



A Qualitative Analysis of the Relevance and Impact of Amal Book #1: Perceptions of MENA Region Refugee Children and their Caregivers

Executive Summary

The Amal Project is a collaboration among a team of mental health professionals and script and story writers, artists, illustrators and content producers.

This project has spanned the last two years with the purpose of producing a series of books aimed at developing coping skills among children who have either experienced traumatic events or suffer from anxiety and depression as a result of the ongoing stress of living in protracted displacement. This field study was funded and conducted in collaboration with UNHCR and assessed the suitability and impact of book 1 in the Amal series for refugee children ages nine to twelve years old in the following categories: knowledge, attitude, skills and style. Thirty-two refugee children living in Iraq and Egypt and representing seven nationalities (i.e., Syria, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Yemen) as well as their caregivers were interviewed.

Results indicated that Book 1 of the Amal series were relatable, understandable, and did not trigger severe reactions. Furthermore, results suggested that participants were able to gain knowledge, better able to accept and normalize their feelings and reactions to stressful events, and learned some skills to manage stress. The current study only included Book #1 of the Amal Series. As a result, it is limited in determining the appropriateness of the Amal Series as a clinical tool. Future research is needed to investigate the clinical effectiveness and feasibility of the entire series.