



NORWEGIAN  
REFUGEE COUNCIL

# Edge of the Valley

## Press Kit



Photo: Zaynab Mayladan/NRC

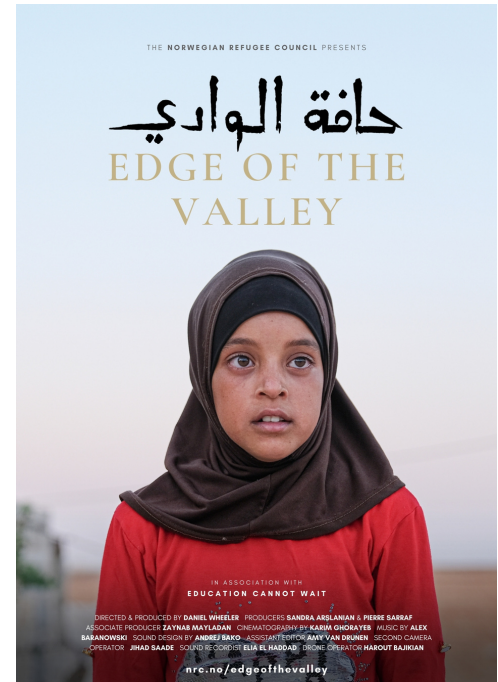
## Edge of the Valley

### Logline

A nine-year-old Syrian refugee contemplates her increasingly bleak future after being forced to drop out of school in the midst of Lebanon's unprecedented economic collapse and battle with Covid-19.

### Synopsis

An intimate look into a day in the life of Darine, a nine-year-old Syrian refugee, forced out of school and into employment on a farm in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Darine struggles to pick potatoes in the scorching sun as she faces the devastating cost of school closures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Forced to assume adult responsibilities, Darine is denied her childhood as she is expected to look after her younger siblings and do chores in the family's tented home after a long days work in the field. With narration from Darine, the film provides a stark look at the injustice of child labour and explores the hopes of a young girl faced with the collapse of the country she once sought refuge in.



## Directors bio

### **Daniel Wheeler**

**Director, producer, and editor**

Daniel Benjamin Wheeler is a British journalist, photographer, and filmmaker. Spanning across a decade and four continents, Daniel's documentary work has brought international attention to important issues such as child labour in Sierra Leone, women's rights in Afghanistan, the fight against ISIS in Iraq, the civil war in South Sudan, and child marriage in Syrian refugee camps.

His work has been widely published and aired by major international media outlets such as the BBC, Sky News, Bloomberg, and El Pais.

Most recently, Daniel has been working with humanitarian organisations and media outlets to raise public awareness on issues affecting the mental health of refugee children. His short documentary film, Stressed: A pandemic of fear, exposed the alarming rise in stress levels amongst displaced children in the Middle East due to COVID-19 and went on to win the 2021 Grand Prix in the Health Emergencies Category at the World Health Organization's International Film Festival.



## Production team

Director, producer, and editor: **DANIEL WHEELER**

Producers: **SANDRA ARSLANIAN & PIERRE SARRAF**

Associate producer: **ZAYNAB MAYLADAN**

Cinematography: **KARIM GHORAYEB**

Music by: **ALEX BARANOWSKI**

Sound design: **ANDREJ BAKO**

Assistant editor: **AMY VAN DRUNEN**

Second camera operator: **JIHAD SAADE**

Sound recordist: **ELIA EL HADDAD**

Drone operator: **HAROUT BAJIKIAN**

## Photographs

[Click here](#) for a selection of high quality still images that are available for use.



## Contextual information

- According to UNHCR, 9 out of 10 Syrian refugee families are currently living in extreme poverty, meaning they cannot afford a range of basic goods and services considered needed for survival. ([Source](#))
- Finding a dignified and safe shelter continues to be a struggle, with almost 60% of Syrian refugee families living in dangerous, substandard, or overcrowded shelters. ([Source](#))
- 30% of school-aged (ages 6-17) Syrian refugee children have never been to school. ([Source](#))
- Child labour is known to be underreported given the associated stigma for concerned families. However, in Lebanon children as young as six are seen working in the streets, in agricultural fields, garages or on construction sites, where they are exposed to risks of exploitation, violence and abuse. ([Source](#))
- With unemployment rates skyrocketing, many families now rely on their children to provide the only income. Preliminary VASyR 2021 findings show that at least 5% of children age 5-17 were engaged in child labour in 2021. This rate increases as the child's age increases, reaching 16% for children 17 years old. According to research in May 2021 by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Save The Children (SCI), the most common risk (88%) of being away from school reported by the children consulted was the risk of child labour. ([Source](#))
- According to research by NRC in 2019 (that predated the economic collapse in Lebanon), 78% of all surveyed children who were out of school, stated they could not go to school because of financial challenges. ([Source](#))
- Given the unprecedented economic crisis that has unfolded in Lebanon over the past two years, financial barriers to education are more present than ever. Tens of thousands of desperate parents now have to choose between an education for their children or feeding the family.
- The minimum wage in Lebanese pounds today is the equivalent of 30 USD (previously 450 USD). An average family in Lebanon today spends 5 times this amount on food expenses alone. ([Source](#))

## Get in touch

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