

## Childhood Warscape, Experiences from Children of War Offer Key Design Decisions for Safer Built Environments

**Authors :** Soleen Karim, Meira Yasin, Rezhin Qader

**Abstract :** Children's books present a colorful life for kids around the world, their current environment or what they could potentially have- a home, two loving parents, a playground, and a safe school within a short walk or bus ride. These images are only pages in a donated book for children displaced by war. The environment they live in is significantly different. Displaced children are faced with a temporary life style filled with fear and uncertainty. Children of war associate various structural institutions with a trauma and cannot enter the space, even if it is for their own future development, such as a school. This paper is a collaborative effort with students of the Kennesaw State University architecture department, architectural designers and a mental health professional to address and link the design challenges and the psychological trauma for children of war. The research process consists of a) interviews with former refugees, b) interviews with current refugee children, c) personal understanding of space through one's own childhood, d) literature review of tested design methods to address various traumas. Conclusion: In addressing the built environment for children of war, it is necessary to address mental health and well being through the creation of space that is sensitive to the needs of children. This is achieved by understanding critical design cues to evoke normalcy and safe space through program organization, color, and symbiosis of synthetic and natural environments. By involving the children suffering from trauma in the design process, aspects of the design are directly enhanced to serve the occupant. Neglecting to involve the participants creates a nonlinear design outcome and does not serve the needs of the occupant to afford them equal opportunity learning and growth experience as other children around the world.

**Keywords :** activist architecture, childhood education, childhood psychology, adverse childhood experiences

**Conference Title :** ICSC 2019 : International Conference on Sociology and Criminology

**Conference Location :** Paris, France

**Conference Dates :** June 25-26, 2019