly reviewed and monitored. Participatory Assessments will be held systematically as part of the AGDM process and will be used to follow-up on the issues raised by the children.

- UNHCR protection staff will investigate the comments made by children regarding sexual exploitation at food distribution, the identified problems at the health centre, and the exploitation, neglect and abuse of unaccompanied/separated children.
- The final report and child-friendly version will be shared with stakeholders, community members and the children who participated in the workshops.
- UNHCR/partner staff, community leaders, committee members and refugees, including children, will be briefed on the outcomes of the AGDM exercise held in November 2005.
- A series of awareness campaigns on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and HIV/AIDS will be organised for the community, encouraging girls to report cases of violence to the authorities.

- A series of workshops/education programmes will be conducted on how to deal with the forms of violence children face (based on the findings of this participatory assessment) for the SGBV Committees and selected groups, including partner staff, teachers, police at the camp, parents/guardians, and children both in and out of school. These trainings are to be later replicated in the Lwani Refugee Camp.
- UNHCR will follow up with the recruitment of a female police officer in the camp upon completion of the police hostel that is currently being rebuilt to house police in the camp.
- UNHCR has planned to designate an office in the camp where IEC materials relating to children, youth and parents will be available for refugees. Notice boards, that will be kept locked, have been put around the camp in which IEC materials will be displayed.
- UNHCR has received funds from UNFPA for SGBV and reproductive health activities for youth in the camps. As part of this programme, income generating and recreational activities will be initiated for youth and women along with the provision of PEP kits for rape cases. Other planned activities include increased training in life skills and negotiation skills, among others.
- Age sensitive video tapes have been provided by the UNHCR Regional Office and are being shown to youth in the camp. This may reduce the idleness of youth which leads to the sexual harassment of girls.
- Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) has received some funds from Family Planning International, which is being used for Home Based Care and Orphan and Vulnerable Care, in Dzaleka camp and among nationals around the camp. This programme will run through February 2007. As part of this programme, home visits with foster parents will be conducted frequently and small income generating activities as well as material support for children will be provided.
- Drama activities for the children will be expanded to involve messages on children's rights and the dangers of child abuse and exploitation.
- To strengthen police capacity in handling SGBV cases, UNHCR has initiated a record keeping book at the police where all SGBV cases reported from the camp are registered. This will help with follow up and making sure that SGBV cases are taken to court.
- The topic of child's rights will be integrated and addressed in each of the above activities, when applicable.

## Part 2: Documentation of the Participatory Assessment Process

This part of the report is a detailed documentation of the participatory assessment. It has been included because the approach used here is seen as one possible way of conducting participatory assessments with children.

In addition, the approach would be useful for any organisation wanting to find out about the lives of children. This outline looks specifically at violence in the lives of refugee children, but the same activities could be used to find out about general problems children face as the approach touches on many aspects of children's lives.

Included in Part 2 are an outline of the workshop, some suggestions and key considerations for working with children, a detailed elaboration of the workshop progression and activities, comments on how the process took place in Malawi, and variations of the participatory assessment process.

### 1. Workshop outline

The workshops in Malawi were planned according to the following guidelines (the activities mentioned below are elaborated upon in detail at the end of Part 2):

A note about time frames for activities: The time frames given are general guidelines and must remain flexible. Children must be allowed to guide the use of time. Observe their behaviour and when they are restless allow a break with a game. It is important that everyone gets an opportunity to talk about his or her drawing. Younger children can usually stay involved with the discussion process for about 30 minutes but older children can sit for an hour (and sometimes even two) if they are interested in the discussion.

| Day one |   | Day two |  |
|---------|---|---------|--|
| 8.30    | Breakfast   | 8.30    | Breakfast  |
| 9.00    | Introductory games  | 9.00    | Games  |
| 9.30    | Activity 1: Draw your house and all the people who live in it   | 9.30    | Discussion about violence continues – use Activity 4 if the children have not talked about how being a refugee places them at risk of violence. Use Activity 5 to find out if they know what to do when a case of violence occurs. |
| 10.30   | Discussion about house drawing  | 10.30   | Activity 6: Drawing of how flight, reception and journey to a camp or how you came back to your country of origin and violence in these contexts (Adapt it for the situation you are working in)                                   |
| 11.30   | Activity 2: Draw all the places you go to in a typical week   | 11.30   | Discussion of drawing  |
| 12.30   | Lunch   | 12.30   | Lunch  |
| 1.30    | Discussion about community drawing  | 1.30    | Activity 7: Discussion and drawing of solutions to the problems you drew earlier   |
| 2.30    | Activity 3: Draw all the examples of violence against children in your area (community – places you go to regularly). | 2.30    | Presentation of solutions to children's group  |
|         |   | 3.00    | Information session from local stakeholder on where to go for help   |

|  |  |      |   |
|--|--|------|---|
|  |  | 3.30 | Presentation of summary of problems and solutions to interested adult stakeholders. |
|  |  |      | 4.30 Closing ritual and celebration of each child's contribution                    |

## 2. Key considerations when planning a workshop

### *Note!*

*It is important that personnel who are experienced in working with children facilitate this kind of process. It is very important that they understand and are sensitive to the ethical issues involved in this work, particularly the principles of confidentiality and minimising harm.*

### **Workshop venue**

A number of issues must be kept in mind when preparing the workshops described here. One important issue is the venue. The most important thing related to the venue is that the children are in a private environment where they are not distracted by other activities and where there are no onlookers. This is important in terms of confidentiality and for building an environment in which children feel safe and free to express themselves.

### **Child selection**

It is important to consider the selection process for the children who will be invited to participate in the workshops. The children should be representative of the different groups in the camp. Additionally, a number of vulnerability factors should be considered. Children who are both in and out of school should participate as well as those in foster care and unaccompanied/separated children. It is best to avoid having siblings in the group as this limits the representation in the group, and can cause the siblings to be more guarded with the facilitator.

Once the children have been selected, it is critical to obtain consent from the parent/caregiver of each child prior to the workshop. A sample consent form is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

### **Group size**

These workshops were organised for 12 children, six boys and six girls, who were separated for discussion purposes. Keeping the discussion groups small ensures that each child will be heard. Separating the girls and boys for the discussions means that at least two facilitators are needed. Depending on the children in the group, an interpreter may also be needed. It is important, however, not to include more than one adult per two children as this ratio will disempower children.

The process could be run with more children as long as there are more facilitators present. The discussion groups should not be larger than six or children will grow tired of listening to each child in the group.

### **Art as a medium for communication**

The artwork in this process uses a layering technique, which is an important part of building confidence and simplifying the reflection process for the children. The children begin with a drawing of their homes on a small piece of paper (A5 size). A small piece of paper is not intimidating and it gives children the confidence to try out the crayons. This piece of paper is then pasted on to a larger piece of paper (A2) and children are asked to draw all the places they go to in their lives. The drawing of their home becomes part of the bigger drawing. The third drawing of their journey is drawn on a third piece of paper and pasted to the large drawing. The children decide where the different drawings should be pasted.

Once these drawings have been done the activities focus on violence in the children's lives. Children describe examples of violence through drawing experiences on small pieces of paper. These are pasted in the appropriate places on the large drawing of their area. Children's ideas about ways of solving the problems are also drawn on small papers and placed near or over the drawings of violence.



This layering technique allows the children to gain confidence with the medium and build up their reflections about their lives and the solutions to their problems in a simple and systematic way.

### **Building trust and creating a child-friendly environment**

An essential part of the process is the creation of a child-friendly environment and the building of trust. This is largely achieved through the behaviour of adult facilitators who need to be friendly and warm without being patronising.

One way to achieve this is to give everyone a nametag as this makes the relationship personal from the beginning. First names should be used for adults and children and they should be written in large letters so that everyone could read them when playing games. Remember that some children cannot read so use the name games suggested below for learning names.

Another key element of the workshop is playing games in order to complement the difficulties of speaking about the violence that occurs in the lives of refugee children (a manner in which children can step away from these realities and memories). It also allows a forum to build trust and provide psychosocial treatment. It is good to use some local games and songs as this allows children to play something familiar and therefore relieve the worry of not knowing what to do or if they could do what was asked well.

Remember you need to play games that are appropriate for the age group. The games should not be too energetic as this can make children (especially young children) very excitable. Try and find games that are fun but do not involve too much running around. Make sure the games you choose are fun and non-threatening. Do not make them competitive and beware of games that have an element of mockery.

#### **Games!**

Here is a small collection of good warm-up games that were used in these workshops. In addition, the children taught us local games.

#### Name Game

Stand in a circle. Throw a ball or beanbag or ball made from plastic bags to someone else in the

circle. As you throw call out the name of the person, to whom you are throwing. They then throw the ball on to someone else while saying their name aloud and so on.

This is a good game for learning names. You can add to it as you go, for example if someone drops the ball they have to do 'shake shake banana' (i.e. put hands on hips and shake their hips - see game below)

#### Shake shake banana!

This is an adaptation of the game 'Simon Says'. Play in a circle. The leader says. 'When I say the word *Orange* touch your head, When I say *Apple* touch your toes. When I say *Shake shake banana* put both hands on your waist and shake your hips.' The leader then calls out 'Apples' etc. At first put the correct action with what you call out but as you go on call out one word and do the action for another. Children will get confused and there will be much laughter. Keep the atmosphere light and non-competitive. Use fruit that children will know.

#### Yebo!

Yebo means 'yes' – you can use the word that means 'yes' in your language if you want. This game involves close eye contact so you need to make sure it is culturally appropriate and do not play it first as it can be a little threatening.

Stand in a circle. The leader begins by saying 'Yebo xxx (call out the name of one of the children), look them in the eye and then walk slowly and purposefully to their place and take their place in the circle. They then walk out into the centre of the circle and say 'Yebo xxx (another person in the circle's name) and go to their place and so the game goes on. Encourage the group to play it in a flowing way. This is a lovely game to play if you have been talking about sad things, as it is a positive and group affirming game.

#### Clicks

Stand in a circle. Set up a simple rhythm with claps and clicks. For example, clap both hands on your lap, clap your hands together and then click each finger in turn. Teach the rhythm to the group slowly at first until they have it. Then, keeping in time with the rhythm call across the group, begin by saying your name (on the first finger click). 'Glynis to Martha', Martha then calls her name and someone else in the group (keeping in time with the finger clicks) 'Martha to Jessie', Jessie then calls 'Jessie to Thami' and so the game goes on.

#### Groups

The group sits in a circle on chairs or you can also sit in a circle on the ground. The leader stands in the centre and calls 'Everyone with a red piece of clothing' everyone wearing red that day has to swap seats and the leader takes one of the empty seats. The person left without a seat then calls 'Everyone with shoes on' or 'Everyone who has a big brother' and so on. This game does not always work well through translation.

#### River bank

The group stands in a long line in front of the leader. If the room is small make two lines. If the leader calls 'river' the whole group has to hop with legs together to the right. If he or she calls 'bank' they have to hop to the left. If she calls 'riverbank' then they stay where they are and wave their hips in a circle. As the game speeds up those who go in the wrong direction are out. Don't make the game too competitive, there is no need to play until everyone is out – just have fun with it.

#### Coconut

This is a great game if everyone is falling asleep or losing concentration. Stand up and spell out the letters of the word Coconut with your bodies. Make sure you stretch up as high as you can and as low to the ground as you can as you spell out the letters. This is a real stretching game.

### I am, I can, I have

This is appropriate when you have been talking about sad things in the group. Stand in a circle and throw the beanbag to each child around the circle. When they catch the bag they have to say, 'I am xxx' and then say one positive thing about themselves. Do the same with 'I have xxx' and 'I can xxx'.

## **Information sheets**

It is important to gather information about children's age, school level and living situation. It is best to do this on the second day or at the end of the process because a level of trust will have been built up, and children will be more willing to give accurate information. This is important in a refugee camp situation as fostered children are often not open about their living situation until they trust the facilitator. (See Appendix 1 for sample information sheet.)

## **Helping children to express themselves**

When working with groups of children, some of the children can be shy while others can be confident to speak out. You need to help the shy children to express themselves too. You can allow them to talk about their pictures alone instead of in the group. If they are prepared to talk in the group sit close to them so they can speak softly and do not hurry them; give them time to gain confidence. You may have to ask gentle leading questions to help them to tell the whole story. (See the facilitators' questions throughout Part 1 of the report for examples of this.)

## **Dealing with distress**

Violence is a difficult topic to discuss with children. What happens if a child becomes distressed in a participatory assessment? Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Start the process with non-threatening activities that do not involve emotional input.
- You may find that children become sad when they tell a story about their lives. You need to acknowledge this sadness. You can do this by using a culturally appropriate way of showing that you care. Sitting close to a child is often the best way of showing you are 'with them' emotionally. If children cry do not be afraid of their tears. Give them a drink of water and a tissue to dry their eyes.
- If a child has shown distress, the other children in the group will feel sad and may even feel afraid. Bring them into the process of supporting the child as this makes them feel less powerless. You can say, 'Thandi is feeling very sad; she was very brave to tell us such a sad story. What could we say to her to make her feel better?' You will find the children are good at supporting each other.
- Do not give advice to the child who is sad. This is not the time to try and help them, just acknowledge their sadness and their bravery in sharing their emotions with you and the group.
- Do not end the group when children are sad. Make sure you lift everyone's spirits. You can do this through a song or a comforting game.
- Try and work with children who have access to an organisation or institution that can provide support services such as counselling for the children if they are distressed. Refer the child if you think they need help.

## **Your emotional needs as a facilitator**

Running workshops with children can make you feel sad or vulnerable emotionally. This is because working with children reminds us of our own childhood and all of us carry sadness from our childhoods. It is also deeply distressing to hear children tell very sad stories. You need to look after your emotional health. Find a friend or colleague who understands the work you are doing and make sure you talk about what you see and hear from children. Share with them your sadness. If you find you are getting depressed you should go and see a professional counsellor and share some of the stories that make you sad.

## **What to do with the information once you have it**

In this participatory assessment, the discussions with children were taped and transcribed. However, you may not have recording equipment and transcribing is very time consuming, so you can take notes of what children say instead. Give one person the job of 'note taker' and another the role of facilitator, as it is difficult to facilitate a discussion and take notes at the same time. Try and capture exactly what children say in your notes. Review them at the end of the day and draw up a list of issues raised by the children while they are still fresh in your minds. Also include general observations such as children's reactions during the discussion process, the children's level of participation and confidence speaking about these issues. Sometimes, these can say much more than the actual words, which is what you will get with a transcription or notes. The best way to record this kind of information is through a short time of reflection at the end of the day after the children have left.

The information learned from children through participatory workshops should ultimately lead to the implementation or improvement of programmes that address the identified needs and concerns of children. Children's recommendations and ideas on how various actors can work to improve their lives are particularly valuable and should be incorporated into a plan of action. It is advised to communicate with the children after the workshops and let them know how the discussions with them have lead to action.

## **Closing activities**

It is very important to end the workshop on a positive note for children. If you have invited adults from the local community to hear what children have to say with the visiting adults present, stand in a large circle, let each child hold up their drawing and thank them one by one, by name, for participating. Remind them what will happen to all the information collected. Children should take their drawings home unless you want to use them for local advocacy. If this is the case, you need to get permission from the children and return them before too long.

It is recommended to include parents in the closing activity. This is a useful strategy as it empowers children in their family context and also gives an impetus to what they are saying. It also means that a concerned body of adults attends the meeting and are able to take what the children say into other community fora.

### 3. Detailed elaboration of the workshop progression and activities

#### Introduction

##### 1. Games

##### Rationale:

- To break the ice and get to know each other
- To signal to children that this workshop will be fun and reduce the power imbalance between adults and children

See discussion on creating a child-friendly environment above. Choose some games from the box above.

##### 2. Explain the following:

- who you are – introduce all the adults and explain their role
- purpose of the workshop
- their choice to participate
- confidentiality
- about recording

Make a child-friendly information sheet for children to take home.

**Remember:** It is not informed consent if children do not understand the purpose of the participatory assessment.

#### Activity 1: Your house and the people who live in it

##### Rationale:

- Non-threatening introductory activity
- Provides information about their home situation

##### 1. Give the children a small piece of fabric or paper and crayons

*‘On the fabric/paper draw your house and the people you live with. Draw all the people who live in your house.’*

Make sure everyone understands and ask if they have any questions. Give the children time to finish their drawings. Do not stand over the children or walk around observing. It is better to come down to their level. Sit and spend a few minutes with some children and engage yourself. You could also look at a drawing and state the obvious such as ‘oh, this family is a little like mine, I also have two sisters’. Try to make your own connections to what they are drawing so they get to know a little bit about you and that there are similarities between you despite the age difference. You can also sit and draw with the children.

#### **Split boys and girls into separate groups**

2. Ask the children to describe with whom they live. Ask them to tell you about their relationship with the adults in their house, i.e. siblings, aunts, uncles etc.

3. Ask who does what tasks (work) in the house. Ask about differences between boys and girls work in order to introduce the ideas of gender and a gender analysis approach.

### **Activity 2: All the places you go**

Rationale:

- Also quite non-threatening and builds children's confidence in the group discussion process
- Allows children to place the discussion around violence later into the context of their actual experience
- Provides information about the activities they do and places they go

1. Hand out large pieces of paper or fabric and paste the house drawing on this.

*'Now draw all the places you go to in a typical week - everywhere you go.'* They should record all the places they go to in a typical week, those close to home and those further away. Do not give examples as this is leading.

#### **Split boys and girls into separate groups at this point**

2. Ask the children to tell you about what they have drawn.

Questions to ask:

- *Tell me about all the places you go?*
- *Do you go to different places on the weekends?*
- *Do you go to school?*
- *How do you get to school?*
- *Do you work?*
- *When you are sick where do you go?*
- *Do you go to church?*
- *Do you play sports?*
- *Do you do any other activities like a choir or youth group?*
- *How do you get there?*

### **Activity 3: Unsafe places**

Rationale

- To find out what kinds of violence children are exposed to
- To collect stories of the kind of violence they have experienced
- The map provides a non-threatening way of doing this
- To find out their existing protection strategies

*'Now I want you to look at your map of the places you go to and think about all the places that are unsafe. The places where violence happens to children. Places where bad things happen to children, places where it is difficult for children, unsafe for children. Draw pictures on the card I have given you of violence/bad things happening to children you have seen in your place where you live.'*

Note: Do not give examples at this point as this may limit children; they may think that violence is just the things you have mentioned. Leave the description quite open ended so you get all sorts of examples from them.

1. Children draw on small cards and then stick it on to the place on their own map where those things happen.

#### **Split girls and boys into separate groups at this point**

2. Ask the children to tell you about what they have drawn. Use these questions to find out more information from them – adapt them for girls and boys:

- *Tell me about your drawings?*
- *What happens to girls/boys at these places?*
- *Has this happened to you? Probe: what happens to children – they may tell stories of adults.*
- *What about sexual violence? Are girls raped or abused at any of these places? Are boys raped or abused at any of these places?*

3. Once they have described their pictures and told stories about this, try and find out about other situations in which they may come across violence:

- *What about school? Are children safe at school?*
- *Are girls raped or abused or harassed at school?*
- *What about boys?*
- *On public transport*
- *Walking at night and during the day*
- *Places where they work*
- *Can home be unsafe sometimes?*
- *Are girls raped or abused or harassed at these places? What about boys?*
- *Are there people who may hurt children? Like soldiers, policeman? Home Affairs officials? NGO personnel*
- *Would you ask a police officer/NGO personnel/ soldier for help? Why? Why not?*
- *Who would you go to for help if you needed it?*
- *What do you do to protect yourself/ keep your self safe at these places? Give them time to talk about this. Try and understand the different strategies they use to protect themselves. Do not give examples as this could lead them, allow them to come up with ideas on their own.*
- *What about boys/girls? Are they safer than girls? Why? What do they do to keep themselves safe?*

Ask gently. Do not put children on the spot. Accept a non-response. Do not make children feel they have to talk.

#### **Activity 4: Being a refugee/returnee**

Rationale

- To find out if children perceive their status as refugees/returnees as placing them at risk of violence
- To look at the specific refugee/returnee experience of violence

1. Take the cut out boy and girl silhouette figure below and take them to the different places on the children's maps. Probe to find out if they experience more SGBV because they are refugees/returnees. Ask

*'These young people are refugees/returnees.*

- *Does this make their life more difficult?*
- *Are they going to experience more violence than children from the country of asylum?*
- *Does being a refugee/returnee place them more at risk?' (Ask each question separately)*

2. Make sure you take the figures to – places of work, school, streets, government offices, NGO offices etc.

F5:



F6:



### **Activity 5: What do you do if ...**

#### Rationale

- To understand their knowledge of rights, procedures and services available to them
- To collect child-generated suggestions for improving SGBV services

1. Take a girl silhouette figure to a place on someone's map. If you are working with a boy's group use the boy silhouette initially. Then in each group set up a scenario with the other figure.

*'This is XX (use a local name). She/he has been raped/beaten here on her/his way home from school.'*

2. Ask these questions.

- *What does she/he do? Immediately after it has happened? Who does she go to for help immediately? Does she go to the clinic? Why/why not?*
- *Does she/he report it to the police? Does it go to the court? Why? Why not?*
- *How does she/he feel? Does she talk about these feelings? Who does she/he tell about her feelings/situation?*
- *Can (name a local NGO) help her/him?*
- *Who would you go to if it were you? Why?*

3. Now set up other scenarios

*This is (name) she/he has been sexually abused by a teacher/older student at school. What does she/he do immediately after it has happened? Who does she/he go to for help?*

*This is (name) she/he is being sexually abused in the shelter by a man/woman there.*

*Does she/he tell anyone? Why/why not?*

- *Who does she/he go to for help?*
- *What does she do? Immediately after it has happened? Who does she/he go to for help immediately? Does she/he go to the clinic? Why/why not?*
- *Does she/he report it to the police? Does it go to the court? Why? Why not?*
- *How does she/he feel? Does she/he talk about these feelings? Who does she/he tell about her feelings?*
- *Can (name a local NGO) help her/him?*
- *Who would you go to if it were you? Why?*

Probe: medical help (especially issue of washing and also getting PEP), immediate security, legal action, psychosocial help, community help. Explore knowledge of specific organisations in the local area.

- *Does being a refugee/returnee make any difference to the help she/he gets or can access?*
- *What does she do to help her recover, what helps her/him when he/she remembers and feels*

*sad?*

*- Now think about what can help girls and boys who have been raped or abused. What should happen to help them?*

3. Repeat the process for the boy silhouette.

### **Activity 6: Story of flight or repatriation**

Rationale

- To introduce past experiences of SGBV

1. Working on another piece of fabric/paper, have the children draw 3 pictures: the place they lived before they came to their country of asylum, why they left their home and came here, and their journey here. One drawing should be placed in each square. Children who had been born in their country of asylum should be asked to think about solutions to problems and draw these.

2. Stick the new piece of fabric/paper to the top of the drawing they did in the previous activity.

#### **Split boys and girls at this point**

3. Ask children to tell you about what they have drawn. Do not probe for details, as the stories may be very painful for children.

*‘Can you tell me about when violence happened to children in the places you have drawn.’*

4. Once everyone has discussed their pictures ask:

*- What violence happened to children in the place where you lived before?*

*- What violence happened to children on the journey here? Which adults or children made that violence? (Do not focus on war-related violence but rather on violence related to those situations related to flight and assistance in refugee situations)*

*- What did children do to keep themselves safe?*

*- What did adults do to help keep children safe? Which adults?*

### **Activity 7: Solutions to the problems**

Rationale

- To collect child-generated solutions to specific examples of SGBV

1. Introduce the activity like this:

*‘We have talked a lot about violence that children experience and talked about what can help children when it happens.*

*Now, we are going to think about what we can do to keep children safer in the place where you live.’*

2. Divide large group into small groups mixing boys and girls and let them do the following in groups:

*‘Draw some of the things that can be done to make sure that violence does not happen.*

*Think about what can be done at school, at the shelter, at home, on the streets.*

*Think about what parents can do, what children themselves can do, what teachers can do, what village leaders can do, what government can do.*

*Just think of ideas that will keep children safer than they are now.*

3. When they have done these – give them the second instruction.

*‘What would have helped **in the past** prior to and during flight? Draw some of these things on the card and stick them on the cloth about your old country and your journey.’*

4. Let a representative from each group report back on the main ideas they discussed.

5. Introduce the idea of projects to follow up on the participatory assessment.

### **Closing Activity: Presentation to local stakeholders**

Invite local stakeholders to attend the end of the workshop. Discuss the idea of presenting the findings with the children. Allow them to decide how to display the work, who should talk and what they should say. Two could present a summary of the problems they have discussed and two could present the solutions. Let the children choose what they want to say but allow them to prepare it and practise it with the help of one of the adults.

Begin with an exhibition of the children’s artwork allowing them to tell adults about their drawings. Introduce the meeting by describing briefly the purpose of the workshops and what the children have been doing. Then allow the four children to speak. Let the adults ask questions and allow the children to answer them. You will find that children, even those who are unused to speaking in front of adults, will speak out with a confidence and frankness that will surprise you.

**Keep the issue of confidentiality and protection in mind.** Do not let children report on anything that could place them in danger! Explain to them that some issues are best not reported on in a public forum. Intervene if a child begins to tell something you think could place him/her in danger. After the presentation allow some time for the children to talk about the experience. Make sure there have been no negative consequences and follow up if there have been.

An action plan should be created for follow-up that would include participatory planning with the children if this is possible. This would also need to have a set timeframe to ensure the different implementing partners take action. If you can do this in the time available it is a good way to hold the adults present accountable.

## **4. The participatory assessment in Malawi**

The following section presents some of the specifics of the participatory assessment process in Malawi. It indicates some of the key considerations discussed above and how they were applied. Also highlighted are the modifications from the activities in the detailed outline, specifically the presentation to the local stakeholders, the additional training and capacity building component that was conducted alongside the workshops, and awareness raising of staff members.

## **Key considerations in Malawi**

The participatory assessment took place in the school library and an adjoining office, both very small rooms. This setting was chosen due to its safe environment, which allowed for privacy and was free from distractions.

The children were served a simple breakfast before the work began in case they had not eaten. A simple lunch was also served.

The layering artwork in this particular case consisted of drawing with crayons on large pieces of paper. Many of the children who participated in the workshops did not have a lot of experience with using crayons, but after a short period of initial hesitance and with lots of encouragement from facilitators they drew with great confidence.

## **Presentation to local stakeholders**

Following the workshop, the children did a report back in one of the school classrooms to UNHCR and camp staff and all of the teachers from the local school. Teachers were very interested in the use of drawings to allow children to express themselves and local camp and UNHCR staff commented on the fact that they had learned useful information from the children. A lively discussion between children and teachers took place about text books and discipline. The event confirmed the fact that if given the opportunity, children can make relevant input into local policy issues. The positive interaction and the way the children took control and expressed themselves was good advocacy for children's participation. Many adults commented on how impressed they were with what the children had done. The experience also gave children confidence in their ability to contribute.

## **Training and capacity building**

A capacity building and training programme was conducted alongside the participatory assessment workshops. In order to build a pool of staff who can continue working with children in the camp, UNHCR staff and NGO partners were included as facilitators. Discussion sessions were held daily to give the facilitators the opportunity to ask questions and better understand the process. More comprehensive reflection sessions were held at the end of each workshop, during which protection risks, their causes, community capacities, solutions and possible follow up actions were identified. (See Appendix 3 for systematisation form.) These reflection sessions also addressed the following themes:

- Building trust and making children feel at ease
- Using drawing as a way of helping children to express themselves
- Ethics of research with vulnerable children
- Questioning and discussion techniques
- Recording, analysing and reporting on what children have said

Additionally, staff were mentored while they worked with the children through the set of activities, so they could become familiar with them. Following the process of involvement in the participatory assessment, staff gave feedback about the activities. In Malawi most of the feedback related to adjusting the workshop activities so they could take place over a single day or two afternoon sessions as staff felt this would be the more likely time span that they could use for such a process. Staff agreed that the core activities were the drawing of the area in which children live and the identification of problems they face. This could be followed by a second afternoon session looking at solutions. All staff agreed that the drawing was key to the process as it gave children time to reflect and it made it easier for them to talk.

## Awareness raising of staff members

In Malawi, the lead facilitator also spent some time briefing the Multi-Functional Team about why it was important to allow children to participate. She also looked at how the process with children needed to be different from a typical focus group. Activities suited to the children's age and stage of development would allow the children to fully participate. This awareness of the children's process by the entire team is important if the children's recommendations are to be taken seriously when the findings of the participatory assessment are integrated into programme and protection planning.

## 5. Variations of the participatory assessment process

It would be possible to run the programme presented here in one day or even in a half day. The activities that are central to the process include:

- All the places I go to in our area – a map
- Problems we face in our area
- Our solutions

If the programme is run in a shorter timeframe, children can be asked to draw a map and then mark on their maps the places where problems occur, rather than drawing them. These places can then be discussed. By the facilitator asking, "So what do you think can be done about this?" Solutions can also be discussed after each problem is mentioned.

The actual drawing of the map is important because the drawing gives children time to think and the local map allows children to place the issues they raise in their own social context rather than deal with them in an abstract way through a discussion alone.

Whereas it is possible to gather useful information from a shorter process, giving children time to draw problems and solutions allows for deeper reflection.

The activities in this process focus on drawing. It is possible to understand the situation of children through other activities such as role play. If you are going to use role play, remember that children will usually depict one situation in a role play. You will need to have a discussion afterwards about other situations of violence. This can be time consuming. Drawing is an effective tool because each child will draw a number of problem situations, and, in this way, a range of issues will be collected in a short amount of time.



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- The following information booklets and materials about children's rights and sexual and gender-based violence were given to the children at the end of the workshops:**
- RAPCAN – Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (Undated). *A Trolley Full of Rights*. Cape Town: RAPCAN.
- RAPCAN – Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (Undated). *What is Child Abuse?* Cape Town: RAPCAN.
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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Information about the children who took part in the participatory assessment in Malawi

| Age | Sex | Grade if in school | Family status                                   | Country of origin | Year of arrival in Malawi |
|-----|-----|--------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 9   | M   | 4                  | Both parents and 11 children – not all siblings | Somalia           | 1994                      |
| 10  | M   | 3                  | Both parents and siblings                       | Burundi           | 2002                      |
| 11  | M   | 3                  | Both parents, granny and siblings               | Rwanda            | 2001                      |
| 12  | M   | 3                  | Both parents and siblings                       | Rwanda            | 2004                      |
| 12  | F   | 4                  | Father and 3 children and step-mother           | Burundi           | 2002                      |
| 12  | M   | 4                  | Mother and siblings                             | Rwanda            | 2000                      |
| 12  | F   | 5                  | Both parents and siblings                       | DRC               | 2000                      |
| 12  | F   | 8                  | Father and siblings                             | Burundi           | 2000                      |
| 13  | F   | 3                  | Both parents and siblings                       | DRC               | 2000                      |
| 13  | M   | 4                  | Both parents and siblings                       | Somalia           | 1994                      |
| 13  | F   | 5                  | Both parents and siblings                       | DRC               | 2003                      |
| 13  | F   | 5                  | With both parents and siblings                  | Rwanda            | 2000                      |
| 13  | M   | 5                  | Mother only                                     | Rwanda            | 2000                      |
| 14  | F   | 6                  | Mother and siblings                             | Burundi           | 2004                      |
| 14  | F   | 6                  | Orphan living with foster family                | Sudanese          | 2003                      |
| 14  | F   | 6                  | Orphan living with foster family                | DRC               | 2003                      |
| 14  | M   | 7                  | Both parents and siblings                       | DRC               | 2001                      |
| 14  | F   | 7                  | Father and siblings                             | Rwanda            | 2000                      |
| 14  | M   | 8                  | Both parents and siblings                       | Rwanda            | 2003                      |
| 14  | M   | 8                  | Grandfather                                     | Rwanda            | 2000                      |
| 14  | F   | 8                  | Mother and siblings                             | DRC               | 1994                      |
| 15  | M   | 6                  | Both parents and siblings                       | Rwanda            | 2002                      |
| 15  | M   | 8                  | Both parents and siblings                       | DRC               | 1996                      |
| 16  | M   | 7                  | Both parents and siblings                       | DRC               | 2001                      |
| 16  | F   | 8                  | Both parents and siblings                       | Burundi           | 2003                      |

N=25 children

## Appendix 2: Consent form for parents/caregivers

Dear caregivers,

UNHCR wants to make sure that the programmes for refugee children in Dzaleka Refugee Camp are helping them. To do this we need to know what problems children are facing. This means we need to ask the children about their lives.

We will be running a two-day workshop with children in your area. We hope you will allow your child to attend the workshop. At the workshop children will draw pictures and talk about their lives. We will record what they say and then write a report which will be given to UNHCR. We cannot promise that any actions will be taken, but we will make sure that people hear what the children have to say.

Whatever the children tell us will be kept confidential. The report will not mention names.

If you would like your child to participate, please sign the form below.

I ..... (name) give permission for my child  
..... (name) to participate in a participatory assessment.

Signed .....

Date .....

### Appendix 3: Systematisation form for each subgroup discussion

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of people: \_\_\_\_\_

Subgroup: (Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Age group: \_\_\_\_\_ )

Facilitators: \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Protection risks/ incidents</b> | <b>Causes</b> | <b>Capacities within the community</b> | <b>Solutions proposed by subgroups</b> | <b>Most important issues to address as expressed by people of concern</b> | <b>Urgent Follow-up action</b> |
|------------------------------------|---------------|--|--|---|--------------------------------|
|                                    |               |  |  |   |                                |
|                                    |               |  |  |   |                                |
|                                    |               |  |  |   |                                |