

**PEER Network**  
Political Economy of Education Research

# PEER NETWORK DOCTORAL WORKSHOP EDUCATION, CONFLICT AND CRISIS



**20-21 June, 2023** 

**University of Sussex** 

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## PEER Network Doctoral Workshop

### EDUCATION, CONFLICT AND CRISIS

June 20, 2023, 1.00pm – 6.00pm

June 21, 2023 9.00am - 6.00pm

The Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, University of Sussex

#### Final Programme

Tuesday, 20 June 2023

13.00 -13.30	<b>Welcome and Registration</b>
13.30-14.00	<b>Opening Remarks</b> Prof. Simon Thompson, Head of the School of ESW, University of Sussex Prof. Mario Novelli, University of Sussex
14.00 - 16.00	<b>Roundtable discussion</b> Chair: Mario Novelli <b>Speakers:</b> Dr. Maha Shuayb, University of Cambridge & Centre for Lebanese Studies Dr. Laila Kadiwal, Institute of Education, UCL Prof. Tejendra Pherali, Institute of Education, UCL Dr. Sean Higgins, University of Sussex
16.00 -16.30	<b>Coffee Break</b>
16.30- 18.00	<b>Panel 1 –Policies and Programmes on education and conflict</b> Chair/Discussant: Tejendra Pherali, Institute of Education, UCL  <i>'Permissive Spaces': Education Policy Enactments in authoritarian contexts</i> <b>Martin Preston</b> , University of Bristol  <i>Rohingya Education: Digital Technology Program Design and Evaluation through Community-based Participation in Cox's Bazar</i> <b>Ambreen Lakhani</b> , Institute of Education, UCL  <i>Combining Multiple Datasets to Improve Educational Outcomes for Children in Countries Affected by Conflict: A Case Study of Afghanistan.</i> <b>Amanda Meyer</b> , University of Edinburgh  <i>Beyond the buzz word(s) towards meaningful progress in understanding and enacting healthy international relationships: a case study of the relationship between a small INGO and a school in Rwanda, 2013-present</i> <b>Angie Kotler</b> , University of Sussex
19.00	<b>Dinner</b>

**Day 2: Wednesday, 21 June 2023**

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09.00 – 09.30

**Welcome**

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09.30 - 11.00

**Panel 2 - Higher Education, Conflict, and Peacebuilding**

**Chair/Discussant:** Helen Murray, University of Sussex

*Peeling the Multiple Layers of Inequalities in Higher Education: The Case of Syria*

**Oudai Tozan**, Cambridge University

*'Cult Pandering' and the Geopolitics of Russian War Demonstrations at Syrian Universities*

**Jee Rubin**, Cambridge University

*The role of higher education in peacebuilding: a case study of four different universities in Nepal*

**Ganesh Khadka**, Institute of Education, UCL

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11.00 - 11.30

**Coffee Break**

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11.30 – 13.00

**Panel 3 – Pedagogies and Peacebuilding in conflict contexts**

**Chair/Discussant:** Sean Higgins, University of Sussex

*(Re)imagining pedagogies from 'below' for teaching about Transitional Justice in the Peruvian context*

**Paola Sarmiento**, University of Bristol

*Rethinking/conceptualizing Education for Peace and/or Societal Transformation: The Radical Pedagogy of the Kurdish Movement as a Political Project*

**Ozlem Kocyigit**, University of Edinburgh

*Breaking barriers: Pukhtun women's agency for peacebuilding in Pakistan*

**Sadaf Yasir**, Institute of Education, (UCL)

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13.00 – 14.00

**Lunch**

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14.00 – 15.30

**Panel 4- Rethinking inclusion/exclusion in education and conflict**

**Chair/Discussant:** Maha Shuayb, University of Cambridge & Centre for Lebanese Studies

*At the intersection of disability and refugeehood: exploring whether and how disabled Syrian refugee children access education opportunities and learning spaces in Lebanon*

**Giada Costantini**, University of Birmingham

*Street Children and Experiences of Work in Beirut City: Towards Learning Trajectories*

**Cyrine Saab**, Institute of Education, UCL

*The production of girls' education in Afghanistan? A Cultural Political Economy Analysis and Critique*

**Abdul Ghairat**, University of Sussex

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15.30 - 16.00

**Coffee break**

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16.00 – 17.30

**Panel 5- Evolving Concepts and Framings in the field of education and conflict**

**Chair:** Birgul Kutan, University of Sussex

**Discussant:** Tejendra Pherali, Institute of Education, UCL

*Conceptualizing Capacity Development in Afghanistan for Education Government Officials*

**Farzana Bardai**, University of Sussex

*Neoliberal Resilience in Refugee Contexts: Would a Responsibilisation Policy Build Global Peace and Security?*

**Salahuddine Al Mugharbil**, University of Ulster

*Assessing education transformation for learners in conflict and crisis contexts*

**Susan Nicolai**, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex

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## **PARTICIPANTS' ABSTRACTS**

### **Panel 1 – Policies and Programmes on education and conflict**

#### ***Rohingya Education: Digital Technology Program Design and Evaluation through Community-based Participation in Cox's Bazar***

**Ambreen Lakhani**, Department of Culture, Communication and Media Institute of Education, UCL

##### **Abstract**

The Rohingya community has been facing a severe lack of education opportunities, both in Myanmar and in the displaced persons camps in Bangladesh. According to UNICEF, more than half a million Rohingya children living in displaced persons camps in Bangladesh have limited access to formal education. Several barriers contribute to the access to education for all learners including curriculum limitations, complex language issues, and lack of qualified teachers. In order to overcome these barriers to the delivery of education, various international organizations, NGOs, and governments are working together to develop solutions, including informal digital education programs. However, a common critic of programming has come from the Rohingya community who feel they have been continuously left out of planning and programming conversations.

This research study aims to explore the value of community-based participatory research for designing and evaluating digital technology programs through a social justice lens in the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh. Building on literature that argues for a community-based approach to programming, the study seeks to establish good practices that contribute to effective program design and delivery. The study will focus on education and investigate whether current digital technology programs meet the needs, preferences, and aspirations of the Rohingya learners.

The case study design will include data through semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders involved, including Rohingya learners and facilitators, program designers, software developers, donors, and program implementors. Two organizations have been identified that have existing education technology programming in the Rohingya camps. By collecting existing data and insights, the study aims to provide valuable information that can inform the design and evaluation of future programs. In addition, this study will contribute to the discourse and research on practical solutions for improving the effectiveness of digital technology programs for education among the Rohingya community in the camps.

#### **Combining Multiple Datasets to Improve Educational Outcomes for Children in Countries Affected by Conflict: A Case Study of Afghanistan.**

**Amanda Meyer**, University of Edinburgh

##### **Abstract**

To enable children's educational outcomes to be improved, quality, reliable data is essential. Data enables decision-making, planning and monitoring - and facilitates comparisons across provisions, countries and organisations. For fragile and conflict affected countries (FCACs), data is even more critical, as global and transnational policy decisions directly impact populations already suffering. Availability of quality data in FCACs, however, is highly challenged. Government systems and finances are normally weak, and national and donor priorities can be misaligned. The factors that impact educational outcomes are also considerable. Access to education is often severely reduced due to

infrastructure damage, migration, security and cultural issues - and attendance impacted by an enhanced risk of child protection issues such as child labour, child marriage and conflict-related recruitment. These factors, combined with the presence of multiple actors working in a chaotic environment, also hamper the ability to collect unbiased, complete datasets and to track both group and individual data.

Multiple datasets exist relating to FCACs, largely due to the number of organisations actively working with or alongside the national government; each with their own agenda (often donor-linked) and each needing data due to the underlying weakness of the administrative system. Datasets tend to belong to one of three types: Global, National and Ad-hoc primary research. A typical global dataset is the UNESCO SDG4 database. National datasets are largely driven from a country's Education Management Information System (EMIS), whilst ad-hoc primary research comes in different forms and from differing sources. Datasets are also considered to be disparate, sporadically produced and incomparable - and as a result, difficult to analyse. Any user, therefore, has disconnected and inconsistent information available to them. Combining these multiple datasets is a potential way to enhance a user's understanding.

Afghanistan, a land-locked country in Central Asia, has been conflict-affected for centuries. Education provision is very varied with informal non-governmental education sitting alongside an established formal system, all of which are undergoing significant change following the change in administration in August 2021. A rapid review of publicly available data shows a disparate range of data in differing formats, written for varying purposes as previously described. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, this research seeks to assess and help improve the quality of publicly available data, enabling users to better understand the status of the factors that impact educational outcomes for school age Afghan children (6-15). Using a 4 stage approach: 1) available data will be mapped according to source and factor; 2) datasets will be analysed to assess whether they meet the quality criteria: Accuracy, Completeness, Consistency, Timeliness and Relevance; 3) using select factors, data from multiple sources will be combined and presented visually using Microsoft Power BI; and 4) through a series of semi-structured interviews, the quality of the combined data will be reviewed to determine whether this combination approach does enable a user's understanding to be improved.

### ***'Permissive Spaces': Education Policy Enactments in authoritarian contexts***

**Martin Preston**, University of Bristol

#### **Abstract**

Drawing on multiscalar research, this presentation focuses on the roles, rationales, and implications of policy actors operating within Ethiopia during a period of recent migration governance change, specifically the enactment of global refugee education policy. Since the signing of the Global Compact on Refugees in 2016, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) has increasingly become a central policy focus for international and national migration and development actors. Ethiopia, itself a conflict-affected context, hosts over 800,000 refugees and was the first nation to commit to enacting the CRRF. Adapting the Comparative Case Study approach (Bartlett and Vavrus, 2015), this research considered the global, national, and local dimensions of change in the period 2016-2021. Interviews were conducted with policy actors, education providers, teachers and refugees and analysed using thematic analysis. Documents were selected based on their relevance to the CRRF and were reviewed through critical discourse analysis.

Migration and education are central concerns for sovereign states. Existing literature on the role of refugee hosting states often focuses on the governments' lack of capacity and critiques the involvement of neo-liberal and post-colonial actors. However, less attention has been given to the actions or inactions of authoritarian governmental actors and their willingness to implement agreed-upon policy agendas, especially in relation to migration (Norman, 2021). Such attention is important to understand implications of policy enactment, both for building peaceful states and to conceptualise socially just policy is enacted.

Applying Jessop's Strategic Relational Approach to understand the roles of actors in the Ethiopian context, I develop the concept of the 'permissive space' (Cooper-Knock, 2017) to conceptualise how sovereign governments engage with global policy agendas. I argue that Ethiopian government actors, distrustful or perceptive of potential disadvantages in proposed change, consistently disengage from agreed policy priorities. In the resulting permissive space, I argue that powerful international, foreign government and non-governmental actors take up policy, ultimately resulting in reification of northern discursive ideas and policy agenda.

Contradictions within the enactment process are challenging for education practitioners and refugees alike. Education providers strategically interpret and adapt education policy to the cultural and structural contexts they operate in and are compelled to maintain and negotiate relationships with governmental and international partners and funders. Whilst examples of hopeful educational practice endure, the process can be to the detriment of refugees who are also presented with structural and temporal barriers in the pursuit of their aspirations.

Opportunities do not always align with the aspirations of refugees, who can find themselves in cycles of re-education, each as irrelevant as the last to either their envisioned aspirations or present opportunities. In the complex malaise of enactment, I propose that education provision in such contexts, dominated by northern migration agendas, is being deployed as part of wider border externalisation processes.

## **Panel 2 - Higher Education, conflict, and Peace building**

### ***Peeling the Multiple Layers of Inequalities in Higher Education: The Case of Syria***

**Oudai Tozan**, Cambridge University

#### **Abstract**

It has long been debated as to whether higher education (HE) is a site of social mobility that promotes meritocracy or a site of social reproduction that creates and exacerbates inequalities in societies. In this paper, I will argue that HE, even when democratised and provided free to everyone, reproduces inequalities unless coupled with an inclusive sectoral design, an expansion of funding, and a wider strategy to reduce socio-economic inequalities. To do so, I studied the case of Syria, which has always claimed to have a meritocratic HE system that is designed to achieve equality in society by providing free HE for all. I analysed the database of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) for 15 academic years from 2001 to 2015. I unpacked four types of inequalities, namely HE provision mode-based inequalities, specialisation-based inequalities, city-based inequality, and gender-based inequalities. Finally, I show how gender dynamics and roles are changing in the HE sector as a result of the Syrian conflict

### ***'Cult Pandering' and the Geopolitics of Russian War Demonstrations at Syrian Universities***

**Jee Rubin**, Cambridge University

#### **Abstract**

In March 2022, international media outlets ran reports of pro-Russian war demonstrations at universities across Syria. While the Syrian State News Agency claimed a headcount in the thousands, footage from the University of Damascus—the country's largest institution for higher education—showed modest crowds. There, young people were rigidly organized into a massive Z formation, waving Russian flags and chanting about the war in Ukraine. Though journalistic coverage framed the demonstration as a solidarity event, such a reading ignores the Assad regime's longstanding use of universities as sites for coercively-organized political spectacle. Previously, however, events of this kind focused almost entirely on extolling the Assad dynasty, save for references to its martyrs or to regional issues seen as critical to its domestic footing. In this light, the significance of these 'protests' points not to possible inferences about public opinion, but rather to questions regarding the shifting parameters of Syrian higher education (HE) as a theatre for geopolitical power struggles.



Drawing on visual analysis of digital artefacts from the event, this paper argues that these demonstrations represent a novel iteration of an otherwise tired form of state propaganda in Syria. Born out of Assad's indebtedness to Putin, the pro-Russian spectacle reflects emergent political realities that include the regime's increased threshold toward foreign interests in domestic settings. Here, I propose the term 'cult pandering' to describe the process by which a leader like Assad leverages a cult of personality to gratify its external allies and patrons. Doing so involves objectifying the subject's body as both a 'site and sight' of geopolitical transaction, upon which a co-instantiation of power and pleasure come to play out. To forward this argument, I revisit Lisa Wedeen's seminal theorization of the regime spectacle as a domestic phenomena by asking how modes of symbolic power instead operate within the foreign relations and wartime affairs of autocratic regimes.

### ***The role of higher education in peacebuilding: A case study of four different universities in Nepal***

**Ganesh Khadka**, Institute of Education, UCL

#### **Abstract**

While the role of education in conflict contexts continues to grow, there is now renewed interest in higher education in conflict affected and emergency environments. Higher education often seems to be a neglected and ignored sector for decades in a post-conflict context, receiving less attention from the governments and international aid agencies. However, higher education is perceived to be a stabilizing or securitizing factor by providing a positive alternative to youth, and therefore it contributes to peacebuilding through transformative disciplines such as peace and conflict studies and addressing horizontal inequalities (Milton and Barakat, 2016). Post-conflict reconstruction should adopt a 'conflict-sensitive' approach to address the structural issues of educational inequity, social exclusion, and political hegemony of the privileged social groups (Pherali, 2012).

Exploring the role of higher education in the post-conflict context of Nepal could encourage the necessity of a peace education curriculum, better understand conflict drivers, and contribute to peace and stability. The dominant element of this research rests to fathom the inequalities and social injustices within higher education in Nepal which could potentially help to understand the drivers of violent conflict and addressing such inequalities within higher education or through higher education will fetch sustainable peace and overcome the legacies of conflict. To do so, the research aims to unpack the following questions:

1. What are the social justice-oriented policy reforms in the higher education sector in the current political structure of Nepal?
2. What are the initiatives in universities at local and provincial levels that are aimed at promoting peace and social transformation?
3. To what extent do the universities in federalized political system articulate and implement policies for peace in their practice?

The qualitative case study nature of the research will help in a comprehensive analysis of the different ways in which higher education can contribute to conflict, including its potential to perpetuate or challenge existing inequalities and injustices within the conceptual social justice 4R framework. In doing so, the research attempts to answer the socio-economic and political dimension of higher education in Nepal, the relation between higher education and violent conflict, and how Nepalese higher education could contribute to post-conflict transition and sustainable peacebuilding in Nepal. While investigating the higher education of a fragile country like Nepal, this research aims to contribute to the limited debate on the role of higher education in peacebuilding and social justice.

## Panel 3 – Pedagogies and Peace Building in conflict context

### *(Re)imagining pedagogies from 'below' for teaching about Transitional Justice in the Peruvian context*

Paola Sarmiento, University of Bristol

#### **Abstract**

Peru experienced significant violent conflict between 1980–2000 —one of the bloodiest in Latin America— mainly between the government and the insurgency group 'Shining Path'. In 2001, the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to clarify the conflict's events and foster transitional justice. In explaining the over-representation of indigenous people (70%) among the total number of victims, the Commission traced the causes of the conflict to the deeply rooted racism and discrimination historically present throughout Peruvian society. The TRC's report attributed great responsibility to the education sector and its role in building a culture of peace, reconciliation, and democracy.

This presentation aims to discuss the progress of my research proposal on 'imagining' pedagogies for teaching about Transitional Justice in Peru, looking at processes in and beyond schools. The presentation is divided into three parts. Firstly, I will briefly outline the education and social context of the study, highlighting the role of state schools in the rise of violence during the 1980s, the social stigmatization of teachers, and the challenge of including the TRC report in the education curriculum. Then, I will discuss the still limited research on post-conflict pedagogies in Peru, which has been focus on state teachers' memories and pedagogical practices within the restricted classroom space. Here, findings are shared and conclusive. State Peruvian teachers do not address the topic in their classrooms. Few studies, however, have transcended school spaces and creatively examined 'Other' pedagogies for the conflict coming from alternative local practices, knowledge and experiences of 'ordinary' people affected by conflict and engaged in memory and education. Secondly, I will present the study's preliminary research design to address the following principal and secondary questions: (1) What are the (potential) pedagogies of formal and non-formal educators for teaching about Transitional Justice in Peru? (i) What are educators' pedagogies for teaching about Peru's armed conflict? (ii) How do these pedagogies challenge, resist, or complement dominant historical narratives on Peru's armed conflict? (iii) How do these pedagogies innovate the teaching of Peru's armed conflict? The research draws on a hybrid theoretical framework on Transitional Justice; reparative, decolonial, and state pedagogies; and Memory Studies. I propose to use participatory creative methodologies and narrative approaches to co-produce knowledge and understanding that capture the texture and complexity of the participants' stories and pedagogical imagination. The study will involve working with two Peruvian grassroots social organisations working on memory about the conflict and eight state secondary-level teachers from the Ayacucho (4) and Apurimac (4) regions (two of the most affected areas by the conflict). I will end up the presentation sharing the strength, limitations, and concerns regarding the research design of the study.

### *Rethinking/conceptualizing Education for Peace and/or Societal Transformation: The Radical Pedagogy of the Kurdish Movement as a Political Project*

Ozlem Kocyigit, University of Edinburgh

#### **Abstract**

This research project, which is still in the design phase, focuses on the radical pedagogies and educational activities that emerged as resistance and organizing strategies in the Kurdish Movement accompanying the search for peace on political grounds in Turkey. The research problematizes the liberal peace discourse, and developmentalist and liberal humanist framework that underpins Freirean theory and critical pedagogy in general, in connection with critical peace education, suggesting a more bottom-up approach and radical thinking on the concepts that are discussed and frequently studied in the field. The design process begins by thinking about the answer to a basic but often forgotten question such as '*Does education really transforms society and brings peace?*' -both globally and in the context of the



research itself. Following the call of critical scholars who suggests more sincere, courageous, and difficult dialogue within the peace education field as a response to increasing violence and deepening inequality worldwide as well as the failure of all the international efforts and global summits, it highlights the importance of reconceptualizing the concept of education alongside the notions of peace, conflict, and violence. I criticize the reductionist approach to the meaning of education in the field, which puts an excessive emphasis on schooling, and aimed to bring a new education paradigm for discussion. I was intrigued by the field of Radical Adult Education (RAE) and two key figures Paulo Freire, and Antonio Gramsci who can offer theoretical signposts for an exploration of the role of adult education in a course of peace and social transformation in my research context, North Kurdistan.

Since RAE usually plays a role within the larger agency, it brings the issues of party, social movements, and civil society into the conversation as well. Even though these two thinkers are frequently cited in the radical adult education literature and are often approached from a comparative perspective or from the complementarity of the two. I weigh in with Paula Allman's view, whose book *Revolutionary Social Transformation Democratic Hopes, Political Possibilities and Critical Education* is the main inspiration for the research project in question, and think that we can learn from both. The dialectical unity between their work – while Freire has come to be related to pedagogy, or process, Gramsci's thoughts are more associated with, knowledge, content, and organizations – will add rigour to the discussion I want to pursue.

This research is a qualitative study that will employ dialectical critical realism as a methodological approach. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with the 10 educators, usually, the cadres of the Kurdish movement, by using Skype or Zoom. Due to the refugee identity of the researcher, the research has to be carried out remotely. Data will be analyzed and interpreted by thematic analysis.

### ***Breaking barriers: Pukhtun women's agency for peacebuilding in Pakistan***

*Sadaf Yasir*, Institute of Education, *University College London (UCL)*

#### **Abstract**

'Gender' has emerged as a critical area of inquiry in the peacebuilding debates. It is believed that for positive and sustainable outcomes, peacebuilding must not only be orientated towards transformation of cultures of violence into cultures of peace but also attend to the constructions of gender in the entire process. Especially when women continue to be excluded from the formal peace processes, and their multi-faceted and profound contributions to peacebuilding keep neglected in the official accounts of transition from war to peace. Although the UNSCR 1325 (Women, Peace, and Security) and the subsequent resolutions have given a momentum to the contributions of women in peacebuilding processes, their role remains understudied and therefore, the evidence behind women's contribution towards peacebuilding is 'patchy' and 'anecdotal'.

In addition, the extant literature examining women's participation in peace processes, either centre on how women have been excluded from the peace processes or focus on how women have been victims of war and overlooked in the post-conflict reconstruction. There generally is little focus on understanding women's agency for shaping the processes of peacebuilding and to enhance the comprehensiveness of the entire process. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the role and contributions of women for peacebuilding, and how fragile states, such as Pakistan, with armed opposition movements, and patriarchal gender arrangements contribute to and define their everyday lives. In contrast to painting the Global South in one colour, it's essential to investigate what constitutes as peace in different contexts, what roles women play as the architects and owners of peace, and what they believe can further amplify their voices.

Hence, in the overall backdrop of international focus on gender in development, the figure of girl as a 'change agent' in societies, education as a vehicle for women empowerment and peace, I aim to investigate *Pukhtun*<sup>1</sup> women's agency for sustainable peacebuilding in the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa province of Pakistan (sharing a porous border with Afghanistan) and understand their perceptions on peace, conflict, and the role of education in this regard. I further aim to focus on those women activists who are actively engaged in the process of peacebuilding in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa against the backdrop of complex interactions of patriarchy, religious beliefs, gender–class relations, and the changing contours of the nation state of Pakistan. For developing a theoretical framework of this study, I propose to use three intellectual perspectives based on the principles of 'Islamic feminism', 'decoloniality' and 'positive peace' and seek to utilise the intersection of these ideologies as a coherent and comprehensive lens for this study.

***Beyond the buzz word(s) towards meaningful progress in understanding and enacting healthy international relationships: a case study of the relationship between a small INGO and a school in Rwanda, 2013-present***

Angie Kotler, University of Sussex

**Abstract**

I will be examining the relationship over a ten-year period, (2013 – 2023), between a small INGO - constituted in the UK - and a small school in Rwanda, established and supported by this INGO. After setting the scene of how and when this school and INGO came into being, I use the case study of this specific relationship to raise questions about international aid in a post-colonial and post-conflict setting, with reference to intersections of critical peace education and decolonial theory.

The school achieved the unusual status of being called Lead School for Peace and the aim of my research has been to try to capture the essence of what is happening there. While acknowledging and celebrating positive processes and outcomes in many areas and, despite deliberate attempts to create mutuality and what could be called a 'third space', I have been increasingly troubled by the multiple and ubiquitous post-colonial and post conflict trip wires. Pedwell (2012b, 294) said: "empathy is not just about attempting to 'know' or 'feel' how another feels, but about seeking to understand the structures of feeling and the feelings of structure that produce and mediate us differentially as subjects and communities who feel". The notion of empathy has been central to my enquiry and provides an important additional perspective to the very useful 4 'R's social justice framework (Novelli et al, 2016) for peace education in this context.

I have worked ethnomethodologically, using principles of Everyday Peace Indicators (Mac Ginty and Firchow, 2014) with participants in the research setting, to explore diverse concepts of peace and education for peace. I have tried not to lead but to follow and then facilitate what is being raised, to engage reflectively in the process and my part in it – aware that this attempt is itself fraught with difficulties. I have often felt like Alice in Wonderland, either too small or too large for the situation and frequently confused! By contrast, I also show how relationships built with humility, self-awareness and deep sharing, can bridge the gulf of understanding given adequate time, willingness to listen, patience and self-reflection. I draw on the work of Lederach to consider what can happen between people enmeshed in historical conflict where – even if only rarely - a willingness arises to step out of the archetypes they normally inhabit. This 'moral imagination' (Lederach, 2005) can lead to breakthroughs in the structural webs that bind us all most of the time and reveal genuine and mutual empathy which can in turn lead to transformation.

My burning question is: When considering a framing of decolonisation in the field of post conflict education - which is accessible to both practitioners and researchers - in order to both deepen understandings of the challenges and point

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<sup>1</sup> Ethnolinguistic group: comprising majority population in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa province of Pakistan and southern Afghanistan.

to new healthier directions - do the related concepts of 'moral imagination' 'empathy' and 'third space' have something to offer and what could this new framing look like?

## **Panel 4- Rethinking inclusion/exclusion in education and conflict**

***At the intersection of disability and refugeehood: exploring whether and how disabled Syrian refugee children access education opportunities and learning spaces in Lebanon.***

**Giada Costantini**, University of Birmingham

### **Abstract**

When studying disability and inclusive education in a context such as Lebanon, which has undergone a process of humanitarianization (the welfare system has collapsed, the government is absent, and the only service providers for both Lebanese and the refugee population are humanitarian organizations), it is not possible to investigate disabilities' constructions and understanding without critically engaging with discourses of colonialism, humanitarianism, and the neoliberal dimension it brings with it. Grech (2011:96) on the neoliberal nature of humanitarianism states that "the push for quick outcomes demanded by donors makes disabled people an unattractive proposal, especially since these require a long-term commitment and resources, and the results may not be immediately evident". A practical example can be the efforts towards inclusive education, and to what extent children with disabilities are included. Humanitarian aid, following neoliberal principles of cost-effectiveness, measurable impact, etc. clearly prioritize children with less severe disabilities as they are easier and less expensive to include, and to re-introduce in the market system, promoting a disability-hierarchic response, which completely exclude people with more severe and compounded disabilities.

In going through participants narratives, I realized how the theme of humanitarian education disabling Syrian children, especially the one with severe disabilities, using inclusive rhetoric is a predominant one. Humanitarian education seems to do not only promote an exclusionary inclusive approach to education, but in doing so, it is further neglecting children with severe and compounded disabilities, relegating them in a status of bare life. Children with severe and compounded disability are excluded from most of the interventions in place and using their parents' words "they are left to themselves". Excluding these children from services such as education and health care, means, without using euphemism, to administer death. People with severe and/or compounded disabilities are not seen as worthy of receiving services, and hence to live, due to the intrinsic unemployability of their bodies and minds reshaped on the "colonial notion of 'ideal bodies' docile ones predicated on a normalised able-bodiedness driven by productive output and measurable indicators. Disabled people are again (re)constructed (...) as someone who need to be corrected or removed, as disability continually falls outside the normative remits of utility, economic growth, and development indicators" (Grech, 2015, p. 15).

The concept of bare life is here borrowed despite a circumscribed physical locus is missing, or at least it is not central to my analysis. The locus to which I refer when I engage with the concept of bare life, goes beyond a physical space, such as a refugee camp, a prison, a concentration camp. The locus to which I apply Agamben's concept of bare life, belongs to an abstract and socially constructed realm, which sees people divided into socially constructed categories, and where these categories intersect, at some of these intersections, people found themselves in the spatiality of bare life. Humanitarian disability-hierarchic interventions, which largely and systematically exclude people with mental, severe and/or compounded disabilities, brings with it the hidden message that not every human being is the same, and it more or less indirectly determined which lives are worth "saving" and worthy of living.

## ***Street Children and Experiences of Work in Beirut City: Towards Learning Trajectories***

**Cyrine Saab**, Institute of Education, UCL

### **Abstract**

This presentation focuses on how refugee street children in Beirut, the capital city of Lebanon, develop their experiences of work through their everyday interactions. It is informed by the practice theory, a sociological and anthropological framework that examines how social practices are formed and sustained through social interaction (Nicolini, 2012). Specifically, it draws on the Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) theory developed by Lave and Wenger (1991), a strand of practice theory that views practice as tradition and community. At the heart of the LPP theory is the recognition that learning is a ubiquitous process that occurs through participation in social practice.

This account is particularly valuable for understanding the experiences of street children. Firstly, the LPP argument acknowledges learning that occurs in everyday practices, including those in socially devalued settings, such as street work. Secondly, without this processual view of learning, the agentic turn in the everyday lives of street children, as it appears in contemporary urban studies literature, remains obscured and implicit, with interaction being viewed as a hidden and metaphysical process (Lave and Gomes, 2019).

However, the LPP theory was originally formulated without a specific focus on street contexts. Therefore, in order to appropriate this idea for the context of the study, this account draws on concepts from the cultural learning tradition (Tomasello, 2018; Heyes, 2018; Nasir et al.; 2020; Dreier 2007) to fortify and further extend the understanding of practice knowledgeability. Developing these ideas further, and taking them in combination, a new conceptual framework is proposed called 'learning trajectories' which is an anthropological concept that seeks to explore how street children develop knowledgeability through their participation in everyday street practices *across* space and time.

To explore learning trajectories, an ethnographic-inspired methodology has been used for a duration of eight months in Beirut streets, comprising observations, informal discussions, walking and seated semi-structured interviews, and group discussions, primarily with twelve refugee street children in addition to key informants (parents, police, peers, shop owners, etc.). This presentation discusses the ethnographic portraits of two of the children<sup>2</sup>: Ram who collects and resells recyclable material from the street and from waste containers in the popular neighbourhood Nabaa and Aziz who sells flowers on a commercial street in central Beirut. The vignettes illustrate how these children legitimize the available social and material resources in their everyday lives to culturally learn how to evolve their work and grow their income.

This contribution represents a departure from outcome studies that portray refugee street children as passive subjects and inevitable victims of structural inequalities created by capitalism, refugee policies, families, and exclusion from mainstream institutions. Instead, it sheds light on these children as active participants in the conduct of their everyday lives in an intricate manner. Relatedly, by introducing the contextual concept of 'learning trajectories', the study moves beyond individualistic and mentalistic views of learning and extends it beyond the confines of mainstream schooling.

Although this framework does not directly benefit the children, it provides relevant institutions and community organizations with a new vocabulary and thick descriptions that illuminate the zigzagging nature of the everyday lives of street children and their learning and development. As such, it can serve as a useful tool for designing educational and work-related programs that are better suited to their needs.

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<sup>2</sup> Please note that these are pseudonyms and not the children's real names.

## ***The Production of Girls' Education in Afghanistan? A Cultural Political Economy Analysis and Critique***

**Abdul Ghairat**, Univeristy of Sussex

### **Abstract**

The aim of my research is to analyse, critique, and understand the diverse ways in which girls' education has been framed by different international aid agencies and national organizations, and how it intersects with cultural, political, and economic issues and processes locally, nationally, and globally. My research methodology proposes a mixed approach incorporating discursive institutionalism, discourse analysis, and in-depth interviews with various actors from global aid agencies and national organizations involved in girls' education programming in Afghanistan. These actors will include the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Afghanistan Ministry of Education. I will employ Cultural Political Economy to examine this issue. The explanatory power of Cultural Political Economy lies in its investigation of how education is never neutral and disinterested; rather, it is always intertwined with cultural political dynamics and agendas. This holds true for the work of international aid agencies and the global governance agendas that shape how issues and problems are framed and understood. I am undertaking this research due to my unique positionality as an Afghan man working towards girls' education, coupled with my experience as a grassroots activist. I am acutely aware of the frequent disconnect between the broader agenda of aid organizations and the complex needs of community organizations striving for girls' education. This connection holds personal significance to me, as I am dedicated to addressing these challenges on the ground.

## **Panel 5- Evolving Concepts and Framings in the field of education and conflict**

### ***Conceptualizing Capacity Development in Afghanistan for Education Government Officials***

**Farzana Bardai**, University of Sussex

### **Abstract**

Capacity development in the field of International Development and Education is extremely complex and political. Whilst vast sums have been devoted to the capacity development of government critical analysis shows that term, whilst aiming to be emancipatory, is often oppressive. It is argued that fragile states lack of quality education further deteriorates the relationship people have with their very fragile governments. Capacity development by external actors becomes a tool aimed at supporting fragile governments to deliver education.

In my thesis I take the complex notion of capacity development and situate it in the complicated context of Afghanistan. I case the capacity development work of the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), a hybrid (I)NGO that fits the parameters of a local as well as an international NGO. I claim in this thesis that the context that capacity development is situated in matters, and in fact the capacity development process is subservient to the context that it takes place in. By taking on a critical realist lens, this thesis focuses on the power dynamics vested in the capacity development process. As a result, this thesis argues that capacity development is about the acquisition and maintenance of power.

This presentation is based on a chapter of my thesis that aims to investigate how different actors associated with the capacity development of subnational education government officials understand the process. In this presentation I outline the seven dominant understandings of capacity development produced through empirical mix method research collected in Afghanistan. In particular, the voices of Ministry of Education government officials, Provincial and District Education government officials, non-state actors (UNESCO, World Bank) and NGOs (Aga Khan Foundation) are central to the thesis and the presentation. In this presentation I demonstrate that western understandings of capacity development fail to recognize local understandings of knowledge distribution.

**Title: *Neoliberal Resilience in Refugee Contexts: Would a Responsibilisation Policy Build Global Peace and Security?***

**Salahuddine Al Mugharbil**, University of Ulster

**Abstract**

My presentation will adopt a critical take on the underpinnings of the contemporary international security resilience-based dispositions relevant to educating young people affected by conflict and crisis. It will discern the effects of the Education in Emergencies' neoliberal strategies and policies on adolescents' refugees in one of the most affected and violent conflict regions in the twenty-first century, the Middle East (Syria, in particular). Subsequently, this presentation will elaborate more on my PhD's primary question which is: "Does the resilience agenda in the Education in Emergencies community equip the Syrian refugee adolescents for their political and social future?". Therefore, this study will examine the effects of such political agendas on the Syrian adolescent refugees' perceptions towards their social and political future, and thereafter, its impact on the whole peacebuilding and security agenda intended in the Middle East.

Firstly, this presentation will tackle the peacebuilding and security project adopted by the international actors in the developmental debates from an educational perspective. This part will explain how education is currently perceived as a development project within the international community's peacebuilding discourses and concerns, and how it is being merged into neoliberal securitization agenda in conflict-affected contexts. Secondly, it will provide a glimpse of the efforts of the Education and Emergencies communities in mobilizing crisis prevention, disaster reduction, and conflict resolution policies and discourses through pushing neo-ontologies resilience agendas.

Thirdly, this presentation will discern and detail the underlying neoliberalism ontologies behind such conflict preventative policies which have culminated in rendering human subjects as resilient, passively adaptive, and vulnerable. This part will problematize neoliberal subject (or resilient subject) who is always humble, disempowered, and living with diminished capacities for autonomy, agency, and security. The argument presupposes that such insecure and uncertain individuals tend to accept the passive normalization of their consistent unpredictability of future, and consequently, care solely to enhance their adaptive capacities (their resilience) rather than promoting their agencies and capacities in the social, economic, and political spheres. Such preventively neoliberal assumption would push governments to foster the "responsibilisation" of individuals to adapt in face of adversity and accept their status quo. Hence, the notion that resilient subjects are passive in the face of change and do not seek to resist change is problematized in this research.

Finally, this presentation will examine the theoretical and methodological approaches adopted to complete this research. Theoretically speaking, social constructionism will be employed to identify the historically and culturally situated social processes derived from the human communicability around our subject matter. Espousing Social constructionist fashion is precisely congenial to undertake a Q methodology approach in order to abductively, holistically, and qualitatively identify the currently predominant social viewpoints, bodies of knowledge, and perceptions relative to the neoliberal resilience discourse in the refugee context. Practically, 30 Syrian adolescent refugees will be recruited in two of the neighboring countries hosting Syrian refugees (Lebanon and Iraq) to complete the data collection phase. To that end, this presentation will leave us with an indelibly profound concern within the global security challenges: Would a responsibilisation policy build global peace and security?

**Assessing education transformation for learners in conflict and crisis contexts**

**Susan Nicolai**, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex

**Abstract**

The global emphasis on education transformation has been a prominent discourse in recent years, encompassing efforts to address the educational challenges faced by children in conflict and crisis situations. This presentation aims to explore a fundamental question: How can we understand and measure education transformation in such contexts?



Specifically, it will begin to examine the key indicators and metrics used to assess this, evaluate their adequacy, and identify the need for additional measures to comprehensively capture the scope of transformation.

The global education sector has embraced the concept of transformation to respond to the learning crisis and shape the future of learning. The context of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has both highlighted and exacerbated existing educational challenges, serves as backdrop for this narrative. Recent high-level events such as the UN Transforming Education Summit and the recent Education Cannot Wait High-Level Financing Conference have further emphasized the significance of transformation in guiding actions related to education in conflict and crisis.

To assess transformation and overall progress in education, various indicators and metrics have been employed. These measures typically include enrolment rates, completion rates, gender parity, literacy rates, and education expenditure. While these indicators do offer valuable insights, their adequacy in capturing the multidimensional nature of education transformation for children in conflict and crisis remains a subject of inquiry.

The presentation aims to provide critical reflection of the existing indicators and metrics, evaluating their strengths, limitations, and gaps in evidence. It will explore whether these measures adequately consider significant issues such as the quality of education, teacher training, inclusivity, psychosocial support, and protection for children in conflict and crisis situations. By examining the gaps and shortcomings of these indicators, the presentation aims to stimulate a critical discussion on their sufficiency. By examining the gaps and shortcomings in the current measurement framework, several questions arise on the sufficiency of existing indicators and ways of measurement.

Moreover, the presentation will explore the need for additional measures of transformation that complement existing indicators. These could include assessing the provision of life skills education, social and emotional learning, peacebuilding and conflict resolution education, and teacher wellbeing. By incorporating these measures, a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of education transformation can be achieved, capturing the broader aspects that shape the learning experiences of children in conflict and crisis and their interaction with the specific context.

Examining the question of indicators, metrics, and additional measures of what constitutes education transformation in conflicts and crises will contribute significantly to the presenter's upcoming PhD research. The research will further investigate the drivers and constraints of related changes within selected aspects of the international aid architecture. Through this work, a deeper understanding of education transformation in conflict and crisis contexts will be fostered, key to informing issues of policy and practice to address the educational needs of vulnerable learners.



## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

### PEER Network UK Doctoral Workshop

#### Education, Conflict and Crisis

June 20<sup>th</sup>-21, 2023

#### Workshop Location

The workshop will take place **at the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, University of Sussex**, Gardner Centre Road, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9RA. We will be in the **GARDNER TOWER** on the Ground floor.

The nearest station is Falmer (approx. 5 minutes' walk from our the venue) and the train takes less than 10 minutes from either Brighton or Lewes. More information on the location can be found here: <https://www.attenboroughcentre.com/visit-us/getting-here>

Click [here](#) for a photo route from Falmer station to the venue.

Access to the University Campus <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=5139-uofs-campus-map-a3-july22-main-final-web.pdf&site=271>

#### Accommodation

All external participants are staying at **Leonardo Hotel Brighton**, 101 Stroudley Road, BN1 4DJ, Brighton. The hotel is right at the back of Brighton Railway Station. Your stay includes breakfast. View map here <https://www.leonardo-hotels.com/brighton/leonardo-hotel-brighton>

#### Catering

All catering during the workshop including coffee/tea in breaks, lunch on the second day and workshop dinner on 20<sup>th</sup> of June will be covered by the PEER NETWORK.

#### Notes for Participants

The workshop will start at 13:00pm and finish at 6pm on the first day (20 June) and 9am- 6pm on the second day (21 June). We will start on time, so please make sure you arrive at the venue on time.

The workshop dinner will be at the end of the first day.

Each participant is allocated a slot on a panel of 3/4 presentations with a dedicated chair and a 15-minute presentation time. Following all presentations, the chair will open the floor to the audience for questions and comments, and the chair will also act as discussant.

The conference venue will have the necessary facilities for PowerPoint presentations. We may ask you to share this with us prior to the event.

The final programme and all abstracts will be shared with you, and on the website of the PEER Network at <https://peernetworkgcrf.org/>

If you have any problems/issues on the day, please call me on 07917 360 569 (Birgul).