Targeting Adolescence Vandalism in a Refugee Camp

A Community-Based Initiative from Talbiyeh Camp, Jordan

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The objective of this paper is to present and analyse a case study on how urban space can support a local community in addressing violence by adolescents. The paper presents an initiative in Talbiyeh Palestinian Refugee Camp that attempted to address vandalism among adolescence through a multi-step program that was implemented in the period 2009-2010. The initiative was part of the Talbiyeh Camp Improvement Project, a community-based slum upgrading approach that was initiated in the camp in 2008. As locals identified vandalism as an important risk facing urban spaces in the camp, the project worked with a local NGO, the Women's Programs Center, to develop, implement, and manage the initiative by volunteers. This enquiry uses ethnographic methods based on the author's personal involvement in refugee camps over the last six years, incorporating observation, interviews, and focus groups to understand a.) the varied types of violence that refugees were subjected to and b.) how that violence was reproduced in the camp. The enquiry then explores a community-based endeavour to address adolescent aggression against property, conducted as part of an urban improvement project, in order to generate lessons learned for similar situations.

Urban Violence

Violence has varied definitions that reflect its complex socio-psychological nature. There is a focus on the explicit expressions of violence impacting personal wellbeing both physically and psychologically, for instance in the American Psychological Association's definition of violence as "an extreme form of aggression, such as assault, rape or murder" (American Psychological Association, 2014). Others address it from a criminological perspective and focus on the safety of persons and their property, in which violence is intentional physical harm against one's self, property,

Previous page: Palestinians arriving in the refugee camp in Jordan. Historical photo/UNRWA

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or others (Briceño-León & Zubillaga, 2002). This concept includes vandalism as a type of violence. Still others categorize violence in three parts: economic, social, and political (Moser & McIlwaine, 2004). Central to all of these definitions is the focus on the use of physical force.

Another typology is from the World Health Organization (2002), which identifies violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation" (World Health Organization, 2002, p 5). This definition includes threats and intimidation, and other types of power-related dynamics of control and harm. This typology initially identifies three main types: self-directed, interpersonal, and collective violence.

The World Health Organization report identified the nature of a violent act as physical, sexual, psychological, or involving depravation or neglect. Consequently they developed a composite classification based on a combination sketch of the perpetrator, victim, and the nature of crime. This typology includes: abuse of the elderly, youth violence, child abuse and neglect, violence by intimate partners, sexual violence, self-directed violence, and collective violence (World Health Organization, 2002). The typology also acknowledges a higher level of complexity, especially as it includes neglect as a type of violence, addressing psychological trauma in addition to physical pain.

Another definition of violence focuses on how it climaxes, identifying violence "as the manifestation of distorted power relationships, produced by the complex interaction between risk factors" (Agostini, Chianese, French, & Sandhu, 2010, p iii). This is of significance as it acknowledges the role of power relationships, a position that supports the need for a wider view on what violence is and how it is perpetuated through social relationships. Hence acute unfair, painful, or distressing social relationships are violence that impacts the body and the psyche, and may lead to physical violence, as discussed below.

Similarly, a wider perspective of violence addresses its totality and its impact on the comprehensive wellbeing of humans. For example, Bourdieu (2004) identified symbolic violence (i.e. domination expressed in daily rituals) as a significant source of violence on the body, the impacts of which are sometimes missed even by the victim. Such effects may include emotions (i.e. shame, humiliation, guilt, anxiety, etc.) or passion and sentiment (hate, respect, etc.), and may become very evident through flustering, stuttering, trembling, and anger. The symbolic relationship between genders, for example, often manifests itself in violence against women.

Pearce (2007) highlighted the significance of this change in perspective, as she discussed how violence and power interplay. Providing a wide perspective into violence, including, but not limited to symbolic and structural violence- in addition to other types of violence- she argued how the presence of violence improved individuals' understanding of the production of violence in a community, as they learn how their actions aggregate and perpetuate physical violence.

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A wider concept of violence would include types of "social -structural" violence that are harmful to the body, psyche, or mind. Structural violence causes pain and suffering; socially unjust structures create injury both physical and psychological. Structural violence perpetuates a culture of violence as it is practiced and legitimized.

This wider view of violence has developed to incorporate psycho-social aspects of pain, harm, and aggression. According to Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) "violence can never be understood solely in terms of its physicality – force, assault or the infliction of pain – alone. Violence also includes "assaults on the personhood, dignity, sense of worth, or value of the victim" (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004, p1). This understanding is an important aspect for explaining the "safe zone" in the study case in Talbiyeh, which provided the participants with a space in which their dignity, sense of worth, value, and individuality was respected.

Similarly, in his study of refugee camps in Lebanon, Hanfai (2008) discusses a different kind of violence that is witnessed by refugees: Spatial violence is exerted over the refugees by controlling movement of persons and materials in and out of camps. Such practices are intended towards segregation and rejection, thus limiting human access to services and resources. This kind of violence is subtle but has long-term impacts on the wellbeing of individuals, both mental and physical.

Consequently, violence may be misrecognized, or even culturally lauded and encouraged. For example, parental violence may be encouraged in some cultures, while violence against certain behaviour that is not acceptable in a community may be sanctioned. Similarly, violence may be practiced as witchcraft and sorcery, an example of invisible violence that some societies perform (Pearce, 2007). This wide understanding of violence is significant as it highlights the fact that violence is produced and reproduced in varied forms, thus when a community expresses signs of criminal violence (violence that is considered illegal, which is often dubbed "urban violence"); it is part of a cycle of violence that includes varied typologies of structural, symbolic, social, and mental harm.

This wider understanding of violence provides perspective, which "enables us to see the continuum of violence, between the direct political, structural, symbolic and everyday violence. It makes us think about how, for instance, the violence of poverty, inequality, hunger, and disease translate into intimate and domestic violence" (Scheper Hughes and Bourgois 2004: 1). As such, this perspective is significant in understating how violence is instigated in a community, as in the case study below, which was otherwise not known for being violent.

Consequently, the understanding of urban violence has changed from considering it as merely acts of crime to an appreciation of its complexity as a multifaceted phenomenon signifying humanitarian affliction and societal injustice, rooted in socioeconomic relationships and environmental conditions. This perspective is of significance as it provides explanation for violence in refugee camps, and was the foundation for developing the initiative below.

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Methodology

This enquiry utilised ethnographic work done by the author since 2008 in several refugee camps (Talbiyeh, Baq'a, Husn, and Wihdat). Such work included site visits and interviews conducted as part of research work in the period 2011-2014. The enquiry also utilised data from the Talbiyeh Camp Improvement Project documents, in addition to recent interviews and focus groups with the Talbiyeh Women Program Centre and some of the youth who participated in the case study. Furthermore, the author's own experience as project manager of the Talbiyeh Camp Improvement Project was essential for the understanding and presentation of this case. The investigation aimed at offering a grounded perspective of violence in the camps, in addition to exploring a community-based endeavour to address adolescent aggression against property - conducted as part of an urban improvement project.

The enquiry below is preceded by a study of the history of refugee camps in order to communicate the different types of violence that refugees have been subjected to since their arrival in Jordan (the inquiry will not cover the violence that they witnessed before reaching the camp, despite its traumatising effects). It then uses ethnographic methods to understand the local's perceptions of the meaning and reasoning behind local violence and develops a model of understanding that is based on their input. The paper then proceeds with a case study about an implemented initiative targeted at reducing vandalism among teenagers in one of the camps. It is the objective of this paper to move beyond the traditional views of crime and violence towards a more complex understanding of the contextual impact on the generation violence.

Palestine Refugee Camps in Jordan

Palestinian refugee camps were created after the 1948 and 1967 wars with Israel to house refugees who fled their villages in north, middle, and south Palestine. The total number of camps is ten according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and thirteen according to the Jordanian Government (Department of Palestinian Affairs -b, n.d.; UNRWA, n.d.). The camps started as tent cities, but over time people had to adjust to the needs of their expanding families and the harshness of winter weather. The adjustments for refugees were difficult, as the majority were of a peasant background, had no urban life skills, and were suddenly uprooted from their lands.

Within the camps, UNRWA provided basic health and education services in addition to relief and social aid. The camps did not have any infrastructure until 2006 when a series of projects were initiated; thus most camps were not serviced with sewage, water, and electrical networks at the time they were set up. The camps have grown into urban centers without planning, which resulted in varied environmental and social problems (Al-Nammari, 2013, 2014; Qutub, 1989). The camps are typically of lower environmental quality, and represent poverty pockets, but still express varied living conditions depending on their location,

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demographics, and development interventions (Department of Palestinian Affairs, n.d.; Bocco, 2009; Khawaja & Tiltnes, 2002).

The social dynamics inside camps is an overlay of many years of international and national happenings that resulted in attitudes and beliefs amongst refugees about themselves and the camp. From its beginning, the mandate of UNRWA was ambiguous but a de-facto state led UNRWA to focus on humanitarian assistance, so it offered basic services in education, health, and social and relief, but was not engaged in the governance of the camps, per se. The number of refugees increased over the years and the camps developed into slum-like areas (Bocco, 2009). The camp space was not managed; thus, at the root of the conflict over open space was the belief that open space was common and available for those who have the power to keep it. In Jordan, the Department of Palestinian Affairs played a limited role in managing the open space in camps, focusing on pedestrian and vehicular circulation and the number of building floors. Locals have acquired spaces and enlarged their shelters since the establishment of the camp; this phenomenon was largely ignored by the government. This created tension as neighbors competed with each other to take space and utilize it.

The dire conditions of the camps are also a result of a lack of trust, as refugees constantly fear that they may be denied their right to return to their homeland. Initial interventions in the camps during the 1950s and 1960s were faced by many obstacles, as refugees refused any attempts towards assimilation into the host communities (Bocco, 2009). Rempel (2009) points out how refugees feared that UNRWA's economic programs were aimed at creating a de facto integration in the host lands. Nonetheless, the harsh realities of survival led to acceptance of certain programs targeting education, income generation, social relief, and employment; however, all attempts to intervene in the physical settings of the camp have been rejected. Al Husseini and Bocco (2009) point out how, since

Jerash, The very first Palestinian Refugee Camp in Jordan, today. Photo: Dina Dahood Dabash

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the 1960s, every decision adopted by UNWRA was scrutinized politically in terms of its impact on the Right of Return, and its ramifications to the Palestinian national movement.

Palestinian refugees are a very heterogeneous group. Only about 18% of the refugees reside inside camps, the majority of Palestinian refugees live outside camps, reflecting the diversity in socio-economic conditions. Many Palestinian refugees brought with them higher skills and education levels that were lacking in the host country, facilitating their achievement and economic stability early after their migration (Khawaja & Tiltnes, 2002). Furthermore, most Palestinian refugees in Jordan were awareded Jordanian citizenship in 1954, in an arranegemnt that targetd facilitating their access to services while at the same time maintinig their right to return to their homaland (some refugees were excluded though, such as refugees from Gaza). This had a significant impact on refugees in Jordan, hence their higher living standards and achivements compared to refugees in the other host countries (i.e. Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza) (Department of Palestinian Affairs, n.d. ; Khawaja, 2003). Still, the living conditions of refugees inside the camps were vastly different, as these camps grew into pockets of severe poverty and social exclusion (Khawaja & Tiltnes, 2002).

Black September[1] was a catastrophically violent event that shaped, and continues to shape, the lives of Palestinian refugees in Jordan and their subjugation to varied forms of structural and symbolic violence. The tension between Palestinian factions, located mainly within the camps, and King Hussein resulted in bloody clashes that took the lives of thousands from each side. The results of the clashes were significant for the construction of identities by Jordanians and the exclusion of Palestinians with Jordanian nationality (refugees of the 1948 wars). It was not only about a sense of "Jordanianness" that rejected a Palestinian presence on Jordanian land, but also about excluding all Jordanians of Palestinian origin from public and security employment. Immediately afterwards, a process of Jordanization of government positions was initiated, and still continues (Fruchter-Ronen, 2008).

01. The term Black September refers to the Jordanians Civil War that began in September 1970 and ended in July of 1971.

In the 1970s, Jordan benefited from the oil boom and the salary transfers from Jordanians employed in the Gulf countries, thus, the government launched several development programs targeting socio-economic development, housing, and infrastructure. The tensions of "Black September", on the one hand, and the political implications of development within camps, on the other, gave refugee camps special status, resulting in minimal development inside the camps (Al Husseini & Bocco, 2009). This period is significant in the construction of meaning of the camp as a space of destitution, want, and relief.

Despite that, from the 1970s–1980s, some refugee families witnessed improvement, as they obtained employment in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries (Bocco, 2009). Many camp residents saw a gradual change in their quality of life while others managed to move outside the camp, though usually in the immediate surroundings of the camp. These new local "elite" developed networks within regional and national institutions and became instrumental in the shaping of development activities

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inside the camp, functioning, through their control of local organizations and government committees, as "gatekeepers". This is important as the case study below shows how such individuals found it difficult to accept the inclusiveness of the Camp Improvement Project and utilized different tactics to maintain their hegemony, often employing structural and social violence to reiterate their power.

Issues of "resettlement" and "alternative homeland" emerged in the1980s, which witnessed an attempt to introduce housing development into camps by the Jordanian government, an act which was completely rejected inside the camps. However, the return of approximately 300,000 Jordanians from the Gulf War in 1990–91, most of whom were Palestinian refugees, resulted in a new economic decline inside the refugee camps. As salary transfers dwindled, the camps suffered new socio-economic challenges. Again, the refugee camp was a space of distress, suffering, poor housing conditions, overcrowding, poverty, inferior environmental conditions, and no infrastructure (Abu Helwa & Birch, 1993).

These camps are dispersed across Jordan, but within Amman and its immediate vicinity there are four camps of varied conditions. The Hussein and Wihdat camps have capitalized on their location within the city through entrepreneurship, becoming commercial retail centers. These camps attract visitors through their diverse shopping opportunities, low cost, and lively markets (Table 1).

Camp Names	Year established	Number of refugees registered	Area (x 1000 meters square)	Economic base
Zarqa	1949	18,549	182.589	Varied (industrial & business entrepreneurs
Wihdat (Amman New Camp)	1955	51,751	479.164	Commercial and vocational entrepreneurship
Hussein	1952	29,560	445.241	Commercial entrepreneurship
Irbid	1951	25,000	240.00	Commercial and vocational entrepreneurship
Baq'a	1968	104,000	1400.00	Agricultural labor, commercial and vocational entrepreneurship
Talbiyeh	1968	7286	133.433	Agricultural and industrial labor
Husn (Shaheed Azmi Mufti)	1968	22,000	770.00	Agricultural and industrial labor
Marka (Hitteen)	1968	53,000	920.00	Light industrial and vocational entrepreneurship
Jerash (Gaza)	1968	24,000	750.00	Agricultural labor vocational entrepreneurship/crafts
Souf	1968	20,000	500.00	Agricultural labor

Table 1 Refugee camps in Jordan. Sources (Department of Palestinian Affairs -b, n.d.; UNRWA, n.d.; and author)

On the other hand, Talbiyeh, Marka, and Baq'a camps are on the outer edges of the city and have developed a character based on their location. Baq'a is in the midst of an agricultural area, whereas Marka is a vocational and light industrial area. Talbiyeh is a labor center with locals working in public and private institutions in mostly semi-skilled and non-skilled

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labor; it is mainly influenced by the industrial zone in close proximity, nearby agricultural land, and the airport, in addition to small labor and clerical positions in the municipality and UNRWA.

Other camps include Husn (Table 1) located near an industrial zone in the Houran agricultural plains (northern Jordan). Irbid Camp lies inside Irbid city and has become a part of the city center. Souf lies close to a village and has become an urban center for the residents of the village, while Zarqa developed into a city located close to the Jordan oil refinery and became a city center and hub of development for that region.

Understanding Violence in Refugee Camps

Generally, violence in refugee camps has been linked to socio-political and economic insecurity (Crisp, 2000). The psychological bearings of wars and migration impact stress levels and social interaction within camps. The impact on children has been singled out as camps are not designed for the wellbeing of children (Paardekooper, De Jong, & Hermanns, 1999).

Multiple researches have been dedicated to the social, economic and political dynamics of Palestinian refugee camps, but primarily on those in Lebanon and the West Bank. Studies have shown that the consequences of poverty, high density, and political tension result in psychological and mental stress as well as trauma (Farah, 2000; Suleiman, 1999; Marx, 1992). The construction of the refugee, as an aid receiving dependant

Life in Jerash Refugee Camp. Photos: Dina Dahood Dabash

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person, and the construction of the place, the camp, are both structurally intertwined with suffering, need, and pain (Peteet, 2005).

Studies into refugee camps in Jordan showed that the refugees believe that overcrowding and poverty are important factors in domestic and street violence. Teenagers and youth spend most of their leisure time on the street, as their homes are overcrowded; this results in them engaging in different activities starting with smoking and drinking and getting in contact with gangs and drugs (Khawaja & Tiltnes, 2002). The researchers found that refugee camps in Jordan are enclaves of poverty, as the homogeneity of income created a shared identity of "refugeeness" that has shaped the character of camps and confined their residents (Khawaja & Tiltnes, 2002).

This is further emphasized by the fact that refugees believe that they are discriminated against. For example, in Hejoj's (2007) study on causes of poverty, one half of survey respondents felt that government policies were to blame for their economic situation while approximately 18% believed that their political status of a refugee was the cause of poverty; less than one third of respondents felt it was something within an individual's control.

Hejoj noticed the causes of their poverty were a "politically-charged" issue that refugees were not comfortable with discussing it (which could be seen as an indicator of their feelings of insecurity). It is not a secret that the government practiced several policies that implicitly and explicitly excluded Palestinians from employment (Hejoj, 2007). Palestinian refugees have been subjected to an exclusionary discourse and actual policies that emphasized their "otherness" compared to Jordanians (Fruchter-Ronen, 2008; Perez, 2011). This structural violence against Palestinians has left marks on the camp refugees in particular, as they are the most vulnerable. The camp, in this sense, is a "political space", where "us" and "them", alongside "in" and "out" borders are clearly demarcated.

No wonder then that mental distress is widespread among all age groups in refugee camps in Jordan, with 15% reporting taking regular medication, 48% constantly feeling sad and depressed 60% feeling nervousness, and 50% worrying too much about things. Also, 13% of refugees suffer from four or more psychological distress symptoms. Mental stability closely correlates with occupation, income and housing conditions (Khawaja & Tiltnes, 2002).

Consequently, domestic violence has been identified as a problem in refugee camps in Jordan. Social, mental, and physical impacts of unhealthy living conditions lead to high levels of stress, depression, conflict between neighbors, and domestic violence (Farah, 2000; Khawaja, Linos, & El-Roueiheb, 2008).

Some camps have developed a reputation for crime and violence, specifically Irbid, Zarqa, and Ba'qa. The three camps are viewed as "unsafe" by their neighbors and in public discourse. Reports and talks of murder, gangs, drugs, rape, and assault take place and are considered part of the image of the place. In Husn/Al-Shaheed Camp, respondents discussed their image outside the camp and reflected on the title their camp has been awarded: "The Valley of the Wolves". It was possible to see that this

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image was painful for them, but they also felt that it was mainly a result of social tensions. They agreed that residents of nearby villages and towns did not accept their presence and would rather see them leave, and that it why they taint their image. Some narrated stories of trying to find jobs and being denied on account of being from the camp, thus they do not reveal their true place of residence and instead lie about it. They related that to the Black September events and the camps' role in them. They also felt that although crimes did occur in the camp, it was far less than what happened elsewhere. The author's talks with some people of Husn City, the closest neighbor of the camp, revealed that they harbored very negative images of the camp and the refugees.

During a similar visit to Baq'a camp, the author tried to discuss that image and the respondents (both male and female) undermined the violence. They said it was just a stereotype

that was propagated for political reasons. Their political activism and their nationalistic role created negative relationships with their Jordanian neighbors and such an image was intended to exclude and isolate them. Many women were quick to inform me that they were very safe in Baq'a as long as it was not too late, which they identified as after 1am: "where else can a women walk safely in the middle of the night?" Men noted that the crimes committed inside Baq'a or by Baq'a residents were not higher in rate than those of the neighboring areas (a fact that was verbally confirmed by the government officials and security officers on site). The majority of respondents felt that the image of violence was mainly related to aggressive behavior by the youth on the streets, which they acknowledged. The young men claimed that street life made people tough and that was why the youth and teenagers of Baq'a behaved in an aggressive manner – even if the motivation was just wishful thinking of possessing a powerful position.

Although Baq'a is an agrarian area, the camp itself is large (over 100,000 people) and has become an urban center of its own. Thus, the diversity of inhabitants, the high level of poverty, the dire social and economic needs, and the lack of extended familial support (as the limited number of extended family who are present in the same camp) creates a culture of determined uncompromising behavior, which may not necessary be violent, but may have impacted this image of aggression. The respondents highlighted the high number of families receiving UNRWA's relief aid, and the fact that many young men find themselves responsible for their families at an early age. Furthermore, overcrowding pushes the male adolescents and youth into the street, which puts them in direct contact with varied aspects of street life at a very young age. Some felt that delinquency would be greatly reduced should the problem of street youth be addressed. Similarly, both Zarqa and Irbid are camps that have come to be major urban city centers. The socio-economic conditions inside these camps are typical of refugee camps in the region, including high poverty rates, crowding, exclusion and discrimination, in addition to unemployment.

Of particular interest is violence expressed in relation to football matches of the Wihdat camp football team, which can be considered a

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representation and reflection of the structural and social violence committed against refugee camps. The varied hostile attitudes against refugees by the main government discourse, which started after the Black September clashes, resulted in strong form of nationalism among refugees. This is manifested in the zealot support for the Wihad camp football team, who has come to symbolize Palestinians in Jordan. Violence between the two main rivals, Wihdat (representing Palestinian) and Faisali team (representing Jordanian) is ridiculous when remembering that the players are of mixed origins from both Palestine and Jordan. However, the symbolism of the two teams playing, each representing an enclave of nationalism, cannot be missed. This violence related to football games is heavily related to suppressed nationalism in camps, and the hate which was fostered after Black September among Jordanians.

An explanation was offered by a respondent: after the 1970 Black September events, in which refugee camps were strongholds for Palestinian faction fighting, the Jordanian army prohibited any act of activism in the camps. As part of that, suppression of Palestinian nationalism has led to furthering feelings of oppression. Football has become a coping strategy.

Thus, political activism is known to bring clashes with the security forces. Typically, Baq'a and Wihdat Camp in Amman are known for their activism and residents take pride in the fact that they initiate demonstrations in support for the Palestinian cause. Studies show that refugee youth and adolescents suffer high levels of distress and depression due to the prolonged conflict and the structural violence they face as refugees (Chatty, 2007). They have developed several coping strategies such as education, the formation of formal and informal groups, avoidance of tense social relations, the amplification of Palestinian identity, religion, the development of a sense of belonging to the camp, the support of peers, early marriage, and the support of family and kin (Chatty & Hundt, 2001).

Case study: The Urban Improvement Initiative

The Talbiyeh Camp Improvement Project

The Talbiyeh camp is one of the emergency camps created in the aftermath of the 1967 wars. It is located on the southern boundary of Amman in a poverty pocket that is slowly changing from an agricultural to an industrial economic base. The camp of 133.33 square meters houses refugees from Beer Sheba, Hebron, Ramallah, Jericho, and Gaza and faces several challenges of unemployment, poverty, extreme density, poor housing, and poor environmental conditions (UNRWA, 2008). The official camp boundaries include 1,313 shelters housing 810 families; however, the camp and its surrounding spill off include 7,286 individuals.

Today, Talbiyeh camp has semi-urban characteristics. In the past 15 years, the area witnessed many changes. The growth of Amman southwards on the main north-south highway brought the capital closer to this area on the one hand; the establishment of an industrial park has been changing the job market and economic opportunities on the other.

Upon its establishment, each family had a tent, later replaced with a room built with concrete masonry units and asbestos roof. Through time,

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families added rooms according to availability of space and resources. Currently, the average family has about 71 m^2 for shelter, but this does not reflect the high density of some of the shelters. The number of families in shelters ranges between one and five, with 10% of shelters housing 2 or more families. Furthermore, 12% of families live in abject poverty and 32% are in relative poverty. The urban context is not very promising either, as there is limited open space, no recreational areas, and limited vehicular access to many camp corners (UNRWA, 2008).

The Talbiyeh Camp Improvement Project was initiated in June 2008 to mark a new phase in how UNRWA handled refugee camps. The newly established Camp Improvement Department, unlike others in the organization, did not adopt an authoritarian relief-oriented approach, but was founded on partnership with the community and sustainable development approaches. It was anticipated that the new department would revolutionize how UNRWA operated, if UNRWA managed to honor their commitment to community-based development (Misselwitz and Hanafi, 2010; Budeiri, 2014).

Consequently, the Talbiyeh Camp Improvement Project used several modes of participation including, but not limited to, door to door surveys, thematic groups, focus groups, public meetings, and neighborhood groups. The main forum for participation was the Work Group (WG), an open council where the planning, discussions, and decisions were made. The Work Group included heads of public and local organizations, activists, family heads, and any interested individual.

The project produced a list of priorities and included several sub-projects, which complemented each other and were all based on community

Talbiyeh Refugee Camp in Jordan-Source: Al Nammari (2010)

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Talbiyeh Refugee Camp

agency (Al-Nammari, 2014). This included components concerning education, health service, infrastructure, shelter, urban space, local NGOs, and economic opportunities. Of relevance was a series of training done with local youth to address employability and life skills; an employment office was likewise established to support job searching; so too were training of local trainers and projects for income generation realized. Adolescents had several trainings and activity projects to facilitate their input and collaboration with the project towards the redevelopment of the play areas and other open spaces.

Violence in the Talbiyeh camp

As part of the planning of the urban upgrade, discussions of the community's priority needs often led to requests for one key concern: "police presence in the camp, especially at night", which was ranked sixth in the community needs. The ranking was done by a random sample composing 10% of the local community, stratified by age and gender. This feeling of insecurity was mainly expressed by women, youth, and adolescents. However, most males rejected this need and refuted any state of insecurity.

During the focus groups, women and adolescents were the ones who identified violent behavior as problematic. The main concerns were three fold: vandalism, violence between individuals which escalated to become violence between families due to the culture of kin support, and drugs. The discussion showed that types of violence are as follows:

- Against the self : drugs (no suicide took place in the camp);
- Against persons at home (domestic violence);
- Against property, through stealing, damaging, arson, and vandalism.
- Against persons in the public realm, including youth groups (not gangs), and familial quarrels. This was mostly about control of resources and power conflicts. The youth did not engage in serious gang activity but did act violently over conflicts of interest;

The discussion showed how space was a central issue (Table 2). Domestic violence was very much explained in terms of overcrowding and dire economic need. Most social physical violence was attributed to quarrels over space. Neighbors fighting over an available square meter (and sometimes over 20 cm of expansion) were a recurrent incident and often ended in courts. Once an individual was in a fight the culture of kin created tension between the two families and the conflict often escalated if the families

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	persons		property		other
	individual	group	private	public	
Domestic	Wife/ child abuse	—	Theft Arson	—	discrimination between siblings, children work, early marriages, and severe financial hardship
Schools	Student quarrels, teacher-student violence	Student groups fighting	Stealing from classmates	Vandalism at school	Verbal and mental abuse by teachers. Drugs reported by students but denied by school
NGOS, UN, and government organizations	—	Quarrels between rival power structures	—	Vandalism	Structural and symbolic violence. Lack of transparency, corruption accusations, bias, and no inclusiveness
Street and alleys	Fights between individuals, especially youth and teenagers	Youth group quarrels – support of kin individual fights	Theft	Vandalism of street furniture and public property	Nothing was observed over the visits, which was explained in term of time, most violence takes place at night. Girls reported sexual harassment.
Parks, playgrounds	Individual quarrels between children or teenagers	Fights between users (children and teenagers) on right of use	Theft	Vandalism	Rape of male boys reported at night in secluded spaces. Drug abuse also reported.

Table 2: Types of violence by location

had a tendency for violent behavior. Some families in the camp even constructed a reputation for being physically violent against their adversaries, which made people avoid them. However, they seemed to acquire what they wanted most of the time. Few people reported incidents to the police.

Crimes of sexual nature were difficult to assess, as the community would not talk about them. However, during the five years of visiting the camp for research and projects, three cases of sexual violence were discovered by the police. Talks to individuals from the security service revealed that they did not consider the camp violent; on the contrary, it was among the calmer places. Unlike large camps inside Amman the camp did not witness crimes such as murder, gangs, or organized crime (Table 3). This camp's small size probably created strong collective ties and provided strong social capital to youth, relative to other camps. The residents assumed that violence may be associated to the homogeneity of the inhabitants, in terms of their incomes and social value systems. Furthermore, being on the boundaries of Amman and not in its center created less economic and social pressures. Still, a rise in drug abuse and family quarrels were noted in the last ten years. Vandalism, on the other hand, was cited as an incident that was repetitive and created serious damage to public property.

Discussions of the reasons behind the varied forms of violence (Figure 2) showed that the community understood the problem to be rooted in:

- Environmental pressures. The cramped conditions in the camp and lack of space, created tensions and made most inhabitants highly stressed. This was compounded by the poor quality of shelters, as the zinc roofing made rooms very hot in the summer and very cold

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in the winter; in addition, these roofs leaked and were not able to control noise. Having an average of 5-6 individuals in a space of 70 square meters "made everybody on edge". One of the respondents complained, "I can hear what my neighbor says to his wife!" Furthermore, many complained about the infrastructure, as they felt that the poor quality was a result of the lack of attention paid to them as refugees: streets executed in the camp, for example, were of poor quality, compared to streets in other places in Amman. The inferior infrastructure and complete disregard of the serious environmental issues (such as the garbage collection point inside the camp, the inadequate rainwater drainage, the poor drinking water service, etc.) were all "intended" and they, as refugees, were excluded for the normal services that were awarded to the average areas of Amman.

- Economic pressures, lack of job opportunities, low wages, high dependency rates, the inability to meet daily life needs, and scarce resources. "I work morning to afternoon as a garbage collector with the municipality, then I work as a male hair dresser until midnight, and I still cannot move to my own place", said one respondent who occupied a room at his parents' shelter, which housed himself, his wife, and their two children. The shelter was composed of four rooms each occupied by one family and they shared the kitchen, washroom, and living area. Most youth had a feeling of complete despair as they felt that they had no possibility of a better quality of life, as long as they remained in the camp. Some felt that the only solution was to immigrate due to the discrimination against Palestinians in Jordan.
- Social pressures of being away from family, expectations from family and the community, feelings of insecurity due to the political situation, worry, pressure by family or relatives, and pressure by the community were also mentioned, especially by women. Many women are forced into marriage at an early age, many are denied education, and varied types of injustices take place as girls feel that they are treated differently than their brothers. A teenager exclaimed, "I have to make tea for my brother when he asks, and he will beat me if I don't....my mother does not help. They ignores my complaints!" Males talked about pressures to meet expectations and the financial requirements of marriage.
- Political: the main source of stress was the lasting temporariness of being in the camp, the inability to return, and the fact that there was no solution on the horizon. The stale peace process, compounded by the continued violence that is continually practiced against family members who are still under Israeli occupation, remains a tragic fact.

Table 3: Types of criminal violence as revealed in focus groups, interviews, and through observation

All of the above mentioned factors are in fact forms of structural, mental, and symbolic violence that refugees faced on a daily basis. One of the most poignant responses during an early interview for the Camp Improvement

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Category	Perpetrator	Kind	Spread	Locus	Reported by	Corroboration by formal gov. and UN employees
Economic (theft of property, damage to property)	Adolescents and youth inside the camp	Petty theft	Common	Any possible place	Children, women, men	Yes
	Youth inside and around the camp-mainly based outside the camp	Drug trafficking	Limited according to male interviewees, common according to female interviewees	Schools, homes	Adolescence and women	Qualified
	Male Adults	Scrap (theft of metal objects)	Limited	Outside the camp	Male adults women	Yes
	Unauthorised vendor booths	Selling items on streets	Common amongst the unemployed youth	Outside the camp	Adult males and females	Yes
	Adolescents mostly	Vandalism	Common	Public space	All	Yes
	Families or youth conflicts, disgruntled students	Arson	Rare in private property (one in five years) but limited in schools (two in five years)	Private property and schools	All	Yes
	Brothers, male family members	Inheritance overtaking	Very common	Women forced to give their inheritance to male relative (brother or uncle)	Women	Yes
Social	Adolescents and youth	groups	Common	School, streets, alleys	Women and adolescence	Some
	Males (adults and youth)	family fights over space, power	Common	alleys	Women, youth, adolescents	Yes
	Parents, teachers, colleagues	child abuse, bullying	Common	Home, school, street	Women, children adolescents	Yes
	Parents towards each other and towards children	Domestic violence,	Common	Home	children adolescents	Yes
	Males	rape	Comparatively rare (three reported cases in five years)	Varied	women adolescents	Limited
	Anybody – arguments exploding	Interpersonal, physical and verbal assault	Common	Streets, school	All focus groups	Yes
	males	Alcoholism	Limited	Homes,	Women	Limited
Political	Male youth	Demonstration, security force interrogations, security clashes, detentions	No	common in other camps (ex. Gaza camp-Baq'a camp)	-	Camp is not politically active

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project was "our blood is worthless, our suffering is worthless, we have no rights, and you want to discuss what improvements we need? How about going back home?" One elderly lady, when answering the door-to-door survey questionnaire, started crying upon being asked about her camp's needs. "Dignity" she said. "We had dignity back home, we were on our own land, working and eating what we sowed, but now..." Life in the camp presents a state of being uprooted, homeless and out of place, yet still within a defined space with legal borders and a distinct character. The camp offered a pseudo-home, as a home for waiting, a space for loss, for denial, and for those without rights. The violence of being denied was significant; it was a denial of the people and their story.

Shaden, a young lady who recently graduated from the university, was receiving congratulations for being appointed in a government position, but the following day I saw her sad: "They said I cannot have the job because my father was not born in Jordan". Being excluded because one's refugee status was commonplace, and also legalised. Similar frustrations were reported by male youth, who felt that their career options were limited and that their ability to obtain good jobs was hindered on account of their identity. Options for work were limited to small jobs, mostly as non-skilled laborers paid between 180-200 Jordanian dinar monthly (approximately $200-$250). Many young men received excellent vocational training, but were still unemployed. Upon discussing that with one adolescent he explained: "such training would allow one to get 300 dinar as a start and an experienced master of this trade gets 700-800 dinar [monthly], but I could not find any vacancy in any factory here. They said there are more positions available in the King Hassan area [in the North Jordan industrial zone], but I don't know anybody there... The number of positions seem to be limited, do you know anybody who can help me find a suitable job?" One of the youth explained why a laborer position at the industrial zone does not offer much: "I keep wondering, how I am supposed to start a family when I cannot even cover my own expenses?" Most respondents were confident that one could not find any promising employment without having contacts (commonly known as wasta), and since they did not have powerful contacts, it would be better to immigrate. Many of the young men participating in the focus groups had plans for immigration to Sweden, Australia, or Canada.

Additionally, the continued political turmoil in occupied Palestine -fear for family and kin- on the one hand, was coupled by frustration over the peace process which did not offer anything for refugees. The "Right of Return" is sacred and refugees have learned not to trust the UN. Thus, upon initiating the project, there was rejection and fear that it was a trap and any improvements would hinder their right to return. However, discussions within the community reached a point of consent on the principle that living in miserable conditions impacts their health and that of their children, thus the improvements were their human right to a healthy environment and accordingly should not be related to their right to return home. The discussions revealed not only the high level of distrust and insecurity they felt, but also reflected self-perception, as they were at a point were improving the quality of life requiredlegitimization.

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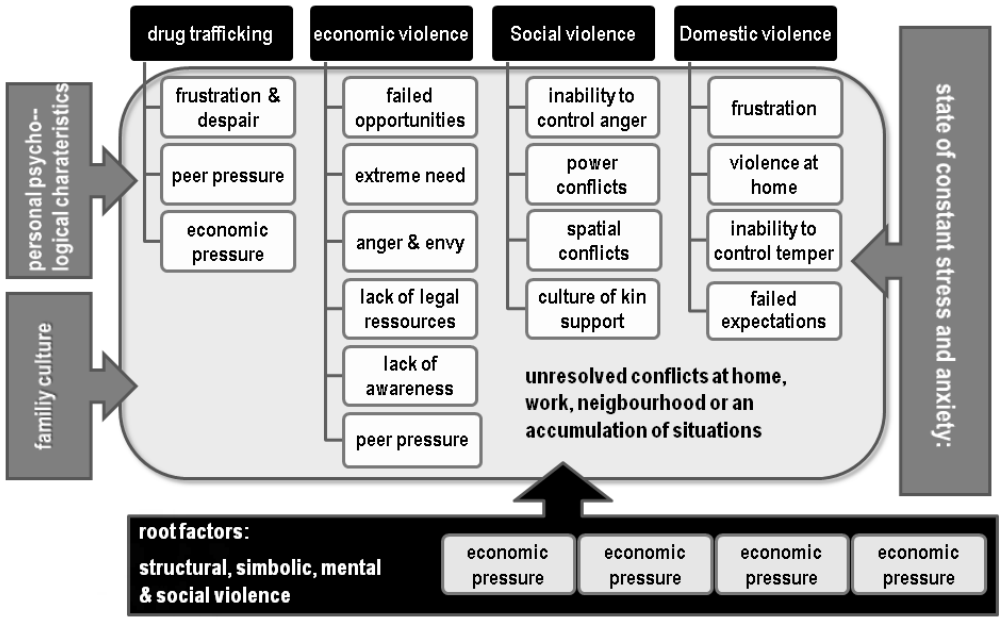
It is important to note that the dynamics of participation in the Talbiyeh Camp Improvement Project reflected the structural and mental violence within the camp itself. The Camp Improvement Project offered a first time opportunity for any interested individual to participate and encouraged women and youth to have an input. Typically, public affairs were monopolized by heads of local organizations and a consulting committee created by the Jordanian Government from local elites. The adult males who usually predominated in such matters were not appreciative of the transparency and the inclusion of the project. Different tactics were used to exclude opinions, and varied forms of violence and counter violence were used, none of which was criminal in nature, but more symbolic, mental, structural, and social.

The early meetings witnessed varied attempts to overlook new faces and reflect the power and status of the elite, which discouraged new participants. Invited females in the early meeting rarely spoke, and if they did, they were ignored by the males. Youth, on the other hand, faced ridicule for their opinions and had most of their suggestions undermined. The discussions showed the male elite emphasizing their experience and knowledge and communicated to other participants that they did not belong. Many of the new faces, males and females, felt overpowered and were inhibited from participating, which later required intensive work by the project team in order to maintain participation and input (Al-Nammari F., 2014).

In the decision-making phase, verbal and mental abuse, accusations, and violent arguments were used to control decisions and halt or direct resolutions. Several groups in the camp had their own agenda and the

Sources and cycle of violence according to local focus group discussions



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meetings witnessed the consolidation of these groups in one space for the first time. The corresponding struggles for power led to varied tactics inside and outside the meetings. This included rumors intended for social ostracization, mobilization against specific projects, undermining of the capacities of rival groups, and many other tactics that deployed mental and structural violence. The attendance of many youth and women, in particular, quickly dropped as they were subjugated to such verbal and emotional attacks. Within the heat of the arguments there were verbal threats for the use of physical violence against each other and against the project team (Al-Nammari F. , 2014; 2014_b).

Within the camp space varied forms of violence were generated and reproduced in manners that furthered the exclusion of the average refugee. The violent reactions against ideas which questioned the established hegemonic order demonstrate how far the community has internalized varied types of structural violence directed towards them and use similar tactics against each other (Al-Nammari F. , 2013; 2014). The struggle for power depended heavily on such forms of violence. This is significant as the camps space is usually friendly, and those with a different opinion are not criminals. Whenever those opponents in a meeting meet outside the camp most of time they exchange warm welcomes and generous invitations. This reflected a state of heavy mental stress in which people were unable to handle additional pressures. Thus, one of the elder clan leaders explained, when asked about missing meetings "with all the bad news taking place around, there is only so much stress that I can handle". The general context of anxiety, social exclusion, political failure, and absence of just solutions for their predicament created a continued state of stress, which limited residents' ability to manage conflict.

Vandalism

Upon discussing the suggested urban improvement proposals, focus groups and the Work Group identified a high risk of vandalism, citing stories of previous attempts to improve the urban environment, which were sabotaged. Some even requested the presence of police, while others maintained that any improved space would need a guard.

Vandalism has several definitions, but Moser (1992) provides a definition focusing on the socio-psychology of the phenomenon. Vandalism is mainly an act of "aggression towards the environment, an aggression aimed not at individuals, but at objects, whatever symbolic value they may be granted, and that damaging them allows the vandal to reach the symbolized authority through the object" (Moser, 1992, p21). According to Roos (1992), the vandal has an objective of ritualistic change to the environment, rather than real change. Autonomy is at the heart of this act, which also has a strong symbolism. When an adolescent vandalizes a school, for example, he is actually attacking a symbol of power.

This prompted the project team to conduct a quick evaluation of the problem in 2008. A series of focus groups with male adolescents and youth, in addition to women, and officials from the Department of Palestinian Affairs and the UNRWA resulted in better understating of the problem:

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What?

Damage to public property in general had limited the presence of any items in the public realm, such as trash bins, trash containers, and traffic signs. A long history of vandalism in the public space was the reason why the only play ground was dysfunctional. Apparently, there had been two previous attempts to improve public spaces that were condemned to failure due to abuse of equipment or the theft of it altogether.

Furthermore, schools in particular were victims of vandalism, including the marking of desks and blackboards to light fixtures and toilets. Graffiti was limited to a few statements on the walls of shelters or in the school; simple words (ex. names, adjectives) that defaced the facades of public organizations as well as private shelters.

Private property was attacked only in discords between families. Such attacks were very few, and were known to the community in general, but seldom reported.

Why?

Several predominant reasons for vandalism were cited, all revolving around the camp space as a place of hardship and adversity. Although participants were against the behaviour, most would sympathise due to feelings of social oppression:

a) economic :

- immediate cash (by selling items as scrap, or exchanging them for other items of value)
- domestic reuse (items that can be reused such as toilet fixtures, faucets, etc.)

b) social

- adolescents expressing anger or anti-social behaviour, resulting from economic pressures, limited opportunity, domestic violence, peer pressure, and abuse. Teenagers displayed difficulties in their ability to manage life obstacles, anxiety, and frustration about their future, depression, disorientation, or rebellion.
- space conflicts: space was important and families attempt taking over any available space.
- power issues: certain families and networks would act when they saw decisions or actions that undermined their interests.

Who:

Most respondents agreed that the perpetrators were mostly male adolescents. Discussions with the school, the Women's Programs Center, the Work Group, and other focus groups revealed that many parents felt that the male adolescents had tendencies for behaviour problems in general. They identified several reasons for it: overcrowding in the shelters,

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poverty, domestic violence, economic frustrations, limited job prospects, feelings of discrimination.

Still, there was adult vandalism, though limited, that took place on account of familial conflicts; it would include damage to private property, located in spaces in conflict. Power struggles also create familial conflicts, as families supported their relatives. Such incidents were rarely reported but resulted in damages to private property or physical attacks (limited in general, but known to happen by specific families).

Where:

Streets, open spaces, playgrounds, and schools were the main targets. In the case of private property, many incidents were not reported, and the community did not cooperate in exposing the perpetrators.

The planned initiative: "Beautify Your Area"

Through the participatory planning process, the community was able to identify adolescent vandalism as a very high risk to their planned public space improvements. Discussions of the issue with local organizations showed that the Women's Program Center had specialized experience dealing with behavior change programs, adolescent issues, and violence. The administration and the volunteers had many ideas on how teenage behavior could be targeted through a variety of methods, which they had used over the years in sporadic workshops. This was not based on their academic training, but on their accumulated knowledge though the "Training as Trainers", which they received in the projects that they have participated in.

As such, the Camp Improvement Project developed a strategy with the Women's Program Center to approach vandalism (Table 4). This was an interesting happening in which the local organization worked with professionals from UN Camp Improvement to join in addressing a possible risk to the Action Plan, created by the community. The Women's Program Center had no experience in construction or space design; such experience, in addition to funding, was offered through the Camp Improvement Project.

Based on the input by all parties involved, the following initiative was developed: the target group identified was adolescents (teenagers), both male and female (in order to have a gender balance); they were to be composed of two sub groups that were known to the trainees and school administration only; approximately half of the trainees would be adolescents without any behaviour problem, mostly academic achievers or leaders, but the rest were to be adolescence with behaviour problems. The assumption was that a mixture of the two would allow the ones with behaviour problems to work with the others and learn skills and attitudes from them.

The concept was based on providing adolescents with the skills they needed to manage their lives and deal with stress, giving special focus to their personal identity so that they could improve their self-image and develop a future vision of their own. By offering them the opportunity to practice such skills through a project of their own design (under guidance

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	Time	Content	Parties involved
Pre-implementation	Two weeks	Identification of targets	WPC and preparatory schools in the camp
Phase 1	Six days	Self-identity skills	WPC
	Six days	Life skills	WPC
	Six days	Planning an urban intervention based on Camp Improvement Plan	Participants, neighbors, CIP and WPC team
	Ten-fifteen days	Implementation of the urban intervention	Participants, neighbors, CIP and WPC team
	Three days	Conclusion, reflection, and planning the next phase.	Leaders identified for next phase. selection from target group of adolescence with
Modified initiative Phase 2			
Phase 2	Two weeks	Inviting peers, promoting experience, identification of new participants- peer learning	
	Six days	Workshops: life skills	
	Six days	Self-identity skills	
	Ten-fifteen days	Planning an urban intervention based on Camp Improvement Plan. Implementation of the urban interventions	This part was implemented with group leaders from Phase 1. Several small projects were planned and implemented under supervision.
	Three days	Conclusion, reflection, and planning the next phase.	Creation of a core group for urban improvement volunteer tasks.
Phase 3: expanding projects	Participating in any initiative or project inside the camp with Camp Improvement Plan. This included participation in initiatives by the local youth targeting a variety of issues such as drug awareness, sports, and arts.		

Table 4 Iinitiative Design

from the trainers), the participants were granted the independence that they required as adolescence in search of their own identity.

The title of the initiative, as envisioned by the volunteers themselves, was "Beatify Your Area" (Jammel Matiqtak); it was initiated in phases in the spring and summer of 2009, and then again in 2010. It was intended to emphasize positive environmental change, rather than destruction, and encourage a sense of ownership of the environment.

The Women's Programs Center suggested a three tier strategy:

Tier 1: Self-identity

The training was based on the assumption that achieving an identity was a central task facing adolescents and helped them in their quest

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for autonomy. Therefore, this part targeted self-exploration in a variety of exercises, including understanding the self and building self-esteem (Cobb, 1992). It comprised skills for self-understanding and evaluation, personal identity and development understanding the self, safe zone, personal rights, responsibilities, exploring life options and personally defined goals, gender roles, ego and the self, family, community, autonomy, minority identity, and culture.

Tier 2: Life skills

Life skills were important for empowering the youth to act responsibly, take initiative, and take control (Cobb, 1992). The training included a variety of relevant skills, essential for surviving, living with others, and succeeding; topics included communication skills, self-regulation, prosaically behavior, problem-solving, decision-making, civic responsibility, conflict resolution, communication with peers, parents, and teachers, and team work. The training was based on the assumption that when young people were able to manage the challenges of their daily lives, they would feel empowered and assertive and thus, would be less likely to resort to anti-social behaviors. The training was conducted through participatory learning, group reflections, and exercises.

Tier 3: Agency through urban space

This part assumed that adolescents become more autonomous as they choose to be part of the decision-making process. Through agency, the adolescent could achieve the level of autonomy and independence that they described (Cobb, 1992). The objective therefore was to improve self-esteem though engagement with peers in positive and socially-valued activities that the parents also supported. This also offered opportunities for enhancing skills such as self-organization, commitment, responsibility, and peer learning. The latter was a significant part of the initiative. Through this process, teens were expected to improve their communication and interpersonal skills, autonomy, and satisfaction with social support.

The targeted urban space would be selected based on the Camp Improvement Plan, the urban development strategy that the community generated through the participatory learning process. It included lists of needs, plans identifying loci for intervention, and results of the door-to-door surveys, focus groups, neighborhood meetings, thematic groups, and Work Group workshops. The Camp Improvement Plan identified locations for possible urban improvement through simple intervention aimed at improving the urban space. The participants were given the opportunity to choose where to work, but they had to design the intervention and implement it in conjunction with the neighbors, which was an excellent exercise in leadership and communication.

The concept of "safe zone"

The idea of the safe zone was both locational and conceptual. So during his/her work in the project, the teenagers are offered a space in which they feel safe from violence, including verbal, mental, or physical violence.

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They are treated with respect and their ideas are valued. In return, they have to practice exposing respect to other individuals and not to abuse them verbally, mentally, or physically. The training emphasized the right of each individual to be appreciated, while offering the initiative as a space in which the adolescence could receive that kind of esteem.

It was imperative that the trainers maintained a healthy environment so that none of them was subjected to any kind of violence (relatively speaking, since some of its causes were beyond the trainers' capacity to remove (such as the poverty or the confinement to the refugee camp). The essence of the safe zone is respect for one's self and for others. It requires a change in behaviour so that the adolescents do not abuse each other, which also demands for contemplation of their life and relationships.

Implementation

In the first phase, each of the four available trainers had approximately 15-20 trainees. However, the second phase included 25 trainees per trainer. Eventually, the number of participants increased to such an extent that four trainers were no longer enough. So a Training of Trainers was conducted for 30 male and female youth in order to teach them how to manage initiatives by other adolescents. This produced a total of 30 trainers, who managed more than 100 trainees (figures 3, 4, and 5). The last phase was an evaluation of the receptiveness of the youth and adolescence to the opportunities provided and to develop their own and independent ideas.

However, as part of the self-evaluation the trainers felt that they needed the help of a trained psychologist. The trainees started to disclose their personal problems or family conflicts and expect guidance and support, which went beyond the trainers' professional preparation and skills.
For each individual environmental improvement location, the trainees had to incorporate the neighbors, which emphasised their feelings of civic responsibility (Table 5). The trainers noted that many mothers came to the Women's Programs Center to ask about the training, as they noticed serious changes in the behaviour and attitude of their children. Of particular interest to all was the concept of "safe zone", about which the teenagers had talked at home with the result that now the mothers started to claim the same from their peers and family.

As phase two started, a local branch of a national NGO donated uniforms to the trainees. This was a significant moment for them as they felt they were being recognised positively. Also, elderly women and men

Project initiatives

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were stopping them around the camp and asking them to work in their alleys. The value of this cannot be over emphasized as they experienced acknowledgement of their agency and independence.

The dynamics of the implementation indicate a snow ball effect, as each stage witnessed more work, more trainees, and more ideas. This reached a point where the training program became a volunteer force that expanded its work beyond urban space. The last stage witnessed initiatives to address drugs and delinquency.

The implemented projects

Program participants were asked to implement a project that had been recommended by the community. These generally were small projects in urban pockets and became part of the Camp Improvement Plan. The participants discussed the potential spaces and their first project to start with was a space within the alleys. However, due to their negative image, the neighbors did not approve.

Table 5: Projects implemented

Projects done entirely by target group		
Title of Project	**Type of work done**	**Vandalism?**
Side walk improvement (first project)	Tiling, paint, planting	No, but plants died after the project closed their offices in 2012 as no neighbor was around to water them.
School improvements	cleaning, planting, and paint	
CBRC side building	Cleaning the yards, painting the building inside and out (work done with volunteers from outside the camp)	Limited graffiti
Camp greening	Helping residents plant trees.	No
CIP major projects implemented with help by participants		
Title of Project	Type of work done	Vandalism?
Play space	Participatory design workshop	Neglect
Multi-use space	Painting of neighbours' walls according to the resident's wishes	Vandalism due to power conflicts-no adolescence involved
Urban improvement projects done without target group involvement		
Title of Project	Type of work done	Vandalism?
School improvements	Participation in the detailed design was limited to parents, UNRWA, and school administration. Student input sought in the early stages only.	Vandalised
Clinic improvements	Participation of adult users and doctors	Limited graffiti
Projects inside local CBOs and NGOs		Not vandalised. Design included window protection bars. Location highly visible

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Thus, the first realized intervention was in front of the Camp Improvement Office, a walkway that led to the main mosque. The participants opted for that space as they did not need neighbors' approval. They prepared plans and worked on implementation immediately, which proved to be of significance. As all camp residents saw what they were doing, they started talking about it. Upon finishing this project, the adolescent participants had gained the trust of the community.

In phase two several small projects were implemented (Table 5). Some of them included planting trees, others painting facade, while others combined several interventions. It was up to the participants to design, obtain needed materials, and tackle the challenges of the various projects. The Women's Programs Center provided supervision through trainers and the Camp Improvement Project provided the funds.

In designing the Action Plan projects, the flowing adjustments were taken into account:

- for the Camp Improvement Project on open urban spaces
    - additional light was provided;
    - neighbors were involved and were responsible for the space;
    - one neighbor at least committed to watering the plants, other committed to monitoring;
    - spaces were designed by the neighbors;
    - spaces were located at areas where there was heavy pedestrian circulation (except for the playground which had a corner location);
    - ownership of the space was not sufficient to prevent vandalism by adults, due to power and space conflicts (high barrier had to be installed at a later stage).
- for the Camp Improvement Project buildings (clinic, NGO and school):
    - the design took into account securing fixtures at the facades, iron bars to prevent access through windows;
    - UNRWA regulation applied and did not allow for night lights at schools;
    - though NGO buildings were highly visible they were not targeted by vandalism; nonetheless, they were also secured through iron bars on windows and high boundary walls.

Noteworthy in all these adjustments was that they were done based on advice from the local community, who participated in all stages of the projects. It was clear that such coping strategies became standard in the camp.

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A planning workshop Source: Al Nammari (2010)

Immediate Impact

The trainers and teachers noticed that the participants developed better self-esteem; they started volunteering in projects in the camp as well as with other local organizations. They developed a taste for volunteer work. One has to take into account that there were not many possibilities for spending leisure time in the camp. So volunteering in varied initiatives in the project and with other organizations developed as a new past time for adolescents. Sometimes volunteering included a snack, also of interest for some. But the participants talked about how much better they felt about themselves, and how proud their families were of them.

Teachers noted that participants' attendance had improved as well as responsiveness in class and their behaviour at school in general. Furthermore, the known 'troublesome teenagers who had been intentionally mixed with the other participants, had integrated well or even become leaders. Peer education was taking place and the new groups continued functioning as volunteers in the project. This was encouraged in phase 2, as they were allowed to invite their friends and lead them in a new initiative.

The most important feedback came from the participants themselves. They noted that they not only felt better about whom they were, but they sensed a change in how people treated them. Their parents, relatives, and neighbors seemed to show respect and stopped undermining them. There was a new feeling of positivity that they cherished. The community around them was collectively changing their perception of who they were and what they could do.

Sample cases

- Ahmad S. was expelled from the male preparatory school before the initiative started. After joining the training he returned to his school as the Women's Programs Center trainers interceded with

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the school administration. His teachers noted a change in his behaviour not only towards them but also towards his peers. He was elected to the student senate one year after, and remained in school despite his previous thoughts of quitting.

- S and Y both had no plans to finish their school education and were succumbing to the idea of getting married and leaving school early. Each changed their plans and respectively decided to finish her high school career and pursue a college education.
- Zain had minor behaviour problems at school but distinguished herself during training and continued to volunteer in Camp Improvement activities after the initiative was concluded. Her school performance improved, as did her parents' trust. She had difficulty leaving home earlier as her parents did not approve it, but as her volunteer work continued, she noted that she found it easier to obtain approval to leave the house. She finished her high school, trained as a hair dresser, and continues her volunteerism with the Women's Programs Center.

Long-term impact

The initiative did not stop vandalism in the camp, for one, not all vandals had participated, and moreover it only functioned for a limited period. However, the long-term impact on the lives of participants was felt by mothers and by the trainers. It has been five years since the end of the programme and participants are now out of school or in college. Although the participants mostly felt that the initiative helped them in contemplating who they were and what they wanted, most importantly they had been given an opportunity to engage in positive activities, of which there are few in the camp. Adolescents did not have many alternatives much to do in the camp before the project started. Many adolescents had expressed that they did not benefit from the existence of two local sports clubs as those focused on soccer, wining matches, and were not at all inclusive but new members were admitted dependent on connections. However, the program initiative offered them a chance to achieve something tangible: they remember the times positively and feel that they have a different approach to life than before their participation.

Teachers noted that the impact of the initiative was limited in time and span. For a short time after the initiative the teenagers where clearly changing. Still, soon after the project was gone there was not much happening and they rejoined their former groups, albeit they maintained a different attitude. Their awareness about what they aspired for in life and their feelings of worth did not change. And, after all, the program did not include all teenagers with behaviour problems but only those who agreed to join.

The participants had hoped that the initiative would continue, as year after year new boys grew up and wanted to get involved. The Women's Programs Center was interested in having to turn the initiative into a permanent program backed by the positive feedback they received from mothers. Yet, the volunteers that implemented the initiative are now

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employed full-time and cannot offer the same free services as before. Also, as the Camp Improvement Project concluded, the funding for the initiative also ceased.

Vandalism in school continued, as did vandalism outside. The spaces created by the participants did not witness much vandalism but remain witness to the ability of local adolescents. The Women's Programs Center and the schools felt that the main benefit from the initiative was its impact on the individuals involved.

Lessons learned

Successes:

- Successive training by varied organizations creates opportunities on the local level that are often ignored. Local organizations are also rarely involved in the planning of new interventions and international NGOs often assume that locals do not have the required capacity. In this case, the participation of the Women's Programs Center showed that locals can have a leadership role that capitalizes on previous experiences.
- Adolescents become more autonomous as they choose to be part of the decision-making process. Their input in the urban improvement initiative improved their interest in the civic sphere. Many continued volunteerism with NGOs, especially the Women's Programs Center. The initiative opened a new world for them where they could practice being themselves in positive manners.
- At the heart of the program was the concept of "safe zone", which seemed to help the participants interact with their families and peers. Mothers in particular felt that the notion was very helpful in improving the behavior of their children.
- Local residents helped in improving the self-esteem of the participants, as they were acknowledging of the work that participants were realizing. Their subsequent participation in the implementation of projects selected by the community also helped them create a totally new image for themselves. Over two years of implementation, most of the participants constructed positive new self-images. The fact that people changed how they treated them helped them in their process of change.
- Urban space was an important Factor for the success. It makes the achievements of the initiative visible to the teenager's community, and contributes to the public image of the neighbourhood. Visibility of the achievements also raises the social standing of the participants in the community and many of them reported changes in how their families responded and talked to them.
- The last phase of the initiative created special bonds between the participants and foster new friendships that supported the youngsters to overcome similar problems.

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- The flexibility in the design of the initiative supported its continuous development. At the end of each phase new ideas and evaluation helped in developing the next step. The fact that it was completely run by the local community fostered a sense of ownership and facilitated cooperation with schools, other local organizations, and the local community.

Limitations:

- A necessary maintenance activity was regular watering the plants which were provided in the improved spaces. This requirement limited the success of the project. Many plants died due lack of watering, although the selected plants were native and drought resistant. - but they did require daily watering in the first two weeks, and then on regular weekly basis for two months until their roots were strong. The required amount of water was too much for the water-impoverished camp. It would be better to have greening campaigns in the winter only as the rain would offer the needed support.
- There was a limitation to the possible number of participants. Not all adolescence with behaviour problems agreed to join, although all those who did, continued to the end of the first phase. Also, the trainers felt that the program should have continued to include new participants. The program expanded to a certain point and was very helpful for the participants at the time, but not sustainable.
- The interruption of youth and adolescence initiatives in 2011 caused a kind of shock in the community. If continuation was not possible, there should at least have been a planned withdrawal that allowed the participants to gradually phase out their input. Most of the participants met by the author recently reflected frustration towards this, as their vision for a role in the camp affairs has been truncated.
- The trainers noted a need for expert psychological support. Once the adolescents started to build trust, they came with personal questions and problems that needed professional training in counselling. Also, they noted a need for the creation of support groups to help participants follow-up on their visions for improving themselves. It should be on a case by case basis; deterministic and generalised approaches have limitations. Each case has its own circumstances.

Conclusion

Investigating violence should not be focussed activities which are defined 'criminal' according to the law, as violence is produced and reproduced in a community in varied forms. Physical violence is mostly a secondary effect of other existing types of violence, including also systemic and structural violence. Violence passes through cycles of production, exchange and reproduction.

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Sometimes, the heart of violence is a quest for power (Pearce, 2007). Yet, although it is often reduced to acts of acquisition or harm, especially in anti-social behaviour, its essence is embodied in how a community understands their situation and the social capital involved. The study has shown that refugees have developed a very strong sense of community, of shared agony and hardship, and of shared history. This may explain why, for example, vandalism rarely targets private property, and why, despite all the poverty and feelings of injustice, crimes are limited, and no explosion of violence takes place.

The structural, social, and mental violence faced by refugees supports the creation of a violent culture in which violence is lived and recreated. The absorption of social and political violence leads to impacts on behaviour, indicating high levels of stress and frustration. Violence is encountered on a daily basis politically, legally, and economically. It is absorbed and articulated though high levels of stress and anxiety, which can translate to aggressive behaviour and domestic violence. This has a toll on everybody in the camp, especially adolescence and youth.

There are similar experiences internationally for behaviour change through urban improvement (ex. KfW , 2010), yet the focus here has mainly been on how a change of the context of violence for teenagers impacted their behaviour and how agency changed their self-esteem and self-image. The adolescents were given an opportunity to become partners in urban upgrading processes, which enabled them to involve themselves in decisions about public space and be treated as partners in a process of improvement that their communities needed. A state of self-autonomy was felt, not through breaking and vandalising but through creating and designing. For the first time in their lives, many adolescents were not subjects, but rather mobilizers, choosers, authors, and achievers. This was coupled with the fact that their achievement was a space used by, and visible to, their community, aiding them in creating a positive image and foster a process of change.

This initiative did not have a revolutionary impact but a subtle influence on the lives of the participants, which they continue to feel today. As the schools continue to be the principal victim of vandalism, the teachers, mothers, and trainers would love to see the initiative start over and continue for an elongated period, as they believe that it offers a needed change not only in how the local adolescence understand themselves and their surroundings, but also the dynamics of relationships inside the camp.

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