

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

NATHAN THOMPSON, SAMANTHA COLÓN, AND DANA BURDE

We are pleased to present Volume 9, Number 1, of the *Journal on Education in Emergencies (JEiE)*. The main themes among the five research articles, five field notes, and four book reviews in this issue coalesce around the education in emergencies (EiE) field's joint capacity to attend to and respond to context as we conduct research, implement programs, make policy, and create the frameworks, guidance notes, and other documentation that make up the collective voice of the EiE field. This issue also consolidates our attention toward understudied questions and underrepresented voices in EiE scholarship. The contributing authors in this issue focus on factors that influence whether students resume their education or drop out permanently when shocks disrupt their schooling; on the ways remedial education can help out-of-school students resume their education; on how locally relevant framings of hope, self-concept, resilience, and vulnerability influence students' aspirations and elevate teachers' agency within the global EiE discourse; and on the efficacy of social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions that respond to students' age- and gender-related realities.

These questions have assumed new urgency as this issue goes to press. Conflicts have proliferated and become more numerous in the past two years than at any time since World War II (Uppsala Conflict Data Program 2023). Previously frozen conflicts have again erupted, such as that between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh. The devastating war in Sudan has killed approximately 9,000 people and displaced close to 6 million since April 2023. Conflicts in Syria and Yemen remain unresolved, and the war between Russia and Ukraine shows no signs of waning (Poast 2023). However, perhaps no other conflict has captured more of the world's attention in recent months than the dramatic escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In Israel's response to the October 7 attack by Hamas, "the rate of death...has few precedents in this century" (Leatherby 2023). Indeed, ten thousand women and children, conservatively, were killed in Gaza after five weeks of fighting—more children "than in the world's major conflict zones combined...during all of last year," including the war in Ukraine (Leatherby 2023). International laws of war were developed largely in response to the massive civilian death tolls of World War I and World War II, and the 1949 Geneva Convention codifies the protection of civilians during wartime. And yet, international norms—always unevenly applied and frequently under threat—appear to be softening ever further.

Education Cannot Wait (ECW 2023) reports that 224 million school-age children worldwide are currently affected by conflict or crisis. Among these, 72 million are out of school, and 127 million are in school but are not meeting minimum learning benchmarks. Half of the world's out-of-school children live in eight countries: Ethiopia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Mali, and Nigeria. In Eastern Africa, significant drought and ongoing conflict are driving low school enrollment (ECW 2023). Against the backdrop of these recent escalations of violence and their devastating effects on children and families, the articles we present below assess the overwhelming challenges to education and learning in conflict and crisis contexts, but they also offer a few bright spots of hope.

The first two research articles in this issue employ rigorous quantitative methods to lay out the factors children are facing in terms of catching up, or being left further behind, as their schools reopen after the pandemic in two often-overlapping contexts: Myanmar and Bangladesh. In "Impact of Catch-up Clubs in Conflict-Affected Myanmar: A Community-Led Remedial Learning Model," Silvia Mila Arlini, Nora Charif Chefchaoui, Jessica Chia, Mya Gordon, and Nishtha Shrestha evaluate the pilot of Save the Children's Catch-up Clubs, a remedial education program that was implemented among 3,000 upper primary and lower secondary students in Myanmar's Rakhine and Kayin states. The Catch-up Clubs' community-led, play-based model groups students according to their ability rather than their age, and promotes children's development of foundational literacy skills and SEL skills. In their evaluation of the pilot, the authors employ difference-in-difference multivariate regression modeling and draw from panel survey data collected at baseline and endline to demonstrate the literacy and SEL gains among students who participated in Catch-up Clubs. Students in the intervention group were eight times more likely than their peers in the control group to advance by one literacy level and twice as likely to be able to read and understand a short story (the highest literacy level tested) at the end of the program. Moreover, while boys' literacy levels tended to outpace those of girls in the control group, boys and girls who participated in the Catch-up Clubs were at similar literacy levels after the intervention. Finally, intervention students were twice as likely as control group students to attain high-level SEL skills. The authors suggest that the Catch-up Club model may be adopted in other contexts where disrupted education and chronic stress may jeopardize students' ability to resume their education and fulfill their education aspirations.

The next research article offers an examination of the barriers to resuming education in Bangladesh after the pandemic. In “Left Further Behind after the COVID-19 School Closures: Survey Evidence on Rohingya Refugees and Host Communities in Bangladesh,” Gudrun Østby, Haakon Gjerløw, Sabrina Karim, and Emily Dunlop explore the differential effects of the pandemic-related school closures among refugee and host community boys and girls. The closing of learning centers run by the UN Children’s Fund and international nongovernmental organizations during the pandemic exacerbated the existing education crisis facing Rohingya refugees, but returning to school after the learning centers reopened appears to have been the most challenging for teenage Rohingya girls. In order to understand why caregivers chose to re-enroll their students, or did not, Østby and her coauthors conducted phone interviews with Rohingya and Bangladeshi parents and caregivers in 802 households at three points during the pandemic, as well as in-person surveys with 1,226 household members after the schools reopened. The authors’ panel ordinary least squares regression model indicates that the probability that Rohingya households with girls older than age 11 accessed at least one education service declined from 55 percent in March 2020 to 34 percent in November 2021. Caregivers listed security concerns, family obligations, and marriage as the leading reasons why their teenage girls stayed out of school after the learning centers reopened. This research contributes evidence on the benefits of providing cash incentives, safe spaces, and strong security practices as part of initiatives to prevent dropout among secondary school-age girls, particularly refugee girls.

The next research article also adds to the evidence on the benefits of age- and gender-responsive EiE interventions. In “Addressing Adolescence: Advocating for Age- and Gender-Responsive Social and Emotional Learning during Emergencies,” Rena Deitz and Heddy Lahmann systematically review the key literature on SEL interventions in emergency settings to unpack “what works for whom” (111). Taking as a point of departure the unique gendered effects of conflict, along with the brain development milestones and gendered socialization that occur during adolescence, Deitz and Lahmann argue that there is a critical need for studies that disaggregate SEL outcomes by age and gender. Of the 48 articles they review, which describe 41 unique SEL interventions for refugees, internally displaced persons, or youths in crisis or conflict settings, only 33 disaggregate outcomes by gender and only five by age. Their review of gender-responsive SEL interventions gives Deitz and Lahmann insights into the program elements that best suit boys’ and girls’ needs and lived realities. For example, they find that girls tend to benefit more from interventions that focus on social outcomes and strategies for reframing stressors, while boys respond more positively to behavioral and emotional skill-building approaches. As

boys and girls encounter more complex gender norms and consolidate a gender identity throughout adolescence, SEL interventions must pay special attention to the structural issues facing older children's social, emotional, and behavioral development. Deitz and Lahmann recommend that SEL initiatives in EiE settings intentionally target narrower age groups.

The final two research articles in this issue use innovative qualitative methodologies to shed light on how communities affected by displacement and environmental disasters frame their aspirations, self-concept, hope, vulnerability, and resilience. Hassan Aden's research article, "Hoping against the Odds: Understanding Refugee Youths' Aspirations for Gaining Overseas Scholarships," is an examination of the cultural logic of hope, hard work, and success among students in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp that sustains their motivation to seek higher education abroad. Aden lays out the puzzle of young refugees' strong commitment and aspiration to secure scholarships to facilitate their resettlement and higher education outside the Dadaab camps, regardless of the scarcity of these scholarships and the steep barriers to obtaining them. Aden conducted in-depth semistructured interviews and a future aspirations mapping exercise with ethnic Somali Form One students (ages 18-25), and semistructured interviews with teachers in the Dadaab camps. He finds that these students' aspirations are "shaped and in some ways sustained by the refugee experience of precarity, unfreedom, and humiliation, and by the cultural logic that education is a pathway to prosperity" (149). They see getting a scholarship as their ticket out of the camps, and as a way to achieve upward economic and social mobility and more personal freedoms. They believe in the power of their work ethic and focus, and that, in the process of working toward the goal of getting a scholarship, they increase their odds of accessing other higher education opportunities. Aden's findings contribute to the notion that having aspirations and working toward a goal is beneficial for students' wellbeing. However, he also observes that refugee youths are not uniformly equipped to confront the psychological strain caused by failure and disappointment, and that mentorship could help refugees adjust their goals and provide psychosocial resources.

Continuing the thread of local framings of key EiE concepts that positively influence emergency education response, we present "*Bangkit Semangat—Raise the Spirits: Teachers' Vulnerability, Resilience, and Voice in Postdisaster Indonesia*" by Christopher Henderson. In this research article, Henderson highlights the slim acknowledgment of teachers' agency and the lack of representation of their voices and experiences in global policy and technical guidance for EiE. Drawing from individual semistructured life-story interviews with five in-service teachers with firsthand experience of the 2006 Yogyakarta earthquake near Bantul, Indonesia,

he explores how these teachers demonstrated resilience and offered invaluable, locally relevant perspectives on education in postdisaster contexts. Henderson and his research participants' *ngobrol-ngobrol*—a type of conversation that is at once familiar and comfortable, purposeful and driven—reveal the teachers' beliefs, personal narratives, and resilience that helped them meet their teaching responsibilities and support their students amid the destruction. Henderson argues that these “culturally located framings of vulnerability and resilience can effectively guide the disaster preparedness, response, and recovery processes of humanitarian actors” (175), but key texts in the EiE sector often present teachers within a deficit paradigm. Henderson suggests, therefore, that there is a need to realign how EiE discourse is structured in order to include teachers meaningfully in policymaking and agenda-setting. Teachers' capacity to bring nuance and relevance to humanitarian response guidance and planning may help global-level humanitarian actors avoid EiE programming and interventions that promote dependencies and break out of uninterrogated frames of reference.

We open our field notes section with “Voices of Refugee Youth: Reflections on a Participatory, Youth-Centered Study” by Katrina Barnes, Rebecca Daltry, Amy Ashlee, Aime Parfait Emerusenge, Khalid Khan, Asma Rabi, Aimée Mukankusi, Julia Pacitto, David Hollow, and Bethany Sikes. This article is also concerned with broadening representation and participation in the creation of EiE knowledge and discourse. Barnes and her coauthors deliver a critical reflection on Voices of Refugee Youth, a participatory research initiative to cocreate and execute an investigation of postprimary education with young refugees in Pakistan and Rwanda. The authors apply Hart's (1992) “ladder of participation” as a framework for operationalizing the non-tokenistic involvement of young refugees, who bring varying levels of research knowledge and skills, as collaborators in designing research, collecting and analyzing data, and presenting and disseminating the findings. The field note, which was coauthored by four of the refugee youth researchers, offers insights for navigating the bias that may arise from participants' researcher-community member positionality and provides practical lessons for supporting refugees' participation in research, especially adequate remuneration and rigorous training. The young researchers involved in Voices of Refugee Youth were enrolled in an accredited training program and received a credential that they hope will lead to future employment and education opportunities and empower them to guide evidence-based education advocacy in their communities throughout their lives.

In this issue, we offer a Special Subsection on Education in Pandemics, which includes four field notes curated under the direction of our special issue lead editors from *JEiE* Volume 8, Number 3, Mark Ginsburg, Emily Dunlop, and Randa Grob-Zakhary. The articles in this subsection offer lessons for the design and delivery of community-based and distance education, such as the need for culturally responsive curricula and for offline and paper-based modalities in settings where internet- and radio-based solutions are infeasible; the benefits of teachers and other education program facilitators visiting students to provide in-person support; and the need for greater investment in teacher training and flexibility in higher education. They also describe the factors that boost the resilience of education systems as COVID-19 transitions from an acute shock to a system stressor.

In “Education Systems Response to COVID-19: Reflections on the Contributions of Research to USAID’s Education and Resilience Agenda,” Jennifer Flemming, Ritesh Shah, Nina Weisenhorn, Julie Chinnery, and Gwendolyn Heaner trace the development of the US Agency for International Development’s Education and Resilience Framework. Developed in response to case study research on the COVID-19 response in five contexts—Colombia, Georgia, Lebanon, Nigeria, and Zambia—the framework describes school- and community-based actors’ and country-level institutions’ responses to shocks and stressors that may either promote education system resilience or result in continued vulnerability. Flemming and her coauthors identify practices, resource flows, and structures from the five case-study countries that these education systems leveraged to absorb, adapt, and/or transform the effects of COVID-19 on learning as the pandemic moved from being an initial system shock to become an enduring system stressor. The authors offer key recommendations based on their assessment of education systems’ resilience dynamics: (1) the critical need to develop medium- and long-term recovery and preparedness actions; (2) the importance of acknowledging differential risk exposure and risk sensitivity to ensure equitable and inclusive education system planning; (3) making space for local strategies, networks, and resources to build locally driven resilience capacity; and (4) the need to see resilience as a process rather than an outcome.

The next three articles discuss examples of planning and delivering distance education that is attentive to the strengths, resources, and needs of the communities they are meant to serve. First, in their field note, “The Impact of COVID-19 on Connected Learning: Unveiling the Potential and the Limits of Distance Education in Dadaab Refugee Camp,” HaEun Kim, Mirco Stella, and Kassahun Hiticha contribute their reflections on the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees

(BHER) program's response to COVID-19. The BHER program is a partnership among Canadian and Kenyan universities and international nongovernmental organizations that delivers tuition-free certificates, diplomas, and degrees to refugee and host community students living in and near the Dadaab refugee camps. During the pandemic, BHER drew from more than a decade of experience delivering its innovative blended learning model, in which it sustains a sense of connectedness through relationship-building, community, and in-person encounters. Kim and her coauthors describe the complex logistical challenges posed by the closing of BHER partners' education spaces in Kenya and Canada and the need to transition to online learning. For example, BHER delivered laptops and network-connected data service to learners in Dadaab, but found that, due to the unreliable electricity and internet connectivity infrastructure in the camps, the instructors still needed to adapt their coursework and exam content, delivery, and pacing. Like many higher education institutions, BHER participants moved to Zoom and WhatsApp during the pandemic to create a synchronous learning environment; however, the authors found that it was vital to expand BHER students' capacity to serve as peer mentors and to empower program facilitators, instructors, and students to pose their own creative solutions to ensure their ability to stay in the program and continue their coursework throughout the shutdowns.

In her field note, "A Capabilities Response to the Design and Delivery of Distance Learning for the Most Educationally Marginalized Children during COVID-19," Kate Sykes shares lessons learned from the response to COVID-19 by the Transformational Empowerment for Adolescent Marginalised (TEAM) Girl Malawi Project. The TEAM Girl Malawi model delivers basic education and holistic support to adolescents facing intersecting barriers to learning, such as extreme poverty, disability, and early marriage and/or early motherhood. Sykes highlights the mechanisms that ensured that TEAM Girl Malawi could effectively reach and respond to the education needs of marginalized girls: (1) delivery of paper-based learning materials; (2) curricula that integrate resilience and SEL skills, and which teachers can adapt to students' needs; and (3) capacity-building and training for teachers to be key partners in promoting child-protection outcomes and community engagement. For marginalized learners, education access is not merely about appropriate delivery modes; it is also about preventing dropout and reducing the occurrence of early pregnancy, child marriage, and child labor. These efforts benefit from the presence of a supportive, trusted adult. Therefore, for some children living in remote or underresourced communities, face-to-face teaching with mitigations against the spread of illness is the method most likely to ensure continued learning during a pandemic. Sykes contrasts the TEAM Girl

Malawi model with radio- and internet-based distance education programming, which was prevalent during the height of COVID-19, to highlight the investment needed to make distance education more inclusive in EiE settings.

Next, in “Preparing Children for an Unpredictable World in the Middle of a Crisis: La Aldea’s Approach,” Ana María Restrepo-Sáenz and Emmanuel Neisa Chateauneuf discuss La Aldea, a flexible, learner-centered distance education initiative created by the Colombian nongovernmental organization ClickArte. La Aldea is a media program in Colombia that was designed to reach children, parents, and teachers amid the country’s intersecting refugee and internal displacement crises and the COVID-19 pandemic. The program’s books, radio shows, digital content, songs, and games use familiar local imagery and sounds to bring real-world themes to life for students. The authors describe the scale-up of La Aldea. Under ClickArte’s coordination, more than 87,000 children ages 6 to 14 have been introduced to La Aldea’s interactive multimedia content, and 4,500 teachers and 130 tutors have received training on its use. Restrepo-Sáenz and Chateauneuf attribute La Aldea’s success to its ability to engage parents in learning activities and conversations with their children through culturally relevant content and SEL skills, which also promoted continuity of learning during the school closures.

Finally, the four book reviews offered in this issue discuss peacebuilding from a variety of perspectives, including citizenship, belonging, participation in social movements, and representation in educational materials, especially textbooks. In her review of *Meaningless Citizenship: Iraqi Refugees and the Welfare State* by Sally Wesley Bonet, Samaya Mansour conveys the grim picture that Bonet paints of the lives of four Iraqi refugee families as they attempt to resettle in the United States. Based on a four-year ethnographic study, Bonet finds that, in their encounters with state-run assistance programs and other public services, including public schools, these families were met with hostility, scrutiny, and restrictions. Bonet explains how, in limiting refugees’ possibilities for educational attainment and funneling them into low-wage work, the refugee resettlement system in the United States failed the families she profiles in the book. Mansour underscores Bonet’s claim that the US resettlement program’s failure to live up to its liberal ideals of acceptance and multiculturalism stems in part from the xenophobic deficit narratives, structural inequalities, and neoliberal policies that have hollowed out the state’s capacity (and will) to help refugees settle in the United States. Mansour suggests that EiE scholars and practitioners will appreciate the book’s insights into the intersection of refugee education, citizenship and belonging, and national resettlement policies.

Also in conversation with the themes of belonging, identity, and social cohesion, Orelia Jonathan offers a review of S. Garnett Russell's book, *Becoming Rwandan: Education, Reconciliation, and the Making of a Post-Genocide Citizen*. Jonathan highlights Russell's extensive investigation of the Rwandan government's attempt to consolidate a unified national identity after the 1994 genocide, in part through education. Russell parses national education policies and discourses and draws from survey data, interviews, and ethnographic observations across diverse settings in Rwanda to examine the role of curricula, textbooks, and language of instruction in the state's attempt to build peace through education. Russell notes, however, that the government's goals sometimes had unintended consequences. For example, unified historical narratives reinforced the divisions between Rwanda's ethnic communities and made it difficult for teachers to facilitate the kind of open discussion and critical thinking about the country's history that could promote reconciliation. Jonathan leaves readers with the reminder that the complex relationship between education and peacebuilding requires EiE scholars and practitioners to consider a multifaceted approach to negotiating policy priorities.

This complexity is also articulated in Myuri Komaragiri's review of *Teaching Peace and Conflict: The Multiple Roles of School Textbooks in Peacebuilding*, edited by Catherine Vanner, Spogmai Akseer, and Thursica Kovinthan Levi. The volume presents the Intersecting Roles of Education in Conflict (IREC) framework as a tool for understanding education as a victim, accomplice, or transformer of conflict. The chapter authors provide observations of the IREC roles in the discourse on textbooks and curricula in cases as diverse as Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In her review, Komaragiri invokes Bush and Saltarelli's (2000) two faces of education thesis and Pherali's (2016) framing of education as victim or perpetrator to underscore the analytical power of the IREC framework. She asserts that the IREC framework suggests that education, as illustrated in textbooks, can occupy multiple roles simultaneously, can oscillate between those roles, and that the various roles are not always mutually exclusive or at odds with one another. Komaragiri points out that, although the transformer role is often identified as an intention, it has not always been actualized. She argues that prioritizing and enabling this transformational role is crucial if education is to play a role in peacebuilding.

Finally, Deanna Pittman reviews *Youth-Led Social Movements and Peacebuilding in Africa*, edited by Ibrahim Bangura. The authors who contributed to Bangura's edited volume highlight young people's struggles to enact social, economic, and political change across the continent and the tendency of state authorities

to suppress youth movements, often violently. In her review, Pittman extends Bangura's analysis of African states' "gerontocracy" to observe that feminist scholars have long noted the linkages among age- and gender-based exclusion in political processes and the patriarchy. EiE scholars and practitioners will appreciate Pittman's support of Bangura's claim that consciousness-raising and learning happen in and through social movements. Pittman reissues Bangura's call to action for the EiE field: that is, to give young activists a platform and include them as essential stakeholders and participants in EiE decisionmaking—a directive that likely resonates with several of the authors whose work appears in *JEiE* Volume 9, Number 1.

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