

# WAR & CONFLICT

## GRASSROOTS APPROACHES TO PROTECTING, HEALING, AND EMPOWERING TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN

War affects people of all ages, but it has a particular and lasting impact on children. At a time when they are dependent on adults to love and care for them, children instead experience unspeakable violence and paralyzing fear, the effects of which are both immediate and enduring. Children in war zones watch as their communities are destroyed, and are often forced to flee their homes. Many children are separated from their families in the chaos; some are abducted by combatants and forced to be soldiers or sex slaves. And for those who do find safety outside the war zone, social services like education and healthcare are scarce. Conflict-affected children need our help to enjoy the kind of childhood that everyone deserves, so that they can be safe, educated, healthy, and cared for.

For very young children, there is no difference between witnessing and experiencing violence — the psychological effects are the same.

59<sup>M</sup>

The estimated number of refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons worldwide.

2<sup>x</sup>

The likelihood of children living in conflict-affected, poor countries to die before their fifth birthday, compared to children in other poor countries.

1 IN 10

The proportion of the world's children who currently live in countries affected by armed conflict.



Imagine returning to your village after spending years working as a combatant against your will. Now imagine you are only 10 years old. **Bureau pour le Volontariat au Service de l'Enfance et de la Santé** (pictured) directly negotiates with armed groups to release child soldiers and sex slaves in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The organization then helps the children transition home—providing them with shelter, therapy, and education and helping them reunite with their families.

*The Global Fund for Children invests in grassroots organizations around the world that develop local solutions to protect and heal children and families in conflict-affected areas. From Lebanon to Nigeria to Ukraine, our grassroots partners provide war-affected children with essential programs and services.*

Sources: Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; UNHCR; UNESCO; UNICEF



Last year, The Global Fund for Children invested nearly \$650,000 in 51 organizations working in conflict-affected areas in 24 countries.

## OUR RESULTS: TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

We measure and track our grassroots partners' success and impact, while providing strategic support to help these organizations grow into sustainable community resources. Through our partners, children in refugee camps not only receive food and medical care but also have access to leadership training and peace education. Youth who resorted to begging on the streets to support their families in the wake of conflict find new opportunities through vocational classes. Girls who became mothers as a result of rape receive psychological care in addition to lessons in parenting, early childhood development, and human rights.

## SPOTLIGHT: SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

Millions of children and families displaced by the Syrian conflict continue to suffer. In the midst of this massive crisis, several of our local partners in Serbia, Turkey, and Lebanon are providing refugee children with essential aid and services like shelter, clothing, resettlement support, access to medical services, counseling, and education. We are also helping our partners expand their capacity to accommodate the growing need for their programs. Our partner **Insan Association** (pictured) in Beirut, Lebanon, provides refugee children with a safe place to learn, play, and receive counseling.



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## SOLUTIONS FROM THE FIELD

### KHARKIV, UKRAINE

Children with disabilities are already vulnerable to a host of challenges. War makes them even more susceptible to danger and neglect.

**Pravo Vibora** operates a rehabilitation center for children with extreme disabilities, providing them with physical therapy and psychosocial services. Ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine has caused severe inflation, raising costs like rent and utilities. Despite these challenges, Pravo Vibora remains steadfastly committed to the most vulnerable children, reaching a total of 150 children last year, including newly arrived refugees with disabilities.

### KITGUM, UGANDA

Despite progress toward peace, northern Uganda remains deeply scarred from two decades of conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army.

For girls who were abducted and abused by the Lord's Resistance Army, access to education is just one of many obstacles. **Fight to Improve Community Health** helps conflict-affected girls holistically, providing "second-chance" education and job skills training, savings and entrepreneurship activities, and counseling services to help them heal from trauma and rebuild their lives. Last year, FICH reached 710 conflict-affected children and youth.

### KANTALE, SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka's 25-year civil war, which ended in 2009, destroyed entire communities. Children continue to face challenges in accessing education, healthcare, and employment.

**Rural Economic and Community Development Organization (RECDO)** helps impoverished rural communities through projects in education, food, healthcare, and microfinancing. Through RECDO's programs, young children prepare to transition to mainstream education, and children who are at risk of dropping out of school receive after-school tutoring. Older youth learn to become self-sufficient through RECDO's vocational training and career counseling. Last year, RECDO reached nearly 2,000 children and youth.

**GET INVOLVED** Your support makes all the difference. With your help, we reach children on the margins of society so they can be safe, educated, healthy, and cared for. To learn more about how you can transform the lives of vulnerable children, especially children affected by war, visit [www.globalfundforchildren.org](http://www.globalfundforchildren.org).