



THE SILENT PANDEMIC

The Impact of the
COVID-19 Pandemic on
the Mental Health and
Psychosocial Wellbeing
of Children in Conflict-
Affected Countries

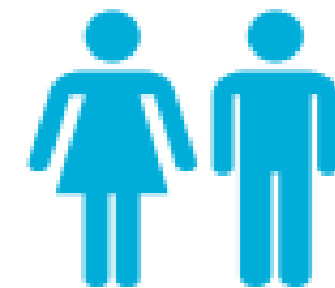
Method

We spoke to:

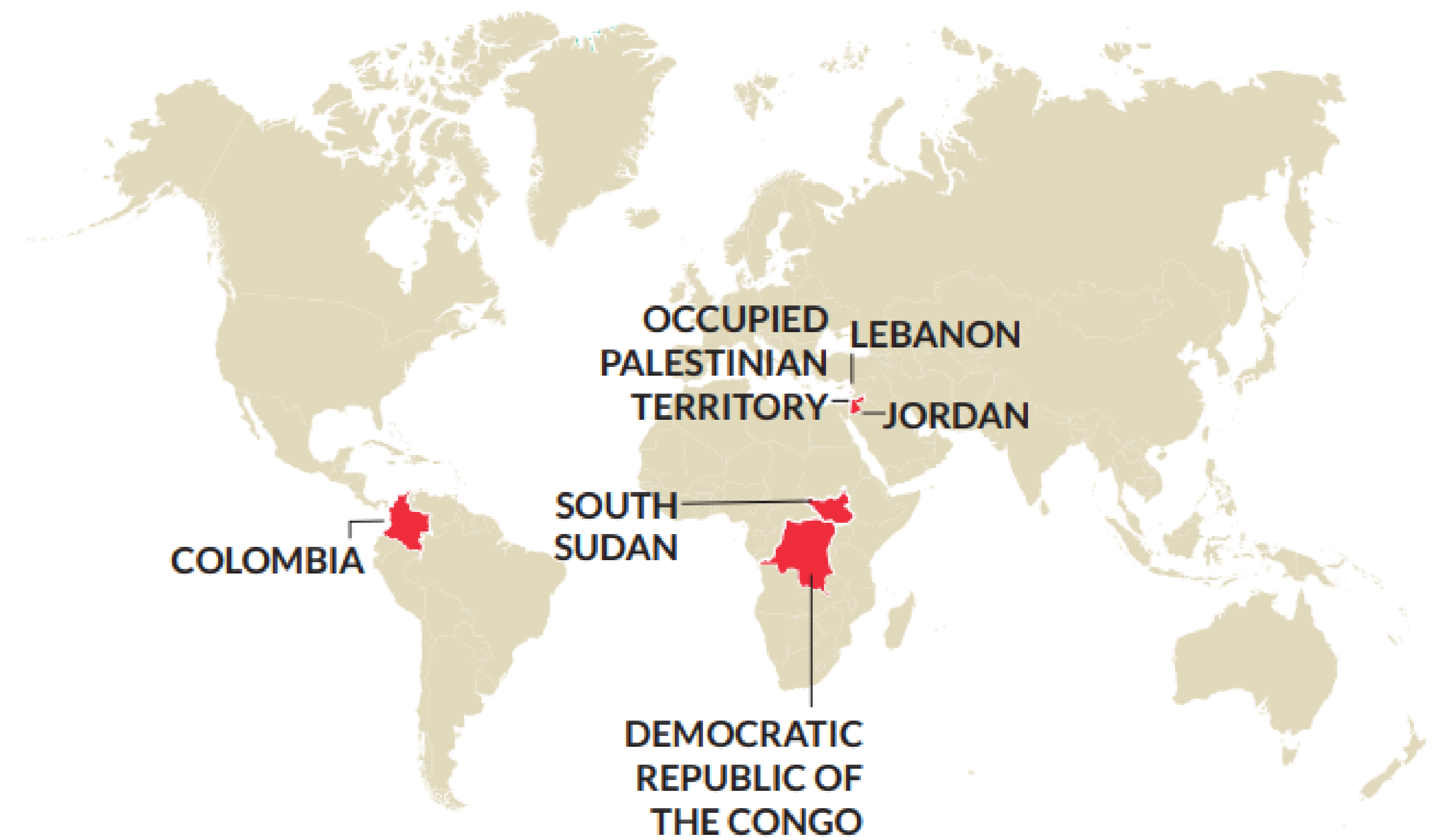
In six conflict-affected countries, to see how they'd been affected by COVID-19.


220
children


287
parents and
carers

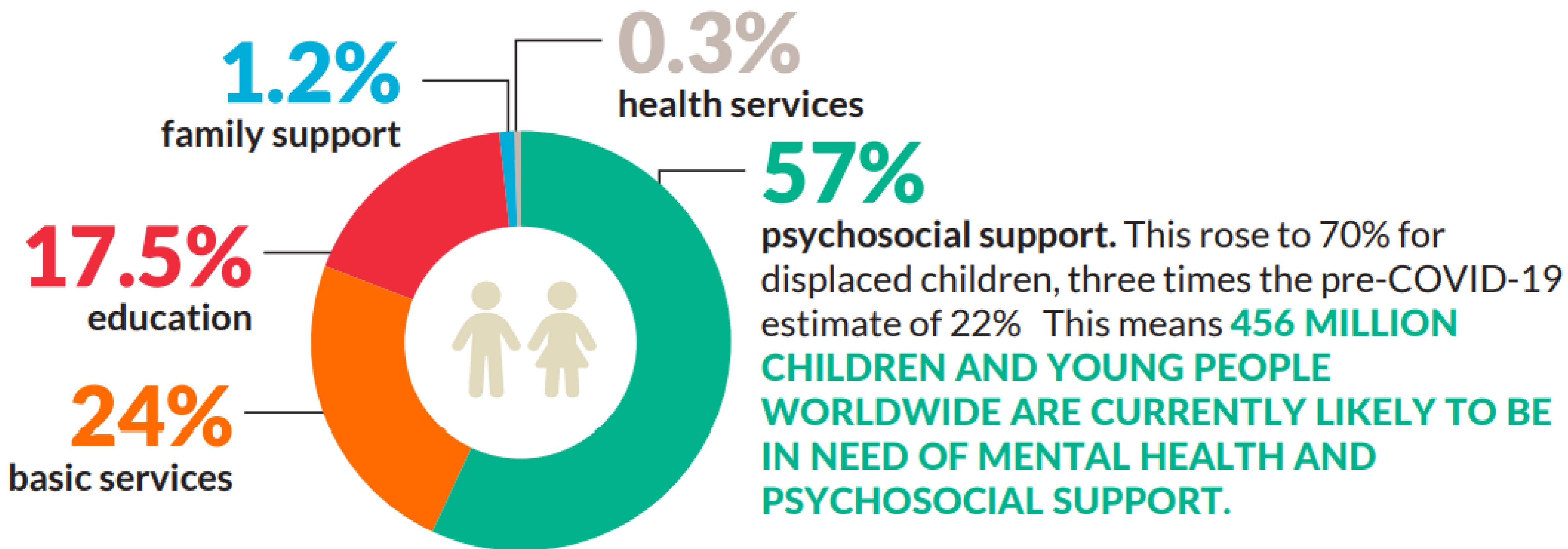

245
adolescents and
young people


44
child protection
experts and
community leaders



Needs

What children said they needed:



Needs for psychosocial support: 57% (70 % for refugees; 43% for host communities)

Impact

12%



of children living in conflict-affected regions said they were continuously feeling extremely sad and fearful, and could be at risk of developing moderate to severe mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety.

This is a

33%
increase

Prior to the pandemic, WHO estimated 9% of children and adults in conflict settings.



Risks

Most children and parent feared contracting COVID-19 themselves or that relatives may die from the virus. **40% of children** and **48% of parents** indicated that COVID-19 is the main risk affecting their emotions.



Recommendations



USD 1.4 billion is needed to reach the **456 million children** living in fragile and conflict-affected regions who are in need of mental health and psychosocial support.

Currently, funding for mental health and psychosocial support makes up **JUST 1%** of all humanitarian health funding.



Reference for 22% and 9% WHO: Charlson, F., van Ommeren, M., Flaxman, A., Cornett, J., Whiteford, H., & Saxena, S. (2019). New WHO prevalence estimates of mental disorders in conflict settings: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet*, 394(10194), 240-248.

Recommendations:

- 1) **Stop fighting** and adhere to International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law
- 2) **Prioritize MHPSS** in Humanitarian Response Plans & have a subsection with: targets, funding and reporting, so that needs are highlighted, and funding gaps addressed
- 3) Recognise MHPSS as **a right for children** and their families, as a life-saving intervention in emergency responses, development and peacebuilding•
- 4) **Integrated** across sectors (including child protection, livelihoods, and education) – with communities playing a role in design and implementation
- 5) Draft **National Mental Health strategies** (specific lines in education, health and protection)
- 6) Step up international collaboration to **accelerate vaccine rollout in fragile and conflict-affected countries.**

Meet the Team

To read the **full report** head to :

<https://www.wvi.org/emergencies/coronavirus-health-crisis/silent-pandemic>

• https://www.warchild.nl/documents/217/The_Silent_Pandemic.pdf

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