



Introduction

Through its work in the Jeddah 5 IDP Camp, NP made several key observations regarding the safety and security of children and families. It became clear that many physical confrontations between families within the camp were the result of conflicts between children that escalated and dragged the larger families into conflict. These larger conflicts led to more violence, tensions, or disputes between families that affected the safety and security of the whole community living in the camp. This conclusion was further supported by camp sector leaders – community members themselves - who also raised the point directly to NP.

Guided by NP's Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) that contributes to child protection and social cohesion, NP planned a larger engagement with children in the camp with the goal to mobilize a children's peace group who could engage with other children in the camp as well as with parents, families, and schools on the issues children face. Many children expressed interest in engaging with NP and joining discussion sessions and trainings to champion social cohesion and protection among other children in different kinds of activities. NP included a wide and diverse group of 20 boys and 20 girls to form two peace groups, including children who have not been able to access formal education due to a lack of legal documents; children from lower economic backgrounds; and children with disabilities. NP developed a curriculum of participatory activities for the children focusing on problem solving, conflict resolution, bullying, safety and risk mapping, and community story telling. In early 2022, NP started conducting sessions with the first two groups.

Community Response

Throughout the trainings and after their completion, participants' parents sought out NP during its patrols or at its office to note how pleased they were with the sessions and the positive changes they saw in the children's behavior. Furthermore, the children themselves often approached NP in-between the weekly sessions to reflect on how they put into practice what they learned in their daily lives by, for example, giving support to children who were being bullied or engaging with their friends and peers on why it is not okay to bully others.

*"I am very happy that I am a part of the Children's Peace Club and I can't wait for the day of the graduation ceremony for our group and start practicing what we have learned and share it with other children."
Ahmed¹, Member of the Boys' Children's Peace Club*



¹ Names have been changed to protect the identity of children involved.

Ahmed's sister and aunt elaborated, noting that in the past, he had bullied classmates to the point where Ahmed was nearly expelled and verbally harassed women in the camp, but now they have seen a lot of positive character growth in him. They sensed that asking him to take on the responsibility to share what he has learned with others in the camp has influenced him in a positive direction. The relatives explained that whenever Ahmed comes back from the sessions, he is excited to share everything he learned with his family.

"I loved attending the sessions because they were all discussing interesting and new techniques that I never knew like about problem solving and risk mapping. For instance, one time I saw some children were playing in the dark next to an electrical box and were climbing the fence and jumping off it. Because of the risk mapping session, I advised them to leave this area and play somewhere else because they might get hurt." Mohammed², Member of the Boys' Children's Peace Club

Mohammed's grandmother noticed positive character development and maturation in her grandson, noting that he has become much more peaceful in his daily life and spends more positive time with his family, a point which his teachers from another NGO seconded. His grandmother added that previously, he used to be very aggressive with his younger siblings and occasionally hit or beat them, but since attending the sessions, he's stopped using physical violence against them. This behavior change "made me so happy and grateful that he is a part of the Children's Peace Club with NP" his grandmother noted.

² Names have been changed to protect the identity of children involved.

It was not only Ahmed and Mohammed's families that saw positive changes. A member of the Girls' Children's Peace Club explained:

"Before attending the sessions with NP, I used to spend most of my time inside the tent doing nothing but house chores and studying. That's why I'm so happy that I was part of the Children's Peace Club because I got the chance to do something useful, learn new interesting things and make new friends. I learnt a lot about child's rights and gained a lot of personal skills like problem solving. I'm looking forward to when the peace club officially starts so that my other friends can benefit from all the information and experiences I've gained." Fatema³, Member of the Girls' Children's Peace Club

Fatema's mother added that she encouraged her daughter to attend the sessions because "we trust NP and we know the staff, so she will be in a safe place," but, more importantly, because "I want my daughter to have more confidence in herself and I can tell how positively it affected her. I'm happy with my decision and grateful to the opportunity my daughter had and I'm sure this will benefit her in the future."

"Due to the sessions, I have been attending with NP, I've become confident. I used to be very pessimistic and think that there's no hope for humanity, but now I have a more optimistic view of life. I feel more responsible now, because if I want the community to be better, I need to do something about it and NP helped me with that. I started to intervene when there are any conflicts between my friends. I defend any girl who's being bullied

³ Names have been changed to protect the identity of children involved.

and try to stop any bullying and understand where this behavior is coming from and offer to assist and help.” Nour⁴, Member of the Girls’ Children’s Peace Club.

Nour’s mother mentioned that before the sessions, her daughter wasn’t very active and had little energy. But since the sessions, she’s become more motivated with a more positive mood. Her mother said that “we’re proud of her because we believe girls have rights just as boys and she needed this push to gain more confidence.”

Conclusion

After both groups (boys and girls) concluded their initial training series, NP worked with the children as they formalized themselves into one Children’s Peace Club, which included designing a logo so they could identify themselves as a group. NP provided them with visibility materials and organized an official launch event in October 2022 where NP officially introduced the Children’s Peace Club and a Youth and Women’s

Protection Teams to camp management, camp leadership, local security actors, other NGO partners, and the community inside the camp to promote the presence of the groups and their work.

After the inauguration, the Children’s Peace Club have joined NP in some of its activities, championing protection practices among children, and showing their support and acceptance to NP’s programming in Jeddah 5 IDP Camp. The club members invited 20 other children from all the camp’s sectors to join in an introductory engagement and outreach with other children to introduce themselves, the two groups, and some of the activities they attended. Going forward, NP will continue to coach the groups so they can join NP and share their own experiences as new groups of children attend the sessions they previously completed and join Peace Club activities. Later, as their confidence grows, they will join NP for discussions and events with parents, teachers, and the wider community to be advocates for children’s concerns in the camp.



⁴ Names have been changed to protect the identity of children involved.