**War Child UK Information Sheet**

**Short Version:**

·       War Child UK was founded in 1993 in response to the impact of conflict on children in former-Yugoslavia.

·       War Child originated with close ties to the music industry and artists, and since then has collaborated with a variety of creative industries in innovative ways to raise funds.

·       War Child has partnered with the games industry for 15 years, including partnerships with Football Manager, Fall Guys, This War of Mine and more, and is increasingly partnering with the Twitch and Youtube community.

·       Children in Conflict was founded in 2017 as War Child’s American arm based in New York City, and allows US partners to work more closely with War Child on fundraising.

·       War Child has made it its mission to do what it can to help children impacted by war.

·       It remains the only charity solely dedicated to protecting and speaking up for children affected by war.

·       War Child currently has active programmes in Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

·       In 2020, War Child UK’s work reached 171,952 participants across their 5 country programmes.

·       War Child’s work covers 4 core areas: Protection, Education, Livelihoods, and Advocacy.

·       Protection ensures children are kept safe from the impacts of conflict, and are given the support they are needed when impacted. This can include psychosocial support, reintegration of former child soldiers, addressing sexual and gender-based violence, giving young people access to justice, and more.

·       Keeping children in education during wars and other emergencies is a life-saving priority for children and their families. Work in this area includes giving children early childhood care and development, and ensuring education can continue in some form even in times of crisis.

·       War Child’s work on Livelihoods ensures that children and young people impacted by conflict are given long term opportunities. This includes vocational training, skills coaching, small business grants, and more in order to gain long term employment or start their own businesses. Work in this area also includes providing medical supplies, cash assistance, food and more to vulnerable households.

·       War Child’s advocacy work means giving children impacted by conflict a voice and attempting to tackle the root causes of war. This includes youth advocacy campaigns, reports and publications, and amplifying the voice and rights of children at places like the UN or public rallies.

**Long Version:**

**About War Child UK**

War Child was founded in 1993 by film-makers David Wilson and Bill Leeson. On assignment in the former-Yugoslavia they were horrified by the violence and ethnic cleansing they witnessed, and especially its impact on children.

Instead of relying on politicians, War Child looked to music and high-profile pop stars to help publicise the plight of children caught up in war. In 1995 they persuaded the cream of the British music industry—including Paul McCartney, Oasis, Blur and Radiohead—to record the HELP album. Recorded in just one day, the album shot straight to the top of the charts raising £1.25 million in the process.

Since then, War Child has built links across various creative industries to raise funds in innovative ways and expand its projects supporting children impacted by conflict across the world. This includes working with the gaming industry, for 15 years now. War Child’s partnerships in gaming include Sports Interactive’s Football Manager franchise, This War of Mine, Fall Guys, and many more.

An increasingly important partnership is now with the Twitch and wider streaming community. War Child is proud to be raising funds with the help of streamers and gamers and is excited to see what the future will bring in this space!

**About Children in Conflict**

Children in Conflict is War Child UK’s partner organisation in the United States. Launched in 2017, Children in Conflictworks with North American partners to raise vital funds for War Child’s programmes. Having a sister organisation in New York City provides a platform for War Child UK to access the American continent and gives partners a local agency to deal with.

**About War Child’s Work**

Wherever children are caught up in wars—whether they’ve lost their homes, families, schools, or been forced to take part in atrocities—War Child has made it its mission to do what it can to help them.

War Child UK’s projects have expanded to reach conflict zones across the world. War Child currently has active programmes in Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

War Child UK remains the only charity solely dedicated to protecting and speaking up for children affected by war. With more than 25 years of experience, it is acknowledged as an experts at what it does, and a leading voice in the sector.

Its work has evolved from temporary food aid to ongoing, sustainable projects that improve the long-term outcomes for the most vulnerable and marginalised children in conflict areas.

In 2020, War Child UK’s work reached 171,952 participants across their 5 country programmes.

War Child’s work covers 4 key areas:  Protection, Education, Livelihoods, and Advocacy.

**Protection**

It is a key priority to ensure children impacted by conflict are kept safe, as they are at huge risk of physical harm, violence, abuse or sexual exploitation.

War child works with children, families, communities, legal services and local authorities before, during and after armed conflicts to develop more child-focused attitudes and strengthen child protection systems.

This can include rehabilitating and reintegrating 'former child soldiers', providing psychosocial support to children, addressing sexual and gender-based violence, working with legal systems to improve justice for children, setting up child helplines and community-based child protection networks, and reunifying children with their families.

**Education**

Keeping children in education during wars and other emergencies is a life-saving priority for children and their families.

Right now, more than 75 million children and young people (aged 3-18) are out of school in 35 crisis-affected countries. And less than 2% of global humanitarian aid goes towards education.

War Child sees protecting children’s right to education as a central part of its response to a crisis.

This includes ensuring young children have access to early childhood care and development; and the ‘Education in Emergencies’ programmes that make sure children have access to quality and relevant education, either formal or non-formal learning, whatever their circumstances.

**Livelihoods**

As well as immediate protection and educational programmes, War Child also delivers long-term, sustainable food assistance and ‘livelihood’ support to young people and their communities – creating a more secure future and safer environment for children.

War Child’s work in this area includes reintegrating vulnerable children either associated with armed groups or detained for long periods of time; helping young people gain employment or start a business through training and grants; and providing medical supplies, cash assistance, food and more to vulnerable households.

**Advocacy**

For War Child, advocacy means speaking up for a cause, or giving a louder voice to children who need it.

Not only does it stand up for the rights of children in war, it also aims tackle the root causes of conflict.

A lot of what it does is about persuading other people to help, to take action, or make vital changes.

Examples of its advocacy work include a campaign to change the conversation surrounding the psychological impacts of war on children; youth led advocacy programmes; producing fact-based advocacy and research papers; and amplifying the voice and rights of children at places like the UN or public rallies.

**A Child’s Story**

This story was initially published here:

[**https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2021/03/the-story-of-zinah-formerly-associated-with-an-armed-group-in-the-central-african-republic/**](https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2021/03/the-story-of-zinah-formerly-associated-with-an-armed-group-in-the-central-african-republic/)

When the conflict erupted in 2019 in Birao, Central African Republic, Zinah was 12 years old and lived with her mother.

“I come from a poor family. My father died when I was young. We were four [at home] and my mother took care of us. It was very difficult because my mom couldn’t meet our daily needs. Right after my older brother joined the armed group, he was reported missing. My mother was so devastated by his disappearance. My older brother was the backbone of the family, helping my mother with the business and with maintaining the household. It was hard because people made fun of my mother; she didn’t earn enough money to feed us.”

Zinah couldn’t stand being teased and not knowing what had happened to her older brother.

“That’s why I decided to join the armed group. I wanted to find my brother so that we could support our family together.”

Within the armed group, Zinah spent her days collecting water, firewood and cooking for the combatants. She also learned how to carry weapons. Unfortunately, she also received the confirmation that her older brother died.

Along with 249 other children and youth, Zinah was identified as a minor during an adult disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme initiated in Birao in October 2020 by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the government.

She was separated from the group and, among other things, she received psychosocial support and an exit kit containing clothes, a pair of shoes, a mat, a towel and hygiene products to facilitate her return to civilian life. Sustainable, long-term and gender-sensitive reintegration programming based on the needs of the child is critical for boys and girls to fully realize their rights and to achieve durable peace.

Zinah is now a sociable and smiling girl, always ready to help her peers in difficult situations. The services provided by War Child helped her rebuild her life.

“I am very grateful for the services I benefited from War Child. I felt lost and I’m not anymore. What we do [joining armed groups] is done out of ignorance, by blind conformity; our community sometimes pushes us to take up arms. My wish is that War Child supports all other children affected by armed conflict; we need it.”

Since October 2020, Zinah is back to school. She is convinced that her place and that of other children is in the classroom and not in the ranks of armed groups. Zinah’s family situation remains however precarious given its modest means.

War Child is currently developing a prevention and reintegration programme for children recruited and used by armed groups. Zinah and her peers will be at the heart of its development and implementation. The objective is to make children and young people agents of change within their community so they can contribute to its stability. Zinah further wants to raise other children’s awareness to deter them from joining armed groups.