

UNACCOMPAINED AND SEPARATED SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN: CASE STUDY OF A NEW FEATURE FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN JORDAN

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Abstract

While Jordan has hosted many refugees within its borders over the past 70 years, the recent influx of Syrian refugees has significantly increased pressure on an already fragile economic and social landscape. The Jordan Response Plan to Syrian Refugees advocates for emergency response that meets the basic needs of refugees alongside long-term capacity building of Jordanian services and infrastructure; with the Protection Working Group (an inter-agency working group with sub groups on child protection, gender-based violence and mental health) specifically advocating for more social workers. While the role of social workers in working with refugees is relatively well established in destination countries (such as the United States, Canada, Australia, parts of Europe), it is less well established in neighbouring and transition countries – countries which are the ‘first’ responders and host the bulk of refugees. By describing a case study on the role of social workers in a foster care programme for unaccompanied and separated Syrian refugee children in Jordan, we establish the contribution that social workers can make to the multi-disciplinary team to improve the short and long-term well-being of refugees. The paper concludes with a number of policy recommendations.

Key words: *Syrian refugees; unaccompanied children; separated children; social work; Jordan.*

1. INTRODUCTION: SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN

Over the last few decades The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, has received a massive influx of Iraqi, Afghan and more recently Syrian, refugees. While the (relatively) recent arrival of Syrian refugees dominates the refugee agenda, Jordan has a long history of responding to the needs of refugees that have crossed its borders.¹ Palestinian refugees from 1948 form a large and fundamental part of the current population.² Since this time, conflict in countries along its many borders has resulted in an almost constant arrival of refugees, some using it as a base from which to seek resettlement elsewhere. Refugees therefore continue to play a key role in the country's political, economic and social landscape. Indeed, political commentators have reflected on the ability of the Hashemite Kingdom to see the potential of refugees for facilitating its own social and economic development.³ This has resulted in quite different policy decisions made by Jordan, in response to Palestinian and now Syrian refugees, compared to other transition countries in the region, such as Lebanon. Yet the recent arrival of Syrian refugees is being experienced as a 'crisis' and a 'state of emergency', meaning that Jordan continues to rely, more than ever, on aid and development assistance from the international community; partly because of the number of refugees who have arrived, and because of the economic and social fragility of the country which pre-dates the arrival of Syrian refugees.

Since March 2011, thousands of Syrian refugees have sought refuge in Jordan – a nation with a population of approximately 6.5 million people.⁴ At the end of 2016, 655,833 Syrian refugees were registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Jordan.⁵ This places Jordan as having the second greatest ratio of refugees to

¹A. Francis, *Jordan's Refugee Crisis*. Washington DC, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015, available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_247_Francis_Jordan_final.pdf (last visited 2 May 2017). A.M. Al-Smadi, L.I. Tawalbeh, O.S. Gammoh, A.S. Ashour, A. Alshraifeen & Y.M. Gougazeh, "Anxiety, stress, and quality of life among Iraqi refugees in Jordan: A cross sectional survey", *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 19(1), 2017, 100-105.

²J.G. Smetana, I. Ahmad & L. Wray-Lake, "Beliefs about Parental Authority Legitimacy Among Refugee Youth in Jordan: Between- and Within-Person Variations", *Developmental Psychology*, 52(3), 2016, 484-495.

³A. Francis, *Jordan's Refugee Crisis*. Washington DC, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015, available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_247_Francis_Jordan_final.pdf (last visit 2 May 2017).

⁴United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Jordan Human Development Report 2015: Regional disparities*, New York, UNDP; 2015, available at: http://www.jo.undp.org/content/jordan/en/home/library/Human_Development/NHDR/2015.html (last visited 19 April 2017).

⁵United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) & United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *3RP Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2017-2018 in response to the Syrian Crisis: Regional Strategic Overview*, Amman: UNHCR and UNDP, 2017, available at: <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/3RP-Regional-Strategic-Overview-2017-2018.pdf> (last visited 19 April 2017)

citizens (this does not include Palestinian refugees) in any country across the world, and fifth in absolute numbers of refugees.⁶ However there are also a significant number of Syrians who are in Jordan but who are not registered as refugees (some of whom arrived before the ‘crisis’ or those with work permits, for example). The Government of Jordan therefore estimates that there are up to 1.4 million Syrians currently living in Jordan.⁷ This has placed a significant strain on Jordanian social and economic infrastructure and has required an unprecedented response by the Jordanian Government in every sector of governance.⁸

While there are 5 camps for Syrian refugees in Jordan, and many informal tented settlements, 84% of registered Syrian refugees live in host communities, in addition to those who are not registered with the UNHCR.⁹ This has particular implications for the care and protection of refugees, as well as implications for host communities, and community integration. It is estimated by the UNHCR that, partly due to the protracted nature of the ‘crisis’, 86% of Syrian refugees now live below the poverty line, predominantly in host communities, facing challenges in accessing sufficient health, education services and reliable livelihoods to ensure they dwell in a ‘protective space’.¹⁰ This increases the risk of refugees resorting to negative coping strategies to survive, some of which significantly increase vulnerability, such as school drop-out, child labour or early marriage.¹¹ According to the Protection Working Group (2016), over half (52%) of the Syrian refugee population who are registered with the UNHCR in Jordan are children, most travelling to Jordan with their

⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Mid-Year Trends 2014*, Geneva, UNHCR, 2015, available at: <http://unhcr.org/54aa91d89.html> (last visited 2 May 2017).

⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Jordan Refugee Response: Vulnerability Assessment framework, Baseline Survey*, Amman, UNHCR, 2015, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/vaf.pdf> (last visited 2 May 2017)

⁸ Ministry of Planning International Cooperation, *Jordan Response Plan for the Syrian Crisis 2016-2018.*, Amman, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Ministry of Planning International Cooperation, 2016, available at: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/JRP16_18_Document-final+draft.pdf (last visited 19 April 2017).

⁹ Protection Working Group, *2016 Jordan Refugee Response: Protection Sector Operational strategy*, Amman, UNHCR, 2016, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/43783> (last visited 19 April 2017). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Jordan Refugee Response: Vulnerability Assessment framework, Baseline Survey*, Amman, UNHCR, 2015, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/vaf.pdf> (last visited 2 May 2017)

¹⁰ Protection Working Group, *2016 Jordan Refugee Response: Protection Sector Operational strategy*, Amman, UNHCR, 2016, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/43783> (last visited 19 April 2017). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Jordan Refugee Response: Vulnerability Assessment framework, Baseline Survey*, Amman, UNHCR, 2015, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/vaf.pdf> (last visited 2 May 2017)

¹¹ Syrian Needs Analysis Project (SNAP), *Regional Analysis Syria, Part II – Host Countries*, ACAPS, 2014, available at: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/part_ii_host_countries_1.pdf (last visited 8 Aug. 2017).

parents.¹² However, a small percentage of these children are unaccompanied or separated from their parents. In 2015, UNHCR recorded that there were 4640 unaccompanied and separated Syrian minors in Jordan, although the majority will eventually be reunited with family members.¹³ However, there are also unaccompanied 'aged-out children' over 18 to 21 who are often exposed to the same protection risks as unaccompanied children under 18 years of age.¹⁴

Unaccompanied and separated Syrian refugee children face a number of challenges due to being separated from their family, in addition to the difficulties they already face being a refugee (for example, statelessness, poverty, malnutrition, poor educational access, poor health, high levels of child labour and child marriage). This creates specific challenges for professionals to develop services which protect this relatively new and vulnerable category of refugee children in Jordan.¹⁵ This is particularly magnified in a collective culture where the dominant assumption is that children are always cared for by their families (rather than the state, strangers or even the wider community) and where people's sense of identity and value is inextricably linked to their kinship group (including the extended family).¹⁶ Decisions about the future (such as educational access or marriage) are made by heads of the family household and are often based on a collective identity rather than an individual identify, for example. In addition, services for children (such as education) are usually facilitated through their families. While Jordan does have state systems of 'alternative care' (in cases of child protection, for example), many of these systems are in their infancy with a lack of experience of accommodating refugees, such as the foster care system.¹⁷

¹² Protection Working Group, *2016 Jordan Refugee Response: Protection Sector Operational strategy*, Amman, UNHCR, 2016, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/43783> (last visited 19 April 2017).

¹³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Registered Syrian in Jordan: 15th October 2015*, Amman, UNHCR, 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/562626214.html> (last visited 2 May 2017).

¹⁴ Protection Working Group, *2016 Jordan Refugee Response: Protection Sector Operational strategy*, Amman, UNHCR, 2016, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/43783> (last visited 19 April 2017).

¹⁵ Save the Children & King Hussein Foundation Information Research Centre, *Kinship Care report: Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan*. 2015, Amman: Save the Children. Available at: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/jordan_report_kinship_care_final.pdf (last visited 19 April 2017).

¹⁶ S. Al-Makhamreh & K. Libal, "The Middle East: Expanding Social Work to Address 21st Century Concerns", in K. Lyons, M.C. Hokenstad, N. Huegler & M. Pawar, (eds) *A Handbook of International Social Work*, London, Sage Publications, 2012.

¹⁷ W. Bruere, *For the first time in Jordan, young children who cannot be cared for by their biological parents are placed with foster families, not institutions*, New York, UNICEF, 2016, available at https://www.unicef.org/protection/jordan_66468.html (last visited 19 April 2017).

K. Malkawi, "Pilot programme to gauge impact of foster care system", *The Jordan Times*, Amman, available at: <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/pilot-programme-gauge-impact-foster-care-system%E2%80%99> (last visited 19 April 2017).

Receiving a significant number of unaccompanied children from Syria (in comparison to other refugee groups in Jordan) has forced policy makers to develop new services and has inspired professionals to revise the role of social workers within refugee service provision and children at risk in these communities. This paper uses the development of a fostering system for unaccompanied and separated Syrian refugee children as a case study to explore the role of social work in Jordan and advocates for social policy that supports the continued professionalization of social care in the region, especially in relation to unaccompanied and separated children. Drawing on published literature and professional experience, this article shows how the refugee crisis in Jordan, and the international response, has shaped the role of social workers in crises and in working with refugee children in Jordan. Social workers in Jordan have been striving to develop the profession of social work at a local, regional and global level.¹⁸ This case study shows how meeting the needs of separated and unaccompanied refugee children has enabled social workers to show how valuable their expertise and experience is for contributing to the wider social and economic development of Jordanians and Syrians alike. The discussion section draws together the evidence from the case study to argue that the current context in Jordan offers an opportunity, not only to better respond to the emerging needs of Syrian children, but also to strengthen the social work professional nationally, building a legacy not just for future refugees, but for a whole nation. We finish by converting these into concrete social policy implications at an international, national and local level.

2. RESPONSE TO SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN

The government of Jordan is not a signatory of the United Nation's 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (often known as the Geneva Convention), which outlines the roles and responsibilities of nation states in response to refugees. Therefore a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was established in 1998 between UNHCR and the Government, partially amended in 2014. The MOU forms the basis for the UNHCR's activities in Jordan and defines parameters for cooperation between the UNHCR and the Government.¹⁹ It also outlines Jordan's rights and responsibilities in relation to refugees,

¹⁸ S. Al-Makhamreh & K. Libal, "The Middle East: Expanding Social Work to Address 21st Century Concerns", in K. Lyons, M.C. Hokenstad, N. Huegler & M. Pawar, (eds) *A Handbook of International Social Work*, London, Sage Publications, 2012.

¹⁹ D. Stevens, "Legal Status, Labelling, and Protection: The Case of Iraqi 'Refugees' in Jordan", *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 25(1), 2013, 1–38.

which since 2014 have restricted free access to health care,²⁰ but have more recently opened up employment opportunities in some sectors. Nonetheless, the Government refers to Syrians as refugees, stressing the need to develop an environment that facilitates protection, often referred to as a 'protection space'.

Importantly, the Jordanian government, through the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, has developed the Jordan Response Plan for the Syrian Crisis, which is updated on an annual basis. This is the national chapter within the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3PR) which aims to build connections between the responses made by neighbouring countries in the region (Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and Turkey).²¹ The aim of the current plan in Jordan is to bridge the gap between short-term responses to the immediate needs of refugees and a longer term developmental response which invests in Jordanian infrastructure and services; ensuring longer term development which benefits both Syrian refugees and Jordanians.²² The plan recognises the impact of the Syrian refugee 'crisis' on Jordanian communities and citizens, and seeks to develop a sustainable plan which integrates emergency refuge and long term resilience responses.

The plan is implemented through a mixture of government responsibilities, United Nations and international organisations, and largely funded by the Jordanian government and international humanitarian aid. All non-governmental organisations working in Jordan need governmental approval which is granted based on how the proposed intervention (or programme) contributes to the aims and objectives outlined in the plan. Task forces for each area of service delivery provide a forum for strategic decision-making and implementation. The responsibility at present for delivering social care to Syrian refugees (which includes child welfare and protection, family support services, mental health care and psycho-social support, and care for those with physical or learning disabilities) rests with the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), both national and international organisations and religious

²⁰ A. Francis, *Jordan's Refugee Crisis*. Washington DC, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015, available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_247_Francis_Jordan_final.pdf (last visited 2 May 2017).

²¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) & United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *3RP Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2017-2018 in response to the Syrian Crisis: Regional Strategic Overview*, Amman: UNHCR and UNDP, 2017, available at: <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/3RP-Regional-Strategic-Overview-2017-2018.pdf> (last visited 19 April 2017)

²² Ministry of Planning International Cooperation, *Jordan Response Plan for the Syrian Crisis 2016-2018*, Amman, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Ministry of Planning International Cooperation, 2016, available at: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/JRP16_18_Document-final+draft.pdf (last visited 19 April 2017).

groups.²³ Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are developed in relation to each ‘vulnerable’ group within Syrian refugee communities (such as those with disabilities or mental health problems), and responsibilities are negotiated between the Jordanian Government, the UNHCR and other leading organisations in relation to each group (i.e. the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) or the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) or Save the Children or The World Health Organisation (WHO)). This article first outlines the technical and professional responsibilities in response to unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) arriving from Syria, before widening the discussion on the need to strengthen the role of social workers to respond more effectively to refugees in Jordan.

3. UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPERATED SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN IN JORDAN

The concept of an ‘unaccompanied’ or ‘separated’ child is drawn from the UNHCR Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child.²⁴ The word ‘child’ is used throughout these Guidelines in accordance with the definition contained in Article 1 of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC). In line with the Convention, a child means every human below the age of 18 years (as is the case in Jordan and Syria) unless under the law applicable to the child, maturity is attained earlier²⁵. Unaccompanied children (or unaccompanied minors) are children who have been separated from both parents and relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so. Separated children are those separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary care-giver, but not necessarily from all their relatives²⁶.

²³ A. Cocks, S., Al-Makhamreh, S. Abuieta, J, Al-Aledein, D. Forrester & M.P. Sullivan, “Facilitating the development of social work in The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: A Jordanian/UK collaboration”. *International Social Work*, 52(6), 2009, 799-810. ISSN:0020-8728. DOI: 10.1177/0020872809342656.

S. Al-Makhamreh & M. Sullivan, “Achieving the Decolonization of Social Work Practice in Jordan” in M. Gray, J. Coates, M. Yellow Bird & T. Hetherington (eds), *Decolonizing Social Work*, Ashgate. London, 2013.

²⁴ United National High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) *Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child*, Geneva, UNHCR, 2008, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/4566b16b2.pdf> (last visited 2 May 2017).

²⁵ United Nations (UN), *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, New York, UN, 1989, available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/crc.pdf> (last visited 19 April 2017).

²⁶ United National High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) *Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child*, Geneva, UNHCR, 2008, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/4566b16b2.pdf> (last visited 2 May 2017).

In response to the significant numbers of unaccompanied and separated children who have arrived in Jordan since March 2011, the Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) Task Force was formed to establish the roles and responsibilities of government agencies (Family Protection Department (FPD), Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and Ministry of Social Development (MoSD)), United Nations agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF) and other agencies which provide case management services to children and families (International Rescue Committee (IRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), Jordan Rivers Foundation (JRF), and Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF)) regarding working procedures for the care and protection of unaccompanied and separated children, as part of the refugee response in Jordan²⁷. These procedures reflect standards described in the Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children,²⁸ the Field Handbook on Unaccompanied and Separated Children,²⁹ and Toolkit on Unaccompanied and Separated Children.³⁰

All new arrivals into Jordan, which are registered by the UNHCR, are screened at reception for any unaccompanied or separated children. When an unaccompanied or separated child is identified, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) developed by the UASC Task Force are followed. The children are first registered using biometric technology (i.e. finger print/iris recognition), given basic supplies and escorted to a short term place of care and protection, usually in a refugee camp.³¹ Children are then re-located at camps according

Save the Children & King Hussein Foundation Information Research Centre, *Kinship Care report: Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan*, Amman, Save the Children, 2015, available at: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/jordan_report_kinship_care_final.pdf (last visited 19 April 2017).

²⁷ Inter-agency Working Group, *Inter-agency emergency standard operating procedures for prevention of and response to gender-based violence and violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children in Jordan*, Amman, Inter-Agency Working Group, 2014, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/inter-agency-emergency-standard-operating-procedures-prevention-and-response-gender> (last visited 19 April 2017).

Protection Working Group, *2016 Jordan Refugee Response: Protection Sector Operational strategy*, Amman, UNHCR, 2016, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/43783> (last visited 19 April 2017).

²⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*, Geneva, ICRC, 2004, available at https://www.unicef.org/protection/IAG_UASCs.pdf (last visited 8 Aug. 2017)

²⁹ Inter-agency working group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, *Field Handbook on Unaccompanied and separated children*, Inter-agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, 2013, available at: <https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/HANDBOOK-WEB-2017-0322.pdf> (last visited 2 May 2017).

³⁰ Inter-agency working group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, *Toolkit on Unaccompanied and separated children*, Inter-agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/tools-web-2017-0322.pdf> (last visited 2 May 2017).

³¹ Inter-agency Working Group, *Inter-agency emergency standard operating procedures for prevention of and*

to their age and gender, and temporarily supported by professionals working for NGOs or Syrian volunteers for up to three weeks while a Best Interests Assessment (BIA) and Best Interests Determination (BID) are completed.³² One of the central decisions made through the BID for UASC are short and long term care arrangements, with the identification of caregivers as appropriate. After the initial care arrangements have been made, two strands of work occur in parallel, that of reunification with parents or other relatives, and providing a safe ‘alternative care’ arrangement until they are reunified with their family.³³ The Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) and organizations who provide case management services to unaccompanied and separated children (for example, IMC, IRC, JRF, UNHCR, MOSD, FPD and UNICEF) have joint responsibility for ensuring overall protection and monitoring of the child and their care arrangements. From this early stage, the coordination of the care of each child is assessed and managed by a case manager.³⁴

3.1 Case management with unaccompanied and asylum-seeking children

Case management is an approach to social work that was initially developed in the United States in the 1980’s as a process of tailoring services to individuals needs and now often forms a significant component of social work practice around the globe.³⁵ In some contexts the term ‘case manager’ has become interchangeable with that of social worker, although at times it has been used to denote those who have not done some form of social work qualification or degree, and has sometimes been accused of de-professionalising social work.³⁶ Those debates aside, it is now widely used in contexts of humanitarian aid,

response to gender-based violence and violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children in Jordan, Amman, Inter-Agency Working Group, 2014, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/inter-agency-emergency-standard-operating-procedures-prevention-and-response-gender> (last visited 19 April 2017).

³² Child Protection Working Group, *Unaccompanied and Separated Children Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)*, Amman, Child Protection Working Group, 2015, available at: <http://www.syrialearning.org/resource/20005> (last visited 19 April 2017).

³³ D. Youngmeyer, *Protecting separated and unaccompanied Syrian refugee children in Jordan*, UNICEF Newline, 2013, available at: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/jordan_67920.html (last visited 2 May 2017).

³⁴ Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) Taskforce, *Standard Operating Procedures for Emergency Response to Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Jordan*, Amman, Child Protection Sub Working Group Jordan, 2014.

³⁵ A.J. Hutchinson, “Care management”, in M. Davis (eds) *Blackwell Companion to Social Work* (4th Edition), Oxford: Blackwell, 2013.

National Association of Social Workers (NASW), *Standards for Social Work Case Management*, Washington DC, NASW, 2013, available at: <http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/naswstandards/CaseManagementStandards2013.pdf> (last visited 19 April 2017)

³⁶ A.J. Hutchinson, “Care management”, in M. Davis (eds) *Blackwell Companion to Social Work* (4th Edition),

particularly in relation to child protection.³⁷ Case management is not an intervention in itself, it is a service or process for identifying and assessing needs, and then coordinating other services to meet these needs or reduce risks. It requires a ‘case manager’ to build a relationship with a ‘client’ or ‘beneficiary’ (and their family where appropriate) to encourage participatory decision-making and identification of resources or coping strategies. Case management is often used when some level of individualized support is needed (as opposed to group sessions or community awareness). Critically the quality of case management can have a significant impact on individual children, their families and communities, and requires well-trained and well-resourced staff.³⁸ In Jordan, a case manager may have a social work qualification, they may have experience in a related allied profession, or they may receive ‘in post’ training – this paper will argue later on that those who have received social work training need to be leading the way in relation to adapting the ‘universal’ case management approach to the Jordanian context of displacement.

In the case of unaccompanied and separated children, a BIA and BID is undertaken by a case manager with the child to identify a plan to ensure their care and protection in the short and long term. Encouraging and ensuring the child’s participation in the BID is key for identifying any protection gaps affecting them or the wider group, and is used to help monitor the effectiveness of protocol and enable any follow-up actions.³⁹ However, ensuring meaningful participation requires significant interpersonal skills as well as a deep understanding of the impact of conflict and culturally appropriate engagement. Partners and staff of UNHCR have to ensure that such decisions made as a result of the BID are set within

Oxford: Blackwell, 2013.

³⁷ C. Mc Cormick, *Case Management Practice within Save the Children Child Protection Programmes*, London, Save the Children, 2011, available at:

<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Case-Management-Practice-Within-Save-the-Children-Child-Protection-Programmes.pdf> (last visited 19 April 2017)

Child Protection Working Group, *Inter agency Guidelines for Case Management and Child Protection*, Global Protection Cluster – Child Protection, European Commission – Humanitarian aid and USAID, 2014, available at: <http://cpwg.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/09/Interagency-Guidelines-for-Case-Management-and-Child-Protection.pdf> (last visited 19 April 2017).

³⁸ C. Mc Cormick, *Case Management Practice within Save the Children Child Protection Programmes*, London, Save the Children, 2011, available at:

<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Case-Management-Practice-Within-Save-the-Children-Child-Protection-Programmes.pdf> (last visited 19 April 2017)

Child Protection Working Group, *Inter agency Guidelines for Case Management and Child Protection*, Global Protection Cluster – Child Protection, European Commission – Humanitarian aid and USAID, 2014, available at: <http://cpwg.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/09/Interagency-Guidelines-for-Case-Management-and-Child-Protection.pdf> (last visited 19 April 2017).

³⁹ Protection Working Group, *2016 Jordan Refugee Response: Protection Sector Operational strategy*, Amman, UNHCR, 2016, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/43783> (last visited 19 April 2017).

the spirit of the UNCRC and human rights frameworks. Survival, life, and development of the child to the maximum are fundamental rights.⁴⁰ Hart and Kvittingen (2016) argue that the UNCRC and anti-discriminatory perspectives are cornerstone principles when working with refugee children, calling on governments to treat all children residing in their territory in an equitable manner as bearers of human rights, regardless of citizenship status.⁴¹ International law stresses the protection element as a priority when engaging with children rather than limiting their access to assistance or protection by their migration status or that of their parents. This places particular responsibilities on the Jordanian Government and the UNHCR in relation to unaccompanied and separated children who are without adult caregivers to advocate and ensure their rights are fulfilled. While these institutions have overall responsibility for the ensuring the rights of UASC are upheld, it is the care managers who work daily with these children that operationalize this responsibility.

3.2 Foster care for unaccompanied and separated children

UNHCR, UNICEF, Save the Children and Inter-agency guidance strongly advocates for the alternative care of children in emergencies, especially those less than 16 years of age, to be primarily based in families, such as foster care.⁴² European guidance for unaccompanied and separated children mirrors this, and these children make up a small but significant number of the 'looked after children' in foster care placements in places like the United Kingdom, Ireland, Scotland and Sweden.⁴³ There are a number of forms of foster

⁴⁰ Save the Children & King Hussein Foundation Information Research Centre, *Kinship Care report: Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan*, Amman, Save the Children, 2015, available at: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/jordan_report_kinship_care_final.pdf (last visited 19 April 2017).

⁴¹ J. Hart, & A. Kvittingen, 'Rights without borders? Learning from the institutional response to Iraqi refugee children in Jordan', *Children's Geographie*, 2016, 14(2), 217-231, DOI: [10.1080/14733285.2015.1032890](https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2015.1032890)

⁴² Inter-agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, *Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*, published on behalf of Inter-agency working group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children by International Committee of the Red Cross, 2004, available at: https://www.unicef.org/protection/IAG_UASCs.pdf (last visited 19 April 2014).

Inter-agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, *Alternative Care in Emergencies Toolkit*, London, Save the Children on behalf of the Interagency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, 2013, available at:

http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/ACE_Toolkit.pdf (last visited 19 April 2017).

Save the Children & King Hussein Foundation Information Research Centre, *Kinship Care report: Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan*, Amman, Save the Children, 2015, available at: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/jordan_report_kinship_care_final.pdf (last visited 19 April 2017).

⁴³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Trends in unaccompanied and separated children seeking asylum in industrialized countries*, Geneva, UNHCR, 2004, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/40f646444.pdf> (last visited 2 May 2017).

care, all of which refer to the care of a child by people who are not their parents. Children are sometimes placed with members from their wider family, known as kinship fostering or with network foster families which are families from the child's community back in Syria.

Traditional foster care refers to formal arrangement made with a family that is unknown to the child through formal systems administered by a competent authority which places a child in the domestic environment of a family who have been especially selected, prepared and authorised.⁴⁴ Foster care ensures that children remain in a family setting where they are more likely to receive individual attention and specialist care than in residential care. A child is instantly located within a support network or a means by which to access a wider support network and is less likely to be stigmatised.⁴⁵ Several research studies have also concluded that foster care is usually the 'best' or 'preferred' means of care for an unaccompanied or separated child (asylum seeker or refugee) in comparison to other forms of care (such as residential care or shelters or supported-living). However, these studies are largely based on research in 'western' or 'destination' contexts with foster care provision that has been functioning for over 50 years, such as Kalverboer et al 2017, Nidos 2015, Ní Raghallaigh 2013, Wade et al 2012 and Newbigging and Thomas 2011.⁴⁶ Although by monitoring the

Separated Children in Europe Programme (SCEP) *Statement of Good Practice*, Separated Children in Europe Programme, 2009, available at: <http://scep.sitespirit.nl/images/18/219.pdf> (last visited 19 April 2017).

J. Wade, A. Sirryeh, R. Kohli & J. Simmonds, *Fostering unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people: Creating a family life across a 'world of difference'*, London, British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), 2012.

M. Ní Raghallaigh, *Foster care and supported lodgings for separated asylum seeking young people in Ireland; the views of young people, carers and stakeholders*, Dublin, Barnados and the Health Service Executive, 2013.

O. Aytar & E. Brunnberg, *Empowering Unaccompanied Children in Everyday Life in a New Country: A Resilience Support Centre in Sweden Evaluated from the Perspective of Program Theory*, Revista de Asistență Socială, anul XV, nr. 2/2016, pp. 35-56.

K. Newbidding and N. Thomas, *Good practice in social care for refugee and asylum-seeking children*, Child Abuse Review, 20, 2011, 374-390.

P. Hopkins & M. Hill, *The needs and strengths of unaccompanied asylum-seeking child and young people in Scotland*, Child and Family Social Work, 15, 2010, 399-408.

⁴⁴ Save the Children & King Hussein Foundation Information Research Centre, *Kinship Care report: Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan*, Amman, Save the Children, 2015, available at: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/jordan_report_kinship_care_final.pdf (last visited 19 April 2017).

⁴⁵ Inter-agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, *Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*, published on behalf of Inter-agency working group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children by International Committee of the Red Cross, 2004, available at: https://www.unicef.org/protection/IAG_UASCs.pdf (last visited 19 April 2014).

⁴⁶ M. Kalverboer, E. Zijlstra, C. van Os, D. Zevulun, M. ten Brummelaar & D. Beltman, *Unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands and the care facility in which they flourish best*, Child and Family Social Work, 22, 2017, 587-596

Nidos, *Reception and living in families; Overview of family based reception for unaccompanied minors in EU Member States*, Nidos, Utrecht, 2015.

weight gain of refugee children in families and unaccompanied children in foster care within a refugee camp in Rwanda, Duerr (2003) also concluded that children thrived in foster care in the same way as children living with their parents did within the refugee camp.⁴⁷ Jones et al (2014) also discuss a livelihood programme that was set up to support foster carers in a refugee camp in Kenya to strengthen the household economy of these placements and improve the foster care provided.⁴⁸

It is important, however, that the development of alternative care arrangements such as foster care should be done so based on an understanding of community norms and capacities.⁴⁹ For example, Jones et al (2014) describe building on clan-based family tracing and care mechanisms for unaccompanied and separated children in addition to more traditional foster provision with unknown carers.⁵⁰ Children separated from their parents for any reason are traditionally cared for by the extended family in Jordan or as a last resort in residential care, making fostering an unusual form of child protection in Jordanian society. Similarly, there were no formal fostering services in Syria prior to the conflict, although it may have occurred informally through kinship care. Crabtree et al (2017) suggest that in Muslim communities long term fostering is more appropriate than adoption because adoption is often considered as *haram* (forbidden) under Islam.⁵¹ It could be argued that as children who come from a collective culture in Syria arrive in Jordan, which is also a collective

M. Ni Raghallaigh, *Foster care and supported lodgings for separated asylum seeking young people in Ireland; the views of young people, carers and stakeholders*, Dublin, Barnados and the Health Service Executive, 2013.

J. Wade, A. Sirryeh, R. Kohli & J. Simmonds, *Fostering unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people: Creating a family life across a 'world of difference'*, London, British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), 2012.

K. Newbigging and N. Thomas, *Good practice in social care for refugee and asylum-seeking children*, Child Abuse Review, 20, 2011, 374-390.

⁴⁷ A. Duerr, *Evidence in Support of Foster Care During Acute Refugee Crises*, American Journal of Public Health, 93(11), 2003, 1904-1909,

⁴⁸ C. Jones, T. Hiddleston and C. McCormick, *Lessons from introducing a livelihood project for unaccompanied children into an existing child protection programme in the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya*, Children and Youth Services Review, 47, 2014, 239-245.

⁴⁹ Inter-agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, *Alternative Care in Emergencies Toolkit*, London, Save the Children on behalf of the Interagency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, 2013, available at:

http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/ACE_Toolkit.pdf (last visited 19 April 2017).

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*, Geneva, ICRC, 2004, available at https://www.unicef.org/protection/IAG_UASCs.pdf (last visited 8 Aug. 2017)

⁵⁰ C. Jones, T. Hiddleston and C. McCormick, *Lessons from introducing a livelihood project for unaccompanied children into an existing child protection programme in the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya*, Children and Youth Services Review, 47, 2014, 239-245.

⁵¹ S.A. Crabtree, F.Husain & Spalek, B. Islam and Social Work: Culturally Sensitive Practice in a Diverse World, Bristol, Policy Press, 2017.

culture, the context of a family is fundamental to secure a healthy environment for unaccompanied and separated children. A child's sense of being part of a family and belonging is in itself valuable for strengthening mental health and resilience. Evidence shows the positive impact of supportive adults, such as foster caregivers, for engendering hope in refugee children and building resilience, supporting faster acculturation and adaptation.⁵² Practically speaking parents are normally the ones to advocate for their children in Jordan, accessing services on their behalf. Parents also play a huge role in the decision-making of a child's life. Intersos (2017) found that unaccompanied and separated children face the same issues that accompanied Syrian children face with poor documentation which impacts on educational access and appropriate health care. An important role of foster carers would be to support access to these kinds of services for unaccompanied and separated children, and to advocate for their best interests in all aspects of life, as their own parents would have done.⁵³

One of the big differences for Syrian refugees living in Jordan compared to refugees living in 'destination' countries like the UK or Sweden, for example, is the extent of the Syrian community living in Jordan. Much of the literature concerned with the care of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children is concerned with adaptation to a new culture and maintaining connections with their own culture and community. In Jordan these issues are more subtle as Syrians and Jordanians largely (although not entirely) share a common language, religion, collective culture, food, clothes and life style. Indeed, many Syrians

⁵² A.S. Ryan, "Lessons Learned from Programs for Unaccompanied Refugee Minors", *Journal of Multicultural Social Work*, 1997, 5(3-4), 195-205, DOI: [10.1300/J285v05n03_06](https://doi.org/10.1300/J285v05n03_06)

P. O'Leary, A. Hutchinson, & J. Squire, "Community-Based Child Protection with Palestinian Refugees in South Lebanon: Engendering hope and safety," *International Social Work*, 58(5), 2015, p717-731, DOI: [10.1177/0020872815584427](https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872815584427)

T., Luster, D. Qin, L. Bates, D. Johnson & M. Rana, "The *Lost Boys* of Sudan: Coping With Ambiguous Loss and Separation From Parents", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 2009, 79(2), 203-211.

S. Yohani, "Nurturing hope in refugee children during early years of post-war adjustment", *Children and Youth Services Review*, 2010, 32(6), 865-873.

J. Wade, A. Sirryeh, R. Kohli & J. Simmonds, *Fostering unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people: Creating a family life across a 'world of difference'*, London, British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), 2012.

C. Groark, I. Sclare & H. Raval, *Understanding the experiences and emotional needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking adolescents in the UK*, *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 16(3), 2010, 421-442.

H.M. Roberts, H. Bradby, A. Ingold, G. Manzotti, D. Reeves & K. Liabo, *Moving on: Multiple Transitions of Unaccompanied Child Migrants Leaving care in England and Sweden*, *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 5(9), 2017, 25-34.

⁵³ L. Achilli, H. Leach, M. Matarazzo, M. Tondo, A. Cauchi, & T. Karanika, *On My Own: protection challenges for unaccompanied and separated children in Jordan, Lebanon and Greece*, INTERSOS and Migration Policy Centre, 2017, available at https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UASC_Online_Version.pdf (accessed 31st January 2018)

L. Bates, D. Baird, D.J. Johnson, R.E. Lee, T. Luster & C. Rehagen, *Sudanese Refugee Youth in Foster Care: The "Lost Boys" in America*, *Child Welfare*, LXXXIV(5), 2005, 631-648.

(especially those from Dara'a which is close to the border with Jordan) have Jordanian relatives and would have travelled to Jordan prior to the conflict. Yet, unaccompanied and separated Syrian children still need support to negotiate gender-based and socio-cultural integration issues that are specific to Middle Eastern contexts,⁵⁴ such as girls being accompanied on their journey to school or the need for adults to provide consent for even older children to engage in additional activities. Foster care provides an entry point for meeting those cultural needs in Jordan despite the cultural connections. Although in recent years concerns have been raised over the integration of Syrian refugees into Jordan, particularly due to resource limitations and sheer numbers of refugees'.⁵⁵ In theory unaccompanied and separated children should feel a greater sense of connection to Syria and the Syrian community than those living further afield.

In 2013, the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), in partnership with UNICEF, the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the International Medical Corps (IMC) and UNHCR developed a system for the formal fostering of unaccompanied and separated Children from Syria in Jordan by Syrian families. At this time there was no national fostering service in Jordan. This gave professionals an alternative service to consider as an outcome from the formal BID, ensuring that the place where these children reside each day is one which increases rather than limits their protection space. It also required setting up a new cultural context in Jordan as case workers, foster carers and the fostered children negotiated this new care arrangement.

3.3 Recruiting foster carers

In the Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child it is stated that the foster family criteria is used to determine their eligibility for fostering.⁵⁶ An assessment is completed by social workers based at the MoSD or UNICEF to determine the foster family's

⁵⁴ L. Achilli, H. Leach, M. Matarazzo, M. Tondo, A. Cauchi, & T. Karanika, *On My Own: protection challenges for unaccompanied and separated children in Jordan, Lebanon and Greece*, INTERSOS and Migration Policy Centre, 2017, available at https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UASC_Online_Version.pdf (accessed 31st January 2018)

⁵⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) & United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *3RP Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2017-2018 in response to the Syrian Crisis: Regional Strategic Overview*, Amman: UNHCR and UNDP, 2017, available at: <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/3RP-Regional-Strategic-Overview-2017-2018.pdf> (last visited 19 April 2017)

⁵⁶ United National High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) *Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child*, Geneva, UNHCR, 2008, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/4566b16b2.pdf> (last visited 2 May 2017).

ability to provide care and protection to unaccompanied or separated children, as well as maintain the household responsibilities they already have. Caregivers should express the desire to host the child for humanitarian reasons rather than to access the financial incentive and support services they also receive. Families are therefore assessed in relation to their economic security, but also in relation to their 'family security' (i.e. any family conflicts). The environment in and out of the house is also significant when choosing foster families. Houses, for example, need to be safe, located in safe neighbourhoods with services available like law enforcement, schools and health clinics. These assessments are critical for ensuring children are placed in safe and supportive households, and complexities in identifying suitable families can arise due to the high levels of poverty and uncertainty in most Syrian refugee families.

The criteria for fostering states that the main caregivers should be over 35 years of age with at least secondary level of education and married with children. This ensures that new children are embedded into an already constructed family setting. However it is important to note that religion, gender, and age are sensitive areas for fostering in Jordan, as they are in many countries.⁵⁷ Best practice evidence suggests that foster families should have similar religious (including Sunni and Shia identities of Islam), language, cultural and ethnic characteristics as that of the child. While the majority of refugees are Sunni Muslims, there are small communities of other Muslim groups, such as Druze, Chechens, as well as Christian groups such as: Armenian, and other religions such as Bahai, who are considered minorities in terms of both their ethnicity and religion. These minority groups incorporate some of the cultural attributes of the wider society, but are harder to find appropriate foster placements.

The process of cultural matching is one which tends to dominate the literature and research on fostering minority groups, with great debate over the nature of cultural matching and the impact. While it is generally advised that care to unaccompanied and separated children should be provided by families within the child's own community (called cultural matching),⁵⁸ it is recognised that this is not always possible. In addition, several studies have

⁵⁷ A. Christie, "Responses of the social work profession to unaccompanied children seeking asylum in the Republic of Ireland", *European Journal of Social Work*, 2002, 5(2), 187-198. DOI: [10.1080/714053068](https://doi.org/10.1080/714053068)
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Mid-Year Trends 2014*, Geneva, UNHCR, 2015, available at: <http://unhcr.org/54aa91d89.html> (last visited 2 May 2017).

J. Wade, A. Sirryeh, R. Kohli & J. Simmonds, *Fostering unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people: Creating a family life across a 'world of difference'*, London, British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), 2012.

⁵⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and*

questioned how essential this is.⁵⁹ What appears to be critical in the literature is that carers understand the situation of unaccompanied and separated children and the support they are likely to need as well as being able to help these children develop links with their ethnic community.⁶⁰ However, as highlighted earlier, one of the key differences for unaccompanied and separated Syrian children in Jordan compared those in other countries is that there are over 1 million Syrians living in Jordan. Maintaining links with other Syrians, and Syrian food and culture, is therefore possible in a wide range of ways. Access to similar foods, cooking styles and ingredients is possible in Jordan as many Syrians have set up informal food stalls to earn a living. Kohli et al (2010) emphasises the importance of such access to ‘food from home’.⁶¹ However, as with all countries, there is a large degree of homogeneity across the Syrian community, with identities being closely linked to regions and even specific towns or villages in Syria. Therefore if exact cultural matching is not possible (or even preferable) then other efforts need to be made to ensure that an unaccompanied or separated child feels connected to their home region or town in Syria whilst also taking into account the political and cultural complexities which are reflected in the Syrian conflict (for example, Syrians that do not know each other well may be reluctant to build close relationships in case they are not ‘on the same side’ or feel that they could become politically compromised).

Gender has also been a particularly difficult issue to negotiate from both the perspective of the foster caregivers and unaccompanied or separated children themselves. For

Separated Children, Geneva, ICRC, 2004, available at https://www.unicef.org/protection/IAG_UASCs.pdf (last visited 8 Aug. 2017)

Luster, T. A.J. Saltarelli, M. Rana, D. Baird, D.B. Qin, L. Bates & K. Burdick, *The experiences of Sudanese Unaccompanied Minors in Foster Care*, *Journal of Family Psychology*, 23(3), 2009, 386-395.

⁵⁹ K. Newbigging and N. Thomas, *Good practice in social care for refugee and asylum-seeking children*, *Child Abuse Review*, 20, 2011, 374-390.

M.N. Raghallaigh & A. Sirriyeh, *The negotiation of culture in foster care placements for separated refugee and asylum seeking young people in Ireland and England*, *Childhood*, 22(2), 2015, 263-277.

N. Costa, *Separated and/or Unaccompanied Children placed in care: Perspectives and Experiences of Professionals Working in Sweden*, *Czech and Slovak Social Work*, 3, 2015, 15-26.

⁶⁰ Separated Children in Europe Programme (SCEP) *Statement of Good Practice*, Separated Children in Europe Programme, 2009, available at: <http://scep.sitespirit.nl/images/18/219.pdf> (last visited 19 April 2017).

T.M. Crea, A. Lopez, R.G. Hasson, K. Evans, C. Palleschi & D. Underwood, *Unaccompanied immigrant children in long term foster care: Identifying needs and best practices from a welfare perspective*, *Children and Youth Services Review*, in press, 2018.

K. Newbigging and N. Thomas, *Good practice in social care for refugee and asylum-seeking children*, *Child Abuse Review*, 20, 2011, 374-390.

M.N. Raghallaigh & A. Sirriyeh, *The negotiation of culture in foster care placements for separated refugee and asylum seeking young people in Ireland and England*, *Childhood*, 22(2), 2015, 263-277.

⁶¹ R.K.S. Kohli, H. Connolly & A. Warman, *Food and its meaning for asylum seeking children and young people in foster care*, *Children's Geographies*, 8(3), 2010, 233-245.

example, if a foster family already has boys or young adult males in the family home then they will not be able to foster girls to avoid the risk of harassment or sexual abuse. Similarly, young boys are not usually welcomed by foster families who already have daughters of a similar age. It is important for social workers to consider the wider social, political, and cultural context in which the life of young refugees is embedded and which social and political elements can influence protection and positive mental wellbeing.⁶² Acknowledging the impact of gender and age and religion, and supporting the collective culture, must be at the foundation of any interventions made according to the Jordanian social work experiences of working with unaccompanied and separated refugee children.

3.4 Process of fostering unaccompanied or separated children

If a BID identifies that a foster placement would be in the child's best interest, a suitable family match is immediately sought. Once a family has been identified, the caregivers, case manager and the child sign a contract of commitment. If families experience problems or want to leave the country they can contact a social worker two months in advance to set up an alternative care strategy. Before signing the contract, the social worker arranges meetings between both the child and family where they discuss their rights, obligations and responsibilities. In addition social workers explain their institutional roles and working procedures in accordance with the UNHCR framework.

The case manager will closely monitor the care arrangement according to the standard operating procedures. This includes supporting and guiding caregivers as needed, and giving direct support to the child to maintain a high level of social well-being. Case managers will also facilitate access to services and other direct resources as needed. For separated children, family reunification always remains a priority, which requires case managers to frequently liaise with those involved in this process. When deemed appropriate, the social worker will counsel the caregiver and child on the process of formalising the care arrangement through a

⁶² M. Lacroix & T. Ail-Qdah, "Iraqi refugees in Jordan: lessons for practice with refugees internationally", *European Journal of Social Work*, 2012, 15(2), 223-239.
Protection Working Group, *2016 Jordan Refugee Response: Protection Sector Operational strategy*, Amman, UNHCR, 2016, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/43783> (last visited 19 April 2017).
Inter-agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, *Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*, published on behalf of Inter-agency working group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children by International Committee of the Red Cross, 2004, available at: https://www.unicef.org/protection/IAG_UASCs.pdf (last visited 19 April 2014).

Shari'a court (including temporary guardianship of the child for separated children).⁶³ At this stage UNHCR and Legal Aid will be involved as and when they are needed upon consent. Guardianship of separated children would return to their parents following reunification. Case managers continue to follow up with weekly or monthly visits and by telephone calls. The follow up visits are required as part of the contracts signed with the family. The visits are in place to help avoid abuse or child exploitation, and social workers provide emergency numbers and hotline details to both the child and caregivers. They also arrange for additional professional and family meetings, and UNHCR urge that all child protection parties are informed about any specific risks or vulnerabilities in relation to each child.⁶⁴

Equally all children sign to confirm they are aware of their responsibilities towards the foster family and the main caregiver. Responsibilities include respecting household rules and traditions, and being committed to on-going education or vocational training as needed. In the cases where children fail to live up to their responsibilities, such as staying at a friend's house without telling the main caregivers, the incidents will be reviewed at follow up meetings. Families will inform their case manager of problems related to behaviour, absence from the home, or poor academic engagement. The institutions who are responsible for fostering conduct regular evaluations and supervise the development of the relationship (on both a psychosocial and personal level) between the foster caregiver and the child.

4. DISCUSSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK IN JORDAN

The social work profession in Jordan is still working to achieve formal recognition from the government, and is continually striving to achieve greater acknowledgement of their role within society.⁶⁵ For the greater part, the role overlaps with other professions (such as

⁶³ Inter-agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, *Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*, published on behalf of Inter-agency working group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children by International Committee of the Red Cross, 2004, available at: https://www.unicef.org/protection/IAG_UASCs.pdf (last visited 19 April 2014).

L. Achilli, H. Leach, M. Matarazzo, M. Tondo, A. Cauchi, & T. Karanika, *On My Own: protection challenges for unaccompanied and separated children in Jordan, Lebanon and Greece*, INTERSOS and Migration Policy Centre, 2017, available at https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UASC_Online_Version.pdf (accessed 31st January 2018)

⁶⁴ Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) Taskforce, *Standard Operating Procedures for Emergency Response to Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Jordan*, Amman, Child Protection Sub Working Group Jordan, 2014.

⁶⁵ S.S. Al-Makhamreh, "Exploring experiences of informal carers of mental health: Developing community intervention in social work in Jordan", *International Social Work*, first Published March 16, 2017.

health, education and community development professionals) meaning the position of social work still remains largely ambiguous. Critically social work lacks human resource expertise and substantial economic investment, despite the first social work course being offered in Jordan in 1965. At the time of writing four universities have social work programmes, three of which offer a BA in social work and one MA programme. In 2016 a one year Diploma and a Professional Diploma in Social Work with Refugees and Migrants was offered by two public universities. Still the number of students applying and completing these courses is lower when compared to other humanities programmes.⁶⁶ All graduates call themselves ‘social workers’ on completing their course, however the term ‘social worker’ is not a protected title and there is not a system of registration run by a professional organization. Many of those who call themselves ‘social workers’ or ‘case managers’, especially those based in international organisations, have not actually received formal social work training.

Yet working with refugees, in partnership with governmental and non-governmental institutions, is supporting the emerging role of social workers with children in Jordan. Crises and the influx of international and non-governmental institutions have created a raising demand on social work assistance in Jordan - urging them to identify their role in assessment and care management in crises situations, and in the referring process within multi-disciplinary teams. It is apparent that social workers have a significant role to play in safeguarding children’s rights and well-being in Jordan, particularly UASC, providing a unique contribution to the multi-disciplinary team.⁶⁷ In addition, as a result of working with refugees, social workers are urging the MoSD and The National Council for Family Affairs, with the support of Save the Children and the UNHCR, to develop national ‘alternative care’ guidelines that apply to both refugee and Jordanian children.⁶⁸ It can be argued therefore that the challenge of accommodating unaccompanied refugee minors will impact positively on developing Jordanian national legislations towards alternative care. In addition, social workers have been elevated to a greater level of professionalism in crises intervention in

⁶⁶ S. Al-Makhamreh & K. Libal, “The Middle East: Expanding Social Work to Address 21st Century Concerns”, in K. Lyons, M.C. Hokenstad, N. Huegler & M. Pawar, (eds) *A Handbook of International Social Work*, London, Sage Publications, 2012.

⁶⁷ Protection Working Group, *2016 Jordan Refugee Response: Protection Sector Operational strategy*, Amman, UNHCR, 2016, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/43783> (last visited 19 April 2017).

⁶⁸ W. Bruere, *For the first time in Jordan, young children who cannot be cared for by their biological parents are placed with foster families, not institutions*, New York, UNICEF, 2016, available at https://www.unicef.org/protection/jordan_66468.html (last visited 19 April 2017).

K. Malkawi, “Pilot programme to gauge impact of foster care system”, *The Jordan Times*, Amman, available at: <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/pilot-programme-gauge-impact-foster-care-system%E2%80%99> (last visited 19 April 2017).

Jordan, as the following example shows,

Within refugee hosting communities there is a need for expanding the existing protection space through strengthening and expanding the capacity of Government and service providers to meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups, both within refugee and Jordanian communities. Given the increased demands upon national protection systems and service providers such as the FPD, the JPD and the MoSD, and gaps in terms of specialized services for older persons and persons with disabilities, significant investment will need to be made in national capacity, in particular expanding protection services in heavily populated areas and increasing the number of social workers.⁶⁹p7

Critically social workers assess and build the protective environment using models of intervention that are both evidence-based and value-based. The aims of case management carried out by social workers with UASC are to empower the child and their caregiver, continually informing them of the plans being made for them; and assisting children to make informed decisions through an increased awareness of options available. This is critical for fostering the resiliency found in many unaccompanied and separated children, who are often able to achieve good educational outcomes and levels of psychosocial well-being despite the trauma of migration and separation from their family.⁷⁰ In an attempt to understand this resiliency in unaccompanied and separated children, Carlson et al. (2012), drew on a case study of a 'lost boy' from Sudan. Using a risk and resiliency framework they assert that protective factors encouraging resiliency in this group can include children's intelligence, disposition, good coping and problem-solving skills, faith (or religious orientation), a secure attachment to a caregiver, and stability in the foster home. In addition, they also found that positive relationships at school or church, as well as adherence to cultural values, were also protective and supported long term resilience.⁷¹ Similarly, Luster et al (2010) interviewed

⁶⁹ Protection Working Group, *2016 Jordan Refugee Response: Protection Sector Operational strategy*, Amman, UNHCR, 2016, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/43783> (last visited 19 April 2017).

⁷⁰ L. Bates, D. Baird, D.J. Johnson, R.E. Lee, T. Luster & C. Rehagen, *Sudanese Refugee Youth in Foster Care: The "Lost Boys" in America*, *Child Welfare*, LXXXIV(5), 2005, 631-648.

T.M. Crea, A. Lopez, R.G. Hasson, K. Evans, C. Palleschi & D. Underwood, *Unaccompanied immigrant children in long term foster care: Identifying needs and best practices from a welfare perspective*, *Children and Youth Services Review*, in press, 2018.

D. Horgan & M. Ní Raghallaigh *The social care needs of unaccompanied minors: the Irish experience*, *European Journal of Social Work*, 2017.

R. Kohli *Social work with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people*, *Forced Migration Review*, 12th January, 2002.

⁷¹ B.E. Carlson, J. Cacciatore & B. Klimek, *A Risk and Resilience Perspective on Unaccompanied Refugee*

refugee minors and foster carers about the factors that contributed to their successful adaptation into US culture. The young people highlighted personal agency and staying focused on getting an education. The foster carers, however, describe a more complex set of factors which recognise the contribution of developmental histories on personal attributes which, with contextual support, can influence their adaptation and manifest in resiliency.⁷²

Child protection case managers are expected to establish trusting relationship and create a supportive environment to help the 'recovering' child, fostering agency and resilience, thereby ensuring the involvement of the child and the caregiver from the beginning. It can be argued then that social workers are a vital member of multi-disciplinary teams, and they can play a significant role in developing theories and practice in crises intervention with children fleeing from armed-conflict. While this has been better established in 'developed' contexts across Europe and in the USA,⁷³ where refugee populations are relatively small, this has not been well-established in 'developing' contexts or contexts of humanitarian aid.⁷⁴ This can be accomplished by building and gathering evidence to support practical work. For example, a report by Save the Children and IRCKHF (2015) states that "Kinship care is family-based care within the child's extended family or with close friends of the family known to the child, whether formal or informal in nature' and it is an approach

Minors, Social Work, 57(3), 2012, 259-269.

⁷² T. Luster, D. Qin, L. Bates, M. Rana and J.A. Lee *Successful adaptation among Sudanese unaccompanied minors: Perspectives of youth and foster parents*, *Childhood*, 2010, 17(2), 197–211

⁷³ D. Birman, S. Beehler, E.M. Harris, M.L. Everson, K. Batia, J. Liautard, S. Frazier, M. Atkins, S. Blanton, J., Buwalda, L. Fogg & E. Cappella, "International Family, Adult and Child Enhancement Services (FACES): A Community-Based Comprehensive Services Model for Refugee Children in Resettlement", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 2008, 78(1), 121-132.

P. Cox, "Issues in Safeguarding Refugee and Asylum seeking Children and Young People: Research and Practice", *Child Abuse Review*, 2011, 20(5), 341–360.

G.C. Dunbrill, "Your Policies, Our Children: Messages from Refugee Parents to Child Welfare Workers and Policymakers", *Child Welfare League of America* 2009, 88(3), 145-168.

Y. Park, "Making Refugees: A Historical Discourse Analysis of the Construction of the 'Refugee' in US Social Work, 1900–1957", *British Journal of Social Work*, 2008, 38(4), 771–787. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcn015

B.A. Pine & D. Drachman, "Effective Child Welfare Practice with Immigrant and Refugee Children and Their Families", *Child Welfare League of America*, 2005, XXXIV(5), 537-562.

J. Wade, A. Sirryeh, R. Kohli & J. Simmonds, *Fostering unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people: Creating a family life across a 'world of difference'*, London, British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), 2012.

⁷⁴ P. O'Leary, A. Hutchinson, & J. Squire, "Community-Based Child Protection with Palestinian Refugees in South Lebanon: Engendering hope and safety," *International Social Work*, 58(5), 2015, p717-731, DOI: 10.1177/0020872815584427

A. Ager & N. Boothby, "Using the 'protective environment' framework to analyse children's protection needs in Darfur", *Disaster*, 2009, 33(4), 548–573.

R.D. Drumm, S.W. Pitman & S. Perry, "Social Work Interventions in Refugee Camps", *Journal of Social Service Research*, 2004, 30(2), 67-92.

which builds on results of social workers intervention.” (p6)⁷⁵

The responsibility at present for delivering social care to Syrian refugees rests with a mixture of MoSD policies, both national and international organizations and other religious groups. However, it can be argued that the existence of international non-governmental organizations, and expanding demands on the employment of social workers, also brings a global dimension to local social work. International organisations are facilitating the role of social workers, and encouraging the MoSD to develop more professional pathways for social workers across different domains, including that of refugees. Jordan has historically seen the arrival of refugees as an opportunity to advance its own national development, and recognises the need to integrate national social development aid with humanitarian aid that is being directed in response to the Syrian refugee crisis, to benefit both refugees and host communities’.⁷⁶ Building the capacity of social work across Jordan must be part of that strengthening, both in relation to Syrian refugees and the host communities of which refugees are part of.

The number of UASC arriving in Jordan has challenged the Jordanian governmental service system.⁷⁷ The difficult situation of refugees challenges social workers to practice their role within the limitations of official support and inadequate resources. The role of UNHCR determines the rights of refugees and their collaboration with the Jordanian government in achieving the well-being of the refugees thereby indirectly supports the role of social workers. This positively impacts on social work’s status and has prepared the ground to acknowledge the significant role of social workers in times of crises - that is to increase protective spaces and support the process of integration and adaption. Working in this complex situation where refugees are using a variety of resources from various institutions, social workers are positively forced to strengthen their skills and abilities to help refugees to

⁷⁵ Save the Children & King Hussein Foundation Information Research Centre, *Kinship Care report: Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan*. Amman: Save the Children. Available at: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/jordan_report_kinship_care_final.pdf (last visited 19 April 2017).

⁷⁶ A. Francis, *Jordan’s Refugee Crisis*. Washington DC, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015, available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_247_Francis_Jordan_final.pdf (last visited 2 May 2017). Ministry of Planning International Cooperation, *Jordan Response Plan for the Syrian Crisis 2016-2018.*, Amman, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Ministry of Planning International Cooperation, 2016, available at: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/JRP16_18_Document-final+draft.pdf (last visited 19 April 2017).

⁷⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Mid-Year Trends 2014*, Geneva, UNHCR, 2015, available at: <http://unhcr.org/54aa91d89.html> (last visited 2 May 2017). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Registered Syrian in Jordan: 15th October 2015*, Amman, UNHCR, 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/562626214.html> (last visited 2 May 2017).

access services, safeguarding their rights. In addition, Jordan, as a signatory of the UNCRC, participates in empowering social practice based on the frameworks developed from this convention. These guidelines can be used to cover any gaps within the local social work framework. The BID guidelines and working with UNHCR, for example, helps social workers uphold responsibilities to children, leaving an important legacy which social workers can build on in the future. However, these frameworks and the support of international organisations must be a catalyst for locally ‘owned’ and contextually driven structures and approaches – led by local pioneers in social work. On-going collaborations must be orientated in a way that strengthens local leadership, who have implicit knowledge of the cultural, political and economic context, and who will hold their governments and society to account for the on-going recognition of human rights and social justice.

While social work is often associated with ‘individualised’ case work, reflective of western individualization, social work also has a long tradition of community engagement, advocacy and policy practice.⁷⁸ Ecological models and systems theory encourage social workers to locate individuals within the systems they are part of (such as families, communities, schools, legislative systems). This has been central to understandings of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice. In addition the ‘social development model’ of social work, recognises the need to develop social interventions which explicitly enhance the economic development of individuals, families and communities.⁷⁹ Strengthening these models of social work in Jordan are essential to formalise access to livelihoods and strengthen the Jordanian economy, especially as Syrians have limited employment rights.⁸⁰ Social workers can use their knowledge and experience of promoting human rights and social justice as part of their work with refugees, particularly focusing on anti-discriminatory practice and advocating for children’s rights.⁸¹ It can be argued then that social work practice and theory provides a strong base for a model of intervention with refugees beyond that of case management or crisis intervention. Indeed, the Jordan Response Plan particularly highlights the importance of engaging with young people (aged 10-24 years), for example, who represent a third of the population affected by the Syrian conflict, ensuring their

⁷⁸ P. Kam, “Back to the ‘social’ of social work: Reviving the social work profession’s contribution to the promotion of social justice”, *International Social Work*, 2014, 57(6), 723–740.

⁷⁹ J. Midgley, *Social Development: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage, 2014.

⁸⁰ A. Francis, *Jordan’s Refugee Crisis*. Washington DC, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015, available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_247_Francis_Jordan_final.pdf (last visited 2 May 2017).

⁸¹ P. Kam, “Back to the ‘social’ of social work: Reviving the social work profession’s contribution to the promotion of social justice”, *International Social Work*, 2014, 57(6), 723–740.

participation and voice in decision-making. Models of intervention are needed to foster stability and restore hope, offering the right opportunities and development of skilled adolescents to positively influence social cohesion and strengthen community-based interventions. There is a role here for social workers to develop practice approaches in this area based on principles of equality, participation, strengths, hope and social justice.

Also central to many of social work's theoretical frameworks is to recognize the fluid and two way relationship between agency and structure.⁸² In other words, while we know that the structures we are part of exert significant influences on families and individuals; individuals are not without the ability to exert their own influence on these systems. While this can prove challenging for policymakers (who need individuals to be predictable and to do as they are told), this provides a fundamental basis for resilience,⁸³ as highlighted earlier during the discussion on the agency and resilience of unaccompanied and separated children.. These are important considerations in relation to psychosocial support provided to refugees, usually through the support of social workers. Kerbage (2014) argues that responding on an individual basis and medicalising their mental health is very risky when working with distress among Syrian refugees due to the structural nature of the conflict.⁸⁴ It is vital to change the orientation of services to focus on development of sustainable community mental health thereby restoring social and political justice. However, the Protection Working Group report (2016) revealed that current programmes are failing to support family or community level resilience.⁸⁵ Work with refugees requires trained professionals, such as social workers, that seek to strengthen systems of resilience in a social context, as well as recognise when specialized and advanced PTSD services are needed.

Refugee's access to services and support are challenged by many factors such as disabilities, age, and gender.⁸⁶ Recent assessments by the Protection Working Group (2016)

⁸² A.J. Hutchinson, "Surviving, coping or thriving? Using the concept of coping strategies to understand and promote health and social well-being in Mozambique", *British Journal of Social Work*, 44(4), 2014, p972-991. DOI: 10.1093/bjsw/bcs167

⁸³ S. Fergus & M.A. Zimmerman, "Adolescent resilience: a framework for understanding healthy development in the face of risk", *Annual Review of Public Health*, 2005, 26, 399–419.

⁸⁴ H. Kerbage, "Mental Health Programs for Syrian Refugees: The Risks of Medicalization social distress", *The Legal Agenda*, 2014, available at: <http://english.legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=672&folder=articles&lang=en> (last visited 2 May 2017)

⁸⁵ Protection Working Group, *2016 Jordan Refugee Response: Protection Sector Operational strategy*, Amman, UNHCR, 2016, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/43783> (last visited 19 April 2017).

⁸⁶ HelpAge International & Handicap International, *Hidden Victims of the Syria crisis: disabled, injured and older refugees*, London and Lyon, HelpAge International and Handicap International, 2014, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Hidden%20victims%20of%20the%20Syrian%20Crisis%20>

indicated that up to 30% of Syrian refugees in Jordan have specific physical, sensory or intellectual needs.⁸⁷ These are groups that social workers have historically been advocates for in many countries across the globe, advocating for social models of understanding physical and learning disabilities (or mental health problems) rather than a disease focused medical model. Social work also has a long history of working with groups who are blamed for the ‘ills’ of society, as refugees often are by host communities.⁸⁸ One of the roles of social workers is to challenge negative discrimination, and to be on the lookout for the consequences of this. Social work models of practice have been developed to do this at both the individual and community level in collaboration with multi-disciplinary teams.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL POLICY

The case study and discussion above forms the foundation for several policy recommendations which are detailed below;

5.1 Continued investment in foster care for unaccompanied and separated children in Jordan supported by specialist social workers

Kohli (2006) has shown the key role that social workers in the UK play in supporting unaccompanied and asylum-seeking children to establish themselves in a new country, and in supporting successful foster placements.⁸⁹ While the development of foster care for unaccompanied and separated children in Jordan has been led by international organisations, continued investment by the Jordanian government and Jordanian social workers is needed for sustainability and capitalisation. Children are only unaccompanied or separated due to extraordinary circumstances related to the conflict in Syria. Children are mostly likely to have been sent to Jordan alone for their own protection, or were separated while fleeing to Jordan in precarious circumstances.

Crea et al (2017) found that children who had experienced violence in home countries and exhibited difficult behaviours while in foster care were more likely to need placement

[April%202014%20-%20Embargoed%2000.01%209April.pdf](#) (last visited 2 May 2017).

⁸⁷ Protection Working Group, *2016 Jordan Refugee Response: Protection Sector Operational strategy*, Amman, UNHCR, 2016, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/43783> (last visited 19 April 2017).

⁸⁸ A. Francis, *Jordan's Refugee Crisis*. Washington DC, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015, available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_247_Francis_Jordan_final.pdf (last visited 2 May 2017).

⁸⁹ R. Kohli, *The comfort of strangers: Social work practice with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people in the UK*. *Child and Family Social Work*, 11, 2006, 1–10.

changes during their time in care.⁹⁰ This research highlights the importance of social workers and foster carers understanding the different stages of the refugee experience such as pre-flight, flight and post-flight; or the Homeland phase of apprehension, Persecution phase of terror, Asylum phase of hope and fear and Rebuilding phase of relief with sadness.⁹¹ Therapeutic care and companionship is key for helping unaccompanied and separated children resettle into new environments.⁹² This also involves understanding and taking into account their pre-migration context and culture because these conditions and values frame a child's current functioning.⁹³

Research across the globe has shown that the quality and nature of foster care placements cannot be taken for granted for unaccompanied and separated children.⁹⁴ While foster care can be used to ensure that basic care needs are met, such as a roof over head and regular meals, the provision of emotional and social support is also essential but requires different skills. Social workers, families and children all have different understandings and expectations about what the fostering relationship should be like.⁹⁵ It is not enough to set up foster placements to meet basic needs; they need to be monitored and supported to ensure they are working for both the child and the foster carer in a holistic manner. In the UK, Wade et al (2012) found that only one third of foster carers had been well trained to care for

⁹⁰ T.M. Crea, A. Lopez, T. Taylor & D. Underwood, *Unaccompanied migrant children in the United States: Predictors of placement stability in long term foster care*, Children and Youth Services Review, 73, 2017, 93-99.

⁹¹ A. Jalonen & P.C. La Corte, *A Practical Guide to Therapeutic Work with Asylum Seekers and Refugees*, London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2018.

⁹² R. Kohli, *The comfort of strangers: Social work practice with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people in the UK*. Child and Family Social Work, 11, 2006, 1–10.

⁹³ T.M. Crea, A. Lopez, T. Taylor & D. Underwood, *Unaccompanied migrant children in the United States: Predictors of placement stability in long term foster care*, Children and Youth Services Review, 73, 2017, 93-99.

⁹⁴ J. Wade, A. Sirryeh, R. Kohli & J. Simmonds, *Fostering unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people: Creating a family life across a 'world of difference'*, London, British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), 2012.

L. Bates, D. Baird, D.J. Johnson, R.E. Lee, T. Luster & C. Rehagen, *Sudanese Refugee Youth in Foster Care: The "Lost Boys" in America*, Child Welfare, LXXXIV(5), 2005, 631-648.

T.M. Crea, A. Lopez, T. Taylor & D. Underwood, *Unaccompanied migrant children in the United States: Predictors of placement stability in long term foster care*, Children and Youth Services Review, 73, 2017, 93-99.

Å. Söderqvist, Y. Sjöblom & P. Bülow, *Home sweet home? Professionals' understanding of 'home' within residential care for unaccompanied youths in Sweden*, Child and Family Social Work, 21, 2016, 591-599.

⁹⁵ L. Bates, D. Baird, D.J. Johnson, R.E. Lee, T. Luster & C. Rehagen, *Sudanese Refugee Youth in Foster Care: The "Lost Boys" in America*, Child Welfare, LXXXIV(5), 2005, 631-648.

A. Sirryeh, *Hosting strangers: hospitality and family practices in fostering unaccompanied refugee young people*, Child and Family Social Work, 18, 2013, 5-14.

unaccompanied and asylum-seeking children,⁹⁶ and the issues that they face (which are different to other fostered children, such as those who had been removed from their homes due to parental neglect or abuse).

While Jordan and Syria share a language and Middle Eastern culture, and many share the same religion, there are still differences between the communities which social workers need to understand as they work with foster carers and unaccompanied and separated children. It is essential that 'cultural competence' is not taken for granted and social workers are supported to identify the stereotypes that they hold, and to reflect and learn from Syrian refugees themselves.

One of the main themes in the literature discussing best practice with unaccompanied and separated children in the UK and other countries across Europe is that there is a significant portion of children who are unaccompanied and still seeking asylum, meaning that they have not been granted the refugee status or have the legal right to remain in the country indefinitely.⁹⁷ Children in this situation can wait for years before they know if they have the right to remain in the country, meaning they can never be secure of a future in the host country. Similarly unaccompanied and separated children in Jordan live with a level of uncertainty about their future. Unaccompanied and separated children in Jordan do not know how long the conflict in Syria will continue, they do not know if they will ever be re-united with their families, they do not know if they will be able to stay in Jordan in the long term. It is unlikely that they even have a clear idea about what they want for their future. Social workers and foster carers need a specialist understanding of these concerns and how uncertainty and insecurity could manifest in children's behaviour.

Research shows that other social work services are important to develop alongside foster care for unaccompanied and separated children. Aytar and Brunnberg (2016), for example, describe a support centre which unaccompanied and asylum-seeking children could access while living in foster care, which helped to build resilience and increase engagement with the wider civil society.⁹⁸ Jones et al (2014) also discuss a livelihood programme that was

⁹⁶ J. Wade, A. Sirryeh, R. Kohli & J. Simmonds, *Fostering unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people: Creating a family life across a 'world of difference'*, London, British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), 2012.

⁹⁷ K. Newbidding and N. Thomas, *Good practice in social care for refugee and asylum-seeking children*, Child Abuse Review, 20, 2011, 374-390.

⁹⁸ O. Aytar & E. Brunnberg, *Empowering Unaccompanied Children in Everyday Life in a New Country: A Resilience Support Centre in Sweden Evaluated from the Perspective of Program Theory*, Revista de Asistență Socială, anul XV, nr. 2/2016, pp. 35-56.

set up to support foster carers in a refugee camp in Kenya to strengthen the household economy of these placements and improve the foster care provided.⁹⁹

Social workers in Jordan need to develop a systems models to work with refugees which takes into account individual experiences, character and trauma, and also locates them within family, community and institutional systems. Social workers need to understand how trauma is experienced at a community level, and manifests in adapted and changed community norms. For example, when the conflict began and families heard that security forces (from all sides) were kidnapping girls, many families quickly arranged for their daughters to marry before they fled for Jordan. These fears and rumours have created a community level concern about the protection of girls, in particular, which has also contributed to increased rates of child marriage amongst Syrian refugee communities all across Jordan.¹⁰⁰

Jordan is the first country in the Middle East Region known to have established a formal foster care programme. This new model of community-based care was developed as part of a multi-year collaboration between UNICEF, the School of Social Work at Columbia University in New York, and the Columbia University Global Center in Amman. The Community-Family Integration Teams (C-FIT) project supported the Jordanian government in embarking on the de-institutionalisation process in 2011.¹⁰¹

While Jordan can draw from social work practice with UASC in other countries, it can also lead the way for other countries in the Middle East, such as Lebanon, who don't currently have a fostering service for unaccompanied and separated Syrian refugee children, nor even access to shelters, which leaves unaccompanied and separated children incredibly vulnerable.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ C. Jones, T. Hiddleston and C. McCormick, *Lessons from introducing a livelihood project for unaccompanied children into an existing child protection programme in the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya*, *Children and Youth Services Review*, 47, 2014, 239-245.

¹⁰⁰ UNICEF, *A Study on Early Marriage in Jordan in 2014*, UNICEF: Amman, 2014.

Save the Children, *TOO YOUNG TO WED: The growing problem of child marriage among Syrian girls in Jordan*, Save the Children, Amman, 2014.

A. Hutchinson (in press), *Child Marriage in Jordan: Systematic Mapping of the Literature*, Amman, Terre des Hommes, 2018

¹⁰¹ R. Gearing, M. MacKenzie, C.Schwalbe & R.W. Ibrahim, *Community-Family Integration Teams (C-FIT) Project and UNICEF: End of Year Report*, UNICEF Jordan Country Office, Amman, 2018 (unpublished report)

¹⁰² L. Achilli, H. Leach, M. Matarazzo, M. Tondo, A.Cauchi, & T. Karanika, *On My Own: protection challenges for unaccompanied and separated children in Jordan, Lebanon and Greece*, INTERSOS and Migration Policy Centre, 2017, available at https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UASC_Online_Version.pdf (accessed 31st January 2018)

5.2 Development of professional training of social workers in Jordan and across the region

Work from other countries consistently shows the need for on-going specialised training for both foster carers and social workers to ensure that unaccompanied and separated children receive the best possible care.¹⁰³ This is especially pertinent in a context where foster care is an unfamiliar concept not only to the child and foster carers but also to the case managers and social workers themselves. Specialist training is needed, from considerations for the initial placement matching and how to sustain good placements right through to supporting the transition out of foster care (either through being reunited with family or upon reaching 18 years of age).

In 2016, an MA on Social work, Migration and Refugees was granted Ministry of Higher Education accreditation and will be receiving its first cohort of students in 2018. The established programme is designed to respond to the needs of refugees in Jordan, as well as the regional and international demand for intercultural competences and interdisciplinary approaches. It is hoped that this programme will contribute to the professionalization of social work, and increase the employability of social work professionals at a national and international level.

While social work training in Jordan has developed over the past 50 years, there are still significant gaps in its capacity in Jordan, and across the region, as well the recognition of it being a valued profession in Middle Eastern society.¹⁰⁴ Collaboration across higher education institutions, where some short and intensive programmes like the social work professional diploma are being taught, is important, to develop a holistic professional identity and skill set, as well as including frontline workers and practitioners in delivering lessons and trainings. The current training on social work with refugees tends to focus on the case management and communication skills. However, particularly in the current context, the multi-disciplinarily team approach should also be encouraged where social development

¹⁰³ R. Kohli, *The comfort of strangers: Social work practice with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people in the UK*. Child and Family Social Work, 11, 2006, 1–10.

T.M. Crea, A. Lopez, R.G. Hasson, K. Evans, C. Palleschi & D. Underwood, *Unaccompanied immigrant children in long term foster care: Identifying needs and best practices from a welfare perspective*, Children and Youth Services Review, in press, 2018.

L. Bates, D. Baird, D.J. Johnson, R.E. Lee, T. Luster & C. Rehagen, *Sudanese Refugee Youth in Foster Care: The “Lost Boys” in America*, Child Welfare, LXXXIV(5), 2005, 631-648.

Luster, T. A.J. Saltarelli, M. Rana, D. Baird, D.B. Qin, L. Bates & K. Burdick, *The experiences of Sudanese Unaccompanied Minors in Foster Care*, Journal of Family Psychology, 23(3), 2009, 386-395.

¹⁰⁴ S. Al-Makhamreh & K. Libal, “The Middle East: Expanding Social Work to Address 21st Century Concerns”, in K. Lyons, M.C. Hokenstad, N. Huegler & M. Pawar, (eds) *A Handbook of International Social Work*, London, Sage Publications, 2012.

professionals, lawyers, speech therapist, teachers, nurses and physicians, for example, are fully engaged together. It is also important to recognise that ‘crisis’ intervention is often no longer appropriate when working with Syrian refugees, rather sustainable social development and social protection approaches need to be taught to suitably equip social workers. Further specialist training is also needed on working with refugees with physical and learning disabilities and older refugees. While most of the current training and education in social work is at the level of a diploma or degree, more specialist practitioners with clinical qualifications and post-graduate experience is needed (such as MA or PhD programmes. Few social workers hold a PhD in Jordan.

Finally, developing the role of The Jordanian Social Work Association (and other equivalent associations across the region) to remain connected to all graduated social workers and to offer lifelong learning opportunities is essential. Of particular importance is the availability of ‘self-care’ training to reduce burn out in the field,¹⁰⁵ and ensuring practitioners have enough energy to continue to advocate for wider social change as well as empowering and effective case work.

5.3 Developing and restructuring services to enhance the case management role

As identified earlier the social work role is increasingly being operationalized through the case management approach in Jordan, particularly by non-governmental organisations working in child protection with Syrian refugees. Case management is seen as an effective way to assess the needs of children and develop a collaborative care plan with children and families to meet those needs, or reduce risks, largely by referring to others and managing the range of services provided. The effectiveness of the case management approach therefore largely depends on the range of services that social workers can access for their ‘beneficiaries’. Case managers are usually employed by non-governmental organisations that provide a limited specialist service (such as legal counselling, or psycho-social activities, cash-transfers, or new born kits) and therefore a significant part of their role is accessing services from other organisations or institutions (such as UNHCR or MoSD). While case managers can develop their own skills in assessment, participatory approaches and care

¹⁰⁵ R.A. Spencer, J. Usta, A. Essaid, S. Shukri, Y. El-Gharaibeh, H. Abu-Taleb, N. Awwad, H. Nsour, Alianza por la Solidaridad, United Nations Population Fund-Lebanon & C.J. Clark, *Gender Based Violence Against Women and Girls Displaced by the Syrian Conflict in South Lebanon and North Jordan: Scope of Violence and Health Correlates*, Alianza por la Solidaridad, 2015.

planning, without being able to access well-developed services in response to the needs they identify, the approach will be limited in what it can achieve. This requires a macro understanding of the needs of the community and proactive (rather than reactive) social planning and a clear view of how the different services provided by different organisations fit together. It is also important that policies are developed which reduce barriers to accessing services, such as ensuring that all services are well known with clear referral pathways and eligibility criteria. It also requires social planners to be aware of those groups which may be excluded from accessing services such as those without appropriate ID, or those who are seen as ‘undeserving’ (such as unmarried mothers). Services need to be fit for purpose and accessible in emergencies, easy to access and ‘safe’ for all those who use them. Mapping the needs identified by care managers based in a particular organisation, and then identifying which services were accessed, when and how, could help support macro social planning across governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Although case management has developed in such a way that it is not designed to be an intervention in itself, nor is it always practiced by those who have done their training in social work, it is important to recognise the full potential of case management in engaging with vulnerable and excluded families or individuals. The relationship that social workers build through the case management process is one that has emancipatory potential. Through building trust with families, social workers are, for example, able to give community awareness or public health messages as appropriate (such as a ‘brief intervention’). Through this relationship social workers can become advocates as they access services and fight for precious resources. Through this relationship social workers can ensure valuable and meaningful participation and collaboration during the case management process. Through this relationship social workers can identify and strengthen the protective factors which encourage agency and resiliency in unaccompanied and separated children. Yet in order for social workers to develop the case management approach in this direction, they need to be allocated time to build these relationships (including regular follow up visits) and protected case loads.¹⁰⁶ They also need good quality and regular supervision and appropriate knowledge and training to develop these skills. This, in combination with an enhanced range

¹⁰⁶ R.A. Spencer, J. Usta, A. Essaid, S. Shukri, Y. El-Gharaibeh, H. Abu-Taleb, N. Awwad, H. Nsour, Alianza por la Solidaridad, United Nations Population Fund-Lebanon & C.J. Clark, *Gender Based Violence Against Women and Girls Displaced by the Syrian Conflict in South Lebanon and North Jordan: Scope of Violence and Health Correlates*, Alianza por la Solidaridad, 2015.

of services to access, would increase the life changing potential of social work intervention, which goes beyond that of ‘surviving’ or ‘coping’ but to that of ‘thriving’ and ‘achieving’.¹⁰⁷

5.4 Adapting case management approach to the Jordanian context

Case management is often criticised as being an individualist approach which risks disconnecting the individual experience to wider social problems and reduces the likelihood of structural changes taking place¹⁰⁸. It also risks taking a narrow focus when developing care plans based on individual strengths and resources. However, as the literature discussed earlier has shown, individual strengths and resources are one aspect of a resilient refugee child which needs to be recognised. However, the social context of Jordan, and that of the refugees who flee to Jordan, is strongly connected to family and community, and resilient children are also often resilient because of the support they receive from others. The manifestation of self-intrinsic worth lies in being part of a group through fictive kinship. As a collective culture there is little space for individualism in the society or community or day to day interaction which can cause challenges for approaches that value an individual’s experience, their needs and their agency. Understanding and taking into account this collective culture should be an integral part of intervention with beneficiaries/service users. Case management strategies and approaches which encourage unaccompanied minors to develop only individualized coping strategies may mean that they will struggle to integrate into community life, especially once they are considered as adults. In Jordan there is a lack of social or cultural preparation for coping with main stream life once children in care turn 18 years of age, when many institutional support mechanisms will disappear. Care managers need to avoid working with unaccompanied children in closed, structured institutionalised settings and encourage collective or community-based mechanism of protection and provision to ensure sustainability of support.

Case management processes and service provision also need to take into account gender and segregation connected with religious values and beliefs, which is also known to have a major effect on the experience of displacement. This includes taking into

¹⁰⁷ A.J. Hutchinson, “Surviving, coping or thriving? Using the concept of coping strategies to understand and promote health and social well-being in Mozambique”, *British Journal of Social Work*, 44(4), 2014, p972-991.DOI: 10.1093/bjsw/bcs167

¹⁰⁸ A.J. Hutchinson, “Care management”, in M. Davis (eds) *Blackwell Companion to Social Work* (4th Edition), Oxford: Blackwell, 2013.

account how young women will access services they have been referred to if they don't have a companion who will accompany them, for example, or how kinship connections are understood from an Islamic perspective. Even the gender of practitioners could facilitate or prohibit successful intervention, especially when tackling issues of taboo and stereotyping such as sexuality and cases of gender-based violence. This is profound also when managing trauma and sensitive issues concerning violent experiences.

6. CONCLUSION

This article argues that working with refugees in crises has helped empower social work practice with more autonomy and authority in Jordan. The Jordan Response Plan for the Syrian Crisis emphasises the need to integrate refugee responses with longer term resilience in Jordanian service delivery, and this must include the strengthening of social work as a profession and social work systems of service delivery in Jordan. The development of a foster care system for unaccompanied and separated refugee children through collaboration between international and national partners is a good example of this. The social work response to UASC in Jordan shows the need for social work practice based on strong interpersonal skills (to engage regularly with children and caregivers) and recognition of resilience in children affected by conflict, as well as knowledge of the impact of a child's migration experience, age, gender and ethnicity, and an ability to advocate at a policy level. There is clearly a need to strengthen and train professional social workers to increase the capacity in Jordan to respond to the on-going needs of Syrian refugees - particularly taking into account acculturation and long term community integration. While this article focuses on the development of social work in Jordan, there are many similarities here with other contexts where social work is underdeveloped, but is called upon to respond in emergencies and where the influx of international agencies must lead to structural changes that are locally 'owned' and locally 'lead'.