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World Vision®

6

years

VIOLENCE IS THE NEW NORMAL
Addressing the Violent Effects of Conflict on Syria's Children

States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict: Art 38(4) UNCRC

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INTRODUCTION

Should Syria's conflict repeat the same cycle of warfare as experienced in 2016, armed groups will bomb a Syrian school once a week.¹

Syria's children will comprise 20 per cent of all civilian deaths. Girls and boys will perish in aerial bombardments, chemical attacks, and rocket fire. Hospitals will be targets of war rather than places of medical miracles and recovery. Sieges, insecurity and other restrictions on the freedom of movement will further harm children who cannot access life-saving assistance, basic services and life-sustaining needs. Children will perish without medical assistance from curable disease and recoverable injury. Children who are able to avoid direct violence from warfare will remain daily witnesses to acts of war and interpersonal violence and its consequences: loss of home, family, friends, school and community. More of Syria's children will live with severe trauma, psychological stress and grief. Syria's war directly violates our responsibility to protect children from violence and abuse. This past year recorded the largest number of grave violations against children in the last six years of conflict.²

The violence caused by warfare also creates additional layers of violence. It destroys the social fabric of communities and exposes children to labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, trafficking, child marriage and recruitment by armed actors. Political and humanitarian actors must act against both expressions of violence.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT CHILDREN

Recommendations to armed and political actors that have the power to negotiate for peace, instil peace and provide asylum to Syria's civilians remain the same. Reference to these recommendations must be constant and norm-producing;

We call on all influential actors to create an enduring political solution to the conflict and durable solutions for refugees, displaced persons and their host communities;

We call for the immediate cessation of violations of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, including the direct targeting of civil infrastructure and civilian populations;

We call on all States Parties to the UN Refugee Convention to recognise the Syrian community's right to safety and protection and the obligation of States Parties to offer sanctuary. To reduce the strain on Syria's neighbouring countries and reduce life-threatening journeys taken by refugees seeking international protection by supporting resettlement as the most effective form of protection.

These recommendations must remain at the heart of conversations about Syria's conflict as post-conflict Syria will require an account of global, national and local level actors of influence and their roles in this crisis. These recommendations also serve as a reminder of responsibility six years on.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This brief analyses the violent effects of Syria's conflict. Namely, Syria's war has heightened social tolerance for risky behaviours and interpersonal violence against children in Syria and surrounding countries with large-scale refugee populations. Living inside Syria or as a refugee outside Syria, children and families in acute survival mode are tolerating unsafe and exploitative labour, sexual exploitation, trafficking, and armed group recruitment. Within families, there is a heightened social tolerance for child marriage and domestic violence.

The lack of political will and effort to bring peace to Syria should not interfere with our actions to tackle the abusive side effects of conflict. This additional exposure to violence can be addressed and contained by humanitarian actors even within the confines of fragility and conflict.

Preventing violence demands that humanitarian actors lessen the social tolerance for violence and provide alternatives that help families circumvent the need to employ these risky behaviours for their survival.

Inside Syria, the humanitarian aid community provides one of the only platforms to reduce this damaging social tolerance. There are ways we can deliver aid that can help reduce the social tolerance for risky behaviour and interpersonal violence.

In neighbouring host countries, it is essential to strengthen and scale domestic child protection systems and build the capacity of its formal and non-formal actors. It is time to infuse current systems with new resources that can extend to all permanent and temporary communities and offers sustainability in the future and social cohesion in the present.

Syrians and vulnerable host communities reduce their social tolerance for a child's participation in risky behaviours when household income and other economic strengthening opportunities improve a family's economic stability. Further efforts are needed to open business and employment spaces to refugees and host communities.

Education provides an alternative to risky behaviour and offers future resilience from violence. Inside Syria, access to safe and operating schools is decreasing. Humanitarian actors must increase access to educational materials and remedial education where possible. In neighbouring host communities, educators, governments and humanitarian actors must increase access to education for more Syrian children and further extend information sharing to fortify protection efforts for attending students.



4.8 million REFUGEES

2.4 million children are refugees



15,000 children

have crossed Syria's borders unaccompanied

The cost of the conflict would be between **US\$448 and US\$689 billion**, with an optimistic assumed recovery period of 10 to 15 years

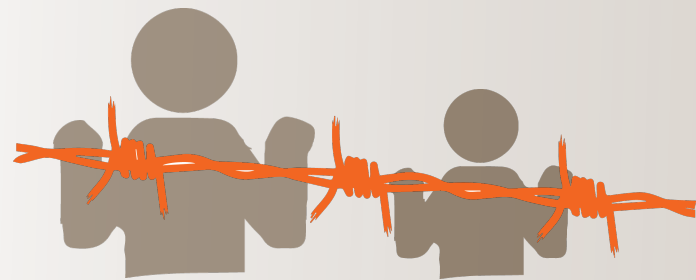


At least **3.7 million** Syrian children living inside Syria and in neighbouring countries have known nothing but war

More than **10 million people** have been forced to flee their homes

5 million TRAPPED

in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, unable to receive life-saving assistance



2.5 million children

are missing out on school



900,000 refugee children and **1.75 million** children inside Syria were missing out on school as the 2016-17 school year started. A further 1.35 million inside Syria are at risk of dropping out.

6.3 million INTERNALLY DISPLACED

3 million children internally displaced



5.8 million children

inside Syria need protection



of families inside Syria live on less than US\$2 a day



It is not culture but conflict that transforms and heightens these behaviours into common practices.

Syria's war has heightened the social tolerance for risky behaviours and interpersonal violence against children.

Protecting children from the violent effects of conflict is an urgent action. Living inside Syria or as a refugee in a neighbouring host country, children and families in acute survival mode are tolerating unsafe and exploitative labour, sexual exploitation, trafficking, and armed group recruitment. Within families, there is a heightened social tolerance for child marriage and domestic violence. A 2013 World Vision global study on child marriage associated increases in the prevalence of child marriage to areas defined as conflict zones. Parent participants in the study expressed a heightened fear for their child's future because conflict had reduced their expectations of provision. In addition, conflict-driven psychological stress, trauma and crowded living spaces among other things, feed

family tensions and further strain relationships that open new spaces for interpersonal violence.³

There are actions that political and humanitarian actors can take now to reduce the violent effects of conflict against girls and boys. Academic and field-based research confirms the destructive long-term impact of these short term behaviours; Public health costs include increases in mental health problems, delayed cognitive development, poor school performance and drop out, early pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Economic costs include losses in productivity and potential lifetime income. At the macro level violence perpetrated against children causes the long-term deterioration of human capacity: lower productivity, profits, investment and wages. For Syria's children, violence creates a cycle of poverty to come.

THE VIOLENT 'EFFECTS' OF CONFLICT

CHILD MARRIAGE



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE DISCIPLINE



CHILD SOLDIERS



TRAFFICKING



SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



CHILD LABOUR



CHILD MARRIAGE⁴

One in three women worldwide experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. Girls who marry under 18 years of age report an experience of physical violence twice as often. A 10 per cent reduction in child marriage could contribute to a 70 per cent reduction in maternal mortality and a 3 per cent reduction in infant mortality rates.



In Jordan, registered refugee marriages involving girls increased from 12 per cent in 2011 to 32 per cent in 2014, with concerns that the figure could be as high as 50 per cent.⁵

UN surveys show that 18 per cent of Syrian girls aged 15 to 18 are married in Lebanon.⁶

The average marrying age for refugee women in Turkey is between 13 to 20 years old. Protecting Girls and Sexual Violence.⁷



Lebanon may have one of the highest proportions of working children aged 10 to 17 in the world, with over 100,000 children in the country who are victims of child labour and trafficking.¹²

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE DISCIPLINE⁸

Corporal punishment is linked to behaviour disorders, anxiety disorders, depression and feelings of hopelessness, suicide attempts, alcohol and drug dependency, low self-esteem, hostility and emotional instability, impaired cognitive ability, lower IQ scores, smaller vocabularies, poorer cognitive abilities, slower cognitive development and poorer school marks.



Results from a World Vision and Ipsos 2014 research assessment in Lebanon found that 100 per cent of respondents knew a child victim of violence, 65 per cent reported that violence against children has increased in the past five years and 51 per cent feel that little action is being taken to prevent violence against children.⁹



Estimates indicate that 30 million children have been or will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday in fragile and conflict settings.¹⁴

CHILD SOLDIERS¹⁰

For children who survive hostilities, they are exposed to the horrors of armed conflict that leave long-lasting psychological effects. Repeated exposure to chronic and traumatic stress during development leaves children with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and severe personality changes.

Girls are particularly vulnerable; they are used as combatants but also risk sexual assault and forced marriages.



Inside Syria, recruitment of children is reported in 90 per cent of sub-districts.

Levels of recruitment and use of children inside Syria are increasing, with payment of salaries and ideology as major influencing factors.

A total of 362 cases were verified last year, 56 per cent of which involved children under the age of 15. Children as young as 7 are recruited.¹¹



Within one city district of Aleppo (A'zaz District), World Vision identified more than 600 child labourers. They are working as car mechanics, painters, and blacksmiths, and to the furthest extreme of working for armed groups.¹⁵

Almost 50 per cent of all Syrian refugee children in Jordan are the joint or sole breadwinners for their families. 60 per cent of children working in Jordan are estimated to be involved in hazardous labour.¹⁶

Surveys in Lebanon report high rates of children engaging in economic activities, with 60 per cent of Syrian children and 39 per cent of Lebanese children aged 12 to 17 working to help sustain their families.¹⁷

TRAFFICKING

Many victims are subjected to sexual exploitation. An increasing number are trafficked for the purpose of forced labour. Child trafficking often results in separation from families and friends and social isolation: these factors can have major consequences for a child's mental, physical and emotional well-being.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION¹³

Apart from direct impact such as physical injuries, increased risks of HIV/AIDs or other STDs, unwanted pregnancies, children can develop serious mental health problems resulting in range of self-harming behaviours, depression, anxiety, and suicide attempts. Shame, secrecy and stigma may have profound social impact on children and will increase psychological and mental health issues.

CHILD LABOUR

Children are working long hours, pushed to their physical limits and working within hazardous environments. Health effects can be immediate, such as a burn or a cut, or have lifelong consequences, such as permanent disability or contracting a respiratory disease or HIV/AIDs, leading in

REDUCING THE TOLERANCE FOR VIOLENCE

PREVENTING THE VIOLENT EFFECTS OF CONFLICT



Preventing violence demands that humanitarian actors lessen social tolerance for violence and provide alternatives that help families circumvent the need to employ these risky behaviours for their survival.

Humanitarian actors do not need an entirely new package of programming to prevent these effects but rather detailed and coordinated responses, which together lessen and interrupt violence against children. These responses exist within the context of warfare; a context of humanitarian restrictions where critical aid and access to civilians is always sporadic and insecure, within the context of neighbouring countries that host disproportionately high numbers of Syrian refugees, where social services are strained, the economic well-being of the most vulnerable host communities and refugees is at risk, and the social cohesion of these societies is faltering.

The aid agenda for Syria and global humanitarian commitments validate our commitment to interrupt this kind of violence. The Sustainable Development Goals, specifically in Target 16.2, was meant to affirm this commitment: end abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence and torture against children.

There is a need and ability for humanitarian actors to provide resilience-aid as much as life-saving aid.

Inside Syria,

the humanitarian aid community provides one of the only platforms to reduce social tolerance.

The current vacuum of systems and norms that restrain violence must be filled by actors with positive presence and power - as well as expertise - with the goal to change attitudes and behaviours. Even in peace, the goal to change attitudes and behaviours requires deeply ingrained cultural shifts. For Syrians in a state of survival-mode, living and without functioning systems and actors, this is a hard-won fight. In addition, Syria's communities have a general distrust of outsiders and their intentions, as changes in the power of local armed actors and their political peers limit the reliability and trust of any system or actor.

Coupled with shifting frontlines and general insecurity, humanitarian actors struggle to offer programming that reaffirms long-term commitments and consistency of operations. It is more difficult when humanitarian actors must build their efforts from caches of short-term funding and relief aid that restricts the expansiveness of action, the timeline of delivery and the ability to form long-term partnerships with local actors.

Yet, if humanitarian actors and donors can mitigate the challenges to offer reliable interventions over time, there is an opportunity to build the trust and

relationships necessary for attitude and behaviour change. Although the primary role of this sector is life-saving aid, this work provides the needed layer of trust and hope to make shifts in attitude and behaviour change possible.

Recent research validates a positive relationship between the delivery of life-saving aid and the psychological well-being of beneficiaries. Namely, the delivery of certain basic needs provided communities with a sense of hope and positive outlook about their futures than experienced in other communities. The study showed that aid targeted to provide a diversified diet; shelter to protect from severe weather conditions and access to basic sanitation facilities has a greater effect on shaping positive expectations than other aid. In addition, access to sanitation facilities, consumption of sufficient drinking water, shelter and an ability to meet basic health care needs increased a sense of dignity and respect and contribution to the community.¹⁸ These actions increase a sense of hope about the future and dignity of communities and families that afford an openness needed to reduce tolerance of risky behaviours and interpersonal violence.

Once humanitarian actors build trust with communities through dignity-enhancing interventions, World Vision, like other humanitarian actors are positioned to offer platforms of

conversation to role-play actions and behaviours that diminish interpersonal violence. Violence such as disciplinary violence or gender-based violence and provide information about the permanent risks associated with children involved in exploitative labour, child marriage and armed group recruitment. Family members receive information on the alternatives to interpersonal violence (positive parenting, share decision-making agency between men and women in families, family planning decisions, and child protection norms and responses) and children learn resilience-building responses to confront interpersonal violence and employ play, art-therapy and recreation to understand child protection, their rights and receive psychological support. Such programming must be gender-aligned and age-appropriate. With feelings of possibility about the future and equipped with information about the risks and effects of their behaviour and the behaviours of others, children and caregivers can reduce the social tolerance for risky and damaging behaviour.

To successfully scale these conversations and interventions with communities, donors and humanitarian actors must strategically consider life-saving aid as much a tool towards other non-material aspects of well-being, including the prevention of interpersonal violence and risky behaviours rather than its sole end.

The following recommendations apply to donors that fund life-saving aid inside Syria:

Continue and emphasise medium-term and long-term funding allocations that give humanitarian actors long-term access and reliable aid outputs. Efforts to build the consistency of presence and aid require that World Vision and other peer organisations maintain flexibility in action, relying on direct and remote interventions, cross-border operations and partnerships with local actors. Humanitarian actors must reinforce the capacities of local and national humanitarian actors who can provide a consistency of presence when others cannot (also noted in the 2017-2018 Syria's Humanitarian Response Plan and reaffirmed at last year's London Conference).

Donors should not miss opportunities to deliver "resilience aid" when possible. Medium and long-term aid grants offered should require the mainstreaming of education and awareness of the harm and impact of violence on children, with care taken to address gender-based violence.

The Dead Sea Resilience Agenda acknowledges that humanitarian and development actors must prioritise the dignity and self-sufficiency of affected populations. Donors must build upon this agenda to affirm that communities disabled by conflict require aid support that encourages and promotes dignity and hope. Any additional costing and expense needed to provide dignity-increasing humanitarian aid should be seen as "resilience aid" and encouraged as such.



In neighbouring host countries,

it is essential to strengthen and scale domestic child protection systems and build

the capacity of its formal and non-formal actors. It is time to infuse current systems with new resources that can extend to all permanent and temporary communities and offers sustainability in the future and social cohesion in the present.

Unlike Syria, neighbouring host countries have the luxury of laws and the presence of child protection actors. Civil society organisations and governments can reduce the tolerance of risky behaviours and lessen interpersonal violence that affect children through the creation of legal norms and the implementing presence of child protection actors in local communities. Although such systems and functions currently lack capacity to reach vulnerable groups and signal the presence of legal norms, new scaling and strengthening of these systems in tandem with programming to influence behaviour change can instil two effects. First, the presence of such actors and norms can create a sense of negativity about violence and second, they can foster the social cohesiveness amongst various ethnic and religious classes of citizens needed to maintain stability within very fragmented societies.

By focusing on domestic child protection systems in neighbouring countries we can equalise assistance to all populations and reach the most vulnerable of both refugee and host communities alike. In all three neighbouring countries, the majority of refugee communities are embedded in host communities. Many of these host communities are poor and services are underdeveloped.

There are initiatives that use this approach in all three of the largest refugee host countries. In Turkey, national authorities link with local NGO partners to provide access to national child protection services for unaccompanied minors and other at-risk children.¹⁹ In Jordan, the newly issued National Standards for child protection services offers a platform to secure quality care and assistance for child protection.²⁰ Next steps include accountability to monitor these standards and build networks to link these services for referrals. In Lebanon, efforts to create local level reporting and referral mechanisms are advancing for both refugee and host communities. The newly created Standard Operating Procedures offer nationally based case management procedures that apply to citizens and refugees alike and are meant to link to response services including cash assistance.²¹

A new and invigorated focus on domestic child protection systems is needed to scale these efforts for both refugee and vulnerable host communities who live together. Donors and governments have used this same approach on education initiatives for refugee children. Rather than separate educational services for refugees, the emphasis on capacity building and resourcing of local schools has been at the heart of donor strategies. This same approach must extend to the child protection system and actors and include both formal and informal actors.

The following recommendations apply to donors and neighbouring host countries:

Fund national level and local level child protection system assessments that review both system features and the functions of both informal and formal actors in each country.

Encourage and support national action plans and strategies to construct stronger laws and services, enhance capacity and coordination and build appropriate accountability mechanisms for any donor money utilized and for child protection services that are accessible and open to beneficiaries and members of the public.

Fund civil society coalitions that span both locally-focused organisations and those that support refugees with a goal to enhance coordination, networking and unified child protection actions.

Focus on laws and the implementation of laws at the local level that build strong social norms about violence against children and ensure that a comprehensive system of child protection services are available for all children, especially the most vulnerable in remote and underprivileged areas.

At the same time, fund the presence and robustness of informal actors as a way to enhance the system, fill in gaps from formal systems, and pursue innovative and rapid delivery of services.



OFFERING ALTERNATIVES TO RISKY BEHAVIOUR

Syrians and vulnerable host communities reduce their social tolerance for a child's participation in risky behaviours when household income and other economic strengthening opportunities improve a family's economic stability.

With sufficient income to survive, families don't need to depend on income earned from exploitative behaviour, freeing up children to return to school if education venues are available.²² The Lebanese Cash Consortium, a partnership of six humanitarian agencies including World Vision, recently surveyed cash transfer recipients and non-recipients to determine the effects of cash assistance on refugee and vulnerable host community families. The survey found that recipients were 11 per cent more likely to send their children to school than non-recipients (60.7 per cent compared to 51.5 per cent).²³ In Jordan, World Vision's program to provide unconditional cash has contributed to increased school attendance and a greater emphasis on education by recipients.²⁴

Increases in family livelihoods have an additional effect; there is evidence that links cash assistance to positive psychosocial well-being in crisis-affected families. The intervention is linked to reduced tensions and instances of domestic violence, especially when combined with sustained psychosocial support.²⁵ World Vision's work in Lebanon validates this result where children from households receiving monthly cash assistance in Lebanon exhibit lower levels of protection-specific insecurity (i.e. physical abuse, feelings of being physically unsafe, social cohesion and fighting inside and outside the home).²⁶ These strong linkages between economic well-being and reduced tolerance for risky behaviours and interpersonal

69 per cent of families inside Syria live on less than US\$2 a day. In a recent survey, more than 60 per cent of children and adults told World Vision that loss of livelihoods and poverty is one of their greatest concerns and that children, particularly boys, are becoming the main source of the family's income.

violence should offer further incentives to both donors and host governments to re-commit to economic strengthening.

The London Conference attendees committed to 1,000,000 jobs for refugees. To date, Jordan has extended 34,000 work permits²⁷ to Syrian refugees in the past few months, moving towards its goal of 200,000.²⁸ Lebanon has opened up industry jobs in agriculture, environment and construction for refugees.²⁹ Turkey has created new regulations that allow Syrian refugees into the workforce.

Cash assistance has proven important to limit risky behaviours however; more work is needed to measure the impact of other economic strengthening opportunities within the context of the Syria conflict.

The goal to employ 1,000,000 refugees in neighbouring host countries must be supported and lauded by business interests, donors and other governments worldwide. New economic opportunities for vulnerable host communities must be provided in tandem to build social cohesion and sustainable, long-term economic resilience for each host country.

Education provides an alternative to risky behaviour and offers future resilience from violence. To use education as a protective tool, donor pledges need fulfilling and education actors must expand information sharing to coordinate effectively, scale efforts and offer the potential for accountability.

Donors and host countries have committed to provide education to Syrian children living inside Syria and in neighbouring host countries. The No Lost Generation initiative represents a multitude of donors and humanitarian actors with the resolve to advocate and commit to the protection, education and participation of Syria's children inside and outside of Syria. No Lost Generation's recommendations and goals, if achieved, will offer 1.3 million children education venues, 100,000 boys and girls specialized protection services and provide 500,000 with positive engagement opportunities by the end of 2017.³⁰

Inside Syria, access to education is decreasing. Remedial education and non-formal efforts to provide children with educational assets (including materials) must continue to be prioritised.

In July 2016, data verified a 24 per cent decrease in school enrolment within a six-month period. Figures estimate that 861,000 school-aged children are out of school, which represents 52 per cent of all children in Syria.³¹ Many of Syria's children are in hard to reach places as a result of sieges and bombardments, which complicates consistent and monitored access to schools, learning materials, and teaching. When hostilities decrease and access is again restored, remedial programmes are essential to boost learning outcomes. These programmes rely on cross-border access by teachers and education experts who can operationalise and scale the work quickly and in unsecure environments. The difficulties of consistent and administratively efficient border crossing to rapidly allow education and protection actors inside Syria remain an issue.

To offer children in hard to reach places school materials and remedial education, World Vision calls on bordering countries and donors with influence to provide consistent and rapid cross border access for child protection and education actors, despite border restrictions.

Educators, governments and humanitarian actors in the region must increase access to education for more Syrian children and further extend information sharing to fortify protection efforts for attending students.

Host government commitments and actions at the London Conference to invite refugee attendance in public schools are commendable and real efforts can be measured. In Turkey, the government worked to remove administrative barriers to enrol refugee children. Between June 2015 and June 2016 there has been a 50 per cent increase in formal education enrolment by refugees.³² In Jordan, the government expanded double-shift schools and constructed new schools to enrol 20,000 new children.³³ In Lebanon, the Reaching All Children with Education (RACE2) strategy³⁴ is setting the stage to receive all refugee children into classrooms. Host government efforts to include refugee children into the public school system is blended with remedial learning, support and child protection services operated by humanitarian actors and local civil society. The patchwork of actors and the scale of need therefore requires a high regard for coordination and information sharing among all parties.³⁵ It is critical to child protection that all actors prioritise information sharing and networking so that programming outside of school builds on education inside of schools. In spite of noted advancements and good faith efforts to educate Syria's children, donor commitments made at the London Conference to support host governments are critical to return more children to classrooms. Presently, accessible funding does not align with donor pledges made; more than US\$11 billion in multi-year funding pledges is still outstanding. As of December 2016, Syria response funding on education did not align with budget demands. Donors fulfilled only 39 per cent of needed funding in Turkey, 50 per cent in Jordan and 75 per cent in Lebanon.³⁶ Without access to these pledges, it is difficult plan and implement new enrolment in accordance with the school year calendar.³⁷

Given the complexity of actors and services offered, inroads must be made with all formal and non-formal actors to share information, track student attendance and validate the impact of school-based social services and support for children to further advance the goals of No Lost Generation.

Consequently, funding for education must be front-loaded and multi-year to provide scalable boosts in infrastructure, teaching and curriculum if No Lost Generation goals are to be achieved.

11-year-old Noura, a Syrian refugee girl living in Jordan receives extra remedial education support outside of the classroom to close the development gap with her peers whose education was not affected by the conflict. Educators in the support classroom had received training on child rights and protection to identify and respond to issues of violence and their students' social and psychological well-being.

When her teachers learned that Noura's father planned to take her from school and marry her to a relative, the school's social workers intervened.

They contacted Noura's father, discussed the adverse impact of child marriage, provided information about Noura's education-related opportunities and impact and provided counselling support to both Noura and her father.

Today, Noura remains a student in public school and also attends the remedial classroom with her father's blessing. Noura's mother personally thanked the social workers for their efforts to convince her husband to abandon the marriage and allow Noura an education in its place.



CONCLUSIONS

After six years of conflict, violence is the new normal. As humanitarian actors, we cannot bring peace to Syria but we can lessen the violent effects of conflict on Syrian girls and boys. Future efforts to reconstruct Syria and re-build social cohesion depend upon today's actions; our ability to protect and prevent risky behaviours and interpersonal violence and build resilience against these tendencies in Syria's children in spite of the conflict is a step to reclaim and reconstruct Syria's social fabric and the lives of individual boys and girls.

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