



BEYOND THE RUBBLE:

The Impact of the Earthquake
on Children in Northwest
Syria One Year Later

Response.

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External Consultant

I. INTRODUCTION¹

In the early hours of February 6,¹ 2023, a catastrophic 7.8-magnitude earthquake, followed by another nearly as strong, struck the border region between Türkiye and Syria. This seismic event, the most significant in Türkiye since 1939, precipitated one of the most severe disasters in the region's recent history. The earthquakes inflicted a heavy toll, claiming over 50,000 lives in Türkiye and more than 4,500 in Northwest Syria, with thousands more injured. The destruction was extensive, with thousands of buildings, including key infrastructure like schools and hospitals, collapsing under the quake's force.

In Türkiye, the most impacted provinces included Adıyaman, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Osmaniye, Gaziantep, Malatya, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, and Adana, located in Southern and Southeastern Türkiye. In Syria, the earthquake caused severe damage in the governorates of Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama, and Idlib, with major infrastructure damage observed in both cities and rural areas within these regions.

The disaster struck Northwest Syria at a time when the humanitarian crisis had already reached its peak since the onset of the conflict, exacerbating the existing plight of the 4.1 million people reliant on humanitarian assistance. The earthquake response on the ground involved UN agencies and humanitarian organizations deploying disaster assessment experts, coordinating search and rescue operations, and providing emergency relief.

In Türkiye, the affected provinces faced severe devastation, necessitating a Level 4 alarm and a call for international assistance. For over a decade, Syria has been grappling with a complex array of issues including prolonged conflict, economic instability, health crises like COVID-19 and cholera, and the recent seismic disaster. These compounding factors have plunged Syria into an unprecedented humanitarian and protection emergency, now in its 13th year. This complexity of challenges, coupled with the recent earthquake, has significantly exacerbated food insecurity in Northwest Syria, according to the WFP Hunger Map, Syria is marked in red, symbolizing the highest category of insufficient food consumption. Out of the total population of 20.4 million, a staggering 12.8 million people are classified as having insufficient food consumption, accounting for more than half of the population. Furthermore, rates of acute malnutrition in children under 5 are alarmingly high at 11.5%, while chronic malnutrition affects 27.9% of children in the same age group, indicating a severe impact on the region's already vulnerable population.

¹ While this brief primarily addresses the situation in Northwest Syria following the earthquake, it is important to recognize that the disaster also significantly impacted Southern Türkiye. For comprehensive understanding, some sections of this brief will reference Southern Türkiye to provide necessary context. However, the recommendations and calls to action are specifically tailored for Northwest Syria. This approach ensures a focused yet contextually aware advocacy effort, addressing the unique challenges and needs of the Northwest Syrian region in the aftermath of the earthquake.

II. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND PERSISTING GAPS IN NORTHWEST SYRIA

One year after the earthquake, Northwest Syria continues to face significant challenges in key sectors:



HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE:

This year marks the 13th winter amidst conflict for many, facing it with inadequate shelter, with children making up 44% of those in need of shelter support (residing in substandard conditions). Following over a decade of conflict, Syria currently hosts the world's second-highest population of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Specifically, in the Northwest, 2 million individuals reside in upwards of 1,500 camps or self-settled sites, of whom 23% are women and 56% are children. In these sites, there is a lack of access to electricity/lighting, insufficient insulation from heat and cold, a lack of privacy, and limited access to basic non-food items (NFIs) including clothing and blankets, as reported by the Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI) cluster in Northwest Syria. The living situation is especially dire for 800,000 individuals dwelling in tents, with numerous inhabitants remaining in the same deteriorated tent for several years. Most of these camps are overcrowded and inadequately managed, posing significant health risks. The vulnerability of their shelters is clear, as last winter's fires, floods, and storms damaged thousands of tents. Early indications of flooding and wind this year suggest an impending harsh winter, potentially exacerbating the hardships faced by these already vulnerable groups.

Over 28,500 families have been moved from tents to more dignified shelters, but the pace suggests it could take years to meet the full need, especially if funding does not increase.

The Shelter/NFI Cluster's winter appeal in Northwest Syria faces significant funding challenges, with only 30% of the needed funds secured. This shortfall in funding means that current resources can only assist 785,000 people, leaving many vulnerable individuals at risk of severe winter conditions without adequate insulation and heating. This gap in assistance, compounded by rising food insecurity and inflation, is likely to lead to increased health risks such as respiratory infections, hypothermia, and potentially preventable deaths.



HEALTH AND NUTRITION:

Nearly 5.9 million people in Syria, with children comprising 64% of this number, are in dire need of nutritional assistance. According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023, the figures for people in need of nutrition in Syria have shown an upward trend from 2016 to 2023, indicating a fast-deteriorating nutritional situation. Prior to the February earthquake which caused substantial damage and displacement in northern and western Syria, 12.1 million people were already experiencing hunger across the country. Additionally, malnutrition rates have surged to unprecedented levels, with one in four pregnant and nursing mothers acutely malnourished, and one in four children stunted in some parts of the county.

The funding for the World Food Programme (WFP) and its partners was cut by over 50% in 2023, impacting food security in Northwest Syria. This reduction led to a decrease in the number of people receiving monthly food assistance, from an average of 2 million in the first half of 2023 to just 1 million since July. The suspension of WFP's



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General Food Assistance program across Syria in 2024 due to insufficient funds exacerbates the issue. Additionally, these funding cuts are indirectly contributing to rising malnutrition rates, further stressing the already dire situation.

Despite the ongoing crises, the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan for Syria is only a third funded, significantly lower than the 52% funding achieved in 2022. Consequently, 2.5 million people are no longer receiving the necessary food assistance.

The funding shortfall is affecting various sectors, with 2.3 million women of reproductive age losing access to vital health services, nearly one million children under five missing routine immunizations, and almost 6 million people, predominantly women and girls, not receiving essential nutritional assistance. This includes 200,000 severely malnourished children. Additionally, numerous hospitals and health centres face closures or downsizing, further compounding the health crisis. The healthcare system is in a profound state of crisis, with half the primary healthcare system non-functional and a significant decrease in medical professionals, leading to an alarming increase in child mortality rates, neonatal mortality rose from 8.7 to 11.8 per thousand live births from 2008 to 2019. For children under 5 years, the mortality rate escalated from 17.4 to 23.7 per thousand live births during the same timeframe.



PROTECTION

Child protection remains a grave concern, with a significant portion of children requiring assistance. Lack of essential documentation like birth certificates restricts access to services, and family separations post-earthquake have led to a rise in child-headed households, child labour, and early marriage.

World Vision reported a distressing increase in child marriage in Northwest Syria, which has become significantly more prevalent since the onset of the conflict. The report identifies conflict and insecurity as the primary drivers of this trend, while also highlighting those fears of sexual exploitation, abuse, and kidnapping significantly contribute to the increased vulnerability of females to early marriage.

The aftermath of these events has heightened concerns about forced evictions, homelessness, human trafficking, violence, abuse, and exploitation, leading to increased internal and external displacements. A recent Protection Cluster assessment of 259 communities in Northwest Syria, revealed limited access to protection services and aid, with 55% of communities reporting no assistance.

Displacements have infringed upon housing, land, and property rights, exacerbating homelessness and vulnerability to exploitation and trafficking. Closures of safe spaces for women and girls due to funding shortages, along with community centres due to security conditions, have heightened risks.

The ongoing conflict contributes to a pervasive fear of attacks and new displacements, perpetuating a cycle of hardship as people seek safer conditions. Additionally, increased explosive ordnance presence further complicates safety, with limited resources hindering effective identification and clearance efforts.



EDUCATION

The 2023-2024 school year in Northwest Syria began amidst a backdrop of protracted conflict, now in its 13th year. This academic year has been particularly challenging due to increased hostilities and the February earthquake, disrupting education for approximately 2.2 million school-aged children. In displacement camps, access to primary and secondary education is critically low, with the situation exacerbated by economic hardships and security concerns.

The escalation of hostilities since October 5 in Idlib and Aleppo, the most severe since 2019, has had a significant impact on children, including casualties and damage to educational facilities. Over 120,000 people, including 40,000 school-aged children, were displaced, needing educational support. This situation followed a series of school suspensions and closures due to increased hostilities and teacher strikes over reduced salaries.

Furthermore, the earthquake significantly damaged educational infrastructure. An Education Cluster assessment revealed that 54% of schools in the region were affected, with about 1,000 schools partially damaged. This has led to an increase in out-of-school children, from an estimated 800,000 to 1 million.

However, the education sector in Northwest Syria is facing a funding crisis, receiving only a fraction of the required funds under the Earthquakes Flash

Appeal and the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan for Syria. The Education Cluster is among the most under-funded sectors, hindering its ability to effectively respond to the crisis. The lack of functional schools in IDP sites further compounds the educational challenges in the region.



LIVELIHOODS

Livelihoods have a profound impact on children, particularly in the context of Syria's worsening socio-economic conditions. As household economic stability deteriorates due to income insufficiency, livelihood degradation, and inflation affecting basic commodities, families are increasingly unable to meet their basic needs. This severe economic vulnerability forces them to resort to negative coping mechanisms.

Children are particularly affected by these mechanisms. The financial strain often leads to their withdrawal from school, which in turn heightens the risks of child marriage, child labour and related protection concerns. Moreover, this situation is especially acute in areas with many self-settled displacement sites, such as Northwest Syria, where services are often limited and displacement due to violence or fear of violence is likely to continue. The lack of livelihood opportunities in these areas further exposes girls and women to the risk of sexual exploitation and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV) as they strive to access food and other necessities.

Amid these hardships, where livelihood challenges are pushing families towards negative coping mechanisms and exposing children and other vulnerable groups to increased risks, the role of humanitarian aid, particularly in the form of cash support, becomes crucial in mitigating the impact of these socio-economic adversities. In this vein, cash support has emerged as a pivotal form of humanitarian aid, accounting for 60% of the Shelter/NFI winter response. Particularly after the devastating earthquake, multi-purpose cash assistance gained prominence due to the resilience of local markets. This type of assistance empowers families to make their own purchasing choices, addressing their specific needs while invigorating the local economy. by November 15, 2023, around



215,000 families, which translates to nearly 1 million individuals, had received multi-purpose cash amounting to \$32 million since the onset of the year. Besides multi-purpose cash, the humanitarian community also delivers sector-specific cash and voucher assistance.

However, the implementation of cash distribution in Northwest Syria is not without its challenges. The Cash Working Group (CWG) has identified key issues related to liquidity and operational capacity in the region. Post-earthquake, there was a reported shortage of both 50 and 100 USD notes, as well as smaller banknotes, temporarily impacting transactions. PTT offices, the Turkish postal services utilized by Syrians for money transfers, do not dispense small coins, and transfers must be made in \$50 denominations or multiples, complicating the process. Moreover, the capacity to meet the widespread needs is limited, with only 10 operational PTT offices across northern Aleppo and none in Idlib, as noted by the CWG. These constraints underscore the importance of addressing logistical and infrastructural challenges to optimize the effectiveness of cash-based interventions in Northwest Syria.



WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE (WASH)

Among the 13.6 million people in need of WASH assistance in Syria, a significant 44% are children, highlighting their particular vulnerability. The country's first cholera outbreak in decades,

occurring in 2022, can be traced directly to the deteriorating water situation. This scarcity of safe water has forced many, including up to 52% of the population, to depend on potentially unsafe alternative water supply methods beyond traditional piped water. The situation is further complicated by an unreliable power supply, which disrupts both the functionality of water systems and the distribution of water to households. These issues are exacerbated by a prolonged drought and the alarmingly low water levels of the Euphrates River, which have contributed to an ongoing water crisis that is now entering a new year.

The recent earthquake intensified these challenges, With 2.1 million people in the Northwest Syria requiring urgent assistance, comprehensive WASH service delivery is imperative, encompassing the provision of safe water, latrines, drainage systems, and washing facilities to meet these immediate needs.

The earthquake inflicted significant damage on vital WASH facilities, including the collapse of water reservoirs, towers, stations, and sanitation systems. A REACH assessment indicated that a minimum of 25% of WASH services in Northwest Syria were damaged, heightening the risk of poor water quality and adverse health outcomes.

The ongoing conflict in the area had already compromised sewage networks due to airstrikes, ground battles, and inadequate infrastructure management, resulting in the destruction of wastewater pipelines and substantial portions of the sewage system becoming inoperable. This exposure to untreated sewage has contributed to the spread of waterborne diseases, including cholera, typhoid, and gastroenteritis, posing a significant threat to local water sources and public health. The existing WASH infrastructures, characterized by fragility and inadequacy, were further strained by limited funding.

The cumulative effect of weakened infrastructure and chronic underfunding has significantly compromised the region's WASH services, which now operate far below the necessary standards to effectively mitigate health risks. Addressing the urgent needs of the affected populations requires immediate and sustained intervention to restore and enhance the WASH facilities, crucial for ensuring the health and well-being of millions in this conflict-affected region.

III. WORLD VISION SYRIA RESPONSE'S IMPACT

Review of World Vision's sector-based response efforts over the past year:²

Over the past year, after the devastating earthquake on February 6th, which significantly affected parts of Northwest Syria and southern Türkiye, our dedication to supporting the well-being of children and families in crisis has been clear through our broad humanitarian initiatives. With more than 50 diverse projects implemented in the earthquake-stricken areas, our work has spanned health and nutrition, protection, education, livelihoods, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). This substantial effort has reached around 2 million people in both Northwest Syria and Southern Türkiye, with over 1.8 million of these people in Northwest Syria alone. In this critical period, we have intensified our collaboration with local organizations, embodying World Vision's approach to localizing aid by empowering and supporting local organizations and workers in Syria. This strategy not only enhanced protection for local humanitarian workers and built upon local capacities but also ensured an effective and immediate response to the earthquake.



HEALTH AND NUTRITION:

World Vision Syria Response, in collaboration with its partners, has been dedicated to enhancing health outcomes in affected Syrian communities. Our approach has included access to essential primary and secondary health and nutrition services, ensuring quality and equality. These comprehensive services have spanned a range of areas, from diagnostic and curative services

for communicable diseases like cholera to interventions for non-communicable diseases, sexual and reproductive health, and mental health care. Additionally, our efforts have encompassed inpatient care for various specialized internal and surgical fields and have promoted child and women's health by supporting child and maternity facilities that provide outpatient and inpatient specialized care for pregnant women, infants, and children, in addition to Basic and Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (BEmONC, CEmONC).

Following the earthquake, World Vision Syria Response has intensified its efforts. Through our network of partners, we have mobilized to offer life-saving health and nutrition services, including the operation of surgical hospitainers, deployment of mobile clinics, provision of rehabilitation services, and the activation of Rapid Response Teams (RRTs). To date, our initiatives have benefited a total of 1.9 million people, reflecting our commitment to supporting those in dire need.



PROTECTION:

In response to the earthquake, World Vision Syria Response, in collaboration with its partners inside Northwest Syria, has provided psychosocial support and awareness-raising on protection risks, prevention, and positive coping mechanisms. Additionally, the organization has offered specialized protection services, including case management, an emergency case fund for the most affected population, and referrals to specialized services tailored to the protection needs of girls, boys, women, and men. This effort aimed to address distress and enhance

² For additional details on the interventions of World Vision Syria Response over the past year, kindly refer to the annual report available at: [Syria Response ANNUAL REPORT FY23 - October 2022 to Sept 2023 | Syria Crisis Response | World Vision International \(wvi.org\)](#)

the functioning level of affected children and their caregivers. World Vision Syria Response initiated its first direct implementation with the LIFT project. This project is an integrated approach that includes psychosocial support (PSS), education, and child protection, all aimed at achieving child wellbeing. This implementation is in line with a global centre initiative that focuses on developing a comprehensive approach named LIFT (Life in Fullness Together). Moreover, World Vision Syria Response co-chairs the Northwest Syria Child Protection Area of Responsibility alongside UNICEF, coordinating 54 active partner organizations inside the area.

World Vision Syria Response has further expanded its services to address more complex mental health needs. We initiated specialized mental health services for those affected, targeting more in-depth interventions and utilizing specialized techniques such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), delivered by qualified, licensed clinical psychologists. By now, 115,031 people have been direct recipients of our comprehensive support and protection services.

“I just want to be like other children,” says Qamar, a ten-year-old Syrian girl whose life has been marred by adversity. Born into a country torn apart by conflict, Qamar’s family became displaced in Northwest Syria, finding shelter in a modest room. Despite the safety, life was far from stable. “We lost everything, lived in a displacement camp, and struggled for food. Sometimes, my children slept hungry,” her mother recounts.

Then, the earthquake struck. Their poorly-maintained shelter barely withstood the quake. In the aftermath, the family endured nine harrowing nights outdoors, exposed to rain and cold. Clinging to their mother, Qamar and her siblings wept, bewildered by the chaos. “I couldn’t understand what was happening,” Qamar recalls.

Compelled by their dire situation, the family returned to their unstable home. However, the trauma persisted for Qamar, “I would scream in the middle of the night and my mother would wake me up. I thought I might die like other children who passed away under the rubbles,” she explains.

Determined to support their child, the family sought help from World Vision’s protection centre, located near the displacement camp where they resided. Witnessing the centre’s comprehensive support for children impacted by the war and the devastating earthquake brought a sense of relief to Qamar. Gradually, she engaged in the psychological support sessions with 600 other children, learning to navigate and express her emotions healthily, rather than suppressing them. Beyond emotional healing, Qamar received medical referrals from World Vision to address her growth deficiencies, while her family, along with many others, benefited from the project’s food assistance. For children like Qamar, enduring the earthquake’s horrors, such psychological support initiatives are not merely beneficial; they serve as a crucial lifeline, enabling them to confront and rise above the traumas they have faced.

*Name has been changed to protect identity.



EDUCATION:

World Vision Syria Response has been committed to Education in Emergencies throughout Syria. Maintaining its focus on informal education, the organization has introduced innovative pedagogical approaches for participants in areas of high vulnerability and severity, ensuring that all

children receive quality educational opportunities, including remote and online educational support. Also, through a holistic approach to both formal and non-formal education for both genders, we have provided education in schools and learning centres, situated both within and outside IDP camps, thereby establishing a robust educational support system for children facing these challenging circumstances. Our dedication to educational empowerment has successfully reached 142,951 children, providing them with vital access to our educational resources and programs.

Nine-year-old Sahar* personifies resilience, having pursued her education amidst war and displacement.

For Sahar*, life was a constant upheaval; the family was forced to flee Northwest Syria due to relentless shelling, indiscriminate attacks, and frequent bombings. They risked their lives every moment they stayed, driving them to seek refuge in a city in Northern Syria, hoping for Sahar to resume her schooling. Yet, amid their quest for safety, Sahar had to drop out of school in the second grade.

The family eventually settled where Sahar's father secured employment, but this semblance of stability was shattered by the earthquake that demolished their home and Sahar's place of learning. With each tremor, Sahar's dream of education seemed to crumble. Post-earthquake, as they assessed their shattered dwelling, Sahar was haunted by memories of studying when their house collapsed. "I am afraid to go to school. I don't want the building to fall down when I start studying again," Sahar recounts.

Sahar's school is part of an educational initiative led by World Vision's partner, Takaful Al Sham. The initiative integrates education with psychological support for children who have survived the earthquake. It provides psychological support sessions, techniques to help children reintegrate with their classmates, and strategies to overcome stress and fear. So far, it has reached more than 1,340 children, including Sahar.

*Name has been changed to protect identity.



LIVELIHOODS:

In response to the earthquake, World Vision Syria Response's efforts have focused on bolstering the economic resilience of highly vulnerable households through income-generating activities and cash aid. These initiatives are part of livelihood projects designed to strengthen families by leveraging resources and implementing strategies that positively impact their economic circumstances and connect beneficiaries with livelihood opportunities. This approach enables individuals facing extreme

vulnerabilities to meet both the fundamental and progressive needs of their families and children.

To achieve these objectives, we have facilitated skill enhancement through Technical Vocational Educational Training (TVET), fostered the development of small enterprises, and implemented cash-for-work programs. These measures are intended to empower families to reach critical goals: securing their children's access to education, ensuring sufficient household income, and fostering ambitions for a prosperous future for their children.

Through these livelihood interventions, we have successfully empowered 167,256 individuals/households, equipping them with essential tools and opportunities.

"When the houses started shaking and the walls were collapsing, I heard a little girl desperately screaming for help. Her voice still echoes in my head," recalls 8-year-old Badr*. From a warm home to a cold tent, that's how their life has been transformed in the blink of an eye "All I could feel is coldness as rain poured down our heads and heartbreak as I recall what happened to our house," says Badr.

Financial support was extended to Badr's family and 750 others, providing two rounds of vouchers, each valued at 150 USD. This aid was crucial for securing essentials such as food and clothing amidst Syria's economic downturn. "my husband used to work on and off as a construction worker and when the earthquake hit, things only went downhill as the opportunities dwindled," mentions Badr's mother.

Badr shares with World Vision's staff: "After the house was renovated, I was ecstatic because we no longer need to stay out in the cold."

World Vision Syria Response, in partnership with Takaful Al Sham, is dedicated to repairing homes affected by the earthquake in Syria, restoring hope, comfort, and safety to families who thought they were irretrievably lost.

*Name has been changed to protect identity.

*Zaid, a 34-year-old father of four, contended with the Syrian crisis before seeking refuge in Türkiye, aiming for a better future for his children. However, stability was short-lived as an earthquake devastated their lives. Homes were reduced to rubble, compelling Zaid's family to endure harsh conditions in a makeshift tent, where the challenges of cold and rain were relentless. The widespread destruction decimated job opportunities, making it extremely challenging for Zaid to provide even the essentials, like milk for his children.

Despite these hardships, Zaid became a beneficiary of the emergency E-voucher program, a collaborative effort by World Vision Syria Response and Orange. This initiative, through a local shopping card, enabled Zaid to meet his family's basic needs, especially ensuring nutrition for his children.

Today, Zaid and his family are navigating a comparatively stable winter, clinging to the hope that this project will continue. The program has already positively impacted the lives of over 18,000 beneficiaries, persisting in its mission to offer relief and foster sustainability for those affected by conflict, displacement, and natural disasters.

*Name has been changed to protect identity.



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH):

In the wake of the earthquake, World Vision Syria Response has executed a range of WASH projects. These initiatives have involved enhancing

water supply, providing sanitation services, constructing latrines, installing water and sewer networks, managing solid waste, and supporting WASH services and facilities in schools and health centres. Additionally, the projects have focused on advocating for hygiene and behaviour change, and distributing hygiene kits in multiple operational areas. These comprehensive efforts have ensured improved WASH conditions for 1,051,308 people, significantly contributing to better health and living standards.

Aysar*, a devoted grandfather and former manager at a ceramic company, once led a prosperous life with his large family in Northwest Syria. However, the war uprooted their lives, forcing them into a displacement camp as part of a collective village decision. Despite securing temporary safety and receiving modest financial support from his children abroad, Aysar faced the harsh reality of life in the camp, including the struggle to afford essential water. Families collaborated to share the cost of water tanks, a critical but insufficient solution.

Recognizing the community's acute need, World Vision Syria Response and its partner, ULUSLARARASI İNSANI YARDIMLAŞMA DERNEĞİ, intervened with a comprehensive water provision project. This initiative supplied clean water, rehabilitated water stations, managed waste, and installed solar cells, benefiting over 330,000 individuals. 'We pray the support continues; people trust the organizations and the technicians. We hope it doesn't stop,' Aysar added.

*Name has been changed to protect identity.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS/ KEY ASKS:

One year post-earthquake, World Vision emphatically calls for:

At the heart of our overarching recommendations is the pressing need for a political resolution in Syria. Governments must resolutely commit to fostering a peace process that ensures a lasting resolution, thus restoring hope and stability in Syria. This process should promote the healing of all communities- children, women, the elderly, and men- paving the way for national recovery and unity.

Concurrently, World Vision calls for unwavering, unconditional, and unrestricted humanitarian access to Northwest Syria, stressing the critical importance of ensuring a continuous flow of aid into the region. Governments must enable this

access, which is vital to secure the survival of the 4.1 million residents in need.

Full funding of the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is paramount for effectively addressing the escalating crisis. The 2023 HRP remains drastically underfunded, with only a third of the necessary resources secured. Donors must fulfil the financial requirements of the HRP, ensuring that the critical humanitarian needs in Syria are comprehensively met. Detailed needs specific to each sector have been identified, necessitating the targeted and efficient allocation of funds in the following areas:



IN HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE:

1. Mobilize resources to expedite the transition of displaced families from tents to dignified shelters, ensuring the pace meets the urgent need.
2. Prioritize funding and support for the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure to ensure children and families displaced by the earthquake can return to their homes.
3. Promote carrying out a thorough risk assessment to identify any potential risks to targeted infrastructure, including natural hazards and conflicts, ensuring that future developments are resilient and secure.

IN HEALTH AND NUTRITION:

1. Promptly increase investment in primary healthcare services, emphasizing the restoration of full functionality and improved accessibility, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.
2. Donors must urgently and immediately restore and increase funding for food assistance, addressing the needs of the 3.7 million food-insecure individuals among the 4.5 million total population in Northwest Syria. Recognize that this aid is a fundamental human right, essential for combating rising food insecurity, malnutrition, and child mortality.



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IN PROTECTION:

1. Humanitarian actors must ensure continuous support and funding for Child-Friendly Spaces, Women and Girls Safe Spaces, and specialized protection services to effectively address the needs of vulnerable populations.
2. Focus on facilitating access to legal aid and support for obtaining essential documentation, such as birth certificates, to prevent the emergence of a stateless generation.
3. Insist on the urgent prioritization of mental health in times of distress, directing substantial resources towards the comprehensive training of trauma service staff to secure their ability to offer immediate and impactful support.



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IN EDUCATION:

1. Call on recovery and development partners to designate dedicated funds specifically for the improvement and reconstruction of schools and educational facilities.

2. Enhance integration across sectors within the education system, particularly by incorporating mental health and psychosocial support for children, teachers, and caregivers, focusing on the post-earthquake context and ongoing crisis.
3. Merge mitigation and preparedness strategies with the transformation of temporary learning centres into sustainable, long-lasting educational institutions, emphasizing resilience and the adoption of innovative practices informed by past lessons.
4. Demand robust support for teachers by ensuring equitable compensation and comprehensive professional development. Additionally, mandate targeted assistance for students to effectively address and rectify learning loss.

IN LIVELIHOODS:

1. Expand livelihood programs, placing an emphasis on skills training, enterprise development, and cash-for-work schemes across various sectors such as health, education, and WASH to empower vulnerable households and foster economic stability.
2. Expand the multi-purpose cash assistance programs in Northwest Syria and enhance their delivery within the humanitarian response framework. This expansion should prioritize nutrition-sensitive criteria in the assessment of needs and vulnerabilities, specifically focusing on vulnerable groups such as children, and pregnant and lactating women.
3. Maintain the use of US dollars in multi-purpose cash assistance programs to preserve the value of the assistance and safeguard the purchasing power of recipient households. Additionally, consider alternative currencies such as Syrian pound or Turkish lira, adapting the selection to the local context and ensuring collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the Cash Working Group, donors, and partners in the same area. Ensure that currency decisions are based on factors such as timely delivery, adherence to do-no-harm principles, and the principles of cost efficiency and cost-effectiveness.



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IN WASH (WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE):

1. Invest in and restore sustainable water and sanitation infrastructure in affected areas, ensuring the availability and continuous operation of clean water and adequate sanitation facilities. This includes not only repairing damaged infrastructures but also supporting the running costs for long-term functionality and maintenance.
2. Intensify efforts in hygiene promotion and behavioural change campaigns to prevent disease outbreaks and improve public health outcomes.
3. Boost investment in solar power and clean energy infrastructure to diminish dependence on fuel-based energy sources. Aim to promote local community resilience, establish cost recovery mechanisms, and reduce the environmental impact.

With an emphasis on long-term strategies and resilience building, the following must be the cornerstone of each sector's recommendations:

- - Involve communities in the planning and implementation of projects to ensure sustainability and enhance local capacity.
- - Implement comprehensive monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the impact of interventions, learn from experiences, and adapt strategies for continuous improvement.
- - The adoption of a comprehensive, climate-smart, and child-centric approach in the recovery and reconstruction efforts. Governments and humanitarian actors should highlight the importance of innovative, environmentally friendly solutions, coupled with the integration of advanced learning technologies where possible.



For more information, please visit



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