

We march through life experiencing the same reality and events. However, each recalls events differently, carrying polar opposite perspectives. This narrative lens shaped by our previous experiences reveals our deep and intimate thoughts thus guiding our interactions through life.





## A Father's Recollection



Monther retelling his experience to World Vision Syria Response Partner  
World Vision Syria Response Partner, Violet Organisation

For Monther\* the father of four children, life presented nothing short of unsolicited surprises testing his patience and resilience. The 41-year-old dreamt of a simple life where his children bloomed around him and lived without fear. However, Monther's dream seemed farfetched when the Syrian conflict broke out almost 13 years ago. Resulting with a dream being evaporated as it began.

The Syrian conflict ignited one of the **worst humanitarian crises** in the world and Monther witnessed firsthand life's fury and turbulence. Like **1.5 million families**, staying home wasn't an option, so they fled to nearby Lebanon hoping to catch a fresh breath of air. The calm there presented an eerie silence for Monther. However, his main focus was to provide for his family and thankfully, he was able to secure a job. Little did Monther know, his gut feeling was correct, one day, he was involved in a car accident leading to injury. Sadly, the series of unfortunate events didn't stop there, he was later involved in an accident at work. Despite everything, he managed to enrol his children in school, Samer\* began picking up on his lost education and reaching third grade, Farah\* in first grade, Yara\* in second grade and his

youngest Rama\* for which he had high hopes for, he wanted he to enrol in education just like her siblings when she grows up. But, the recent escalations in Lebanon tested Monther's resilience yet again. During one of the attacks, Monther's home was torn down but this meant nothing as long as his children were safe and sound. As soon as regained consciousness he ran towards his children only to realise his little Rama was missing. This is a parent's worst nightmare. Monther did not know if his child was lost among the people buried under mountains of rubble. Three days pass by while Monther is on the verge of his breaking point clenching onto his other children while searching for his lost child. Thankfully, his little child emerged one day among the people as the panic and fear amidst the crisis drove her away from the collapsed house.

This marked Monther's decision about leaving and they decided to head back to Syria. Leaving behind a scene of endless flames, frantic people, yet another destroyed home and his children's education journey. Unfortunately, along the way, the father realized that they didn't take their personal identification documents,



how could they when they were buried under piles of rubble? They stayed in a school that was later turned to a displacement shelter. After a while, the family began their ordeal of yet again searching for a home.

After days of walking a dangerous trail, all Monther wanted was to reach Syria safely but constant bombings made this a challenge to survive. As they approached the Syrian border, they remained for a few days battling hunger and thirst. During that time, someone saw their ordeal and offered them help. Another attack meant that Monther needed to cross the border as soon as possible however, someone at the border asked for a sum of money to grant them access which Monther couldn't fulfill. He was heartbroken, Monther managed to get his family through the fire safely only to reach this stage. That is when he borrowed money from someone with a promise to repay finally passing over the first hurdle. Then came another border where Monther was blackmailed. As a result, his wife offered her wedding ring as a form of payment which the blackmailer accepted and let them pass by. With every step, Monther felt he was getting closer until they finally entered the Syrian border. They were welcomed by a barren land, lack of food and water. During this, the responsibility was weighing heavily on his shoulders and owing almost **4000 USDs** of debt just to survive.

The father managed to get his children to one of the displacement camps in Syria where they were provided with shelter. However, he knew he wanted his children to learn but he couldn't afford to enrol them in schools. Until he heard about an education project implemented in the camp he lives in. Monther was interested and began asking about it, after receiving information, he enrolled his children kickstarting their education yet again.



## A Brother and Student's Recollection

Sameer participating in class  
World Vision Syria Response Partner, Violet Organisation

Despite his young age, Sameer lived through traumas no one should have to live through let alone a child. As a result, his determination to finish school was a true testament to his resilience. He was born in Lebanon foreign to his country. Yet, he did his best to learn overcoming the challenges of living in a displacement camp, and economic strains focusing on his education. After establishing a sense of stability and normalcy, everything Sameer worked hard to build came crashing down just like their home.



The little boy had no choice but to embark upon a dangerous refugee-seeking journey that would end up in Syria. Sameer had no idea what it was like there, he had never been there and most importantly, would he be able to continue his education?

All these questions were racing through his mind until his father ran towards him and his siblings. Sameer's heart sank and looked around, Rama was missing. Sameer glanced around staring at their collapsed home praying his sister wasn't there. He felt his father's arms embrace him and his siblings as if he wanted to feel that they were real and there. Days passed with Sameer wrapped up in his father's embrace until he saw a familiar face. It was Rama. Sameer tried breaking away from his father's embrace so he could hug his sister but the father picked them up all and marched towards Rama hugging her too.

After locating his, Sameer went with his family to the school that was turned into a shelter. After entering he began closely inspecting the desks, reading what was written on the boards reminiscing about learning. It was a weird feeling for Sameer, to stay in a school but not learn. After a while, his father told them they needed to start moving to the Syrian border. This journey seemed like never-ending, there were endless barricades and people at each stop but Sameer hoped that once they reached Syria, he would enroll in school.

Upon arriving in Syria, his family settled in a displacement camp. While days passed by, he saw children wearing backpacks but he didn't know where they were heading. This kept Sameer at night, is there a school here? Can I go too? Is it close? Is it similar to schools in Lebanon?

Luckily his questions were answered. Turns out his father asked about one of the education programmes and had already enrolled Sameer. After breaking the news to him, Sameer couldn't contain his joy. On his first day, just like new joiners, he would undergo a placement test to identify his level subsequently enrolling him in the corresponding class. As a result, Sameer was placed in fourth grade and began learning math, Arabic, science, etc. His enthusiasm in class was contingent as he excitingly participates and is eager to learn something new each day. Sameer is on a journey for learning filled with determination.





## Sisters' Recollections



Yara, Farah and Rama during class  
World Vision Syria Response Partner, Violet Organisation

As for Yara\* and Farah\*, the circumstances robbed them of their childhood. The two children are not older than 8 years and they lived through years of heartache. Yet their bond is what kept them going. Yara is a year older than Farah and along with their younger sister Rama, they presented a trio of joy and happiness. They set up a great example for their younger sister Rama who looked up to them when she saw how they got ready for school, did their hair in a braid, put their backpack and marched to school. She was astounded by the information they radioed daily. Yara proudly counted numbers, did simple math equations and so did her sister Farah.

However, when their home was struck, Yara and Farah barely got out losing all track of time and space. All they knew was they were standing outside looking around for their third trio member but Rama was nowhere to be seen. Yara and Farah began frantically searching for her almost getting away from their collapsed home. Their brother Sameer caught a glimpse of them amidst all the chaos and before he could do anything two arms were wrapped around them. Stunned and a little afraid, Yara and Farah dared to look around only to realise it was their father letting a sigh of relief however, peeking over her father's shoulder, Yara scanned around for Rama but she was nowhere to be seen. She began crying, her fear was felt by her sister who could contain herself and began sobbing too.

Everything went black for a while and the sisters regained their senses only to see their third sister's face. It was pure joy, Yara and Farah clung to her while their father held on to them ever so strongly. Yara and Farah had to embark on a refugee-seeking journey around the country but things were happening too fast to comprehend. At first, they stayed in a school which was strange for them because they thought schools were for education, then they met people at the border who took away money from them. Then when they entered a large barricade they saw a land filled with tents. Yara and Farah realized this was their home now. But just like their brother Samer, they wondered about going to school. Talking to each other about the things they learned back in Lebanon and what they wanted to learn.



To their surprise, their father had already enrolled them in school and their first day was approaching quickly. After attending their first day, Yara and Farah were filled with immense joy as they sat at a desk and began participating in class. Yara was in third grade in Lebanon however upon further language and academic placement tests, she was placed in second while Yara was in second grade back in Lebanon and was able to catch up on her classmates.

## A Survivor's Recollection

For Rama, not many details were provided about the incident. However, the moment she recognised her siblings' faces among thousands of others she ran towards them. Tunnel vision erased all the destructive scenes around her directing her focus onto her father's arms as they made space for her next to Yara and Farah.

This ordeal marked her family's decision to move to Syria and as she accompanied them she realized that she was leaving everything she knew behind. This included all the hopes she had of becoming like her sisters, going to school and learning.

As she and her family relocated from one place to another, 6-year-old Rama hoped that her father would enrol her in school. Sadly, he was occupied with keeping them alive. Rama went through a lengthy refugee journey only to find a home in a tent however she wondered if she could go to school. That hope never left her mind.

One day, she saw her sisters jumping with joy and asked them what was going on. They answered her that they would all be going back to school! Delighted, Rama got dressed marching proudly along with her sister finally achieving her dream and learning what she heard her sisters radioing years ago. This kick-started her education journey and was enrolled in the first grade.

Monther is a father who is adamant about getting his children to safety, Sameer, Yara, Farah and Rama are children whose hopes for education never left their minds even during the most difficult of times. Therefore, the implementation of such projects are a lifeline for children affected by conflict. The education project funded by **Crisis and Support Center of Ministry Europe and Foreign Affairs** through **World Vision Syria Response Partner, Violet Organisation** aims to support around **1,800** children.

\*Name/ Names have has been changed to protect identity.

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