

EDITORIAL NOTE

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We are delighted to present the fourth issue of the *Journal on Education in Emergencies (JEiE)*. The five research articles and one field note featured in this issue coalesce around two main themes: refugee education and education administration in postconflict societies. As this issue goes to press in August 2018, the Syrian conflict has created 5.6 million refugees—the most of any current conflict—of which Turkey has absorbed 63 percent, Lebanon 17 percent, and Jordan 12 percent (UNHCR 2018). All three governments have worked to incorporate refugee children into their strained national education systems or, in some cases, into complementary education programs, which are often stretched thin and under-resourced. Yet the roughly 1.2 million Syrian refugees taken in by Lebanon constitute a higher percentage of the country’s pre-conflict population (4 million) than that of its two neighbors.

Previewing our upcoming special issue on refugees and education, the first two articles in this issue explore key challenges faced by children and youth in Lebanon. These articles focus on students’ experiences of belonging and exclusion in Lebanese classrooms and in one complementary education program. In “Fifi the Punishing Cat and Other Civic Lessons from a Lebanese Public Kindergarten School,” Thea Renda Abu El-Haj, Garene Kaloustian, Sally Wesley Bonet, and Samira Chatila provide an ethnographic account of the experiences of Palestinian refugees, some of whom have been displaced twice, and of Syrian refugees as they encounter their Lebanese peers and the teachers who treat them as outsiders. Drawing on three years of observation at Amal Al-Bilad, a kindergarten-only public school in Beirut, the authors show how “children, even those as young as three to five, are developing embodied messages about their public place as citizen-subjects: about belonging and/or exclusion; about how they are expected to relate to power and authority; and about how to act within and on their social world” (p. 13). For example, the authors argue that practices such as downplaying student-produced knowledge, closely following a scripted curriculum, restricting children’s play and chatter, and requiring stillness and silence inculcate in refugee students a deference to authority that emphasizes their status as outsiders. However, in other notable examples, Abu El-Haj and colleagues show how the students carve out a space to “play with, make fun of, and at times actively

reject rigid authority” (p. 15). The authors argue that the implicit and affective civic education afforded students in conflict and postconflict contexts early in life shapes their understanding of how they relate to those with whom they may disagree or differ.

In “Pathways to Resilience in Risk-Laden Environments: A Case Study of Syrian Refugee Education in Lebanon,” Oula Abu-Amsha and Jill Armstrong explore how refugee students’ social ecology provides a framework within which to navigate risks and assets as they pursue education in a new host country. The authors argue that whether Syrian refugee students choose to remain in the Lebanese formal education system or to leave it, the decision may represent an act of education resilience, which they interpret as “the different ways risks and assets affect individuals . . . by analyzing individuals’ interactions and processes within their interconnected ecological systems over time” (p. 49). To understand more about how Syrian students navigate their new environment, the authors conducted focus groups with students who attend Jusoor School, an NGO education center that offers the Lebanese curriculum to Syrian refugee students who have left the formal education system, along with homework help, extracurricular activities, and psychosocial support for the Syrian students who are enrolled in mainstream Lebanese schools. The authors find that, whether children stay in or leave the formal education system in Lebanon, an interwoven set of circumstances and norms determine the cost families are willing to pay to educate their children—financial, psychological, or in terms of future opportunity. Abu-Amsha and Armstrong suggest that, “for some Syrian refugee students, remaining in Lebanese schools is not considered a meaningful, healthy choice” (p. 66). However, programs like those offered at Jusoor School, which provide alternate education and continuity of learning between periods of enrollment in formal systems and help students prepare to reenter the formal system, may be best placed to help families make decisions about their children’s education that are productive and promote well-being.

The next several research articles in this issue focus on efforts to build peace through education within contexts of structural division after conflict. We highlight this work in a special sub-section called “Education Administration in Postconflict Societies: Challenges and Opportunities.” This group of articles seeks to understand mechanisms for managing the linguistic, ethnic, and religious divisions that manifest in the education systems of conflict-affected and postconflict states, including legal instruments and newly created policies.

In the first article in this group, “Mapping the Relationship between Education Reform and Power-Sharing in and after Intrastate Peace Agreements: A Multi-Methods Study,” Giuditta Fontana presents a comparative analysis of the education reform provisions included in peace agreements that distribute power in postconflict governments to formerly warring groups differently. Fontana triangulates data from the Political Agreements in Internal Conflicts dataset with 48 interviews conducted with key education informants from Northern Ireland, Lebanon, and Macedonia and textual analyses of the Good Friday, Taif, and Ohrid agreements. She finds that peace agreements that include power-sharing after a civil war are also more likely to include provisions regarding the reform of the country’s education system. Moreover, agreements that incorporate power-sharing in more than one social sector (political, military, legislative, civil service, economic) are more likely to include pluralistic than syncretistic (assimilationist) education provisions. Fontana notes, however, that “peace agreements reflect the aggregation of the diverse interests of previously warring groups rather than their genuine synthesis” (p. 98). The interview data contribute rich detail on how power-sharing arrangements in the peace agreements of Northern Ireland, Lebanon, and Macedonia, along with each country’s political context, influenced the implementation of education reforms.

The next article, “Developing Social Cohesion through Schools in Northern Ireland and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: A Study of Policy Transfer,” compares the policy of shared education in two postconflict countries. Rebecca Loader, Joanne Hughes, Violeta Petroska-Beshka, and Ana Tomovska Misoska examine the process of adapting, transplanting, and delivering principles established in Northern Ireland’s shared education initiative to Macedonia’s Interethnic Integration in Education Program in order to gain a better understanding of how education policy transfer affects intergroup contact and reconciliation. The authors find that several differences in the two contexts resulted in a different look and feel for the shared education that emerged in Macedonia and Northern Ireland: Macedonia’s mother-tongue instruction policy versus the common language shared by Northern Ireland’s confessional groups; a sweeping national rollout model in Macedonia versus a slower, piloted implementation model in Northern Ireland; an emphasis on social integration in academic subjects (Northern Ireland) versus more targeted social integration programming (Macedonia). Teachers’ anxiety about and avoidance of difficult conversations about the past were common in shared education programs in both countries. The authors note, for example, that “while multicultural workshops sought to explore pupils’ diverse cultural backgrounds and enhance their interactions, the highly structured sessions left little opportunity to discuss

potentially more contentious issues such as discrimination and social injustice” (p. 130). This piece offers lessons for policy-makers working on collaborative efforts that are grounded in policy transfer best practice.

In “The Politics of Education in Iraq: The Influence of Territorial Dispute and Ethno-Politics on Schooling in Kirkuk,” Kelsey Shanks examines the politics of educational content, delivery, and administration in the city of Kirkuk, where ethnic division between Iraqi Kurds and Turkmen coincides with tension between Baghdad and the regional centers of power in northern Iraq. Shanks conducted focus group discussions and interviews with an ethnically diverse cross-section of education policy-makers and stakeholders in Kirkuk. She complemented these interviews with data from news and social media to correlate the general ethno-political climate with the competition for control of education in the region portrayed in the interviews. Shanks illuminates this contest by showing what happens when a school wants to hold a cultural event such as a holiday celebration, which is inevitably seen as “part of a political agenda . . . Therefore, innocent festivals with no political intentions are frowned upon by those trying to insulate education from wider political influence” (p. 156). In fact, Shanks finds that contestation among ethnic groups is a central characteristic in all stages of the design and implementation of formal education in Kirkuk, which has important implications for security and government legitimacy in the region. Shanks recommends additional training for educators in the region in order to foster cultural appreciation and inclusivity rather than division, and to shield students from the fragility caused by ethnic tensions.

In the field note for this issue, “The Borderless Higher Education for Refugees Project: Enabling Refugee and Local Kenyan Students in Dadaab to Transition to University Education,” Wenona Giles describes the project as an innovative higher education delivery model made available to a predominantly Somali population in the Dadaab refugee camp and to students in the town of Dadaab through a partnership between two Kenyan universities and two Canadian universities. The program is staged over four phases, each of which culminates in a credential. Students may pursue a teaching certificate or a bachelor’s degree in one of four disciplines. The teaching certificate has been particularly important for the camp because, as Giles writes, “the Kenyan government did not or could not direct much to the camps in the way of educational resources, thus most teachers in the camps were graduates of the camp high schools and had no university degrees or teaching credentials” (p. 169). While the refugee students complete online and onsite coursework alongside Canadian and Kenyan students, additional supports are available to the refugee students and Kenyan students. Giles describes the

success of some of the program's first graduates, as well as some of the pitfalls students have experienced: mistrust of the program, particularly of instructors, due to a perceived lack of accountability or familiarity with similar models; lack of preparation for higher education; and disparities in how women in the camps were able to experience higher education due to the unsafe conditions for which the Dadaab camp is well known. The piece is instructive for higher education providers in search of a model that enables students whose length of participation in higher education is uncertain or whose participation may be disrupted to receive meaningful credentials.

Four book reviews provide a look at recent works in education in emergencies scholarship. The first is Emily Dunlop's review of *(Re)Constructing Memory: Education, Identity, and Conflict*, edited by Michelle J. Bellino and James H. Williams (2017, Sense Publishers). The volume examines how history textbooks and the teaching of conflict shape collective memory of conflict. Dunlop outlines the book's progression from an exploration of how national narratives are inscribed in official texts to how former colonies understand themselves amid (their own and international) narratives of colonialism, imperialism, and nation-building, including how the stories students receive preclude or enable integration, and how these themes manifest in schools and in interactions between teachers and students. On this final point, Dunlop reminds the education in emergencies community that "multiple processes that lead to both peace and conflict occur simultaneously in classrooms around the world" (p. 187).

In his review of *Child Migration and Human Rights in a Global Age* (2014, Princeton University Press), Jordan Naidoo underlines author Jacqueline Bhabha's appeal for a rights-based reevaluation of how the international community can more effectively defend child migrants—many of whom are trafficked, forced to fight as child soldiers, coerced into an early exit from school, and exploited for their labor—from harm as they contend with the legal hurdles associated with finding asylum or other relief. Naidoo highlights Bhabha's recommendation for the effective "use of technology to target, expose, and monitor potential dangers" to both prevent trafficking and deliver support to survivors of trafficking (p. 189). In the third book review, Tina Robiolle lays out the guiding questions answered by the 17 contributing authors to Clara Ramírez-Barat and Roger Duthie's edited volume, *Transitional Justice and Education: Learning Peace* (2016, Social Science Research Council). Robiolle looks at the authors' perspectives on how transitional justice practices fit into education reforms that seek to reintegrate groups after conflict and build peace, and what role education systems play in turning away from a culture of impunity toward a more human rights-aware and democratic

culture. Her reflection on “instances where the non-formal education sector complemented the formal sector in the transitional justice process” (p. 192) provides a view of the creative innovations that anchor the book.

Finally, Diana Rodríguez-Gómez reviews Michelle J. Bellino’s book, *Youth in Postwar Guatemala: Education and Civic Identity in Transition* (2017, Rutgers University Press). The book, for which Bellino conducted 14 months of ethnographic fieldwork in two urban schools and two rural schools, reports the intergenerational, contested, and still evolving nature of the collective memory of Guatemala’s armed conflict. The book also theorizes that the motivation for violence exists at the nexus between personal agency and social systems and structures. This sentiment is captured by Bellino’s concept of “wait citizenship,” which Rodríguez-Gómez says “describes the condition young people must navigate when relating to a state that obliges them to prioritize the development of their autonomy over their ability to show solidarity with others” (p. 194).

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