

# Meta-Analysis Review of Research in Education in Emergencies and Some Theoretical Approaches for Coping: Implications for Ethiopia

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## Abstract

The objective of this work is to make thorough review of research on education in emergencies implemented in areas of armed conflict by emergency programs and interventions. Qualitative meta-analysis approach is used to conduct this work. Questions like if education in emergencies programs has relevance for psychosocial and educational access and protection/ peace in conflict affected areas, what theoretical frameworks shaped education in emergencies? how did the field education in emergencies develop and what lessons are taken for our country? are addressed. Hence, theories that shaped education and conflict and empirical researches that underpin this relationship are reviewed. Among others, physical and emotional impacts as a result of conflict affect girls' and boys' psychosocial and educational access and success differently despite the decreased distance to primary schools. Moreover, peace education programs showed promise in changing attitudes and behaviors toward members of those affected by conflict. What is more, providing children living in emergency situations with activities in informal learning spaces of the conflict affected areas which are structured, meaningful, and creative improves their emotional and behavioral well-being and coping. The lessons taken can also be an input for Ethiopia to start programs in the field since conflict is inevitable and can happen any time as can be witnessed since the emergence of the field in the mid-1990s. Details of the work can be read from the full article.

**Keywords:** Conflict, Access, Success, Education in Emergencies, Psychosocial Well-being

## Introduction

### Background of the Study

Education is a basic human right and is one of the basic standards of life. As stated by (Mulimbi, 2020) migration affects education and education intern affects migration. Mulimbi added, nearly a quarter of the world's population, or about 2 billion people, live in countries affected by conflict or extreme criminal violence (World Bank, 2016).

As stated by Mulimbi (2020), humanitarianism came to include a concern not just with individuals' basic needs but also with fulfilling their rights to a certain standard of life. International human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 and follow-up action meetings

held by UN agencies expanded, strengthened, and institutionalized the recognition and protection of children's rights, including the right to education.

Similarly, the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report (2019) holds that "providing education is not only a moral obligation of those in charge of it, but also is a practical solution for many of the ripples caused by moving populations".

Educators then adopted a number of strategies to include education in the humanitarian response paradigm. In 2000, a group of educators, linked to organizations such as the UN agencies and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), formed the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) to support education in countries affected by conflict and disaster. In doing so, as (Burde, et al., 2017) stated, they defined education in emergencies as a category separate from development activities in order to incorporate education into traditional humanitarian assistance. The term 'emergency' indicated its urgency and underscored the relevance of education to the humanitarian response paradigm. This rise of investment in education in emergencies contributed to a growing awareness of the importance of providing support to education to those in need.

The end of the Cold War did not mean the end of conflict and population displacement. Many of the countries which gained (or regained) their independence in the latter decades of the twentieth century are multi-ethnic in nature and have not yet developed stable systems of governance. The 1990s saw numerous conflicts with an ethnic dimension, which led to suffering and displacement for millions of children and young people, often under horrific circumstances. Their lives were disrupted and their education abruptly terminated. This has coincided with the enhanced awareness of children's needs and rights, following nearly universal ratification of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. Graça Machel's Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children highlighted the needs for education in emergency situations (Machel, 1996). These needs were reiterated at the World Education Forum held in Dakar in April 2000. Education is increasingly viewed as the "fourth pillar", or a "central pillar", of humanitarian response, alongside the pillars of nourishment, shelter and health services (Norwegian Refugee Council et. al., 1999). Children are vulnerable and dependent, and they are developing, not only physically but mentally and emotionally. "The sudden and violent onset of emergencies, the disruption of families and community structures ... deeply affect the physical and psychological wellbeing of displaced children". Education provides opportunities for students, their families and communities to begin the trauma healing process, and to learn the skills and values needed for a more peaceful future and better governance at local and national levels (Norwegian Refugee Council, 1999).

(UNHCR, 2000a) in a topic on "Education as a humanitarian pillar, a human right and a cornerstone of peace-building", Education in emergencies is a pillar of humanitarian assistance, enabling services to be provided to children and young people from early in an emergency onwards. Speedy access to education and other activities which help to restore the child's development after trauma is a human right which must be respected by agencies, guided by a normative framework based on international human rights law. And education in crisis and transition can be enriched (if certain minimal resources are available) to serve as a cornerstone for building a new social order, promoting mutual respect and tolerance, peaceful discussion and problem solving at local level, and an understanding of the role of law and of representative and honest systems of governance in problem-solving at national level.

### **Statement of the problem**

As human population grows and there is a need for political power as well as a need for sustainable economic development, conflict and as a result migration is inevitable. Hence, it is timely to look at the

relationships between education systems and migration around the globe. However, it is much common when individuals move to another region within their country and yet least acknowledged type of migration (Mulimbi, 2020).

Little is also known about how to improve teachers' skills in the contexts of displacement as a result of armed conflict and which theories and approaches are most conducive to providing qualified teachers and quality learning in the place where they are displaced. This is witnessed by one of the authors who had the opportunity to work for Norwegian Refugee Council at Dolo Ado refugee centers on how to improve student motivation by training teachers in refugee camps, social coercion of refugee and host community. Hence, this work drops some value on education in emergency for our future as well as current situation.

UNESCO's "Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: Migration, Displacement and Education—Building Bridges, Not Walls" takes a timely look at the relationships between education systems and migration around the globe since one in every eight people in the world today is a migrant and human migration is an increasingly important reality to which education must focus, EiE is also an emerging profession which educators must give attention too, it is worth mentioning to focus on the following research questions that are addressed by different research questions qualitatively.

### **Research Questions**

- What Psychosocial and Educational Access Relevance does Education in Emergency (EiE) have?
- What Theoretical Frameworks Shaped EiE?
- How did EiE develop?
- What Lessons can Ethiopia take?

### **Significance of the study**

The study is relevant for the following reasons:

It is a moral obligation to provide education for migrants as stated in a BOOK REVIEW "Global Education Monitoring Report 2019 "providing education is not only a moral obligation of those in charge of it, but also is a practical solution to many of the ripples caused by moving populations" (p. v). Hence, as Ethiopia is not different from the rest of the world and had a moral obligation to provide education to its citizens, this qualitative meta-analysis work would provide some lesson for its problems in relation to EiE.

As there are ample evidences that youth without access to education are more likely to join violent conflict than those who attend school (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2008 cited in Brude, et.al, 2017), our country, Ethiopia should be committed to provide schooling for those who are displaced as a result of armed conflict. Hence, this qualitative meta-analysis study could be a stepping stone for the government as well as other researchers.

### **Scope of the Study**

The scope of this work is on migration as a result of armed conflict areas and the related education in emergency issues.

### **Limitations of the Study**

For financial and time constraints, this qualitative meta-analysis did not include education in emergency other than armed conflict area like those migrants as a result of natural disasters.

### **Methodology**

Despite the fact that qualitative research has long been of interest in the field of psychology or special needs education and humanities, meta-analysis of qualitative literatures (sometimes called meta-

synthesis) are still quite rare. Like quantitative meta-analyses, these methods function to aggregate findings and identify patterns across primary studies, but their aims, procedures, and methodological considerations may vary (Walsh D, Downe, S., 2005).

Meta-analysts are encouraged to consider the methodological integrity of their studies in relation to central research processes, including identifying a set of primary research studies, transforming primary findings into initial units of data for a meta-analysis, developing categories or themes, and communicating findings. Qualitative meta-analysis is a method for reviewing qualitative studies and writings. It is an attempt to conduct a rigorous secondary qualitative analysis of primary qualitative findings. Its purpose is to provide a more comprehensive description of a phenomenon (Walsh D, Downe, S., 2005).

The function of meta-analytic methods can be seen in relation to various research goals, such as the development of theoretical models, comprehensive literature reviews, or methodological reviews. In this article, comprehensive literature reviews is the function of meta-analytic method (Greenhalgh, T. 1997). A secondary qualitative analysis of primary findings and writings was done through an application of meta-analytical procedures. Thematic synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008) is generating analytical themes that emerge from and step beyond the descriptive themes.

The meta-analysis approach was chosen since it allows interpretation of findings deriving from a group of qualitative research into one explanatory interpretative end product (Paterson, Thorne, Canam, & Jillings, 2001; Stern & Harris, 1985).

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Relevance of EiE for Psychosocial and Educational Access**

Despite the fact that there are many challenges of education in areas of armed conflict as stated by (Pherali, et al., 2020), access to education can have its own relevance to minimize the psychosocial impacts of displaced youth and children. Among the challenges as they stated are: lack of adequate resources; teachers, parents, and children who have been traumatized; poor living conditions; and tensions around curriculum, language of instruction, and a lack of mechanisms to certify learning. Forced displacement often results in loss of qualified teachers, which makes it difficult to have a teaching team including school administration in the areas where displaced populations are settled. As a result, schools in these contexts are generally forced to rely on unqualified teachers due to a lack of resources, weak institutional mechanisms, and political barriers in the host societies. In formal schools, where national teachers work with refugee students, the teachers do not have access to specialized training to build the professional skills they need to deal with language barriers, psychosocial and behavioral issues, and the bullying refugee children often experience at school and in their communities. School age children and youth in conflict-affected contexts may have been victims of violence or be traumatized for and some have lost their parents or close relatives. These situations can have a massive impact on their emotional wellbeing and their ability to learn. Hence, teachers need specific knowledge and skills to respond appropriately to these intense situations (Burns and Laurie 2015, Betancourt and Khan 2008, Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies 2016 cited in Pherali, et al., 2020).

Although psychosocial and emotional impacts as a result of conflict affect girls' and boys' psychosocial and educational access and success differently, Burde, et al, (2017) stated providing children living in emergency and post-emergency situations with structured, meaningful, and creative activities in a school setting or in informal learning spaces improves their emotional and behavioral well-being.

Existing evidence has shown that community-based schools increase access to education, particularly by decreasing distance to schools and encouraging participation of local communities. According to one impact evaluation, community-based schools supported by international NGOs, increase enrollment particularly for girls in conflict-affected Afghanistan improving their psychosocial and behavioral wellbeing (Burde, et al., 2017),

Moreover, regarding trauma treatment, (Winthrop & Kirk, 2008) pointed that conflict related trauma can be treated in the school setting by providing children and youth a targeted psychosocial support and developing their natural resiliencies. For example, the provision of educational activities in a “healing classroom” may contribute to the positive social and emotional adjustment of children.

Even though the impact of armed conflict as stated by Machel is in all aspects of life the focus in this work was on the psychosocial and educational access of displaced children and youth. Machel emphasized, armed conflict affects all aspects of child development- physical, mental and emotional – and to be effective, assistance must take each into account ... ensuring, from the outset of all assistance programmers, that the psychosocial concerns intrinsic to child growth and development are addressed (Machel, 1996).

### **Theoretical Frameworks that Shaped EiE**

Among others, two theoretical ideas were introduced by (Pherali, et al., 2020) teachers as “transformative intellectuals” (Giroux 1988, 1993 cited in Pherali, et al., 2020) and an “ecological systems theory” of human development (Bronfenbrenner 1979 cited in Pherali, et al., 2020). They argue that teachers play multiple roles in crisis settings, including helping students develop the linguistic skills they need to make a successful transition to formal education in the host areas, supporting learners’ social-emotional wellbeing, and helping students adapt in new educational environments while acknowledging their prior education experiences and cultural values.

They added, teachers and education practitioners who are working with displaced people engage in transformative education practices. Those who support education in challenging environments need to capitalize on existing innovative practices and act as facilitators of knowledge production and exchange. Similarly, (Cha, Jihae. 2020) in the research conducted in Kenya on ‘Refugee Students’ Academic Motivation in Displacement’, used self-determination theory and a sense-of-belonging construct to explore the academic motivation of these students who, despite the challenges of their life in refugee camps and an unpredictable future, remain eager to learn. Drawn from a survey of 664 primary school students across nine schools in Kakuma refugee camp, the findings suggest that students’ sense of belonging at school is the strongest predictor of academic motivation, even after adjusting for other demographic and family-related variables. While these factors do not represent all possible predictors of motivation among students in refugee camps, the study does suggest that fostering a sense of belonging at school in a context of displacement could help educators create learning environments that promote and sustain refugee students’ academic motivation.

### **Development of EiE**

War or conflict destroys schools, damages school systems, and injures or kills students and teachers, with consequences for education. In addition, rebel groups may attack schools, rendering them unusable, and intimidate students and teachers to prevent them from attending (Human Rights Watch, 2006, 2010a, 2010b). What has happened in the last couple of years in the schools of Amhara and Afar regions of Ethiopia goes in line with this idea. The conflict between the Tigray rebel groups and the ruling

government destroyed most schools as witnessed by the rebel groups themselves on media and the children and youth are forced to be displaced leaving their homes and being in an emergency situations. In the midst of an emergency, when a state bureaucracy is weak or absent, non-state actors such as United Nations (UN) agencies and other international or local nongovernmental organizations often support educational interventions. They may support schools in communities where state services have broken down, or provide supplemental educational activities that are intended to protect children from harm and to promote cognitive, emotional, and social development (Sinclair, 2001, cited in Burde, et al., 2017). These aid organizations therefore name these foreign interventions as “education in emergencies” programs.

By realizing that millions of children live in crisis-affected regions, where they lack access to education, then came in part a growing interest and focus in the field of education in emergencies (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011). Multiple forces have shaped the field of education in emergencies. At least since the 1950s, when modern international development aid was launched, support to education in low and middle-income countries was included. Since support therefore often shifted toward humanitarian aid in the midst of crises or conflict, aid rarely focused on education. As a result, humanitarian aid workers have emphasized the gaps in services that crises create or exacerbate. Pointing to refugee children as well as populations affected by crises, they have argued for providing education aid to further development goals of achieving education for all and to increase children’s protection in these unstable environments. Hence, the inception of the field education in emergency is in the mid-1990s (Adwan & Bar-On, 2004).

According to (Burde D., 2014), the term “emergency” that implies a temporary situation seems ill-suited to describe crises that endure over time in armed conflict areas. Burde added, “Education in crises” and “education in protracted crises” are also phrases used to soften and clarify the connection to emergency while preserving the sense of urgency intended to acquire a response. “Education in emergencies” remains the most common term among international practitioners.

### **Lessons for Ethiopia**

Conflict inhibits development, and poor countries that experience conflict typically have higher poverty rates than stable countries (World Bank, 2011). As it is well known, Ethiopia exercised different armed conflicts at different levels and times and is among the least developed country which is not deniable. Hence, it is highly needed to focus on peace and education in emergency. We all are living witnesses how much things were devastating for the last couple of years as a result of war in the country. Yet there is no department in education in emergency in the country’s universities which is a paradox. The wellbeing of children and youth in armed conflict areas is also critical.

(Ager et al., 2011; Berger & Gelkopf, 2009; Kostelny & Wessells, 2008 cited in Burde, et al., 2017) concerning the potential of education in promoting protection and enhance wellbeing for children living in emergency and post-emergency conditions pointed that providing children with structured, meaningful, and creative activities, in a school setting or in informal learning spaces, improves their emotional and behavioral well-being. Hence the government of Ethiopia in collaboration with other stakeholders should work hand in hand to improve the wellbeing of children in displaced children and youth in areas of armed conflict.

Similarly, although further research is needed, (Betancourt et al., 2014; Layne et al., 2008; Woodside et al., 1999 cited in Burde, et al., 2017) pointed that some psychosocial support programs improve classroom-related outcomes. Hence, psychosocial support programs should be encouraged and

professionals in the field of psychology and counseling in Ethiopia should feel the burden and collaborate with Civil Society Organizations, Edir leaders, religious leaders and other stakeholders and the government of Ethiopia should give its due attention so that children and youth could improve classroom related outcomes. Researchers in Ethiopia should also try their level best to study ways that generate greater resilience among children and youth in armed conflict areas and the efficiency and effectiveness among different psychosocial intervention programs.

In relation to psychosocial intervention, as mentioned above by (Winthrop & Kirk, 2008), a targeted psychosocial support and developing their natural resiliencies. For example, the provision of educational activities in a “healing classroom” may contribute to the positive social and emotional adjustment of children. Hence, this can be practiced in Ethiopian schools to treat the trauma they faced as a result of armed conflict which resulted in in country displacement. Burde, et al., (2017), is regarding the relevance of school based programs than clinical ones pointed that school-based programs allow practitioner’s access to a larger number of children and make treatment more accessible. From this, one can take a lesson that in a country like ours where there are meager clinical services for psychosocial treatments even in the capital city Addis Ababa let alone in the countryside, this school based programs can be taken as a lesson for trauma treatment as a result of armed conflicts.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The qualitative meta-analysis review shows the current states of research on education in emergencies have expanded attention to education globally. These changes will continue as new voices introduce their ideas for peace and as events raise questions about the links between education and displacement as a result of armed conflict. As an example, the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Malala Yousafzai drawn attention to education in emergencies can be considered. This amplified the voices of many civil society actors who stand for education as a human right and view it as an antidote to conflict. Ethiopia also needs many Malalas regarding Education in Emergencies despite the fact that the situations in the countries are different. Better developed countries than Ethiopia like Ukrain are also facing displacement as a result of armed war with Russia. Hence, there is no boundary and time limit when and how conflict as a result mass displacement can occur. Hence, we as a country are badly in need of the program education in emergency.

At the same time, strong states are examining the relationship between education and conflict with an escalating sense of urgency. In response, attention to education in emergencies is set to grow exponentially. Yet, Ethiopia did not start it except as one of the authors witnessed above that some NGOs like Norwegian Refugee Council are trying their best to support Somalian children and youth in refugee camps at Dolo and Melkadida in Ethiopian Somali region.

Given global concerns about peace, violent and war, it is critical that as the field moves forward, researchers continue to examine these theoretical paradigms that serve shape as well as respond to real life contexts. This year’s Addis Ababa University theme of the 9th Annual International Educational Conference on Quality of Education with the theme: Education in Emergencies in East Africa: Implications for Sustainable Development is appreciated by the authors as there could be a paradigm shift that will lead authorities and the university to start the program as one of the fields in education.

What is more regarding gender, considering that women and children comprise the majority of the world’s refugees, more research is needed on the gendered barriers to educational opportunities faced by

refugee children, both during their displacement and after resettlement (Hatoss and Huijser 2010; UNHCR 2018a cited in Cha, J., 2020.).

Historically, the field of education in emergencies viewed education as largely neutral, if not wholly positive, leading almost inevitably to a range of positive outcomes including child protection and well-being, economic development, peace building, and reconstruction ( Paulson & Rappleye, 2007).Therefore, Ethiopia needs to give emphasis in developing the field education in emergency.

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