



## PRESS RELEASE

### **15 March 2021: 10 years of war in Syria WeWorld gives voice to Syrian women with a photographic project by Francesca Volpi**

*More than 6.7 million people have managed to escape from Syria since the beginning of the war.*

*On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the beginning of the Syrian conflict, WeWorld tells the story of its protagonists through a multimedia project and the photographic exhibition "Il tempo sospeso" (Stuck in time).*

*Milan, 11 March 2021-* "When the war started, my parents told me that it was a temporary conflict, that there was no need to be afraid. When I came here to Lebanon, they repeated the same thing, but it wasn't like that. I've been living here for 8 years," says Abir, 18, a Syrian refugee in Lebanon.

**March 15** marks **10 years since the beginning of the Syrian conflict**, 10 years in which the lives of Abir and many other women who have found refuge in Lebanon are suspended.

**WeWorld**—an organization that has been defending the rights of women and children in Italy and around the world for 50 years—has chosen to tell the story of the lives of Syrian women in Lebanon and to give them a voice thanks to a multimedia project of testimonies and photographs created together with the **international photographer Francesca Volpi**, who visited the camps where WeWorld works, in the Bekaa Valley and in Akkar.

The figures speak for themselves: **More than 6.7 million people escaped from Syria since the beginning of the war..** Of these, 1.5 million - mostly women and children - are displaced in Lebanon, the country with the highest concentration of refugees per capita in the world, which itself has been experiencing a major social, political and economic crisis for years. According to the latest 2019 estimates, **some 75,500 adult women and 167,000 children live in informal settlements in Lebanon.** Here, women often lack access to basic services and goods and live in basic subsistence conditions within structures and areas that were supposed to be temporary, but have become almost permanent.

**"Il tempo sospeso", Francesca Volpi's photographic project**, will be on display at the upcoming **WeWorld Festival to be held May 21-30 at BASE in Milan.** The photographic work turns the spotlight on the lives of Syrian refugees, on women who, in the last ten years, have never stopped fleeing the conflict in Syria and have found refuge in Lebanon, in situations that are not always adequate and able to offer them a dignified life beyond the emergency.

*"The photographic work carried out with Francesca Volpi highlights the human and daily aspect of the lives of these women in the informal camps, telling the consequences of a crisis still long to be resolved. The photographs show the courage and resilience (to the end of patience) of Syrian women and girls, stuck in a precarious condition from which they struggle to get out, forced to face the family burden alone and limited by a predominantly patriarchal context. These photos tell and celebrate*



*their strength, giving back a voice and a face to those who have been deprived of everything”* says **Dina Taddia, WeWorld's CEO.**

WeWorld, operating in Syria since 2011, has taken action with targeted projects in various fields, including education, protection, water and sanitation, emergency response, including that against Covid-19. One of WeWorld's main initiatives is the rehabilitation of schools, allowing thousands of children to return to study in suitable and comfortable places.

In 2020, with the support of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and the Italian Development Cooperation Agency (AICS), WeWorld ensured access to school to almost 7,000 children (aged between 6 and 19) and trained more than 1,000 teachers. It also distributed school supplies to nearly 3,000 children in need and rehabilitated 3 educational schools, where about 1,500 other children are currently enrolled. The organization also works to ensure educational spaces are free from mines and unexploded devices and has trained over 24,000 children on mine and unexploded ordnance risks.

WeWorld has been working in Lebanon since 2006, focusing on supporting and protecting the most vulnerable, guaranteeing the rights of boys and girls and ensuring they can go to school. Since 2012, it has been working with Syrian refugees in informal tented settlements (ITSs) to address basic needs.

Over the past 3 years, WeWorld has reached more than 81,000 people, across Lebanese and Syrian communities, with water management and education-related activities and awareness campaigns.

\*The photographic exhibition by Francesca Volpi will take place under the patronage of the Municipality of Milan, the Lombardy Region and under the high patronage of the European Parliament.

The multimedia project is available here: <https://www.weworld.it/en/news-and-stories/news/15th-march-2011-15th-march-2021-10-years-of-war-in-syria>

#### WEWORLD

WeWorld is an independent Italian organization committed for 50 years to ensuring the rights of women and children in 27 countries, including Italy.

WeWorld works in **158 projects** reaching over **7.2 million direct beneficiaries** and **42.4 million indirect beneficiaries**. It operates in **Italy, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Libya, Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Benin, Burundi, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, Mozambique, Mali, Niger, Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, India, Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia**.

Girls, children, women and young people, actors of change in every community are the protagonists of WeWorld's projects and campaigns in the following areas of intervention: **Human rights** (gender equality, prevention and contrast of violence against children and women, migration), **humanitarian aid** (prevention, aid and rehabilitation), **food security, water, sanitation and health, education, socio-economic development and environmental protection, global citizenship education and international volunteering**.

**MISSION** - We work especially for girls, boys, women and young people, who are actors of change in every community for a fairer and more inclusive world. We help people to overcome emergencies and guarantee a life worth living, by offering opportunities and a better future through programmes of human and economic development (as part of the 2030 Agenda).

**VISION** - We strive for a better world where everyone, especially women and children, have equal opportunities and rights, access to resources, to health, to education and to dignified work. A world in which the environment is a common resource to be respected and preserved; in which war, violence and exploitation are banned. A world that belongs to everybody and where no one is left behind.



#### CHILDFUND ALLIANCE

Founded in 1938, ChildFund is a child-focused global development organization that helps children and their families overcome poverty and the underlying conditions that prevent children from reaching their full potential. Twelve child-focused development agencies are part of the global network ChildFund Alliance. Together we reach nearly 23 million children and family members in 70 countries. Members work to end violence and exploitation against children; provide expertise in emergencies and disasters to ease the harmful impact on children and their communities; and engage children, families and communities to create lasting change. Our commitment, resources, innovation, knowledge and expertise serve as a powerful force to transform the lives of children around the world.

#### **For information:**

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