

Editorial Note

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The *Journal on Education in Emergencies (JEiE)* publishes groundbreaking and outstanding scholarly and practitioner work on education in emergencies (EiE), defined broadly as quality learning opportunities for all ages in situations of crisis, including early childhood development, primary, secondary, non-formal, technical, vocation, higher and adult education.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

CARINE ALLAF, JULIA DICUM, AND RUTH NAYLOR¹

The importance of addressing issues of gender in education in emergencies (EiE) has been well recognized by practitioners over the last two decades. Gaps in male and female enrollment and the gender dimensions inherent in the quality of education received, which are driven in times of emergency by heightened cultural and economic barriers and conditions of violence, have been confirmed and supported by research evidence. Although it is difficult to undertake in acute emergencies, research on EiE is key to enhancing understanding, identifying innovative solutions for complex learning needs, and making headway in providing equal access to education for girls and boys at all levels.

Over the last 22 years, global education has benefited from the support of the G7 member states, which have come together at key moments to advance efforts to significantly change access to quality education globally, particularly in developing countries. In 2018, during a Canadian G7 presidency, G7 leaders agreed to the Charlevoix Declaration on quality education for girls, adolescent girls, and women in developing countries. Contexts of conflict, fragility, and emergency, and the people who experience them, are a key focus of the Charlevoix Declaration.

The fourth commitment stated in the declaration is to “improve sex- and age-disaggregated data and accountability,” including through the “analysis, publication and reporting of progress in girls’ and women’s education participation, completion and learning, training and youth employment.” The conducting and dissemination of academic research can play a critical role in fostering understanding of how to close the gender equality gap in education, and in youth training and employment during and after emergencies. It was with this in mind that the Government of Canada chose to support the *Journal on Education in Emergencies* Special Issue on Gender in Education in Emergencies. The publication of this special issue will bring attention to the role academic journals play in accountability for and the advancement of gender equality in EiE.

The process of soliciting and reviewing submissions for this special issue has led the lead editors into many interesting conceptual discussions. One question that will be pertinent and familiar to many of us, especially in this era of mass global school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic is, What counts as an emergency?

¹ Carine Allaf, Julia Dicum, and Ruth Naylor served as lead editors for this issue of *Journal on Education in Emergencies* and contributed equally to its development and production.

This is not a new question in EiE, but it is one we had to grapple with when deciding which articles could and should be included here. Should it be limited to countries receiving international humanitarian aid, or should we also consider high-income countries that are being affected by emergency? What scale does an emergency need to reach in order to qualify? The COVID-19 pandemic and the growing climate and refugee crises are, of course, global in impact, but that qualifier would make nearly everywhere an emergency context.

We can categorize countries as crisis affected based on the number of humanitarian appeals issued or the number of people experiencing forcible displacement. The World Bank and UNESCO have produced lists of conflict-affected countries that are based on the number of battle-related deaths. But these country-based definitions can be problematic, especially when considering large countries like Nigeria and Ethiopia, where much of the population is relatively unaffected by a particular conflict or crisis. Should the EiE field include small-scale emergencies that are having a major impact on a particular community in an otherwise stable country? Moreover, for girls and boys, a household emergency can be as traumatic and as disruptive to their education as a national emergency. When a girl is forced into an early marriage and sent away from her home, is this not an individual case of forced displacement?

After juggling these issues, the editorial team arrived at a broad definition of “what counts” as an emergency context. Rather than relying on quantitative measures of what counts as an emergency, we decided to consider how learners themselves experience emergencies, whether local, national, or global. We received submissions from a wide range of contexts, including many that traditionally would not be considered emergencies and relatively few from traditional emergency contexts. In many of these contexts, data disaggregated by sex are limited, which means that any analysis of gender often fails at the first hurdle. Like education, addressing gender is unfortunately still seen as nonessential in some emergencies. If we are to make gender count in emergency interventions, we first need to count the number of girls and boys affected. It is laudable that several of the contributors to this issue present a gender analysis of quantitative data on girls and boys affected by displacement (see Dulieu et al. 2022; Jones et al. 2022), and that other contributors use rich datasets to help understand the intersection of gender with other vulnerable characteristics in a variety of settings (see Carvalho 2022; Sayibu 2022; Cohen et al. 2022).

The second question the editorial team debated was whether this issue is about gender or about girls' education. These two areas are too often conflated. "Addressing gender" often involves a narrow focus on parity ratios and girls' enrollment, with little consideration for gendered experiences within education or what students learn about gender through education. For example, the well-evidenced but morally complex arguments relating to the relationship between girls' education and fertility, if applied without a gender lens, could be interpreted as "girls' education as birth control." However, taking gender into account should mean that education is a way to empower girls to take control of their own lives and their own futures. Girls and boys do not live in isolation from one another, and their life experiences are linked and affected by other societal factors. As such, looking at gender does not mean only boys or girls are being studied. Some contributors to this special issue (see Bickmore and Kishani Farahani 2022; Cohen et al. 2022) examine the gendered experience of education from the perspectives of both girls and boys in a wide range of contexts, which helps us to understand how education systems can both mitigate and exacerbate gender-based aggression and social exclusion.

The third question we debated was whether to include COVID-19 explicitly in the call for papers. We came together to lead the special issue in early 2020, just as the first global lockdown was starting. Research takes time, we reasoned, and the effects of the pandemic, no matter how long it lasted, would be difficult to determine in time for this issue, except perhaps in field notes. Little did we know as we discussed this just how far-reaching COVID-19 would be and how deeply every aspect of life would be affected, including exacerbating gender divides and violence against women and the unprecedented near global shutdown of education at all levels. Even that early in the pandemic, however, it was clear that we could not exclude COVID-19. As such, we included COVID-19 in the call for papers and have included three articles on the topic. We can only guess at the many ways COVID-19 has affected the production of this special issue, from the availability of reviewers to the amount of time the authors and editors had to focus on completing their work. While we could not have anticipated the themes and contexts that would be offered in this special issue, we are pleased with the five research articles, one field note, and three book reviews contained in its pages.

This special issue of *JEiE* offers new insights into the gendered experiences of girls and boys seeking quality education in contexts of conflict and crisis. The contributing authors share learning from research and fieldwork conducted in varied contexts, including North America, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. This special issue of *JEiE* ties the crisis of girls' unequal access to quality education with the worldwide impact of COVID-19 in several ways.

Kicking off the research articles is “Peacebuilding Education to Address Gender-Based Aggression: Youths’ Experiences in Mexico, Bangladesh, and Canada” by Kathy Bickmore and Najme Kishani Farahani. In this article, Bickmore and Kishani Farahani illustrate how education in emergencies is viewed in various contexts in the three countries. They drew from focus group discussions and workshops with youth and teachers from economically marginalized areas in three countries with distinct and different conflict contexts: Mexico, Bangladesh, and Canada. Despite the various differences between these countries, the problems of gender-based inequity and violence were pervasive in all the participants’ lives. The similarities in the three countries’ cases were more prominent than the differences. Students in all three contexts shared similar stories about gender-based violence in their communities and families. Both female and male participants in all the focus groups described having frequent experience with and concern about direct gendered violence. The participating students and their teachers also showed some awareness of the cultural and social-structural dimensions of gender exploitation that legitimized and exacerbated gender-based violence. However, despite these common experiences, gender conflict was almost never addressed in any curriculum or practice described by the teachers and students in the Canadian schools, and it was rarely mentioned by the Mexican and Bangladeshi participants.

The next two articles explore education during the COVID-19 pandemic, which singlehandedly created a global emergency. In “Barriers to Refugee Adolescents’ Educational Access during COVID-19: Exploring the Roles of Gender, Displacement, and Social Inequalities,” Nicola Jones, Kate Pincock, Silvia Guglielmi, Sarah Baird, Ingrid Sánchez Tapia, Erin Oakley, and Jennifer Seager explore the experiences of Rohingya refugee communities in Bangladesh and compare them with the experiences of Syrian refugees in Jordan. Jones et al. draw from survey data on 3,030 adolescents and in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with a subset of adolescents and key informants. The research, which is part of an existing longitudinal research sample, was conducted at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic; data were collected between April and July 2020. This study focuses on adolescent Rohingya and Syrian refugees’ access to formal and nonformal education prior to COVID-19, and the extent to which they were able to continue learning during the pandemic. Drawing from an intersectional conceptual framing that attends to the ways vulnerability is compounded for the most socially marginalized, the findings in this paper demonstrate that the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened gender and other social inequalities that directly affect these refugee adolescents’ access to education. Despite the two countries’ different approaches to the lockdowns, the widespread school closures in each had negative effects on the Rohingya and Syrian refugee communities. In

Bangladesh, education was deemed nonessential for the Rohingya refugees during COVID-19, which further exacerbated the existing barriers to their learning continuity. Gendered barriers that affected both communities included issues with connectivity for distance learning, such as gaining access to devices, and the increased amount of time adolescent girls spent on domestic and caregiving responsibilities.

In “Girls’ and Boys’ Voices on the Gendered Experience of Learning during COVID-19 in Countries Affected by Displacement,” Nicole Dulieu, Silvia Arlini, Mya Gordon, and Allyson Krupar continue the theme of looking at multiple countries and populations that were affected by displacement and conflict prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. To study the additional impact resulting from COVID-19, the authors drew data from ten countries affected by displacement, looking specifically at girls’ and boys’ (those who were and were not displaced) gendered perceptions of their ability to learn during the COVID-19-related school closures. Their overall findings were consistent with the general literature and with Jones et al.’s article, which show that girls were disadvantaged in terms of access to learning resources in their households. Boys were more likely to report learning “a little bit” or “nothing” when they also reported having more negative feelings due to COVID-19, such as feeling sadder, more worried, or more bored; when they reported experiencing increased violence in their homes; and when they had to do more chores and take more responsibility for the care of other children. Although girls reported experiencing the same challenges, except for increased violence in the home, they were *not* as strongly correlated to girls’ perceptions of learning “a little bit” or “nothing.” This may suggest that girls were more accustomed to pursuing their learning despite facing challenges such as violence in the home and responsibility for domestic chores. Boys were less able to adapt to these challenges during COVID-19, which affected their perceptions of their ability to learn.

The last two research articles look not at COVID-19 but at refugee populations vis-à-vis their host communities. In “Intersectionality: Experiences of Gender Socialization and Racialization for Iraqi Students Resettled in the United States,” Flora Cohen, Sarah R. Meyer, Ilana Seff, Cyril Bennouna, Carine Allaf, and Lindsay Stark use a qualitative study to examine Iraqi students’ lived experiences while attending public schools in Texas and Virginia. These Iraqi adolescents navigated the multiple factors that shaped their racialization and gender socialization, including their parents’ expectations of gender roles; their teachers’ and peers’ perceptions of gendered behavior for Arab and Muslim adolescents, which often were influenced by stereotypes; and their own observations and internalization

of the gender socialization process of their US-born peers. Like the findings in other types of emergencies, the refugee youth in this study experienced an increase in household responsibilities. Interestingly, this created opportunities for the participants' parents to treat their sons and daughters more equitably in terms of participation in the labor market. However, this resulted in the youth having less time to engage with their studies and schools. The study also looked at how differently these Iraqi youth experienced gender and racial socialization than their US-born counterparts.

The final research article, "Refugee Girls' Secondary Education in Ethiopia: Examining the Vulnerabilities of Refugees and Host Communities in Low-Resource Displacement Settings" by Shelby Carvalho, also looks at secondary schooling for adolescents. Carvalho specifically compared the experiences of girls living in refugee camps in Ethiopia to girls in the host communities. Drawing from two household surveys, Carvalho's quantitative study finds that domestic responsibilities at home and concerns about safety in the community limit refugee girls' secondary school participation disproportionately more than the participation of refugee boys and host community children. However, other factors that may affect refugee girls' education, including parental education, parental perceptions about the value of schooling, and exposure to gender-based violence, did not affect refugee girls disproportionately. This suggests that refugee girls and host community girls in low-resource settings face many of the same challenges in accessing secondary school, but that refugee girls face additional compounding barriers that limit their secondary school participation. In looking at the differences in school participation at the camp and host levels, rather than examining aggregate regional statistics, Carvalho was able to investigate how barriers vary across groups and explore how compounded disadvantages can create substantial barriers to refugee girls' education. Her analysis emphasizes the importance of policies and interventions that target the specific barriers faced in each region, rather than taking a blanket approach to girls' education.

This special issue includes one field note, "Data Disaggregation for Inclusive Quality Education in Emergencies: The COVID-19 Experience in Ghana" by Abdul Badi Sayibu. Using the Making Ghanaian Girls Great! (also known as MGCubed) experience as a case study, Sayibu discusses the difficulty of collecting data during emergencies. In April 2020, the Ghanaian Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service, in collaboration with Plan International Ghana, introduced a TV teaching and learning program for all primary school children in the country. This program included lessons in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. From the start, the program put great importance on measuring

the rates of participation in order to ensure equal access and inclusion for all. Sayibu discusses the program's phone-based data collection and analysis strategies and demonstrates how a simple data disaggregation method can provide valuable insights into the reach, inclusiveness, and participation of the most vulnerable sub-groups in education interventions during crises.

The three book reviewers in this special issue examine four quite different works. In the first review, Nora Fyles discusses UNESCO's *GEMR Gender Report 2019: Building Bridges for Gender Equality* and INEE's *Mind the Gap: The State of Girls' Education in Crisis and Conflict*. She finds that, while the scope and objectives of the two reports differ, both contribute to the evidence base on gender and education in a range of crisis contexts, including migration and displacement. They also summarize international, regional, and national legal and policy frameworks, draw from the literature to describe gender dynamics in education, and provide specific examples and case studies. Both reports establish a foundation of evidence on the status of girls' education in crisis contexts and also point to critical concerns that should be addressed in order to advance the ambitions of the Charlevoix Declaration.

In the next review, Laila Kadiwal looks at Shenila Khoja-Moolji's *Forging the Ideal Educated Girl: The Production of Desirable Subjects in Muslim South Asia*. While this book does not stand out immediately as a work that contributes directly to gender in education in emergencies, Kadiwal points out that Khoja-Moolji dismantles homogenous assumptions about Muslim girls that are embedded in Western aid and foreign policies, as well as in the domestic policies of Muslim societies. This book takes readers across South Asia, from 19th-century colonial India to present-day Pakistan, to demonstrate that the educated Muslim girl is a dynamic figure, and not the monolithic one often perceived. Khoja-Moolji urges anyone working in education to look at the underlying causes of why women are treated in certain ways.

Finally, Spogmai Akseer reviews Wenona Giles and Lorrie Miller's edited book, *Borderless Higher Education for Refugees: Lessons from the Dadaab Refugee Camps*, which offers interesting takeaways on refugees' views on higher education as a transformative power in their lives. Giles and Miller and the other contributors to this book tackle the complicated issue of providing higher education for refugees head on. They demonstrate that providing higher education for refugees is critical to enabling them to navigate ongoing systems of inequality and to overcome some of the social, political, and economic barriers they face.

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