CHRISTIAN CHILDREN’S FUND CHAD

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES SURVEY:
Eastern Chad

January 2006
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For decades, Sudan has been involved in multiple conflicts – first in the southern part of the country and more recently in the western region of Darfur. In 2003, Darfurians began crossing the Sudanese border into Chad fleeing war and destruction of their home villages. They found refuge in neighboring Chad where twelve refugee camp settings received approximately 200,000 Sudanese.

CCF conducted a comprehensive Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice (KAP) survey to compliment and inform its ongoing work with children over the past few years in Chad’s Sudanese refugee camps and host population. CCF has been working to create and improve the protection environment for refugee and Chadian children and adolescents through psychosocial support activities, non formal education, raising awareness on the resiliency of children and the risks they face, providing support to camp members, parents and host community members to work together on how to better protect the children, by promoting inclusion of the most vulnerable children in activities while overall, working to increase children’s access to basic services within and around the refugee camps.

Touloum, Iridimi, Mile and Kunoungu are the names of the four refugee camps in Eastern Chad where CCF has ongoing activities for children and adolescents. CCF aims to achieve a better understanding of the children, families and communities with whom they work on a daily basis. Through this study, CCF hopes to gain a new level of understanding of the knowledge, attitudes held and common culturally grounded practices that will then help to inform activities, orient the program goals, respect the cultural values and allow us to learn how to provide appropriate services.

Protecting children through psychosocial support activities, monitoring their access to basic services, ensuring inclusion and participation of vulnerable children in activities and raising awareness on the ways and means to support a child’s natural resiliency and thus, allowing them to actively participate in protecting themselves -- all collectively contribute to a child’s overall well being.

CCF used both qualitative and quantitative methods for this study. Overall, 1,580 refugee children were engaged in child-friendly discussions around some of the concerns and needs they have in their daily lives in the camp settings. These responses were analyzed along with twenty-two focus groups with children and adults, and nineteen semi-structured interviews with key informants among the camp communities. (See attached Appendix I, II, and III)

This process of engaging children, adults and community members in discussions around basic service provision in the camp settings and general inclusiveness of the most vulnerable has helped to shed light on the areas of focus that CCF will engage in throughout its program work. Notably, CCF has identified baseline information on children’s access to Health and Education services. In addition, CCF has learned of the children’s daily use of their time on household chores or work outside their homes and the impact this has on their lives. Focus group discussions with children and adults revealed a deeper more qualitative understanding of access to Education and Health services within the camp settings from the perspective of both children and adults. The focus group discussions were also held to elicit views on what common emotional support systems exist in their culture, what their views are on how working impacts the children’s lives and an opportunity to discuss security concerns they face on a daily basis.

Finally, the semi-structured interviews with key informants from the refugee communities offered an overall view on the roles of girls, boys, women and men in the camps as perceived by their leaders. Qualitative inquiries were made on roles of leaders, types of organized support for children in the camps, views on the effectiveness of youth groups/associations, views of the humanitarian work being done within the camps, cultural practices of marriage, community protection, perceptions of HIVAIDs, and cultural forgiveness processes. In addition, there was an attempt to understand some of the community perceptions on what they see as risks to children, adolescents and women within the camp as they reflected on issues of abuse, exploitation, discrimination, neglect, recruitment into armed forces and challenges to retention in educational settings.
CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

The ongoing conflict in Sudan, which started over a decade ago, continues to this day. Many people from the western territory of Darfur have been the targets of government-supported acts to eliminate a whole race of people. As a result, many Darfurians began crossing the Sudanese border into Eastern Chad in search of safety. UNHCR responded to this crisis in September 2003 by establishing refugee camps along the Sudanese border. There are currently over 220,000 refugees living in twelve refugee camps. Most of these people are women or children. The flow of refugees has waned and UNHCR does not expect another large flow of new refugees.

While life in Eastern Chad has stabilized for the Darfurian refugees, challenges, particularly for children remain. The people of Darfur and Eastern Chad come from very poor and desolate parts of the world, where much of the land is arid or semi-arid. Many people on both sides of the border base their livelihoods on their land and animals. Even though many of the same ethnic groups live in Darfur and Eastern Chad, tension and conflict over scarce natural resources such as land, firewood and animals have added many layers of risk for refugee children. There have been many reports of harassment and verbal and physical violence against children outside and inside of the camps. Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children found, in their report titled “Don’t Forget Us: The Education and Gender-Based Violence Protection Needs of Adolescent Girls from Darfur in Chad” that many girls were harassed, physically abused or raped when they left the camps to collect firewood. Moreover, early marriage and polygamy are norms in Darfurian culture, creating health risks for girls. In some camps, sexually transmitted diseases are on the rise. Sudan is a patriarchic society where a man’s decision is final. Children and adults have spoken of the existence of domestic violence inside of the camps. With few economic opportunities and insufficient land for grazing, many children leave the camps to find work placing themselves in exploitative situations. Adding to the challenge that refugee children face in the camps is the fact that while many of these children are resilient, a large number are still dealing with their experiences in Darfur. Parents have spoken of children that have nightmares, do not talk or have socially withdrawn themselves from other children.

While the situation in the camps is still an emergency, it is improving and slowly transitioning into longer-term development, requiring a shift in programmatic strategy. The Bureau of Population, Migration and Refugees (BPRM) within the United States Department of State and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) are currently supporting CCF in reaching some of the most vulnerable children in four camps in Eastern Chad – Touloum, Iridimi, Mile and Kunoungu. Many agencies, including CCF, have done general assessments of the situation in these camps, but no agency has conducted an in-depth survey exploring the knowledge, attitudes and practices of children in the camps. Moreover, up to now, Refugees International and Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children are the only two groups that have published their research findings for the larger humanitarian community. Thirdly, due to the logistical challenges of conducting a quantitative assessment, no agency in Eastern Chad has used both qualitative and quantitative methods to unearth the situation of children. CCF has thus decided to conduct a Child Protection Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice (KAP) survey using both qualitative and quantitative methods to understand service gaps, and the most pressing needs of children as a way to inform CCF’s current programming, raise awareness about the specific needs of refugee children and stimulate greater action from the international humanitarian community.
METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Methodology

There are twelve camps in Eastern Chad, but because CCF is only currently present in four of these camps – Touloum, Iridimi, Mile and Kunoungu - this KAP survey focuses only on them. While we the experiences of children in the other camps may vary, CCF does not anticipate great variance.

This KAP survey used both quantitative and qualitative methods, including a questionnaire for children aged five to eighteen, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with children and adults. Child Protection is broadly defined to include different aspects of children’s well-being including physical security, education, work, health and gender-based violence. Because of the sensitivity of many of these issues, the children’s questionnaire only asked questions regarding children’s education, work, and health situations. Within the focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, CCF explored all of the aspects of children’s well-being including in-depth explorations of security and gender-based violence issues. See Appendix I, II, III for an English version of the questionnaire, and guiding questions for the focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews.

The questionnaire was first created in English and then translated into Arabic. Thirty-two refugees (50% male, 50% female; eight per camp) were recruited and trained to interview children in their camp. See Appendix IV for an outline of the refugee interviewer training. While the official training for the refugee surveyors was for only one day, CCF held a meeting at the beginning or end of each day to discuss challenges that the refugees experienced while interviewing children. The Child Protection Consultant checked the questionnaires of each refugee interviewer in order to provide each surveyor with constructive feedback on how they could improve their interviewing skills for the next day. This also ensured minimal error in how the questions on the questionnaire were asked. Because the refugees spent an entire week interviewing children, their unofficial interviewer training lasted one week. The eight refugees per camp were paired in groups of two (1 male, 1 female). Before each interviewer pair went to talk to children, the Arabic version of the questionnaire was piloted in Iridimi camp. Based on the experience of the refugee interviewers, some alterations were made to the questionnaire. Once the questionnaire was finalized, each group of refugee interviewers went to households together where the males interviewed boys and females interviewed girls. Based on each camp’s household population and confidence limits between 1.5 and 1.8, a sample size for each camp was determined. A random sample of each camp’s block or zone was then conducted for the questionnaire. Numbers of blocks or zones where interviews were to take place was based on numbers generated from a random number calculator on a sample size calculated with a confidence limit of 1.5 and 1.8 and a 25% variance estimate. (Finite population correction included). Each interviewer pair was assigned to interview children in the blocks or zones generated from the random number calculator. While 1,600 questionnaires were collected, 1,580 questionnaires were valid and therefore analyzed.

The qualitative methods included focus group discussions and informal one on one interviews. CCF first discussed the purpose of the child protection assessment with refugee leaders and the heads of each zone and/or block. These leaders assisted the CCF staff in randomly selecting participants from the various areas for the focus groups. The Child Protection Consultant trained the CCF staff in participatory research methods, including various mapping and drawing exercises, to make the focus groups less invasive and more enjoyable for the participants. See Appendix V for a focus group discussion facilitators’ training agenda. The activities allowed the focus group facilitators to elicit information without having to directly ask questions the refugees may have felt uncomfortable answering. Each focus group consisted of eight to ten participants, and was led by two or three facilitators of the same gender as the group. A total of twenty-two focus groups and nineteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with the children of various ages, parents, teachers, Marabouts (Koranic teachers/traditional healers) and key informants such as UN and NGO staff.
**Limitations**

While it was possible to follow proper research methodology to conduct the KAP survey, limitations both with the quantitative and qualitative methods must be noted.

This was the first time the refugee interviewers had ever interviewed children using a survey so errors may have been made because they did not have a great deal of practice using the questionnaire. Some refugees had a difficult time following the logic of the questionnaire. In addition, while we conducted random sampling of the blocks and/or zones of each camp, we could not conduct a random sampling of each household. UNHCR assigns numbers to tents, but people move without UNHCR’s knowledge, making it impossible to find specific tents. Thus, when the refugee interviewers entered the zone or block they were assigned to, based on the random number calculator, they went to every fifth tent.

While the CCF facilitators were trained in the topics of concern and in participatory research methods, a difficulty with translation of the focus groups and semi-structured interviews remained. CCF’s staff members speak Chadian Arabic, which is a little different from Sudanese Arabic, and/or French. The refugees speak Sudanese Arabic and/or their mother tongue such as Zagawa. CCF attempted to pair up facilitators who complemented each other with their language, literacy and facilitation skills. However, some of the context and nuances of the conversations may have been lost due to the repeated translations.

---


