

BEYOND RETURN

Child and Family Wellbeing
Among Refugee and IDP
Returnees in

SYRIA

World Vision 



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ABOUT THE STUDY

This fact sheet draws on World Vision Middle East and Eastern Europe's [World Refugee Day 2026 briefing](#), which explores the experiences of refugee and internally displaced returnee families in Aleppo Governorate, Syria. Based on qualitative research with caregivers and young people, it highlights the realities children and families face as they rebuild their lives following return.

CONTEXT



Approximately **2 million** IDPs and 1.67 million refugees have returned since December 2024.



15.6 million people require humanitarian assistance.



Nearly half of those in need are children.



Returnees are arriving in communities affected by **damaged infrastructure, limited services and shrinking humanitarian funding.**



KEY FINDINGS

- Families returned primarily to reunite with loved ones, reclaim homes and rebuild livelihoods.
- Many described conditions as significantly worse than expected.
- Food insecurity, poverty and lack of livelihoods are undermining children's wellbeing.
- Children face serious protection risks from landmines, explosive ordnance and damaged infrastructure.
- Access to education remains disrupted by damaged schools, teacher shortages and curriculum gaps.
- Psychological distress remains widespread among both children and caregivers.



VOICES FROM CHILDREN AND CAREGIVERS

"At first, I was excited and happy to be returning to my land, but as soon as I arrived and saw the destruction, I was overcome with disappointment and sadness."

– Woman-headed household interview participant

"There are no safe spaces for children to play."

– Male focus group participant

"The weather changed. The school changed, and my friends changed. This is difficult."

– Young person, focus group discussion



RECOMMENDATIONS

Donors and Funding Institutions:

- Increase flexible, multi-year funding bridging humanitarian response, recovery and development.
- Prioritise high-return areas and underfunded child-focused sectors.

European Union and European States:

- Uphold non-refoulement obligations.
- Ensure returns remain voluntary, safe and informed by children's best interests.

UN Agencies and Humanitarian Actors:

- Scale up protection, mine action, education, nutrition and MHPSS services.
- Strengthen coordination between humanitarian and recovery actors.

INGOs and NGO Partners:

- Deliver integrated, child-centred programmes combining livelihoods, protection, education and psychosocial support.
- Invest in locally led and community-based approaches.

National and Local Authorities:

- Restore schools, healthcare, water systems and social services.
- Strengthen child protection systems and remove barriers to accessing documentation and services.

ABOUT WORLD VISION SYRIA RESPONSE



World Vision Syria Response reached more than 4.22 million people, including 2.53 million children, in FY2025 through WASH, education, child protection, mental health and psychosocial support, health, nutrition, food security and livelihoods programming. Working across Syria, Jordan and Türkiye, World Vision supports both immediate humanitarian needs and longer-term recovery and resilience for children and families affected by conflict and displacement.



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