How they see it: young women’s views on early marriage in a post-conflict setting

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Abstract: Current understandings of early marriage in conflict and post-conflict settings are incomplete and under-researched, and do not sufficiently take into consideration the views and experiences of adolescent girls. While much of the literature, development reports and mainstream media emphasise the poverty, health risks and lack of agency of young women married early, they seldom provide these teenagers an open platform from which to speak. In 2007, a Palestinian refugee camp in North Lebanon was destroyed and its residents forced to flee. Returning families experienced extreme hardships and a military cordon. Through ethnographic research undertaken in the camp a year later with adolescent girls in or en route to an early marriage, their mothers and NGO community workers, I explored decision-making processes leading to an early marriage and adolescent brides’ assessments of married life. The decision to enter an early marriage, neither unilateral nor imposed, was instead described as an assessment of numerous factors, including economic hardships, insecurity and loneliness, many arising as a result of the conflict. Findings of this study challenge common understandings of early marriage – both the decision and its consequences – and call for greater nuance in designing interventions. These findings are particularly pertinent amid sensationalised media reports of early marriage in Syrian refugee communities; presenting girls in early marriages as victims garners international attention, but is not necessarily an accurate reflection of these girls’ own understandings of their situation. DOI: 10.1080/09688080.2017.1383738

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Introduction

Development organisations and human rights groups are increasingly focusing on early marriage, especially among Syrian refugees escaping appalling political violence since 2011. Marriage under the age of 18 is associated with a variety of negative consequences, including girls’ increased health risks and rights violations. Married adolescent girls have a higher likelihood of early childbearing, with the resultant risks of increased maternal, perinatal and infant mortality and morbidity, and often suffer from lack of access to knowledge about their reproductive health or the health needs of their children. Early marriage is known as both a cause and an effect of low educational attainment and linked with perpetuating a cycle of poverty.

Early marriage violates children’s rights. Much of the literature states it diminishes the agency of adolescents, and that adolescent brides are married against their will, a denial of autonomy that continues throughout their lives. However, some literature indicates the need for a more nuanced understanding of the motivations and consequences of early marriage, and even challenges the linkage between adolescent marriage and reduced agency. Other literature points out that consequences differ for those married at 12 versus 18.

Early marriage is most common in South Asia (56%), Western and Central Africa (46%) and Eastern and Southern Africa (38%). In the Arab region, between 14% and 24% of girls are married under the age of 18, although rates vary greatly between and within countries. Lacking a recent national population census, statistical data in Lebanon is limited, nevertheless, by most estimates the rate of early marriage is low in Lebanon, with 6.1% of Lebanese women aged 20–24 married...
by 18 in 2010, and with a 1.7 Total Fertility Rate for all married women in 2014. However, in 2010, 18.9% of all Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon were married before they were 18, with a Total Fertility Rate of 3.2 for all married Palestinian women in 2014. In Lebanon, personal status codes determine different legal ages for marriage for different religious sects. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon mainly adhere to the Lebanese Sunni court, where the legal age of marriage is 12 for boys and 9 for girls. Complex emergencies are linked to a rise in early marriage in academic and development literature, often in an effort to protect daughters from violence or sexual advances. In conflict and post-conflict settings in the Arab region, an increase in early marriage has been documented in Sudan, Iraq, Palestine and Yemen and among Syrian refugee populations in Jordan and Lebanon.

It should be noted that most academic research on early marriage consists of quantitative assessments in sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia, the majority of it undertaken in stable conditions. Early marriage in conflict and post-conflict settings, however, has received insufficient research attention, with a systematic review of quantitative research on the impact of conflict on adolescent transitions (including age at marriage) “reveal[ing] a paucity of literature on the impact of conflict on sexual and reproductive health outcomes of young women”. There is even less academic research utilising qualitative methods to investigate early marriage in conflict or post-conflict settings, very little of which is undertaken in the Arab region. A review by the United Nations of the literature on early marriage in humanitarian settings determined the need for “thorough qualitative, comprehensive, informant-based analysis with long-term policy implications that covers the Arab countries from a regional perspective.”

Indeed, qualitative studies that seek out adolescents’ views of early marriage in conflict and post-conflict settings can produce unique insights. In refugee camps and IDP settlements in Uganda, for example, adolescents discussed the shifts in family relationships and communications caused by conflict and displacement. They identified early marriage as a coping strategy in the face of loneliness, exacerbated by the loss of traditional conversations with elders and grandparents.

There is also a considerable body of grey literature, (by UN organisations and NGOs, as well as the media), which employs ethnographic research methods when investigating early marriage in conflict or post-conflict settings. Not all of this literature is sufficiently rigorous or nuanced. Titles like “How come you allow little girls to get married?” or “The untold misery of child brides” sensationally the phenomenon of early marriage (as has been pointed out in critiques of the coverage of the Syrian crisis), and some reports prioritise a story of victimhood, presenting all adolescent girls’ early marriages as forced and unhappy, although their own findings may be more nuanced. Other reports, however, intentionally provide such nuance, including corrections to commonly accepted understandings.

Finally, most of the academic and grey literature offers standard, prescribed interventions to preventing early marriage: continuing education for girls at risk, poverty reduction for their families and/or awareness-raising of the health risks of early marriage for their parents, with additional security measures for conflict situations. Empirical evidence as to the effectiveness of these interventions is limited, and more research is needed. A systematic review of the evidence base for programming to reduce violence against adolescent girls in humanitarian settings (including early marriage) identified only three (of a possible 5830) evaluations robust enough for review, determining that, “evidence is urgently needed to guide programming decisions”. Moreover, aspects of these standard interventions are also coming under criticism.

This research explored the views and experiences of early marriage among married and engaged adolescent girls living in the Nahr el Bared Palestinian refugee camp in North Lebanon. I undertook this research during the post-conflict
period, one year following the 2007 violent destruction of the camp.

The conflict in Nahr el Bared Palestinian refugee camp, and life post conflict

The Nahr el Bared refugee camp was established in 1949 for Palestinians forcibly displaced from the parts of pre-1948 Mandatory Palestine that became the state of Israel. The United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) has provided services there since 1950. In 2009, there were approximately 420,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The majority have not been allowed to become Lebanese citizens, nor are they granted civil rights and as such are mainly self-employed or work in the informal economy. Most Palestinian refugees have a much lower quality of life and worse health conditions than their Lebanese neighbours.

In 2007, approximately 30,000 people lived in Nahr el Bared and its adjacent areas. The camp was one of the largest markets in North Lebanon and provided much of Lebanon with access to affordable commodities. A majority of residents worked inside the camp, and the camp’s economy was dependent on customers coming from outside.

In May 2007, violent conflict between the Lebanese Army and a non-Palestinian Islamic militant group residing in the camp escalated rapidly, forcibly displacing the entire population of Nahr el Bared. Hostilities continued for five months and most buildings and infrastructure in the camp were destroyed, with damage estimated at US$ 300 million. Almost 180 Lebanese Army soldiers were killed, generating considerable anti-Palestinian sentiment.

During the conflict, the majority of the displaced sheltered in another Palestinian refugee camp or fled to nearby towns and cities. The Lebanese Army allowed families to return to the camp’s adjacent areas in November 2007, where they faced extreme hardship, including limited water supply and electricity. Families returned to find their homes burnt, belongings looted and anti-Palestinian graffiti sprayed on walls. These hardships were exacerbated by the Lebanese military cordon placed around the camp. Entry permits issued by the Army’s Office of Military Information were required for two years after the conflict, and checkpoints remain at all camp entrances, effectively stopping trade between the camp and its surroundings.

Despite an active response by the international humanitarian community and local Palestinian and Lebanese NGOs, and donor conferences and appeals by UNRWA and the Lebanese government, the camp and its economy have yet to recover from the effects of the conflict. The chronically under-funded UNRWA was not able to complete the reconstruction of the camp. Half of the families still live in temporary housing, including pre-fabricated containers, breeze-block structures, semi-converted shacks or garages or shared apartments. With its economy shattered, the camp’s population remains dependent on relief aid and assistance, which continue to decrease.

Finally, access to health care has been drastically reduced, as the camp’s three hospitals, four clinics and six health facilities were all destroyed or extensively damaged in the conflict. During my research, the only health facilities available in the camp were temporary clinics with minimal 24-hour service. For the first year and a half after the conflict, there were no regular ambulatory services and accessing emergency care required exiting the camp via military checkpoint, and then borrowing a local NGO’s car or flagging down an informal shared taxi for the 20-minute drive to the nearest hospital.

Methodology

From July 2008 to May 2009, I undertook qualitative fieldwork in the Nahr el Bared Palestinian refugee camp. The research was formative and action-oriented. Using purposive and opportunistic sampling, I identified potential respondents through local NGOs, friends and acquaintances in the camp. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at the American University of Beirut. I developed and piloted topic guides for in-depth interviews and focus groups. Almost all fieldwork was undertaken in Arabic; topic guides were reviewed with friends in the camp for language accuracy. I requested informed consent orally prior to interviews or focus groups, and provided all respondents with a research summary.

Twenty-two in-depth interviews were conducted with adolescent girls: 11 married, 1 divorced and 10 formally engaged. I also held in-depth

In Nahr el Bared, there are two types of engagement linked to Islamic Statutes: formal, “kitbil kitab” (كتب الكتاب) and
interviews with 5 of the girls’ mothers and 12 NGO workers, along with 3 focus groups, totalling an additional 15 adolescent girls. Inclusion criteria included marriage or engagement under the age of 18, occurring during or after the conflict. Only Palestinian refugee girls from and residing in Nahr el Bared, engaged or married to Palestinian refugee men from and residing in Nahr el Bared, were included in the study. Additionally, participation-observation included: 16 informal conversations with mothers, 6 informal conversations with groups of young women aged 16–20; 2 weddings and a “girls’ night”, held the night before a wedding.

Nine respondents requested the presence of an NGO worker during interviews. Most interviews were held in private settings at the respondents’ homes. Ten respondents requested I take notes by hand and the rest were recorded. The focus groups were organised by a local NGO in the camp, and held at their premises; two were recorded. Following the interviews, I distributed a contact list in Arabic of clinics in Nahr el Bared offering OB/GYN services, with doctors’ names and visiting hours. I also distributed to married girls informational pamphlets in Arabic on healthy pregnancy and childbirth.

All interviews and focus groups were transcribed and translated into English, by myself or two paid assistants, in addition to the written participant-observations notes.5 I used thematic content analysis, including a grounded theory approach40 and basic discourse analysis,41 to identify themes, concepts and understandings. I validated the results through discussions with three NGO workers. I also met separately with two of the engaged respondents to validate translated transcriptions of their interviews.

Findings

Deciding to marry

Although much of the literature presents early marriage as a decision taken by the family, without the intended bride’s input and often against her will,3,4,7 the adolescent girls I spoke with did not share this view. All respondents, including some who described family pressure to get married, insisted that:

“The engagement was not forced on me.”

Rather, the final decision to get engaged or married, according to respondents, was taken by them – albeit in consideration of their family’s wishes.

An obvious motivation for agreeing to an early marriage – loving the proposed suitor – implied a pre-existing relationship, which no respondents would admit. In conservative Nahr el Bared, adolescents’ unsanctioned interactions are often interpreted as proof of transgression. Instead, respondents described a variety of factors influencing their decision to accept a marriage proposal.

I was frequently told by my respondents that,

“I accepted [the marriage proposal] because my parents accepted.”

Dalal, 17, explained:

“At first, I didn’t want to become engaged; I thought I was too young. But my parents told me he’s a good person, that he would take care of me, and I thought about it and decided they were right.”

As an indication of their role in the decision-making process, I was told by some respondents of how they had rejected numerous prior proposals from “unsuitable” suitors, or men they did not like. Maya, engaged at 15, told me of her first proposal:

“I didn’t know him, he was too young and not settled yet. I said to his mother: ‘You still take care of your son, how do you expect him to provide for me?”

Many adolescent girls also described setting conditions with their fiancés before agreeing to the engagement. Samia, 16, was advised by her older sister to write a list of conditions her fiancé had to agree to. Her list was extensive, and she was proud of it:

“I asked my fiancé for freedom of movement, like my family gives me… I told him I would still do my artistic activities, still go to the [NGO] centres and to scouts activities. And that I go on Sundays to visit my cousins [outside of the camp] and that he can’t oppose that.”

A key factor that all respondents cited was the impact of the conflict and their quality of life post-conflict, saying:
“If the conflict hadn’t happened, I wouldn’t be married/engaged now.”

These girls’ understandings of their lives and their decisions were permanently coloured by considerations of their post-conflict situations; life had become more insecure and more oppressed (especially due to the military presence), much poorer, and the future more bleak.

Many adolescent girls explained that they chose to get engaged because they felt they should relieve their parents. Amira, 17, divorced with a child, told me:

“I only agreed for one reason. I agreed because of the situation here, because I wanted to reduce the burden on my parents, because their economic situation is not good.”

Respondents also commonly described wanting to leave their families’ residences. Tamara, married and pregnant at 16, described her family’s post-conflict living conditions:

“Ten people in one room – imagine that! Ten, it’s way too much. And the arguing. I was suffocating.”

These motivations were recognised by some mothers. Yara’s eldest daughter married at 15, mainly to leave the house. Yara’s husband had become increasingly suspicious of his daughter’s behaviour after the conflict:

“After the conflict, my daughter told me that she would do anything, anything to get out of the house. And I told her, ‘Don’t marry this guy, wait for someone better.’ But she said she wanted to relieve us from the pressure she puts on the family. She said she didn’t want me being hit every time she went out.”

Another key motivating factor for early marriage was loneliness. Following the conflict, living in a new neighbourhood and often no longer in school, all respondents had lost contact with their closest friends and peers. The magnitude of this loss was powerfully expressed during our discussions, and respondents frequently showed more emotion when discussing the loss of their best friends, than when recounting their engagements or weddings. Abir, 16 and engaged, told me:

“I rarely go out, because I don’t have friends anymore.”

Abir then showed me one of her prized possessions, a locket her best friend had given her when they were 12, who had not returned to the camp after the conflict. Later, when she described her engagement ceremony, I asked Abir who she told about it. She stared at me:

“Who[m] could I talk to? I’m not talking these days.”

Bushra, engaged at 16, connected her engagement with her situation post conflict:

“I always used to wonder why young girls would get engaged and then married so young. And I had thought I wanted to be much older when I got engaged. But then I found, after the conflict and the changes, that it’s better to be engaged … Before, I never carried these pressures, I was happy. I never felt lonely, but after we came back here, after the conflict, I felt there was an emptiness in my life.”

Such loneliness was exacerbated for those no longer in school. Only 3 of the 22 adolescent girls interviewed were still in school; the majority had left school after the conflict, but before their engagements. Many left school after failing the academic year or the exam required to enter 10th grade. They said that after the conflict, they could no longer concentrate, and they no longer liked school because their friends were not with them. Dalal, 16 and engaged, explained that:

“I had wanted to continue my education, but then, when I failed school [at 15], I said that a girl should be engaged, and get a new life.”

The early marriage experience

Early marriage is often described as perpetuating a life of hardship, poverty and unhappiness. Some of this study’s respondents confirmed this impression. However, the majority of respondents claimed they were happy in their new situations, and reported that the difficulties they faced were not the result of early marriage, but rather caused by the conflict and the resultant destitution. Life was hard because they were so poor, and because the community was now so oppressed, with little hope for change.

Despite these difficulties, I often heard expressions of satisfaction over their new lives, such as having their own space (however small), their enjoyment in keeping it tidy, and being in charge of how they spent their time. Several married respondents described having developed new friendships after marriage, often with sisters-in-law or other women from their husband’s family, or with their new neighbours.
Before her marriage at 16, Roula explained:
“...I was bored, sitting at home all day. Now I have a house, and I make our food and go shopping.”

The most commonly expressed sources of joy were related to their husbands, their pregnancy and their children. Leila, married at 16, insisted:
“...there’s no one better in the whole camp! He looks after me, takes me out and buys me whatever I want... And now that I’m pregnant he makes sure that I’m taken care of while he’s at work.”

Early marriage is also commonly associated with early and frequent childbirth.4,7 Of the 12 married adolescent girls interviewed, 3 had already given birth and 8 were pregnant, with an average duration between the wedding and pregnancy of 5.8 months. At least three respondents had miscarried. According to NGO employees, the health risks of early childbirth in Nahr el Bared were high in this post-conflict setting, due to the absence of hospitals, the poor quality of 24-hour emergency and ambulatory services, and the overall conditions of hardship (including limited water supply and poor sanitary conditions).

Some married respondents described considerable familial pressure to conceive. Amira, married at 16, pregnant and divorced at 17, recounted bitterly:
“[His family] wanted me to get pregnant from the first month, and I was refusing. They wanted to take me to a doctor after the second month! But I didn’t want to have kids yet, I was hoping, hoping I wouldn’t get pregnant.”

However, several respondents were also adamant about their own desires for children. I was frequently told that,
“...There’s nothing better than a house with children in it.”

Several respondents looked shocked when I asked if they had felt ready for motherhood. Married and pregnant at 16 and living in a damp garage, Tamara insisted:
“...Of course, I was happy to get pregnant! I love children, of course I wanted kids – as many as God wills!”

Another reason for becoming pregnant quickly may have stemmed from lack of knowledge. Two-thirds of adolescent respondents did not think there were any additional health risks for themselves or their babies with early childbearing. The majority were also misinformed or unaware of contraceptive options. Dia, engaged at 17 and still in school, did not want to become pregnant right away. Nevertheless, she said:
“They say that the pill, and the IUD, can delay your pregnancy, and maybe even cause damage... That when you first get married, you shouldn’t take the pill. Maybe once you’ve had a baby, then you can take it. But before you have a child – it’s not good.”

Sara, an outspoken engaged 16 year-old, was one of the only respondents who openly wanted to learn more about sex and her reproductive health:
“All of us engaged girls, we don’t know what happens after the wedding. We hear stories, and we get afraid, but we don’t know anything.”

The only forms of contraceptives the adolescent respondents said they used – normally after a miscarriage or a difficult childbirth – were abstinence or withdrawal. Although some knew of the pill and the IUD, none had used them, and condoms were never mentioned.

Leila, 17, had two miscarriages and was on her fifth month of a third pregnancy:
“After I had my first miscarriage, I made a deal – the doctor told me don’t start right away, take five months to get better – so I made a deal and it ended after five months.”

I then asked which kind of contraceptive she had used. Leila had turned red:
“The deal between you and your husband ... You know, we did a deal – not the pill or the IUD – we didn’t do anything and I didn’t get pregnant.”

This lack of basic reproductive health knowledge was exacerbated by infrequent use of ante- and post-natal care. Basic obstetric care was offered for free at the UNRWA and NGO temporary clinics. Nevertheless, of eight pregnant respondents, three had not accessed regular pre-natal care. In addition to misconceptions about appointment costs, there was an assumption that any pre-natal visit required an ultrasound, which cost US$10. Tamara, 16 and three months pregnant, explained that:
“I haven’t been to the doctor, because there’s no money – my husband’s money goes to the rent ... I can’t afford the ultrasound.”
Discussion

Although many development and human rights reports state that adolescent girls are forced into early marriages, some of the academic literature situates life decisions in context, noting that, “the ‘choice of spouse’ is not a yes/no answer.” Discussing women’s empowerment, Naila Kabeer emphasised that agency is not limited to decision-making: “It can take the form of bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance as well as more intangible, cognitive processes of reflection and analysis.” Still other literature focuses on the structural impact of patriarchy in Arab societies, where gender and age discrimination favour the opinions of elder men, the assessment considers the impact on the whole family, and is influenced by ties of affection and respect. An ethnographic exploration of early marriage in Iran determined that, “The reality is that the way men and women perceive, manage, and negotiate the various forces exerted on their lives (which are paramount in any measures to improve their health and rights) is embedded within the wider construction and negotiation of social identity.”

This research supports these more nuanced understandings of the decision-making process regarding early marriage.

Of the 22 adolescent girls interviewed, none felt they were forced into their engagements or marriages. Rather, they took this decision in consultation with their families, reflecting their understanding of their situation in a particularly difficult post-conflict setting. The post-conflict loss of friendships and peers, especially for those no longer in school, was a common theme. This research confirms the importance of a newly emerging literature on adolescents and conflict and highlights the significance of loneliness as a motivating factor for early marriage – similar to qualitative findings in Uganda. Understandings of early marriage in complex emergencies should include the impact of losing one’s peers and the resultant coping strategies.

The literature also supposes the quality of life of married adolescents to be worse than had they not married young, but does not often realistically explore their alternatives. The adolescent girls in or en route to an early marriage in this study consistently revealed that their right to childhood was violated, first and foremost, by the conflict and post-conflict hardships, and by the structural factors inherent in growing up in a refugee camp as a Palestinian refugee without civil rights. Given this finding, this research questions the often- presumed singular causality between early marriage and a poorer quality of life. Respondents in this study reported having a quality of life similar to the rest of the camp. They were overwhelmed by the hardships of their existence, by endemic poverty made worse by the conflict, and the oppression of their post-conflict existence, but not by their marriages or engagements. Respondents did not think they had sacrificed their futures by their early marriages, but rather that they had started their futures a bit early. Raised to expect they would become wives and mothers and live in the camp, with few examples of women happily doing anything else, why would they not want to become wives and mothers? With the destruction of their families’ homes and livelihoods – and those of everyone they knew – and no apparent recovery in sight, why would they see any benefit in waiting to marry?

Literature has shown that girls who marry early are at higher risk for certain adverse health outcomes including early childbearing and that Arab adolescents lack information about reproductive health issues. This study’s findings confirm these concerns. Anecdotal information from respondents about early childbearing, multiple miscarriages, no modern contraceptives and insufficient use of pre- and post-natal care are compounded by an overall lack of knowledge and misinformation about basic reproductive health. These concerns were particularly pressing in post-conflict Nahr el Bared, as it lacked sufficient medical services and consistent water and electricity.

Finally, although presenting married adolescent girls as victims remains a common approach in the media and development reports, and certainly garners international intention, this research and others have shown that victimisation is not necessarily an accurate representation of how girls in early marriages understand their experiences. Early marriage, “viewed in its broader social and cultural context [...] takes on a different meaning, and local communities often demonstrate a different understanding and do not necessarily consider it a violation of their personal rights.” As such, standard interventions to prevent or address early marriage that are premised on such victimisation may not resonate with at-risk adolescents, may not be effective, and may

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even risk doing harm. For example, NGO workers and academics have criticised the commonly employed “intrapersonal interventions” to reduce early marriage in Syrian refugee communities in Lebanon for failing to recognise early marriage as a result of systemic violence and to address it accordingly also at the community and macro-levels: “It is crucial that we admit that policies, interventions, and the restrictions implemented by all these wider systems, whether via negligence, ignorance, or mis-strategisation, can be violent to Syrian women’s bodies and sexual and reproductive health”. Additionally, a pre-determined status of victimisation risks denying agency to the very girls it alleges to defend.

Conclusion
Greater acknowledgement is needed of how different contexts lead to different understandings and experiences of early marriage: marriage at 12 is different than at 17; the relationship with a husband 20 years older is different than with an age gap of five years; growing up in a refugee camp produces different expectations from those of girls raised in relative stability; and poverty-driven motivations are different from those driven by conflict and post-conflict insecurity, which differ still from those driven by immediate fears for personal safety. In Nahr el Bared, respondents considered their early marriages in response to a variety of factors, most the result of the conflict. No child should be forced to make such a decision; but then, no child should be exposed to the hardships of conflict and post-conflict settings. Emphasising these adolescents’ role as victims – especially if they do not see themselves as victims – negates their role as actors in their own lives, and reinforces the structural factors leading to early marriage in the first place.

The majority of policies and projects designed to reduce early marriage focus on increased access to education, expanded livelihood options and more community awareness. There is some academic literature which questions the presumed cause and effect between increased education and a reduction in the incidence of early marriage, or which acknowledges that poverty reduction’s correlation with a decrease in early marriage must be contextualised within other societal changes and competing needs, or which challenges the efficacy of intra-personal interventions without measures to address systemic violence, but these questions are less present in development reports or the mainstream media. My findings support the need for greater nuance in designing such interventions, and stress that addressing early marriage in post-conflict situations requires additional alternatives. Interventions should explore responding to the indirect factors motivating adolescent girls towards early engagement and marriage, such as addressing their isolation and loss of friendships and peers through programmes designed to bring teenage girls together in societally sanctioned venues (like NGO centres); and that help respond to the trauma and insecurity these girls experience by providing them with societally acceptable opportunities for meaningful and/or productive work (i.e., tutoring younger children, repairing or caring for public spaces, working with the elderly), while also providing access to less traditional options (i.e. vocational training, leadership and civic engagement courses, etc.).

Early marriage in conflict and post-conflict settings is also a community-wide response, and should be addressed through communal recovery, economic and social. In this post-conflict Palestinian refugee camp, any intervention on early marriage then must also be part of a larger project towards a just recovery, one that recognises, if not recompenses, the trauma and injustices inflicted upon the Nahr el Bared community.

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comme une évaluation de nombreux facteurs, y compris les difficultés économiques, l’insécurité et la solitude, plusieurs résultant du conflit. Les résultats de cette étude mettent en évidence une compréhension commune du mariage précoce - à la fois la décision et ses conséquences - et exigent une plus grande nuance dans la conception des interventions. Ces résultats sont particulièrement pertinents dans le contexte des rapports sensationnels des médias sur le mariage précoce dans les communautés des réfugiés syriens; le fait de présenter des filles entrées dans des mariages comme des victimes attirent l’attention internationale, mais ne reflète pas nécessairement la compréhension des filles de leur situation.