

# **Non-Governmental Organisations' Role in Shaping Refugee Youth Education:**

A Case Study of NGOs working with Syrian  
Refugee Youth in Jordan, 2019-2020

Arran Magee

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society  
University College London

2024

### **Declaration**

I, Arran Magee, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Arran Magee

## Abstract

The challenges of forced displacement have grown in scope, scale, and complexity, with the COVID-19 pandemic, new and intractable conflicts, and the climate crisis disproportionately affecting the world's most disadvantaged. Education is crucial for providing a sense of hope and, where possible, integrating refugee populations into their host societies and preventing permanent deficits in human development. Jordan, host to one of the largest populations of Syrian refugees since the onset of the Syrian crisis in 2011, has made concerted efforts to provide inclusive education where Syrian children and youth attend Jordanian schools. Yet, significant challenges remain, including overcrowded classrooms, resource shortages, and economic pressures on families that lead to high dropout rates among Syrian refugees.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play a pivotal role in shaping and delivering educational programmes aimed at refugee youth in Jordan. More than 179 youth programmes were implemented by NGOs in partnership with the Ministry of Education in 2022. However, the complex socio-political and policy environment of the refugee context in Jordan including fluctuating donor priorities, calls for further integration of refugees in to host country schools, and limited resources results in competing demands for different conceptualisations of the goal of refugee youth education. NGO staff are required to balance these competing demands, leading to disparate forms of refugee youth programmes that may not align with the preferences of refugees or international and national policy. This study explores how NGOs working with Syrian refugee youth in Jordan have conceptualised the goals of refugee youth education programmes for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan and the power dynamics that drive these conceptualisations, aiming to better inform our understanding of the role of education in refugee contexts.

Drawing on 30 semi-structured interviews with NGO staff in Jordan across 7 international and national NGOs in Jordan conducted between 2019 and 2020, this research examines how NGO staff working with Syrian refugee youth in Jordan navigate the complex interplay of international and national policies, organisational mandates, in-country relationships, and the nuanced needs of refugee communities. The study provides insights into the role of NGOs in the formation of the conceptualisations of the goals of refugee youth education programmes in Jordan.

The findings suggest that many NGO staff act as ambassadors for refugees, often engaging in acts of resistance against agendas they perceive as misaligned with a holistic approach to refugee education. Many NGO staff integrate multiple conceptualisations they believe better serve the complex and evolving needs of refugee youth often in ways that do not align with the agendas or mandates of others. The research highlights the processes through which NGO staff form their conceptualisations of the goals of refugee youth education, influenced by personal beliefs, experiences, and the broader socio-political

context, underscoring the potential challenges in relying on NGO staff as ambassadors. The findings suggest that NGOs have the potential to significantly influence refugee education policies and practices, highlighting their critical role and limits as advocates and change agents in refugee settings. The research highlights the importance of supporting NGO staff in pursuit of education approaches aligned with the preferences of refugee communities and calls for a deeper understanding of the potential impacts and limits of NGOs as agents of change in the context of refugee education.

## **Acknowledgements**

Dr Susannah Pickering-Saqqa  
Prof. Tejendra Pherali

For taking a risk.

## **Impact Statement**

This thesis enhances our understanding of the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in shaping educational initiatives for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan. The findings underscore the pivotal role NGO staff play in balancing international mandates, national policies, and the nuanced needs of refugee youth. Through an analysis of the competing demands and conceptualisations that NGO staff must navigate, this thesis highlights the significant influence NGOs wield in forming refugee education policies, as well as the challenges they face in aligning these policies with the preferences and realities of the refugee communities they serve.

One of the key contributions of this thesis is its exploration of the diverse conceptualisations of refugee education goals, including human capital development, protection and well-being, citizenship, and empowerment. By examining how these conceptualisations are formed, negotiated, and implemented, the research provides a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in refugee education. It highlights the often-overlooked tensions between the economic imperatives of human capital approaches and the broader social, psychological, and developmental needs of refugee youth. This thesis also contributes to our understanding that while economic integration and skill development are crucial, they must not overshadow the imperative of critical reflection and praxis that facilitate informed decision making around refugee youth programming. It emphasises that true empowerment in education goes beyond mere economic outcomes; it requires NGOs to cultivate an environment where refugee youth can critically engage with their circumstances, reflect on their identities, and actively participate in shaping their futures.

Additionally, the research offers critical insights into the limitations and potential of NGOs as agents of change in refugee education, challenging existing assumptions about their role and advocating for a more nuanced understanding of their influence. By highlighting how NGO staff are prone to both succeed and fail as advocates and resisters of policies that do not align with a holistic approach to refugee education, this thesis contributes to ongoing debates about the drivers of refugee education programmes.

Overall, this thesis advances academic discourse on refugee education and NGO involvement while offering practical implications for those working in refugee settings by proposing strategies to enhance NGO staff's ability to align educational programming more closely with the needs and aspirations of refugee communities.

<b>Chapter 1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1. Refugees and NGOs in Jordan.....	9
1.1.1. 1946-1980 – Separation of humanitarian and development aid allows NGOs to steer refugee programme objectives .....	11
1.1.2. 1980-2000 – Humanitarian and development responses intersect, yet NGOs still hold a significant role in shaping refugee education responses.....	12
1.1.3. 2000-2024 – International policy emphasises disbanding parallel refugee education programming and integrating refugees into host-country education systems.....	13
1.1.4. Jordan’s education policy trajectory 2011-2024 and its impact on NGOs .....	17
1.2. Defining ‘refugees’ and Syrian refugee legal status .....	21
1.2.1. Refugee .....	21
1.2.2. Syrian refugees in Jordan .....	22
1.2.3. Why Syrian refugees? .....	23
1.2.4. Summary.....	23
1.3. Youth, youth programming and youth education .....	24
1.4. Reflections on the process and a warning to the reader .....	25
1.4.1. Articulating the field of education research .....	25
1.4.2. Research with, within, and against education .....	26
1.5. Research Questions .....	27
1.6. Organisation of the thesis.....	27
<b>Chapter 2. Refugee Education and NGOs.....</b>	<b>29</b>
2.1. Refugee Education as a Contested Concept .....	29
2.1.1. Human Capital .....	30
2.1.2. Protection and Wellbeing .....	32
2.1.3. Citizenry .....	34
2.1.3.1. <i>Local citizenship</i> .....	35
2.1.3.2. <i>Global citizenship</i> .....	38
2.1.4. Empowerment .....	43
2.1.4.1. <i>Personal Growth Approach</i> .....	44
2.1.4.2. <i>Relational Approach</i> .....	44
2.1.4.3. <i>Transformative Approach</i> .....	47
2.1.5. Uniting conceptualisations of refugee youth education .....	54
2.2. NGOs and their role in shaping refugee education.....	55
2.2.1. NGO Roles in Refugee Contexts .....	56
2.2.2. NGOs and the Importance of Partnerships.....	58
2.2.2.1. <i>Post-2016 refugee education and the ‘localisation’ agenda</i> .....	60
2.2.2.2. <i>Addressing the research gap</i> .....	63
<b>Chapter 3. Methodology .....</b>	<b>66</b>
3.1. Epistemology .....	66
3.2. Methods .....	67
3.2.1. Selection of Participants .....	67
3.2.2. NGOs.....	68
3.2.3. Interviews .....	70
3.2.4. Document analysis.....	72
3.3. Reflexivity .....	73
3.4. Research Ethics .....	73
3.5. Data Analysis.....	76

<b>Chapter 4. NGO staff conceptualisations of the role of Syrian refugee youth programming in Jordan .....</b>	<b>78</b>
4.1. Certified human capital .....	78
4.2. Protection and wellbeing .....	83
4.3. Citizenry .....	86
4.4. Empowerment .....	91
4.4.1. Meaningful participation and equitable power-sharing between youth and adults	91
4.4.2. Engagement in critical reflection and action on interpersonal and community socio-political processes .....	94
4.5. Dropping out of school – the unspoken alternative .....	100
4.6. Pathways as a shared narrative.....	103
4.7. Summary.....	105
<b>Chapter 5. Policy influence on NGO staff and their ability to shape Syrian refugee youth education in Jordan .....</b>	<b>107</b>
5.1. Jordan’s national policy relating to refugee programme implementation .....	108
5.2. Global and national NGO policies relating to refugee programme implementation ..	115
5.2.1. NGO mandates.....	116
5.2.2. Theories of change.....	120
5.2.3. Malleable NGO policy .....	123
5.3. Summary.....	125
<b>Chapter 6. In-country influences on NGO staff and their ability to shape Syrian refugee youth education in Jordan .....</b>	<b>126</b>
6.1. MoE and donors as key actors in shaping education Conceptualisations.....	126
6.2. Dissemination of conceptualisations within and between NGOs.....	132
6.3. Refugee youth absence from formation of programme conceptualisations .....	138
6.4. NGO staff and their ability to retain control of programming .....	141
6.4.1. NGO Staff Backgrounds.....	144
6.5. Summary.....	147
<b>Chapter 7. Discussion: NGOs and their ability to instigate change .....</b>	<b>149</b>
7.1. Global and national policy Influence on NGOs .....	149
7.2. Influence of NGO policy and in-country mechanisms.....	151
7.3. NGO staff and their roles as transformative intellectuals.....	153
7.4. Hacking for transformation.....	158
7.4.1. Critical reflection on the education system as a ‘system hack’ .....	161
<b>Chapter 8. Summary and Conclusion.....</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Ethics Consent Form .....</b>	<b>198</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Research Participant Information Sheet.....</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Semi-Structured Research Questions.....</b>	<b>204</b>



# Chapter 1. Introduction

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play a pivotal role in shaping and delivering educational programmes aimed at refugee youth in Jordan. More than 179 youth programmes were implemented by NGOs in partnership with the Ministry of Education in 2022. However, the complex socio-political and policy environment of the refugee context in Jordan including fluctuating donor priorities, calls for further integration of refugees in to host country schools, and limited resources results in competing demands for different conceptualisations of the goal of refugee youth education. NGO staff are required to balance these competing demands, leading to disparate forms of refugee youth programmes that may not align with the preferences of refugees or international and national policy. This study explores how NGOs working with Syrian refugee youth in Jordan have conceptualised the goals of refugee youth education programmes for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan and the power dynamics that drive these conceptualisations, aiming to better inform our understanding of the role of education in refugee contexts. It draws on 30 semi-structured interviews with NGO staff in Jordan conducted between 2019 and 2020.

This chapter delves into the historical and socio-political backdrop of Jordan's response to refugee education, particularly how NGOs have become pivotal in shaping educational programmes for Syrian refugee youth. It traces the evolution of NGO roles from the post-World War II era to the present, illustrating how global and national policies have influenced and sometimes constrained their operations. The chapter also defines key terms such as "refugee" and "Syrian refugee," establishing the legal and social context within which these terms are applied in Jordan. It introduces the research questions that guide the study, focusing on how NGOs conceptualise the goals of refugee education and the factors driving these conceptualisations. Finally, the chapter provides an overview of the thesis structure, setting the stage for the detailed exploration and analysis that follows.

## 1.1. Refugees and NGOs in Jordan

The challenges of forced displacement have grown in scope, scale, and complexity, with the COVID-19 pandemic, new and intractable conflicts, and the climate crisis disproportionately affecting the world's most disadvantaged. Education is crucial for providing a sense of hope and, where possible, integrating refugee populations into their host societies and preventing permanent deficits in human development. Yet the role and purpose of education for refugees is contested (Dryden-Peterson, 2017). Refugees exist in what Haddad (2008, p. 7) describes as 'the gaps between states', neither an active citizen in their home country, nor their host country. Subsequently, refugees are often unable to fully utilise their education's potential due to restrictions over citizenship rights, including the

right to work, to cross international borders – or in the context of refugee camps – the ability to travel within the host country (UNESCO, 2018).

Jordan provides an important case study of the challenges refugees face. In 2011, the Syrian crisis triggered an influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan. As of October 2023, 653,292 registered refugees from Syria reside in Jordan, 74% of whom in urban host communities and 26% in refugee camps (UNHCR, 2023a). While Jordan is not a signatory to the UN 1951 Convention on Refugees that requires granting refugees the “same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education” (UNHCR, 1951), Jordan opened the public elementary and secondary school system to Syrian refugees from the onset of the crisis in 2011 through the establishment of a second school shift to accommodate the increased demands on the school (Ahmadzadeh *et al.*, 2014). In addition to Jordan’s long-standing integration approach adopted at the onset of the crisis, in 2017 Jordan accelerated its approach through a string of new policies including the Jordan Education Sector Plan (2017), which places renewed emphasis on the duty of states, donors, and NGOs to develop policies on refugees’ integration into host country systems.

Challenges however, remain, and particularly for Syrian refugee youth. An extensive survey by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and UNICEF in 2020 found that 26,000 Syrian refugee youth were out of school in Jordan, 4% of enrolled youth were deemed at risk of dropping out, and Jordan was predicted to lose up to 9.6% of GDP (or JOD 28.5 billion) if unable to harness the gains of education and prevent school dropouts before grade 10 (UNICEF, 2020). Stakeholders, both in government entities and NGOs, estimate that the number of out-of-school youth in Jordan doubled since the MoE and UNICEF report was published due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Nasrallah, 2022). Youth are a group on the brink of transitioning out of the education system and standing face-to-face with the scarce employment opportunities available to them in an increasingly competitive and uncertain world, shaped by high unemployment rates and increasing costs of living. Subsequently, youth around the world are also increasingly politically engaged (Karsgaard and Davidson, 2021) and willing to challenge orthodox structures to carve their own space to thrive in a globalised world often in ways that do not conform to state expectations (Bellino, 2018b) presenting both opportunities, but also perceived threats to refugee host country stability (Lischer, 2000, 2005).

NGOs play an indispensable role in helping refugee youth gain returns on their education in Jordan. In the complex landscape of forced displacement, where state resources are often stretched or where political constraints limit the capacity of governments, NGOs step in to fill the gaps (Banks, Hulme and Edwards, 2015). More than 179 youth programmes were reported to have been implemented by NGOs in partnership with the Jordanian Ministry of Education in 2022 (Nasrallah, 2022). National and international partners specialise in areas where the MoE requires assistance, including

providing technical expertise and community outreach (Nasrallah, 2022). Jordan's own Human Resource Development Plan (HKJ, 2016) lists national and international NGOs as one of the "responsible partners" in a range of education related activities, including reaching out of school children and youth (HKJ, 2016, p. 115) and improving the school environments to ensure they are safe, nurturing, and healthy (HKJ, 2016, p. 116). Yet the operating environment for NGOs in refugee contexts has shifted over time, and as I argue in the next sections tracing the history of NGO operations in refugee contexts, raises questions over how NGOs conceptualise and enact refugee education enactments, and its impacts on refugee youth.

### **1.1.1. 1946-1980 – Separation of humanitarian and development aid allows NGOs to steer refugee programme objectives**

A history of humanitarian and development aid often begins with the beginning of the Cold War and US President Harry Truman's address at the UN General Assembly in 1946. With the Soviet Union expanding its sphere of influence through Eastern Europe, US President Truman and his foreign policy advisors took a hard line against the USSR. Truman won support for both the Truman Doctrine - which formalised a policy of Soviet containment (Kennan, 1947) - and the Marshall Plan that outlined a series of loans and aid packages aimed to help rebuild post-war Europe. Truman used an ideological argument, arguing that Communism flourishes in economically deprived areas, and that support to develop economies would help spread democratic ideals, and stop the spread of communism. The United States transferred over \$13 billion (equivalent of about \$115 billion in 2021) in economic recovery programmes to Western European economies to rebuild war-torn regions, reduce poverty, transform societies into democratic capitalist societies, and subsequently contest the spread of Communism. While the Marshall plan ended in 1948, both the containment policy and use of development aid to subdue communism became a centre piece of Western foreign policy for decades to come.

Refugee related policies up until the 1980s were largely treated separately from development affairs. The United Nations, established in 1945, and many of the institutions that continue to serve refugees today - including the UNHCR established in 1950 - became the primary organising body for international assistance to refugees (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). Its response architecture and policy originated as an imperative to assist the victims of World War II and had been premised on the delivery of immediate life-saving assistance without significant focus on transforming the underlying causes of crises or vulnerability (Bennett, 2015). Guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948, and the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the UNHCR committed to "accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education" and "accord to refugees treatment as favourable as possible, and,

in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, with respect to education other than elementary education” (UNHCR, 1951).

In 1967 a Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees was established, that broadened the scope of the 1951 convention to include refugees of all regions and conflicts, not only those resulting from WWII. Through the 1960s, 70s and until the mid-1980s it became a foundational policy for refugee rights, yet the role of global institutions in the provision of refugee education remained limited in scope (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). The policy left refugee education to host-countries, with the UNHCR only providing humanitarian assistance through a small number of post-primary education scholarships for an elite few. When access to host-country education systems were denied, refugee communities and NGOs organised themselves to create education opportunities (Dodds & Inquai, 1983; Sinclair, 2001, Dryden-Peterson).

### **1.1.2. 1980-2000 – Humanitarian and development responses intersect, yet NGOs still hold a significant role in shaping refugee education responses**

Over the period 1980-2000 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank established a series of loan packages for numerous countries in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa; many of which at the time were experiencing economic crises. These loans, provided through *Structural Adjustment Programmes* required recipient countries to implement certain policies in order to obtain the loans and to receive preferential interest rates on existing loans. Policies were predominantly centred around privatisation of public services, reduction of barriers to foreign capital and balancing government deficits. In theory, these reforms were intended to improve international competitiveness and create the conditions that would facilitate unfettered free-market capitalism which would in turn start developing countries on a trajectory towards thriving capitalist economies (Stiglitz, 2002).

While there had always been some recognition of synergies between humanitarian and development responses, it was during this period that the two sectors really began to intersect. The 1980s marked the beginning of a series of initiatives aimed at uniting humanitarian and development responses, including the “Linking relief, rehabilitation, and development” (LRRD) initiative spearheaded by the European Commission in the 1990s, which aimed to steer humanitarian relief efforts to “kick-start” development and protect national assets (Nicolai, Hodgkin, *et al.*, 2019). Humanitarian responses were increasingly steered towards development objectives and mass expansion of primary education codified in the Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1989 and the Education for All Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) between 1990 and 2000 shaped a

joint agenda of development and humanitarianism (Nicolai, Hodgkin, *et al.*, 2019). Subsequently, humanitarian responses post-2000s were enmeshed in the proposed logic of the Structural Adjustment Programmes - namely that creation of an educated workforce would be tantamount to 'take-off' for new economies, which drove a growing emphasis on the rates of economic return of education investments (Stiglitz, 2002).

In the 1990s, UNHCR played an increasingly significant role in articulating the purposes and mechanisms of provision of refugee education and shifted from developing an elite cadre of leaders through post-primary scholarships to providing primary education access for all. Large refugee camps provided refuge, often near border crossings and large distances from national populations (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). Waters and LeBlanc go so far as to suggest that UN agencies at this time acted as a "pseudo-state" for refugees, providing services in absence of an established state mechanism (Waters and LeBlanc, 2005).

Yet the majority of education provisions in refugee settings had been outsourced to NGOs (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). Between 1998 and 2011, UNHCR did not have a single education officer working in a refugee-hosting country. In 2004, 0.1% of UNHCR's total budget was allocated to education staff (Dryden-Peterson, 2016, p.21). Refugees, falling between the gaps in education provisions left NGOs to determine many of the methods of providing education (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). In other words, NGOs were provided a level of free rein to do the best they could with the limited resources they were provided. Consequently, refugee education provisions became extremely diverse, and often detached from a vision of economic growth due to the limited resources, lack of qualified teachers, or clear pathways for utilisation of the gained education.

### **1.1.3. 2000-2024 – International policy emphasises disbanding parallel refugee education programming and integrating refugees into host-country education systems**

In the 2000s, development theory and practice was attempting to reemerge from an impasse (Schuurman, 1993). The Cold War had ended, and capitalism had become the dominant mode of social organisation. Yet structural adjustment programmes that had become the primary mechanism of spreading Western ideals and launching countries on free-market development trajectories were increasingly met with scepticism. Structural adjustment programmes had benefited developed countries rather than developing, and had exacerbated rather than reduced local inequalities (Stiglitz, 2002). Development successes between the early 1960s and 1990s commonly referred to as 'the Four Asian Tigers' of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan had rationalised a roadmap of linear development pathways - and the importance of creating free-market preconditions for growth - were being seen as exceptions to the rule (Chang, 2009). In humanitarian

crises, linear pathways from pre- to post-crisis had also been largely rejected, with a recognition of a tendency for reoccurring and protracted crises. A post 9/11 security agenda began to dominate over the decade, placing emphasis on development and humanitarian aid as a means to more peaceful societies (Novelli, 2010).

Refugee crises received far greater attention in the early 2000s amidst the new development and security agenda rhetoric. In March 1997, the UNHCR in recognition of an increasing tendency for refugees to seek refuge in urban areas had released its first global policy relating to urban refugees (UNHCR, 2009) and by 2009, half of the world's 10.5 million refugees resided in cities and towns (UNHCR, 2015a). Many of the urban refugees registered with UNHCR were youth who possessed the capacity and determination to build futures in the major cities of host countries (UNHCR, 2009). Refugees were leaving existing camp provisions in favour of urban areas and became participants in an informal economy, and a threat to the development of the formal economy (UNHCR, 2009). Refugees had repositioned themselves from the periphery of host countries line of sight in refugee camps, directly into the streets of the capitals, and in doing so, increasingly into the centre of mainstream development and security considerations. Subsequently, NGOs relative free-rein held prior to 2000 to dictate programme content in humanitarian crises began to close, with educational aid increasingly politicised and development and peace-building appearing more frequently as an education objective (Novelli, 2010).

The Syrian refugee crisis catalysed a final converging of refugee education into the mainstream development agenda (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker and Mansour-Illie, 2018). Growing numbers of refugee youth were now more mobile than ever and increasingly avoiding camps, opting instead to live in urban areas of neighbouring countries such as Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan (Washington and Rowell, 2013). Others attempted dangerous journeys into Europe and had been seen as susceptible to recruitment by terrorist organisations inciting an increase in calls for a new policy approach that targeted refugee children and youth in countries of first asylum (UNHCR, 2018a).

In 2012, UNHCRs strategy emphasised for the first time “integration of refugee learners within national systems” (UNHCR, 2012, p. 8). While the organisation had always advocated for the rights of refugees to access national education - as outlined in the 1951 convention and 1967 protocol - it became the first time the approach had been placed at the centre of the refugee policy, replacing previous emphasis on repatriation. Integration approaches were seen as more reflective of the increasingly protracted nature of refugee crises, with the average length of displacement reaching 10 years (Devictor, 2019). Integration approaches were also deemed more cost effective than funding parallel refugee camps over extended periods, and helped Western donor countries prevent refugees from crossing borders into European Union (EU) countries, both by creating the

perception of greater opportunities, and encouraging refugees to register in their country of first asylum.

UNHCR's 2012 policy marked the beginning of a trend that dominated over the next 6 years, increasingly shifting NGOs towards facilitating integration approaches. Engagement with refugee hosting country governments increased significantly. In 2011, UNHCR had no formal relationships on education provisions with national authorities. By 2016, UNHCR had relationships established in 20 of its 25 list of priority countries and negotiated access to national schools for refugees (Dryden-Peterson, 2016).

Shifts were accelerated further by a spate of new policy, including the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016 (UN, 2016), the rollout of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in 2017 and 2018 (UNHCR, 2017), and finally culminating in the Global Compact on Refugees at the end of 2018, which placed renewed emphasis on the duty of states, donors, and NGOs to develop policies on refugees' integration into national education systems (UNHCR, 2018c). According to the Global Compact on Refugees however, refugees are not burdens to host-countries, but portrayed as enterprising subjects, whose formal integration into labour markets simultaneously can create self-sufficient actors and cure the economic woes of host countries (UNHCR, 2018b). At the heart of the approach is the belief that "when refugees gain access to education and labour markets, they can build their skills and become self-reliant, contributing to local economies and fuelling the development of the communities hosting them" (UNHCR, 2019a). The approach is outlined in, among others, seminal academic work by Betts and Collier (2017) from the Refugee Studies Centre in Oxford, who propose creating special economic zones designated with special economic regulations intended to attract foreign direct investment through tax incentives and opportunities for trade on the condition that producers employ more refugees (Refugee Studies Centre, 2016). These new approaches capture the zeitgeist of humanitarian reforms today; that is, an increasing drive towards development solutions to humanitarian crises with a strong economic orientation. Known as the 'The New Way of Working', the logic is that investing humanitarian resources in ways that contribute to development outcomes framed around thriving economies (referred to as strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus) will provide cheaper responses (OCHA, 2019). The logic is that shifting refugees and their humanitarian funding into host country schools will provide cheaper responses that benefit both refugee and host-country communities, while also contribute to the economic growth of host-country communities (Betts and Collier, 2015, 2017). It appealed to donors frustrated with prolonged funding of parallel education systems for refugees and the resentment it can create in host country communities (UHNCR, 2018c).

Central to the new approach, is the idea that the education accessed would be of value to refugees. Yet in many contexts, the access to national state schools merely opened doors

to overcrowded, and underfunded education systems (UNESCO, 2018). Moreover, despite integration into national education systems, very few altered their limits on refugee's right to work (UNESCO, 2018). A series of compacts consisting of agreements negotiated between nation-states and multilateral organisations aimed to provide frameworks for increased refugee rights, yet many questioned how suited these policies were to refugee communities (Cole, 2018; Lenner and Turner, 2018). The dynamic between refugee host-countries and donors had changed and had not always been favourable to the preference or realities of refugee lives. Refugees were no longer in 'the gaps between states' as has long been conceptualised in the refugee discourse (Haddad, 2008), instead refugees were now considered as within states, but as an asset which can be quantified, valued and traded for increased donor support (Cole, 2018). As has often been observed, 'solutions' proposed for displaced populations tend to evolve to suit state interests over refugee interests (Jacobsen, 2002; Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker and Mansour-Ille, 2018; Lenner and Turner, 2018) and the commodification of refugees to be traded raised doubts over the likelihood of the new policies benefiting refugees (Cole, 2018). Refugees were left with a human-capital focused education but no improved prospects for its use.

International policy shifts towards integrating refugees into host country schools led NGOs to become further enmeshed in the host-country schooling policy and its conceptualisations of education goals (Mendenhall, Russell and Buckner, 2017). Funding became increasingly earmarked for NGO services aimed at bridging refugees into host-country education systems (UNHCR, 2018d, p. 23). Refugee youth proved challenging to reach with integration approaches, as they were prone to seek employment in informal sectors to support their families (Mosselson, Morshed and Changamire, 2017). The opportunity cost of a national education system education had no clear correlation to refugee futures and threatened NGOs ability to reach out of school children. Levels of discrimination in host-country schools were also high, and convincing parents and youth to integrate in to host country schools that were often deemed to be of worse quality and more likely to subject learners to incidents of violence and discrimination became a tough sell (UNICEF, 2021). All the while, support to navigate these increased demands on NGOs and challenging operating environments remained lacking. A global US\$2.4 billion funding gap for refugee education remains (UNESCO, 2018), despite the increased pressures for NGOs to reach new echelons of learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2018). A new era of refugee education responses had begun, marked by a level of policy and political influence over NGOs that had not previously been seen in refugee contexts.



#### **1.1.4. Jordan's education policy trajectory 2011-2024 and its impact on NGOs**

Jordan's response to the Syrian crisis has largely traced the same policy trajectory as the global architecture outlined in the last section, and subsequently at the forefront of some of the questions the new policy environment poses. In 2011, at the beginning of the Syrian crisis Jordan provided camp-based provisions near the Syrian border. Jordan provided refugees with access to state schools and the Jordanian curriculum, although the education delivery took place in schools established in camps and not alongside Jordanian peers. In 2012 and in line with UNHCR's 2012 policy (UNHCR, 2012), host-country schooling became available to urban Syrian refugees outside of camps. Jordan also launched the 2018-2022 Education Strategic Plan, which marked a shift from previous approaches that had separated refugee and host country community response plans from national education strategic plans (HKJ, 2016; MoPIC, 2020). Jordan embraced a 'vulnerability approach' which emphasised vulnerability as the basis for receiving aid, rather than legal recognition as a refugee (UNHCR, 2015b). For Jordanians the shift to a vulnerability approach allowed greater access to NGO services. Jordan has a young population with around 63 per cent under the age of 30, and long-term social and economic advances hinge on the opportunities provided to this generation (UNICEF, 2019a). Jordan has placed emphasis on human-capital accumulation in the hope of creating thriving economies and subsequently job opportunities for its population (HKJ, 2016, p. 16).

The vulnerability approach however, brought refugees under the umbrella of Jordan's education strategy and its emphasis on economic returns of education, rather than bringing vulnerable Jordanians under the umbrella of NGO strategy. A string of initiatives ensued aimed at Jordanian's and Syrian refugees alike, including the National Framework for Employment and Empowerment aimed at creating 30,000 employment opportunities for youth in Jordan by 2020 (UNICEF, 2019a). UNICEF, as part of their education response to the refugee crisis in Jordan, and to vulnerable Jordanians, has focused "on supporting the employability and economic engagement of youth in Jordan by implementing the national Pathways to Youth Engagement 2018-2022 strategy", which is framed around achieving three core objectives, "transferable skills building, engagement and employment" (UNICEF, 2019b, p2). Jordan's National Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy (2016-2025) best captures the education sentiment in Jordan:

For a nation like Jordan, lacking mineral resources or other natural advantages, prosperity, stability, and wellbeing depend almost entirely on the talents and enterprise of its people. The competitiveness and productivity of our industries, the quality and effectiveness of our public services, and the welfare of our families and communities all depend on the availability of a well-educated and highly skilled

populace. For these reasons, investment in education and skills has been a national priority since the establishment of the Kingdom (HKJ, 2016, p. 16).

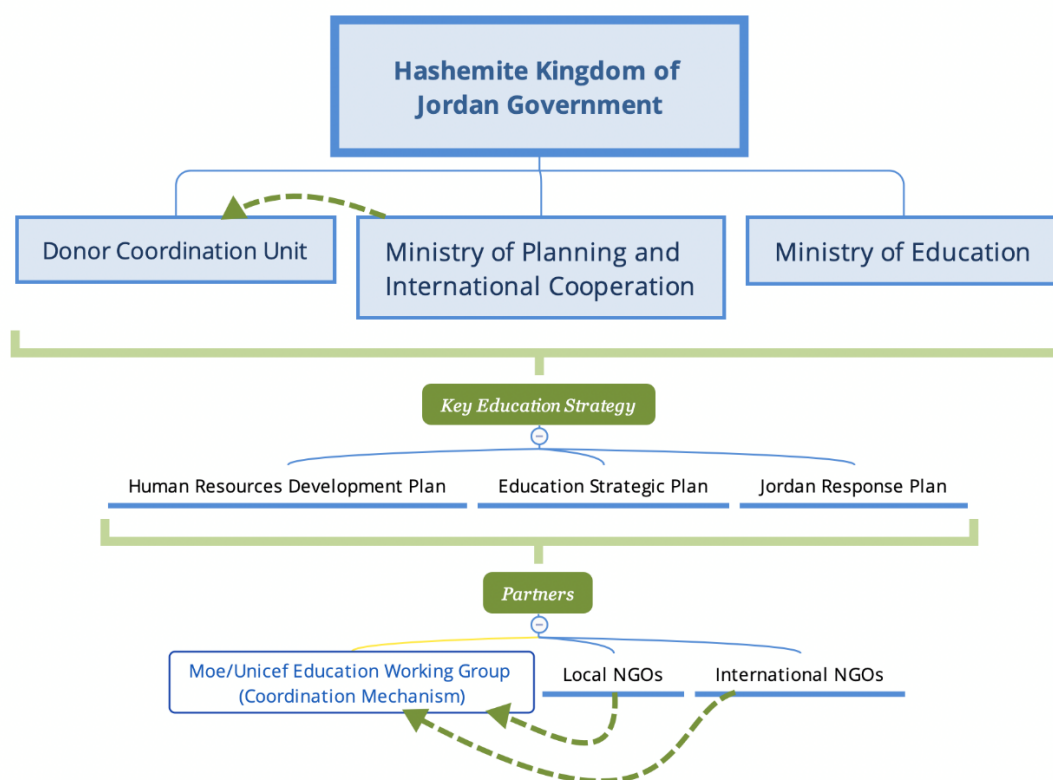
While refugees in Jordan have long been denied the right to work preventing them from immediate economic benefits through education, there were reforms to work restrictions under the Jordan Compact established in 2016 (Lenner and Turner, 2018). The Jordan Compact aimed at turning the Syrian refugee crisis into a development opportunity for Jordan by shifting the focus from short-term humanitarian aid to education, growth, investment and job creation, both for Jordanians and for Syrian refugees (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker and Mansour-Ille, 2018). Under the compact, a limited number of Syrians were allowed to obtain work permits and establish their own businesses (Leghtas, 2018), however, other obstacles persisted in obtaining employment through the compact, including the need to prove legal residency, exploitation in the workplace, distances to employment areas, and a mismatch between the types of work allowed and the work Syrians are likely to engage in (CARE, 2017; Lenner and Turner, 2018; MMC, 2018). Recent research affirms that the rate of economic return on education investment in Jordan is extremely low, with a UNICEF (2020) study finding that every additional year of schooling in Jordan increases the hourly wage for refugees by less than 1%. In the words of the study, the return “is not significant statistically ... which means that for the Syrian [refugee] population, there is no association between earnings and education” (UNICEF, 2020, p. 74). It is perhaps little surprise therefore, that one of the most cited reasons for Syrian refugee youth not attending schools in Jordan is it not being considered valuable (Brown *et al.*, 2019).

Subsequently, the many other returns to education have been emphasised by NGOs (Yeo and Yoo, 2022). For refugees and displaced populations, education can play a transformative role in numerous other aspects of life, providing not just skills for employment, but also fostering resilience, social cohesion, health outcomes, and personal development (INEE, 2016). Education provides a sense of normalcy and routine, which is particularly crucial for refugees who have experienced the trauma of displacement (Nicolai, 2009). Education’s role in fostering social cohesion by bringing together students from diverse backgrounds has also been emphasised. In host countries, educational institutions serve as a platform for refugees and local populations to interact, build relationships, and foster mutual understanding (Seeley, 2015). This interaction can reduce social tensions and facilitate the integration of refugees into their new communities, promoting a sense of belonging and solidarity (Seeley, 2015). Finally, education can empower individuals by providing them with knowledge and skills that enhance their agency and decision-making capabilities (Singh, 2018). It can equip refugees with the tools to advocate for their rights,

navigate complex legal and social systems, and participate more actively in community and civic life (Yeo and Yoo, 2022).

Yet the international policy shifts towards integrating refugees into host country schools can limit NGOs ability to enact alternative conceptualisations of education goals (Mendenhall, Russell and Buckner, 2017). Regulatory bodies facilitated NGOs absorption into the new ways of working shown below. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the Donor Coordination Unit (DCU) reviewed all NGO initiatives to ensure alignment with Government objectives and the various education strategies. An Education Working Group co-led by the Ministry of Education, UNICEF and a rotating NGO partner provided a platform for coordinating activities around these objectives after approval from Jordan’s regulatory bodies. Donor funding increasingly aligned with the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees by earmarking existing funds for investment in initiatives that align with Jordan’s new approach, further steering responses to the knowledge economy visions of Jordan (DSP, 2022, pp. 16–19).

*Jordan NGO Coordination Structure 2019*



(As described by in country staff, 2019 )

NGOs already under pressure to comply with human-capital centric visions of education were now under even greater pressure to enrol refugees into an education system designed for host country nationals with distinctly different rights and possible futures. Any space that may have existed for NGOs to enact alternative conceptualisations of education

beyond their primary drive towards human-capital began to close, which raises concerns over whether immersion of refugees into a human-capital centric education will perpetuate a narrow view of education as having a primary purpose of economic return, overlooking the many other benefits of education for refugees. Protection for example, has long been the bedrock of refugee responses in recognition of the trauma's refugees are often exposed to, yet refugees were integrated into schools known to be prone to violence (UNHCR, 2015b). In the face of a human-capital centric approach to education, these invaluable returns risked becoming side-lined and the remaining value of education for refugees became unclear. NGOs once given some element of free rein to adapt refugee education programming to the unique needs of refugees, were now attempting to re-conceptualise what education could be enacted for refugees in Jordan and what education's role could be under a controversial policy climate.

As Ball (2008, p. 7) argues, however, "policy makers do not always translate directly and obviously into institutional practices" instead "policies are contested, interpreted and enacted in a variety of arenas of practice and the rhetoric, texts and meanings". In education a policy-practice gap is common as policy passes through numerous systems on its way from global policy makers to the classroom, and even more so if those policies are deemed to be disconnected from the demands of the refugee population (Mendenhall, Russell and Buckner, 2017). NGOs, therefore, can engage in a dialectical relationship with policy and other competing sources of authority – including refugees themselves - creating influential connections that shape programming for refugees. Moreover, they hold the opportunity to circumvent policy altogether, suggesting that refugee education amidst the new policy space, can manifest in unexpected ways yet unexplored in the literature.

Subsequently, as I argue in this thesis, the policy shifts in 2016 have birthed a renewed emphasis in the literature on NGOs and the power they hold in shaping the conceptualisations of the goals of enacted refugee education programmes, with the 'local' as a contested space between refugee communities, NGOs, the state donors and increasingly international actors and policy (Roepstorff, 2020). These contests, however, are not only perceived as a threat, but as an opportunity, where actors - in particular NGOs who have long been identified as implementing partners - could contest policy and practice, both overtly and covertly in the interest of different agendas (Brumat, Geddes and Pettrachin, 2022). These shifts pose questions over the role of education for refugees in Jordan, and its consequences on refugee education and policy in the future, which I argue remains unexplored in Jordan.

## 1.2. Defining ‘refugees’ and Syrian refugee legal status

### 1.2.1. Refugee

In international law, the term ‘refugee’ and more specifically, ‘refugee status’ is reserved for a very specific set of conditions. These conditions can have significant implications on one’s flight, and also the types of services they can expect to receive in host-countries as many services are reserved for refugees rather than vulnerable populations. Yet, there is a common misconception that refugee status is a natural right granted to all those fleeing persecution and subsequently skips an important distinction. I choose to take this opportunity to highlight the legal status of Syrians in Jordan, and in doing so remind the reader of the precarious legal situation of many other refugees in Jordan and elsewhere.

Refugee status is defined under the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol (UNHCR, 1951, 1967). The convention is often referenced in relation to a number of rights to be provided to refugees, but is also a basis for providing a legal definition used internationally to define who qualifies as a refugee and subsequently who is entitled to the rights of the convention. According to the convention, to be considered a refugee one must have:

1. Crossed a recognised international border from their country of nationality
2. Demonstrated “well-founded fear” in relation to the purpose of their flight, described in the convention as:

“Owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it”

(UNHCR, 1951)

The criteria spark a series of controversial debates in relation to refugee status and services (Harrell-Bond, 2021). First, the criteria distinguishes internally displaced populations from those who have crossed international borders, establishing boundaries to areas of operation between NGOs that work exclusively with ‘refugees’. Second, and of particular significance, the criteria creates a need to identify who has experienced ‘well-founded fear’ through a ‘refugee status determination’ process by which governments or

UNHCR determine whether a person seeking international protection can demonstrate a well-founded fear:

To the element of fear – a state of mind and a subjective condition – is added the qualification “well-founded.” This implies that it is not only the frame of mind of the person concerned that determines his refugee status, but that this frame of mind must be supported by an objective situation. The term “well-founded fear” therefore contains a subjective and an objective element. (UNHCR, 2019b, p.39)

Supporting the “objective situation” and subsequent “frame of mind” often requires a Status Determination interview, where a UNHCR or government official interviews the participant and makes a judgment call on their viability (UNHCR, 2019b). These processes can take place over extended periods, leaving forced migrants in states of limbo pending status determination interviews (Harrell-Bond, 2021). Inevitably some refugees, unable to demonstrate well-founded fear on the day of their status determination interview, are left in extremely precarious situations, at best treated as migrants and denied the rights of the 1951 Convention and support of organisations exclusively catering to refugees (Marfleet, 2006).

### **1.2.2. Syrian refugees in Jordan**

In the instance of Syrian refugees — the focus of this research — UNHCR has provided a blanket policy that all Syrians fleeing the 2011 war in Syria are to be granted refugee status, due to the nature and scale of the crisis (UNICEF, 2015a). This is not to say that host-countries will always abide by UNHCR policies – as seen in Bangladesh where refugees meet the UNHCR criteria but are denied the refugee status by the Bangladeshi government (Magee and Diwakar, 2020). In the case of Jordan however, UNHCRs blanket refugee status has been recognised by Jordan throughout the crisis.

A barrier still however exists, in that many Syrian refugees arrived in Jordan without sufficient documentation to prove their nationality and/or their presence in Syria during the crisis (JENA, 2015). Delays to granting refugee status have also been experienced in Jordan at various points of elevated arrivals due to processing times required (JENA, 2015). Moreover, some refuse to register because gaining refugee status in a host country would mean that, if they were to travel to another country, that country would have the right to return them to the country they registered in (JENA, 2015). At the time of writing however, the levels of movement into Jordan have stabilised and the majority of Syrians arriving after the onset of the crisis in 2011 are registered as refugees (UNHCR, 2023a).

### **1.2.3. Why Syrian refugees?**

Having highlighted the distinctions between refugee status among different nationalities of refugees in Jordan in the last section, it is important to address a common question of why I chose to focus on Syrian refugees and only Syrian refugees for this research. This question is often posed to me in the form of a critique, highlighting the relative emphasis Syrian refugees receive in research over other nationalities.

For the purposes of this research, I distinguish between Syrian refugees and other nationalities due to the distinctions between the Syrian refugee response architecture and the response architecture of other nationalities. Shortly after the onset of the Syrian crisis, a ‘Whole of Syria’ approach was established to coordinate international interventions led by the UN and major NGOs, which united coordination and funding mechanisms for Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Turkey and Lebanon for Syrian refugees (Anderson, Magee and Nicolai, 2020). These mechanisms, while consisting of many of the same international and national partners as other emergency responses, garnered significantly more funding and attention than other crises, utilised different funding modalities and coordination mechanisms, brought greater political attention and subsequently benefited from significantly more NGO interventions (No Lost Generation, 2016). I chose to focus on Syrian refugees rather than another nationality as the Syrian crisis and these various mechanisms have been central to many of the recent policy evolutions in refugee contexts. Initiatives such as the ‘No Lost Generation’ launched in 2013 by UNICEF in collaboration with other international organisations and a series of conferences on the Syrian refugee crisis including the “Supporting Syria and the Region Conference,” in February 2016 and the Brussels Conferences on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region played a significant role in shaping the Global Compact on Refugees (2018) that steers refugee responses and NGO operations today.

Jordan, in particular, has not only adhered to all the recent policy shifts that concern this research but has implemented variations of the premise of these policies for far longer than the policies have existed (MoPIC, 2015). Jordan can be seen as the golden child of UNHCR policy and presents a relatively stable and mature education system, having benefited from significant external funding for refugees (No Lost Generation, 2016). Subsequently, Syrian refugees in Jordan provide a useful case-study to provide insights into global refugee education policies.

### **1.2.4. Summary**

Through this short outline of refugee status, I have hoped to dispel the illusion that the term ‘refugee’ is an easily defined concept and aimed to recognise the many refugees who do not fit cleanly in our arbitrary international definitions. Jordan is host to refugees from as many as 57 different countries, including Palestine, Iraq, Sudan and Yemen (Johnston,

Baslan and Kvittingen, 2019), not all of whom benefit from the same blanket policy of refugee status as Syrian's and subsequently are at risk of being excluded from services earmarked for refugee populations. This research, however, has chosen to focus on Syrian refugees specifically, and outlines the rationale in the next section.

### **1.3. Youth, youth programming and youth education**

This thesis focuses specifically on refugee youth, yet the findings of the study provide useful insights to education in challenging contexts more broadly. For example, conceptualisations of the goals of education are as important at primary school age as they are for secondary school age, because both provide potential pathways (or lack of pathways) to future employment opportunities, integration into host county communities, and have significant social, cultural and political implications (Bajaj, Argenal and Canlas, 2017). This thesis, however, chooses to focus specifically on youth due to the nuances of refugee youth policy, and NGO youth programme operations that are distinct from primary education and provide important contextual distinctions. For example, a Jordanian policy – such as the National Framework for Employment and Empowerment and the Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy Project (World Bank, 2017) - aims specifically at creating employment opportunities for youth (UNICEF, 2019b). Jordan has a specific Ministry of Youth, and within NGOs, this research discovered a pattern of specialised youth focused departments and staff assigned specifically to education for youth (UNICEF, 2019b). Subsequently, the operating environment for NGOs working with youth is distinct from programmes for other age groups in Jordan and therefore, requires exploration independently.

Despite these distinctions of youth, the definition of youth among NGOs and government remains vague. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) defines an adolescent as a person between 10 and 19 years of age, while the United Nations defines youth as individuals ages 15 to 24, and young persons, ages 10 to 24 (UNDESA, 2013). NGOs participating in this research also had varying definitions of youth, with some including learners as old as 21, others limiting their programming to a maximum of 19. What unites the definitions, is a recognition of the period in an individual's life in which they have specific needs related to their stage of development (WHO, 2014). It is an important time for developing new knowledge and skills, learning to manage emotions and social relationships, and building attitudes and aptitudes that will enable a person to assume adult roles successfully (WHO, 2014). Moreover, it marks a period where schooling places further emphasis on pathways towards employment or further education beyond Jordan's compulsory 10-years of schooling ending at age 16 (UNESCO, 2024).

In this thesis, youth is understood as adolescents and youth ages 10 to 19 and 15 to 24 respectively, however, allows each NGO, government or policy to define their own criteria



of youth, exploring instead youth as a category marked by its own distinct policy and operating environment rather than merely an age group.

In this study, youth programming and youth education in Jordan include any initiatives that target youth with structured programmes that the implementing organisation defines as education-focused. This includes programming that follows a structured curriculum - aligned with the Jordanian curriculum or not - and any programme that is identified as providing learning, such as social-emotional learning. All these types of initiatives are included as deemed relevant to holistic education for refugee youth, and the questions posed by this study over the role of NGOs in their implementation are relevant to the wide array of educational opportunities available to refugees in Jordan.

## **1.4. Reflections on the process and a warning to the reader**

Producing a PhD thesis is a long and arduous journey. In this section, I aim to briefly highlight a few reflections on the process that may provide some useful context for reading this thesis and may also prove useful for those looking to embark on a similar journey.

### **1.4.1. Articulating the field of education research**

I have been fortunate enough to be able to engage in conversation around my research work over the course of my PhD with individuals and groups from a wide range of fields and contexts. NGOs in Jordan are the most obvious example, but also those I have presented to at conferences, in research institutions and increasingly those in the private sector. Surprisingly, I have discovered that in all of these contexts, there has often been occasions where the nature of my research work has been hard to articulate. This was best highlighted for me through a conversation with a microbiologist undertaking a post-doc in Oxford. When I met the individual, I asked about the focus of his post-doc. He began his explanation by suggesting he was studying the role of bacteria in plant life and asked, “do you know anything about bacteria?”. I hesitated briefly before I replied “I know that according to the adverts on TV there is such a thing as healthily bacteria in some yogurts. And that’s about it”. The individual, unsurprised at my answer, began to explain the well-rehearsed elevator pitch of his post-doc from the basis of what bacteria was and how it operated, followed by its implications on plant life. It was then of course my turn, as the individual asked, “what is your PhD on?”. I sighed, confident in the fact that the individual was not going to grasp the nature of my work. I asked myself for some time afterwards why I felt this way. I was confident in my ability to articulate my ideas, and there was no question over the ability of the individual to understand complex themes. It then became clear to me that it was a characteristic of education research. When asked what I knew about bacteria, the simple and expected answer, “nothing”, stood in stark contrast to if I

had asked the same question of him, “what do you know about education?”. The idea of even posing the question, “what do you know about education?” seems absurd to someone who has been so thoroughly and meticulously exposed to education. He is aware of what education is, his children may be going through the education system, he may hold a role on the school board, he may have taught overseas on gap years or as part of voluntary work, he is likely aware of the ongoing refugee crisis, particularly around Syrian refugees and the importance of education that is cited in the media and of course – and of most significance – he has been educated. I discovered that education researchers are not only challenged with explaining their research, but first the challenge of ‘un-explaining’ education. We as education researchers often have to embark on a process of undoing what is thought to be known about education through learnt through exposure to a particular form of education in our state systems, before we can begin to build a new vision of education. It took considerable time to first articulate that I am not a teacher, and then to indicate that learning and education systems are politicised operations enmeshed in the geopolitics of refugee crises. I felt that only through this long process of ‘un-explaining’ could I ever begin to lay the foundation to build on top an explanation of my work on advancing my field of education research.

Surprisingly, these challenges were experienced in far wider settings than I had initially anticipated. Space for discussion around alternative conceptualisations and analysis of the political nature of education, or research into the field of critical pedagogies, from which much of my personal approach to education stems, appeared in my experience to be shrinking, and few NGOs or academic events presented opportunities to engage in debate or advance my chosen field.

Implications, however, were greater than the more obvious practical implications of having to engage in a process of undoing our predispositions. It also resulted in a feeling of isolation and exhaustion when undertaking this research, not through the fault of any individual or group, but merely the nature of adopting minority approaches, holding minority opinions, or siding with minority groups. A seemingly obvious consequence of being part of the minority is your community will be smaller, and you may well clash – sometimes necessarily – with the majority. Reflecting on the process of the PhD, these are elements I would in hindsight give far more emphasis when choosing a PhD pathway.

#### **1.4.2. Research with, within, and against education**

Paulo Freire (2000) — a salient scholar in critical pedagogies and of great influence on my work — suggested that it is illogical to integrate education methods designed to challenge the status quo into broader educational structures as control of the programme is removed from the participants and placed in the hands of those that benefit from the status quo. I cannot help but see parallels and raise questions over the sites from which I

have performed my PhD research. Can a PhD as part of a formal education system where I benefit from the status quo undertake research that places the oppressed at its centre and challenges orthodox education approaches?

My answer is potentially. My reading of Freire suggests a need to develop education projects within the formal education system. This has ultimately been the path I have tried to take, but unfortunately feel, have not fully accomplished. The unspoken reality of the often glamourised 'resistance' to the status quo of education, is that resistance inevitably creates personal and professional friction between the resister and the resisted. The stress of friction accumulates and impacts personal and professional life. Its accumulation can eventually result in compromises to ease the levels of friction, and those compromises can accumulate in a steer back towards a path from which you initially aimed to avoid. This thesis, like any, has inevitably had to make those compromises. That is not to undermine or devalue its content, which I stand by, but merely to recognise the challenges faced and to highlight that what follows is an embodiment of my pathway of resistance and of compromise as I have seen and experienced in this time and place.

## **1.5. Research Questions**

**How do NGO staff conceptualise the goals of their education initiatives for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan and what influences their enactments?**

1. What are the different conceptualisations of the goals of refugee youth education, and how are they reflected in the Jordanian refugee context?
2. How do NGO staff conceptualise the goals of their education programmes for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan?
3. What are the different factors influencing Syrian refugee youth education from the perspective of NGOs in Jordan?
4. How do NGO staff navigate the power dynamics arising from the differing demands and expectations on Syrian refugee youth education programming?

## **1.6. Organisation of the thesis**

Chapter 2 reviews literature on the role of NGOs in shaping education enactments both globally and in Jordan, highlighting their potential role in shaping and reshaping education enactments for refugees. Chapter 2 also focuses on identifying themes across the conceptualisations of refugee youth education. I identify four bodies of literature:

1. Human capital and economic growth
2. Protection and wellbeing
3. Citizenry

#### 4. Empowerment

I explore the relevance of each conceptualisation to refugee contexts and highlight some of the contentions that exist in their application to highlight the controversies that exist and why NGOs are required to engage in a dialectic with the conceptualisations of education and with other stakeholders.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology. I explore the epistemological assumptions related to this research, particularly in relation to positionality having long been exposed to Jordan and the NGOs operating within Jordan and to the education system at large. I then outline the data collection, analysis methods used for this research and ethical considerations, particularly in light of the interruptions to field research stemming from COVID-19.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the findings of my interview data. Chapter 4 explores how NGO staff conceptualise and enact youth education programmes and the drivers of those conceptualisations.

Chapter 5 explores global policy and Jordanian government policy and its perceptions and influence on NGO staff.

Chapter 6 explores key actors in Jordan that influence the conceptualisations of refugee youth education, with particular focus on the Ministry of Education and donors.

Chapter 7 discusses the emerging findings in relation to the implications on refugee youth education and the nature of refugee youth conceptualisations, concluding by outlining the significance of the findings and areas for further research.

## **Chapter 2. Refugee Education and NGOs**

### **2.1. Refugee Education as a Contested Concept**

For those unfamiliar with refugee education, it may not be immediately obvious how 'refugee education' differs from 'education' for someone who has not been forced to flee their home country. The differences are numerous, multifaceted, and specific to various refugee crises, communities, or even individuals. What unites all these experiences and forms the field of refugee education is its intersection with forced displacement and the impact this has on education. The right to education is not guaranteed for refugees, who are often denied citizenship and the associated rights that host-country nationals enjoy. This situation raises fundamental questions about the purpose of education. When access to education is provided, refugees face numerous challenges, including socio-cultural and language barriers, lack of recognition for their previous education, and trauma related to fleeing their country. Additionally, the increasingly protracted nature of conflict and displacement eliminates the possibility of repatriation for many refugees, necessitating a re-evaluation of education in the context of ongoing uncertainty about their futures.

In this section, I review literature on the different conceptualisations of education that exist for NGOs and outline the controversies that can arise when these are applied to refugee contexts. Literature has been identified using google scholar, ERIC and UCL discovery databases, as well as through recommendations from peers within the field, drawing on English publications. I use this chapter to formulate a theoretical understanding on the role of education for refugees and to formulate a theoretical framework for presenting the findings in the final chapters. I aim to demonstrate that refugee education is a contested concept that does not fit neatly into any fixed understandings of education. Instead, it requires ongoing deliberation and debate to construct appropriately for refugees, in line with refugees' unique needs across contexts and time. Consequently, I suggest that the formation of refugee education must be – at least in part – developed at the point of delivery, making refugee education a fluid concept that will manifest differently in different contexts. This, in turn, demonstrates refugee education's susceptibility to alteration by stakeholders operating in Jordan and highlights the importance of understanding the role of in-country actors in these alterations, which I then explore in the next chapter.

Through the review and experience over the research, I have identified and explore four non-exclusive categories of education conceptualisation to group the relevant literature:

- Human capital and economic growth
- Protection and wellbeing
- Citizenry

- Empowerment

### **2.1.1. Human Capital**

Human capital conceptualisations of education are widely accepted as an important mechanism for educational planning, evaluation, and policy making (UNICEF, 2015b). Human capital theory suggests a relation between education, knowledge and skills and the return these attributes bring, often in relation to wage earning potential (Colclough, Kingdon and Patrinos, 2010; Souto-Otero, 2016). In international humanitarian and development education, human capital approaches are often incorporated, providing skills like literacy, numeracy, teamwork, problem solving and critical thinking are as they are deemed valued by the job market and integral to economic growth (World Bank, 2007; Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2018). In refugee contexts, the approaches are justified by seeing refugees as holding the potential to become active citizens contributing to host-country economies alongside their host-country peers (Crisp and Talbot 2001; Betts and Collier, 2017).

The same theory of a correlation between knowledge, growth and returns for learners is increasingly applied to refugee contexts. Betts and Collier (2017) have argued that integrating refugees into host-country education systems and labour markets is essential for enabling refugees to build their skills and contribute to local economies, thereby fostering self-reliance. They emphasise that a human capital approach, where education is closely linked to economic development, can transform refugees into economically productive members of society, which not only benefits the refugees themselves but also aids the economic growth of host communities. Davies and Talbot (2008, p. 513) echo the perspective:

Schooling for these [refugee] learners provides hope for the future. This means that acquisition of skills is vital—not necessarily vocational skills directly but definitely those that provide both an entry into jobs and entry into the world of those who are making decisions about people’s lives.

Specifically, Cochran (2020, p. 169) argues that “refugees in Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon threaten the economic and social stability of the region” unless there is a shift to prepare refugee students to seek employment opportunities.

Fundamentally however, the logic of human capital relies on a demand-side context where such skills are valued. Historically, refugees have been excluded from accessing host country employment sectors to protect employment opportunities for host-country nationals pending either repatriation or resettlement where they hope to regain basic employment rights (UNHCR, 2014b). Yet in the case of Jordan, repatriation has provided

little relief, with the Syrian crisis now in its thirteenth year and having led to destruction of infrastructure and the Syrian economy eroding potential employment opportunities on repatriation. Resettlement only provided opportunities to 5000 of the 670,000 refugees in Jordan in 2017 (CARE, 2018). Repatriation and resettlement, therefore, has not benefited the vast majority of Syrian refugees and employment opportunities are restricted. Additionally, there is a mismatch between the types of work permitted and the jobs Syrians are likely to take. As a result, 99% of Syrians, who typically work in informal sectors or hold multiple jobs to make a living, are excluded from these opportunities (CARE, 2017; Lenner and Turner, 2018; MMC, 2018). When states impose these unilateral policies, international law or action seldom enforce sanctions on host countries, casting doubt on whether the proposed employment sector reforms will truly enhance the value of a human-capital education for refugees (Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2019). Under these conditions questions have been raised over the suitability of human capital conceptualisations of education for refugees (Klees, 2016; Dryden-Peterson *et al.*, 2019). While refugee communities in Jordan often associate education with hope for the future (JENA, 2015) there is little evidence indicating whether refugee education based on human-capital conceptualisations actually contributes to healthy and productive economic futures (EIRCC, 2023). Piper (2020) for example, explores the literacy outcomes of refugee children in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. The authors employed the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) tool to assess literacy skills in English and Kiswahili among children in grades 1-3 across 23 primary schools in Kakuma and the adjacent Kalobeyei settlement. Their methodology included a quasi-random sampling strategy to ensure a representative sample of 732 students, with data weighted to reflect the entire camp population. The findings reveal that literacy outcomes for refugee children were significantly lower than those of disadvantaged children in the host community, with substantial variations based on country of origin, language of instruction, and students' expectations for their future. Jordan's performance for refugees and non-refugees in the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) highlighted significant challenges in learning outcomes. The assessment revealed that Jordanian students scored below the OECD average in mathematics, reading, and science. Specifically, only 17% of students achieved at least Level 2 proficiency in mathematics, significantly lower than the 69% average across OECD countries. In reading and science, the percentages were 20% and 31% respectively, compared to the OECD averages of 74% and 76% (OECD, 2022). The results showed a widening gap between high and low performers, with a notable decline in the performance of high-achieving students (OECD, 2022). For Syrian refugees, the picture worsens. Researchers used quantitative data from the Education Management Information System (EMIS) for 2016/2017 and Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) results from 2017/2018 to evaluate the academic performance of Syrian refugee students

(EIRCC, 2023). The findings revealed that Syrian refugee students' average scores in both reading, and math were 20-22 percent lower compared to Jordanian's. It is perhaps unsurprising then, that recent research in Jordan found the most cited reason for Syrian refugee youth not attending schools in Jordan is it not being considered valuable (Brown *et al.*, 2019). A UNICEF (2020, p. 74) study drawing on population data from Jordan's Department of Statistics and Education Information Management system found that every additional year of schooling in Jordan increases the hourly wage for refugees by less than 1%, which in the words of the study "is not significant statistically ... which means that for the Syrian [refugee] population, there is no association between earnings and education". Without the returns to education brought by opportunities to seek employment, the value of a human-capital based education is called in to question.

It would however, be problematic to dismiss the value human capital focused education for refugees entirely as education is after all, something that can be used throughout one's life, and for NGOs to decide someone does not need access to a form of capital widely understood to be a means of stratifying society between the haves and the have nots could be to further disadvantage a vulnerable population (Dryden-Peterson, 2006). As Singh (2018) notes, based on an analysis of published research and literature reviews in reference to refugee youth in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, when programmes are without accreditation and qualifications relevant to available employment opportunities, prospects for youth mobility, progression into further education or the ability to secure basic livelihoods are further diminished. Additionally, a sample of 4,742 household interviews and 9,085 school-aged children surveyed in 2014 found education access for future employment prospects to be a top priority among Syrian refugees, highlighting the importance refugees themselves place on including human capital based education in their school (JENA, 2015).

For as long as education is a requisite for meeting some of our most basic needs and opportunities, human capital approaches will still have a role in refugee contexts. However, its inability to serve the diverse needs of refugee children and youth and its inability to reconcile human-capital based education with refugee's unknowable futures, has demanded NGOs extend conventional human-capital based conceptualisations of education to incorporate additional dimensions (Klees, 2016; Bajaj, 2018), which I explore in the proceeding sections.

### **2.1.2. Protection and Wellbeing**

Protection has long been at the forefront of refugee education responses. As the UNHCR Global Education Strategy 2012 notes, a "fundamental objective of refugee education is to meet the protection needs of refugee children and young people" (UNHCR,



2012, p. 14). Education has been widely held as a means to offer physical protection to refugees (Davies and Talbot, 2008; Burde *et al.*, 2017) and subsequently been a common conceptualisation of refugee youth education responses (Morand, 2012).

Conceptualisations of protection have also gone beyond the physical and encompasses psychological and emotional wellbeing. Children and youth in refugee contexts bring with them their past and everyday experiences of their wider worlds to the classroom, which subsequently informs their learning experience and ability (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). Formal and informal schooling and activities are believed to be important mechanisms for children to return a sense of normality, re-establish support networks and provide coping mechanisms during crises (Nicolai, 2009; Burde *et al.*, 2017). Psychosocial support and wellbeing interventions are also shown to provide enhanced academic achievement and attainment; improved school attendance, engagement and motivation by lowering stress, anxiety, and depression (INEE, 2016).

In Jordan, protection and wellbeing dimensions of education have been emphasised for Syrian refugees. It is estimated that 79 percent of Syrian families are deemed poor (income below the national poverty line of 68 JOD (\$96.05) per person per month), and 81 percent of Syrian children aged 0-5 years and 50 percent of children aged 6-17 years are both monetary and multi-dimensionally poor (UNICEF, 2022) that has been shown to significantly affect the children, youth and parents willingness to engage in education (JENA, 2015). Those over 12 years old are historically most likely to have their education affected by poverty as there is pressure to generate income or help with home chores (particularly for girls), preventing them from pursuing their education goals (Mercy Corps, 2014).

In Jordanian schools, violence is also widely reported. During the year 2015-2016, almost one-third of children in Jordan self-reported experiencing either physical punishment or verbal violence in schools by their teachers, and bullying and physical attacks in schools in Jordan have been historically high (UNICEF, 2021). Syrians are disproportionately affected with more than 70% of 4955 Syrian students reporting in a nationwide quantitative survey as experiencing bullying or ridicule in schools in Jordan (UNICEF, 2021) that has long placed protection needs high on the agenda of NGOs serving refugee children and youth (Christophersen, 2015; UNICEF, 2021).

Psycho-social needs of Syrian refugees in Jordan are also widely reported. In 2014, an assessment of the mental health and psychosocial needs of displaced Syrians in Jordan based on data collected from 1811 families, providing information on 7964 individuals revealed persistent fear, anger, lack of interest in activities, hopelessness, and problems with basic functioning (UNHCR, 2014a). Of the almost 8,000 individuals who participated in the assessment, 15.1% reported feeling so afraid and 28.4% feeling so angry that nothing could calm them down; 26.3% felt "so hopeless they did not want to carry on living"; and 18.8%

felt “unable to carry out essential activities for daily living because of feelings of fear, anger, fatigue, disinterest, hopelessness or upset” (UNHCR, 2014a). Betawi (2017, pp. 4–5) in a study of the relationship between levels of exposure to war and psychological symptoms on the wellbeing of 133 Syrian children and youth in Azraq refugee camp in Jordan revealed “statistically significant relationship between children’s exposure to war and symptoms on their psychological well-being”.

NGOs, therefore, attend to the material and psychosocial needs of students’ and families’ lives outside of the classroom through the coordination of services and resources that support the learning process and exhibit care for students’ whole selves and their families (Dryfoos, 2005; INEE, 2016; Bajaj, Argenal and Canlas, 2017). Subsequently, psychosocial support and wellbeing are increasingly integrated in to conceptualisations of refugee protection through initiatives such as teacher trainings on physical and mental health as well as tending to social and emotional dimensions through social and emotional learning to acquire competencies to recognise and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively (INEE, 2016; Save the Children, 2016; Mosselson, Morshed and Changamire, 2017).

However, these approaches when implemented alone have been criticised for their insufficient links to learning — a component given great value among refugee communities (Mosselson, Morshed and Changamire, 2017). While protection and wellbeing are undoubtedly a vital objective, I will consider in this thesis how it should be considered as only one of the conceptualisations of a more holistic refugee education approach that incorporates the complex needs of communities.

### **2.1.3. Citizenry**

Refugees have long been conceptualised as existing ‘in the gap between states’, neither existing in or outside of host country nations (Haddad, 2008). Within this gap, solutions historically favoured return of refugees to their country of origin, or onward migration. Discussing citizenry amidst refugee communities may therefore seem paradoxical for a population largely denied recognition as citizens. Yet conceptions of citizenship are diverse and complex. Varying degrees of emphasis are given across the literature to rights, duties, the local, the national and the global (McLaughlin, 1992). Through the review, I highlight three themes in the citizenship literature on the concept of citizenry. First, citizenship has a border scope than national citizenry; it can include networked relations between diverse community groups such as refugee community groups that form in host-countries (Reilly and Niens, 2014; Keating and Janmaat, 2016). Second, protracted crises and growing tensions between host country and refugee populations have driven a now dominant approach of integration of refugees into host countries making refugee citizenry a

prominent point of contention (Bellino and Dryden-Peterson, 2018). Third, a burgeoning literature conceptualising 'global citizenship', speaks to a citizenry that transcends borders, and applies to refugees as much as any other individual in education systems around the world (Risberg, 2021).

### **2.1.3.1. Local citizenship**

Local citizenship refers to types of citizenship within national borders. A useful typology for forms of local citizenship identifies between *horizontal local citizenship* and *vertical local citizenship* (Pham and Vinck, 2017):

*Horizontal citizenship*: related to networked relations between diverse community groups.

*Vertical citizenship*: considered to be orientated around nation building.

I speak to both in turn in the following sections.

#### **Horizontal Citizenship**

While citizenship is often conceptualised around the nation state and nation building (the vertical), there is growing awareness of an important sub-national community in refugee contexts (the horizontal). These horizontal communities consist of cross-cutting, networked relations between diverse community groups and the many different identities that can unite individuals (Pham and Vinck, 2017). Refugees, while not recognised as citizens, are seen identifying as refugees, forced migrants, immigrants or even with their religion as a basis for their sense of belonging (Chatty, 2017). These groups tend not to have legal recognition by a state and subsequently are often overlooked amidst the citizenry debate.

Yet a critical analysis of the nature of its vertical counterpart around nation building begins to demonstrate commonalities. Anderson (2016, p. 9) argues that the nation "is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship". Anderson (2016, pp. 5–7) argues a nation "is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion". When conceptualising vertical citizenship as a social construct instead of merely a legal one, the forms of citizenship are expanded exponentially and refugees are presented an opportunity to find forms of horizontal citizenship despite legal restrictions (Petcharamesree, 2023).

Refugee status is a form of community that can constitute a form of horizontal citizenry. Refugees are protected in varying degrees by international and national covenants. They

may not be entitled to the same provisions as citizens of the host-country, yet there is still a sense of identity and legal recognition of that identity; a 'refugeeness'. While refugees have often been considered non-citizens in host countries, this broadened understanding of citizenry allows us to consider refugees as part of a form of horizontal citizenry - both through the shared imaginary and legal recognition - which facilitates creation of mechanisms of validation of their own cultures and systems (Erel, 2010).

These forms of horizontal citizenship however - in this case a sense of 'refugeeness' - can clash with established forms of vertical citizenship, further emphasising their importance of inclusion of horizontal citizenship in citizenry debates. Syrian refugees in Jordan may form a sense of belonging to the imagined Jordanian citizenry and require no formal legal recognition to do so. Among Syrian refugees in Jordan - many of which being born and raised entirely in Jordan - this sense of imagined citizenry can contest a sense of Syrian citizenry, refugee citizenry, or even become a dominant sense of citizenry despite the absence of legal recognition.

Horizontal citizenship however, can also be perceived as a threat to vertical citizenship and state cohesion, where youth groups may invoke violence, breaching of closed borders or recruitment by international terrorist organisations resolute on instigating violent attacks around the world (Lischer, 2000; Urdal, 2006). Education systems are seen as powerful institutions able to create, sustain or re-create forms of community and citizenry among learners, leading to calls for "smart education systems" that emphasise community responsibility and a community-wide approach" (Leonard, 2011; Bajaj, Argental and Canlas, 2017). Formal and informal avenues for reciprocal learning between communities allows for the recognition of community knowledge, resilience, and helps to ensure preservation of the cultural wealth of refugee communities in education (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b; Gay, 2000; Yosso, 2005; Shabaneh, 2012), although must be considered among the competing forms of citizenry and their various implications on social cohesion within and between communities.

#### **Vertical Citizenship**

Despite the broader understanding of citizenry presented in the previous section, the importance of legal recognition of national citizenry is still of utmost importance to refugees. Legal recognition as a citizen is often associated with access to services, employment opportunities, and the ability to migrate. While forms of horizontal citizenship can begin to create informal networks to circumvent these barriers, they are no substitute for the enhanced rights granted to those legally recognised as part of the 'Jordanian citizenry'. Therefore, 'vertical citizenship' is used to distinguish the legal sphere closely tied to a single form of citizenry around nationhood and nation building.

It is this vertical dimension of citizenry in particular that has often been dismissed by the literature on refugees. Refugees have long been considered as either existing ‘in the gap between states’ (Haddad, 2008), in a liminal state pending repatriation, resettlement or integration (Harrell-Bond, 1995; Bellino, 2018a). Neither a citizen of their home country or of their host country. Subsequently, parallel services were often established to serve refugees during this liminal period. Yet I argue that recent policy begins to shift this interpretation of refugee liminality. A new drive towards integration begins to blur the lines of citizenship that have shaped much of the refugee research to date. Today, integration approaches dominate, driven by the global and national policies that aim to immerse refugees in to host-countries (UNHCR, 2018b). One of the key objectives of this integration is to form social cohesion between host country and refugee communities through an active process aimed at creating and sustaining a peaceful togetherness; i.e. a belonging to that country and sense of national pride (Shirazi, 2012). While refugees’ legal rights may not be on par with Jordanians, the goals of social cohesion that can be achieved through vertical integration have been brought to the fore.

Education is seen as an important component of forming a sense of vertical citizenry with long-term consequences on nationhood (Keating and Janmaat, 2016). Shabaneh (2012) in a study of UNRWA schools in Jordan using observations and interviews between 2004-2007 (and an unspecified number of visits or interviews with students, teachers, and administrators at schools) found Palestinian students interacting with one another in ways that inadvertently and unintentionally preserved and cultivated an identity of nation and self among Palestinians amidst war and social dislocation. The use by UNRWA schools of extracurricular activities (e.g., songs, plays, music, paintings, poetry) aimed at reinventing many elements of Palestinian identity and nationalism had the unintended consequence of reconstructing Palestinian nationalism (Shabaneh, 2012).

The Jordanian Education Strategic Plan aimed at both Jordanian and Syrian refugee education also demonstrates the intentional active process of Jordan’s education in citizenship building:

Strategic Objective: To improve the quality of education for the preparation of good and productive citizens who are loyal (feeling of belonging) to their country. (HKJ, 2017, p. 53)

Subsequently NGOs are increasingly tasked with vertical integration and regularly emphasise pedagogical practices that are conceptualised to achieve these goals (No Lost Generation, 2016). However, as much as education is seen as holding the potential to promote forms of vertical citizenship, it is also recognised as a space to promote horizontal forms of citizenry that can clash with the vertical. Shirazi (2011, p. 278) draws on a six-month ethnographic study conducted in 2007–2008 at two government male secondary

schools in Amman Jordan, suggesting that “the normative agenda of the Jordanian state is far from universally accepted by students and teachers”. Instead, Jordanian schools are “dynamic, ambivalent, and contradictory spaces” (Shirazi, 2011, p. 278). Shirazi provides an example of students utilising their agency to resist structures otherwise seen to instil recognition of national citizenship and discipline:

The morning exercises, known as the *taboor* in Arabic, involve the entire school body, from the administration and faculty to the students ... students are assembled in columns by grade level and are rapidly led through calisthenics, school announcements, student poetry and Qur’an reading, nationalist speeches, and the singing of the Arab nationalist anthem, ‘Mawtani’ (My country) ... Students are not permitted to speak during the *taboor*, except for specific instances in which they are expected to respond en masse or to sing. (Shirazi, 2011, p. 288)

During my school visits, I frequently observed that many of the boys would take advantage of free moments (meaning moments when teachers were not close by or their attention was elsewhere) to parody the proceedings of the *taboor*, as well as the faculty members leading the exercises ... During calisthenics, students would wink at each other or blow kisses to their friends (or the turned heads of the teachers) in an effort to make their peers laugh. Some boys would intentionally sing *Mawtani* off-key or furtively ‘dance’ along with the somber music in an effort to ‘mess with’ their peers.

(Shirazi, 2011, p. 288)

These instances suggest attempts at vertical citizenship by state-based actors are contested within school spaces and provide opportunities not only to create a sense of state identity, but a space to create or preserve forms of horizontal citizenship.

Conceptualisations of both vertical and horizontal citizenship, therefore, are seen relevant to refugee youth education programmes, and the contestation that exists between them a challenging responsibility of NGOs to navigate, yet no literature among the searches conducted for this study were found exploring these challenges for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan.

#### **2.1.3.2. Global citizenship**

While the body of citizenship literature discussed so far conceptualises citizenship at a national level, many of its more recent conceptualisations include a global approach cultivated in shared values, democratic skills and inclusive attitudes (Reilly and Niens, 2014). It broadly encompasses nurturing a sense of belonging to a wider global commu-

nity and common humanity, highlighting political, economic, social interconnectedness between, local, national and the global (Moul, 2017). Torres (2015) suggests that global citizenship should add value to the global commons, which builds on three components that define the common good of humanity: planet; peace and people. The first, is grounded in the belief that our planet is our only home, and we have to protect it. Secondly, that global peace is an intangible cultural good of humanity with immaterial value. Thirdly, that there is a need to find ways for people to live together democratically in a diverse world. Such a framework is understandably appealing to donors and NGO's alike as it aligns with many objectives of the SDGs.

Conceptualisations of global citizenship however, and their relevance to refugee contexts are contested (Risberg, 2021). Hantzopoulos and Shirazi (2014) through a critical review of schooling in Jordanian policy texts between 2002 and 2004 argues that global citizenship framed around participation and accountability merely disguises attempts to reify the economic interests of the nation-state. Learner-entered pedagogies around global citizenship are seen as a means of exporting an ideological worldview intended to develop a preferred kind of society represented by Western capitalist values, disguised as quality and effective teaching (Tabulawa, 2003; Hantzopoulos and Shirazi, 2014).

Similarly, Risberg (2021) through introducing a postcolonial lens to global citizenship, questions its appropriateness for non-Western, non-citizens. A liberal nation-state conceptualisation of the global commons – namely a democratic notion of justice achieved by expanding or extending the sense of responsibility for the Western model of citizenship to others – is often an assumed pedagogical goal of global citizenship education (Pashby, 2018; Risberg, 2021). In light of refugees being both non-Western and non-citizens, Risberg (2021) claims discussion around global citizenship for migrants and refugees is merely an extension of Western national citizenship, and subsequently refugee inclusion is merely superficial questioning its value in education spaces.

Emphasis is therefore placed on a critical and transformative dimension to Global Citizenship Education.

If Global Citizenship Education is to foster anything resembling a truly global citizenship – global citizens that can live up to the high hopes envisaged in the aspirational language of the international policy documents on Global Citizenship Education (UNESCO, 2013, 2015, 2018) – it needs to steer clear of a simplistic Western ethnocentrism. It needs to be historically informed and provide an awareness and understanding of the political and economic structures operating in international politics; it needs to be self-conscious, reflective and mindful of not perpetuating power-relations through well-intended but misguided acts of charity

or failed attempts to empathize; and it needs to avoid blatant Eurocentric biases and triumphalism. (Risberg, 2021, p. 14)

Andreotti (2014) provides a useful typology of a critical and transformative dimension of global citizenry through contrast with what she calls 'soft citizenry'. Critical global citizenship education, in contrast with soft global citizenship education, tries to promote change without telling learners what they should think or do, by creating spaces where they are safe to analyse and experiment with other forms of seeing/thinking and being/relating to one another. This approach of a critical global citizenship has become common. UNESCO (2015) outlined pedagogical guidance in 2015 and included learning objectives for youth:



## UNESCO Pedagogical Guidance for Global Citizenship

	<b>Lower secondary (12-15 years)</b>	<b>Upper secondary (15-18+ years)</b>
<b>Local, national and global systems and structures</b>	Discuss how global governance structures interact with national and local structures and explore global citizenship	Critically analyse global governance systems, structures and processes and assess implications for global citizenship.
<b>Issues affecting interaction and connectedness of communities at local, national and global levels</b>	Assess the root causes of major local, national and global issues and the interconnectedness of local and global factors	Critically examine local, national and global issues, responsibilities and consequences of decision-making, examine and propose appropriate responses
<b>Underlying assumptions and power dynamics</b>	Investigate underlying assumptions and describe inequalities and power dynamics	Critically assess the ways in which power dynamics affect voice, influence, access to resources, decision-making and governance
<b>Different levels of identity</b>	Distinguish between personal and collective identity and various social groups, and cultivate a sense of belonging to a common humanity	Critically examine ways in which different levels of identity interact and live peacefully with different social groups
<b>Different communities people belong to and how these are connected</b>	Demonstrate appreciation and respect for difference and diversity, cultivate empathy and solidarity towards other individuals and social groups	Critically assess connectedness between different groups, communities and countries
<b>Difference and respect for diversity</b>	Debate on the benefits and challenges of difference and diversity	Develop and apply values, attitudes and skills to manage and engage with diverse groups and perspectives
<b>Actions that can be taken individually and collectively</b>	Examine how individuals and groups have taken action on issues of local, national and global importance and get engaged in responses to local, national and global issues	Develop and apply skills for effective civic engagement
<b>Ethically responsible behaviour</b>	Analyse the challenges and dilemmas associated with social justice and ethical responsibility and consider the implications for individual and collective action	Critically assess issues of social justice and ethical responsibility and take action to challenge discrimination and inequality
<b>Getting engaged and taking action</b>	Develop and apply skills for active engagement and take action to promote common good	Propose action for and become agents of positive change

(UNESCO, 2015)

These learning objectives place emphasis on the critical dimensions of global citizenship, the notions of power, voice and difference. Global citizenship in a critical sense becomes the development of skills of critical engagement and reflexivity, the analysis and critique of the relationships among perspectives, language, power, social groups, and social practices by the learners (Andreotti, 2011).

Turning these concepts into action has proven difficult, with many existing as theoretical ambitions rather than actionable practices (Desjardins, Torres and Wiksten, 2020). Yet some studies have explored various attempts at putting these learning objectives into practice and include:

- Participatory action research interventions using a photo exhibition of student work used for supporting the involvement of parents and local community in discussions about social norms (Shah, 2015)
- Study circles for connecting important local identity affiliations (tribal and familial) to citizenship education to foster student engagement in voting (Bungu, 2019)
- Elementary schools in favelas demonstrate using democratic management strategies involving school administrations, schools and local communities in joint efforts to overcome difficult circumstances (Zero, 2021)

What becomes clear from the literature on conceptualisations and on practice, is the emphasis placed on critical thinking, debate and analysis (Moul, 2017). What also becomes clear, is the challenges faced in enacting these practices. As UNESCO note on Global Citizenship enactments, it “requires skilled educators who have a good understanding of transformative and participatory teaching and learning”, and that “in many contexts, educators have limited experience of such approaches” (UNESCO, 2015, p. 51). In a review of the existing body of research on the promotion and implementation of Global Citizenship Education and related programmes in countries affected by crisis situations - with particular attention to initiatives benefiting the refugee population - Robiolle (2018) identifies insufficient teacher training and complex new pedagogy and materials as significant obstacles to implementation.

Historically however, studies have suggested that Jordan has not had the capacity nor incentive for the critical thinking, debate and analysis components deemed central to global citizenship education (Mustafa and Cullingford, 2008; Al-Amoush *et al.*, 2011, 2014; Al-Amoush, Markic and Eilks, 2012, 2012; Sabella and Crossouard, 2017). Al-Amoush (2014), through a sample of 23 student teachers and 44 experienced secondary teachers suggests that Jordanian teachers and teacher trainees hold traditional, teacher-centred, and transmission-oriented beliefs. Sabella and Crossouard (2017) demonstrate that despite Jordan’s attempts to improve the quality of teaching and learning through student-centred

methodologies, a shortage of qualified teachers compounded by large class sizes, reduced school hours and pedagogical design decisions constrains students and emphasises a dominant role of the teacher where the learner is a recipient of knowledge rather than a participant in creating knowledge. Without the requisite experience, educators not only run the risk of failing to achieve global citizenship objectives, but run the risk of (indirectly and unintentionally) reproducing the systems of belief and practices that harm those they want to support (Andreotti and Stein, 2015).

While global citizenship appears to hold important components for refugee education around global commons, it is both controversial and difficult to implement effectively in low-resources contexts, posing questions around the viability of these conceptualisations for NGOs in refugee contexts. I argue therefore, that the different conceptualisations of citizenry are important within refugee youth education programmes, but one extremely difficult for NGOs to navigate, particularly under the low-level of resources available to refugee education in Jordan and in turn posing questions around how, if at all, these conceptualisations exist in NGOs perceived goals of refugee youth education.

#### **2.1.4. Empowerment**

Education has often been conceptualised as holding the potential to empower youth (Martínez *et al.*, 2017) and empowerment has long been the mantra of development practitioners and theorists alike, “aspired to by such diverse institutions as the World Bank, Oxfam and the most radical non-government organisations” (Rai, Parpart and Staudt, 2007, p. 1). What empowerment education means and how to achieve it, however, is contested (Morton and Montgomery, 2013). In a systematic literature review of literature on youth empowerment conceptualisations over the past 15 years, analysing 297 papers, Ucar Martinez *et al.* (2017) claims that the only consensus around the term youth empowerment is that there is no consensus around the definition of youth empowerment.

In this section therefore, I present the literature through three groups identified during the review:

1. Personal Growth Approaches
2. Relational Approaches
3. Transformative Approaches

Through this review of the literature, while recognising the importance of all three dimensions, I aim to highlight the literature on transformative conceptualisations of empowerment education and their relevance to refugee youth education.

#### **2.1.4.1. Personal Growth Approach**

The personal growth approach to youth empowerment education predominantly overlaps with literature on increasing levels of well-being (Martínez *et al.*, 2017). Grounded in psychological theories of adolescent development, these approaches bring together participation, positive reinforcement and adult recognition of positive development to improve developmental outcomes (Martínez *et al.*, 2017). Chinman and Linney (1998) demonstrate the personal growth dimension approach through their Adolescent Empowerment Cycle (AEC) model. Chinman and Linney (1998) linked AEC to the developmental process of social bonding, leading youth to bond to positive institutions through action, skill development, and reinforcement. The AEC model describes a process of engagement to develop a “stable, positive identity” by allowing youth to experiment with different roles and incorporating the feedback of significant others within the programme.

Morton and Montgomery (2013), in a systematic review of youth empowerment programmes found 68 studies using these personal growth conceptualisations of empowerment. Positive youth outcomes from the programmes were diverse, including improved performance in academic subjects and sports; increased happiness, job satisfaction, and persistence; improved safe sex practices; and successful smoking cessation and prevention, while developing transferable social skills and competencies (Morton and Montgomery, 2011).

These approaches to empowerment however, have been criticised for their primarily top-down approach depicting youth as ‘problems to be fixed’ rather than individuals in need of support to find solutions to their own challenges through defining their own programming and their own goals (Kim *et al.*, 1998; Jennings *et al.*, 2006; Wallerstein, 2006). It often outlines an outcome of the type of individual - a trajectory for growth towards a preconceived idea of a positive contributor to society, instead of emphasising self-discovery of one’s own path (Wallerstein, Sanchez-Merki and Verlade, 2005).

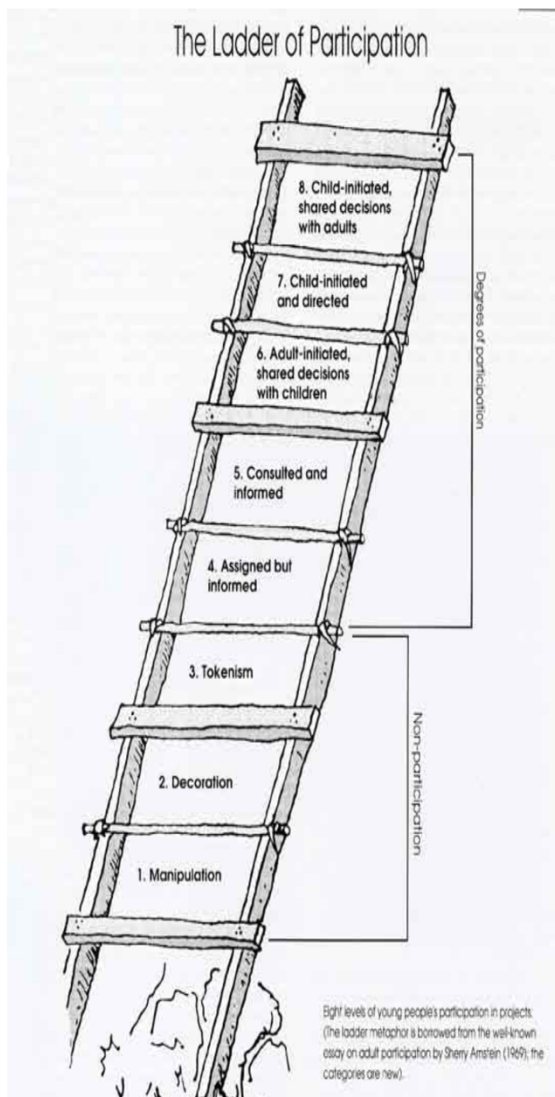
Personal growth approaches are still valued by empowerment education programmes for their emphasis on experimentation with different roles and identities (Jennings *et al.*, 2006), yet the primarily top-down approach has led others to explore alternative conceptualisations that emphasise the importance of power relations between stakeholders.

#### **2.1.4.2. Relational Approach**

The relational approach to empowerment - also referred to as interpersonal (Wong, 2008) - seeks to expose youth to opportunities and challenges within a safe and supportive environment based around shared power relationships between adults and youth to

involve individuals in community affairs (Russell *et al.*, 2009). It's shift from a top-down approach (adults empowering youth, such as in the personal growth dimensions) to a partnering approach (where professionals welcome youth and assume an active enabling role), is seen as particularly important in these conceptualisations, where traditional societal roles of adults holding power over youth are seen as deeply entrenched and require concerted efforts to overcome in order to provide the feeling that power is shared between the young person and the adult (Russell *et al.*, 2009).

*Hart's Ladder of Participation Framework*



Central to the approach therefore, is emphasis on creating welcoming and safe environments based on a “more egalitarian programming approach” to power sharing (Cargo *et al.*, 2003, p. 70). Youth empowerment is conceptualised as a mutual process of transactional partnering between adults and youth. Adults ensure youth gain the skills and knowledge they need to participate in community affairs through facilitation, mentoring, and providing feedback, while incrementally “giving up responsibility for voicing, decision making, and action, making it available for youth to take” (Cargo *et al.*, 2003, p. 70).

Participation of learners in the learning process is one of the key metrics for empowerment in these models. Bello (2011) provides an example utilised with second-generation migrants in non-formal education projects in Italy. By drawing on Hart's (1992) ladder of participation framework, Bello (2011) emphasises youth empowerment as a process,

moving between 8 stages. At the bottom of the ladder, is manipulation, and tokenism, while at the top is child-initiated, shared decisions with adults. The goal of the empowering programme under the personal growth approach, therefore, is to involve youth in the processes depicted at the top of the ladder.

While similar to the personal growth approach in placing individual focus, the relational approach also explicitly incorporates community level empowerment, seeking to integrate youth in to larger society (Kim *et al.*, 1998). Adult leaders guide youth to take on leadership roles around activities in their communities, before evaluating their efforts, discussing

future directions and celebrating success. In the relational model, youth are not seen as social problems or community liabilities, but as assets and resources to their communities that require facilitation more than top-down guidance (Travis and Bowman, 2012).

Youth outcomes include the development of positive relationships with both peers and adults and participation in public affairs (Kim *et al.*, 1998; Tyler, 2007), increased self- and community-esteem, confidence, a clearer understanding of local community affairs and competencies such as voicing one's opinion and leadership (Cargo *et al.*, 2003). These approaches have grown increasingly popular in refugee contexts, where a premium is placed on initiatives that facilitate integration through social cohesion and relationship building with host communities (Harb and Saab, 2014; REACH, 2014; GAGE, 2019).

Programmes in Jordan provide examples of these approaches. Questscope (Syria:Driect, 2013) is a certified non-formal education programme that through facilitators aims to provide individualised attention to young people during session time. The format and ordering of activities, and the choice of learning discussion topics and social activities, during each session is left flexible for the youths and facilitators to determine. The facilitators are trained to facilitate democratic group decision-making processes. The methodology stipulates that youth are actively engaged in program decision-making via regular involvement in processes such as determining program guidelines, deciding learning topics and activities, and planning cultural and community events. Research on Questscope centres indicates positive outcomes on conduct and retention in schools (Oxford University, 2011; Morton and Montgomery, 2012), suggesting value in these pedagogical approaches.

Relational conceptualisations, however, have been criticised for not explicitly integrating the transformative potential of empowerment theory that seek to uncover the structures that impact youth and reform them (Jennings *et al.*, 2006; Mohajer and Earnest, 2009; Magee and Pherali, 2017). While efforts are made to integrate youth into wider communities in leadership roles, these approaches do not see youth as active agents of change in their communities (Travis and Bowman, 2012). Instead, much of the research merely perceives empowerment to be at the level of participation, most notably through frameworks developed by Hart (1992), Shier (2001) or Wong *et al.* (2010). Kabeer (1999) suggests these readings have become increasingly popular as a need has arisen to translate empowerment insights into the discourse of policy. Yet these disconnects from individuals as agents of change has led some to criticise these approaches as attempts to implement "feel-good programmes" (Roberts, 2000).

Paulo Freire remains one of the most well-known critics of these 'feel-good' programmes. He notes in relation to formal schooling:

“The intellectualism we fight is precisely that hollow, empty, sonorous chatter, bereft of any relationship with the reality surrounding us, in which we are born and reared and on which, in large part, we yet feed today” (P Freire, 1998, p. 104).

For Freire (1974) relations between learner and educator are important, however, Freire argues - as have others (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Jennings *et al.*, 2006; Mohajer and Earnest, 2009; Wong, Zimmerman and Parker, 2010; Rocha, 2012) - that individuals as agents of change must be at the centre of programming for the purpose of personal and community transformation, discussed in the next section.

#### **2.1.4.3. Transformative Approach**

What unites many of the empowerment conceptualisations in the literature is their grounding in the idea of critical dialogue between learner and facilitator to facilitate skills that prepare learners to navigate and transform their worlds. Literature highlights the key role of dialectics in these processes (Gill and Niens, 2014; Martínez *et al.*, 2017). Often synonymous with historic understandings of ‘participatory’, ‘bottom-up’ or ‘grassroots’ (Blackburn, 2000), it is a goal shared among organisations of all shapes and sizes. It does not pre-prescribe solutions for youth, but instead engages youth in a pro-social environment around formulating their own effective strategies to navigating their worlds (Buchanan *et al.*, 2020).

As Ucar (2017) notes on analysis of 297 papers on youth empowerment, youth empowerment approaches and conceptualisations often draw on Paulo Freire’s (2000) theories of critical social praxis to connect the education programmes to this transformative potential. At the core of Freire’s thinking, is his belief that humans have an ontological vocation to become more fully human. He distinguishes humans from animals in that while animal consciousness is ahistorical and atemporal, humans are aware of themselves as conscious beings, of the existence of space and time and their place within it (Freire, 2000, p. 98). As a result of this awareness, Freire believes humans will inevitably think creatively in order to interact with space and time to alter reality. Freire (2000, p.84) argues, that we are unfinished as human beings and not to ever be finished. Attempts to reach any particular stage of a finished reality is futile, we are merely in a point of an infinitely unfinished reality (Biesta, 1998). It is this concept for critical scholars, that informs the transformative dimensions of transformative education. Learners must embark on a pursuit of their ontological vocation to continually create and recreate reality.

In contrast and opposition to this ontological vocation is Freire’s (2000) concept of banking education:

'[Formal] education becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and "makes deposits" which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. But in the last analysis, it is men themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system. For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, men cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other' (Freire 2000, p72)

Banking education, as outlined in the passage above, stands in contradiction to the human creativity Freire speaks of. It does not engage knowledge as something existing within time and space, but instead as static and to be deposited into learners who collect, and catalogue knowledge owned by someone else. Pre-existing knowledge is ignored, aside from what was expected to have already been 'deposited' into them. Doing so devalues the processes of critical thinking and creativity and replaces it with a mentality of acceptance. As Freire (2000) notes:

"The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them" (p73).

Freire suggests that many of the common processes used in learning spaces around the world are dehumanising processes, that leads to our greater acceptance of the world as it is. The message we can infer from Freire, is a call for the appreciation of the creativity of humans in their relationships with each other and the world through the undoing of the banking method.

Freire's writings go a step further, in that he poses that education spaces can become sites for reflection to raise a consciousness around other dehumanising forces. For Freire, humans exist within a certain historical context, with its economic, social, political and cultural norms, structures and institutions (Freire, 2000, pp31-32). Freire believes that the structures of capitalist societies are founded on relations of exploitation of certain groups or individuals by others (Freire, 2000, pp. 43-44). Freire, therefore, in response to these oppressive, dehumanising structures, outlines the basis for which the oppressed may become subjects of their own development through education. Freire (1974) suggests learning spaces can act as sites for reflection and understanding of the broad structures



that prevent humanisation and that silently normalise one's oppression. In doing so, learning spaces are not only key spaces in need of reform to see the end to dehumanising banking education, but through this reform, a means of engaging in critical dialogue to raise awareness of other social realities; or what Freire termed, conscientization (Freire, 1974). Conscientization can be understood as the process by which humans become more aware of the sources of their oppression. It is the process by which the capacity for critical thinking by the oppressed can be expanded, providing the space for one's perceptions of reality to change. A central part of this, is for critical analysis to squash the "magical belief in the invulnerability and power of the oppressor" (Freire, 2000, p. 64).

A final and yet vital reading of Freire is in relation to praxis. For Freire, the goal of conscientization is not just to deepen understanding, but to invoke praxis (Freire, 2000, pp. 45). Praxis for Freire is the fusion of reflection and action, the action taken as a result of reflection, and reflection on action taken:

The insistence that the oppressed engage in reflection on their concrete situation is not a call to armchair revolution. On the contrary, reflection—true reflection—leads to action. On the other hand, when the situation calls for action, that action will constitute an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection. (Freire, 2000, p. 66)

When these transformative approaches are applied to youth education programmes, programmes specifically emphasise the development of skills and knowledge that support youth efforts toward social action and change; and link individual empowerment to community organising (Wallerstein, Sanchez-Merki and Verlade, 2005). Participants engage in dialogue about their own personal lives, relationships, and communities and are guided to develop an awareness of school, neighbourhood and global issues. Facilitators engage with learners as co-learners offering youth the experience of contributing to adults learning through their participation, with the aim of praxis; "an ongoing interaction between reflection and the actions that people take to promote individual and community change" (Wallerstein, Sanchez-Merki and Verlade, 2005). To not engage in these processes is not only to miss education's potential to raise conscientization, but to succumb to the world as it is presented to us. For transformative approaches, it is not enough for students to achieve academic excellence if those skills and abilities represent only an individual achievement. Students must develop a broader socio-political, oppositional consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, morals, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities giving them tools to analyse social location, their own experiences, and the distinctions between school requirements and authentic learning vis-à-vis their future aspirations (Bajaj, 2018). Mohajer (2009) notes that to overlook these transformative components of youth empowerment is essentially flawed,

as they are a means to challenge the social determinants which drive ill-health and 'problem behaviour' of vulnerable adolescents that are targeted by the other conceptualisations of empowerment. Therefore, for many scholars, if youth are not critically aware of the structures and processes that make up social institutions and practices, or of their own role and actions within them, there is little room for empowerment (Freire, 1985; Giroux, 2001; Apple, 2012).

Freire (1998a) therefore, advocated for creating a space where dialog could facilitate one's own depiction of a future and engage with others to achieve it. This points to an important distinction that informs the definition of transformative learning for this research. It does not propose transformative education as a method or programme. As it has been argued before, it would be oxymoronic to try and implement a programme grounded in humanisation to 'teach' how to become more human (Freire, 1998b; Mayo, 2004). Instead, we can only explore ways to be allowed to be more human. Transformative education is not the doing of education but the process of undoing through counter-hegemonic processes that create intellectual and social space for the learner - who have historically existed at the margins of educational processes - to be placed at the centre of their own learning. It does not aim to reach any particular stage, ideology or a priori set of beliefs as to do so is to neglect one of the core assumptions of transformation; that we are merely in a point of an infinitely unfinished reality (Biesta, 1998; Ross, 2016).

The idea that however, that a transformative education can simply be enacted and deemed transformative, is criticised by some for being too deterministic (Desjardins, 2015). Critical theorists emphasise the political nature of education, competing interests of the marketplace and politics in the production of knowledge and education policy are seen as significant factors in replicating existing cultural values and privileges of the dominant class (Darder, Baltodano and Torres, 2017; McLaren, 2017). Through this process, education is seen as holding the potential to become a process of social control, capable of domesticating and normalising political, social and cultural views that serve reproduction of existing power relationships and ideologies of the ruling class (Bourdieu, 1984). Refugee contexts are certainly no exception, with the education space highly politicised. Enacting a transformative education amidst conflicting conceptualisations of what refugee youth education should be is no easy feat. Yet with empowerment and transformation receiving such emphasis, it is important to identify its relevance to refugee contexts, which I explore in the next section.

#### **Transformative approaches in refugee contexts**

Transformative visions of education, grounded in Freire's conceptualisations, appear particularly relevant to refugee contexts. In light of calls to ensure preservation of social and cultural values for refugees, an education from which the participants are placed at

the centre of the learning content can hold great value (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). Moreover, its detachment from a definition of pre-defined, fixed outcomes sits well with the realities of refugee's unknowable futures, betwixt and between home country and host, navigating a multitude of pathways. Yeo and Yoo (2022) argues that transformative approaches create opportunities to pursue diverse pathways, rather than imposing linear development solutions to individuals with unknowable futures. A focus on praxis - action taken as a result of reflection - also appears to equip refugees to face the many hurdles they are likely to encounter as refugees, where structural oppressions such as host country restrictions stack the odds against them. It is perhaps little surprise therefore, that literature is increasingly exploring critical transformative pedagogies for refugee youth (Bellino, 2018a).

Yet the literature exploring NGO implementations of these conceptualisations in refugee contexts is limited. McCaffery (2005, 2007) explored community-based participatory and transformative literacy projects for adult refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Sudan, implemented by three NGOs between 1999 and 2005. Each organisation drew on the pedagogical practice of ActionAid's RELFECT programme that outlines a Freirean approach to enacting adult education (Archer and Cottingham, 1996). Key to the Reflect approach is creating a space of learning where people can feel comfortable to meet and discuss issues relevant to them with the aim of improving their meaningful participation in decision-making and practical action (Archer and Cottingham, 1996). McCaffery (2005), through reflecting on her own experience with the programmes - although her type of involvement in the project is undisclosed - finds the programming can make a significant contribution to personal healing, community reconstruction and cohesion, adult literacy and peace-building.

Hammond (1998) made eight field trips to Honduras between 1988 and 1993, each about a month long, to observe classes and participate in teacher training for programmes for El-Salvadorian refugees he identified through his own advocacy work in the region. In his words, he sought to "experience the life of the communities where popular education was practiced" (Hammond, 1998, p. 21). Through 130 interviews with people involved at all levels of the popular education programmes, Hammond found transformative education grounded in the concepts of Freire (2000) to be a flexible and low-cost learning opportunity that significantly contributed to UN-supported refugee camps in Honduras by providing basic literacy to soldiers and fuelling the drive for reform.

However, while these studies provide useful insights into some of the potential benefits of transformative pedagogies, they situate their studies in contexts distinctly different to Syrian refugee youth today. In McCaffery's (2005) study, programmes worked with adult refugees rather than youth. Moreover, both studies explored cases that did not rely on the NGO programming as a substitute for formal schooling and subsequently did not draw on

the other important conceptualisation's such as human capital that comes to the fore when accreditation and access to job markets hangs on NGO provisions. As Singh (2018) notes, for programmes without accreditation and recognition of qualifications relevant to available employment opportunities, prospects for Syrian youth mobility, progression into further education, employment or the ability to secure basic livelihoods are diminished. By not gaining accreditation, refugees are also thought to miss an opportunity that can potentially increase capacity to learn, build confidence, self-esteem and courage to take up lifelong learning (Singh, 2018). It is unsurprising therefore, that Ahmadzadeh et al. (2014) through a secondary literature review, supported by semi-structured interviews with 22 Syrian youth and 23 representatives of different service providers in Jordan found Syrian refugees were less likely to engage in non-accredited education programmes.

These demands to provide accreditation have led some organisations underpinned by Freirean critical consciousness to try and accredit Freirean approaches to youth education. One study explored the role of accredited programming underpinned by Freirean critical consciousness for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan (Magee and Pherali, 2017). The long-running programme at the centre of the investigation, in partnership with the Jordanian Ministry of Education, streamlines the Jordanian curriculum in order to teach Syrian refugees the content required for passing the test, but through the democratic practices outlined by Freire (Oxford University, 2011; Morton and Montgomery, 2012). However, Magee and Pherali (2017) drawing on individual and focus-group interviews and observations of seven of their accredited non-formal education centres in August 2015, suggested that the learners viewed the critical reflection components of the programming as antithetical to the goal of gaining accreditation deemed necessary to secure a basic livelihood. Interviews and observations found no observable discussions about, or participation in, activities aimed at addressing the structures and processes that suppress refugee opportunities, nor were there attempts to achieve any form of redistribution of resources or decision-making favourable to refugee communities as the Freirean vision outlines. Instead, refugees sought opportunities to survive in, rather than discuss the systems they lived within. The study suggests, that when Freirean pedagogies are transplanted from one context to another, they manifest in different ways that may challenge the fundamental philosophical principles of the Freirean programming and question its ability to provide a liberating education.

A similar concern is raised by Dyer and Choksi (1998), during a review of a REFLECT programme – an educational programme underpinned by the Freirean philosophy of conscientization – for migrant nomads in Western India. The authors suggest in the context where their research took place, learners were uncomfortable with the Freirean approach, due to their long exposure and subsequent normalisation of teacher centred approaches. The authors expressed surprise as the learners' social patterns in the

community were grounded in a “strong tradition of participatory decision-making” (Dyer and Choksi, 1998, p. 86). Instead, programmes began to take the form of uncritical programming focused on literacy development. Dyer and Choksi conclude by asking how much alteration a Freirean based programme can take before it stops being Freirean.

However, while both studies by Magee and Pherali (2017) and Dyer and Choksi (1998) suggest that the pressures of the market-economy on learners led to the reconceptualization of the programme at the classroom level, neither explored the role of the organisation or the environment from within which the organisation operates. Programmes in refugee contexts are increasingly immersed within a much broader range of stakeholders than the non-formal adult unaccredited models where the research into transformative pedagogies has looked before (McCaffery, 2005). Singh (2018) suggests these stakeholders in the Syrian refugee context in Jordan include Jordanian government education and training authorities, employers, trade unions, industry, education and training institutions, as well as civil society Jordanian organisations. These immersions have created greater need to comply with the larger educational policies and structures that govern these stakeholders, such as national and global conceptualisations of education (Lerch and Buckner, 2018) and national interests of economic growth (Shirazi, 2011; Sabella and Crossouard, 2017) that can inform enactments of transformative programmes.

These patterns are seen in Barroso (2002) who through research undertaken in the mid-1970s-1980s found many Bangladeshi NGOs such as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee and Gono Shahajjo Sangstha perceived the transformative nature of Freirean programming as a threat to the government, which drove NGOs to replace their previous model of “class struggle” for “a model of class harmony, adopting a new paradigm in which donors are appeased, the state is not threatened and NGOs gain legitimacy as development agent”. While Barroso’s research does not explore the impacts in refugee contexts, it does highlight the potential threats to transformative approaches when immersed in the larger structures of NGO networks.

Karam et al. (2017, p. 461) did however, find tensions in refugee contexts for Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon. Through observations and informal interviews with 19 teachers in a non-formal education programme in 2014, they found that “the nation-state acts with the guiding force of an invisible hand in terms of [the NGO’s] teachers and programme administrators’ decision-making processes regarding what should be taught, in what language, and the purpose of [non-formal education] NFE programming”, suggesting that understanding the contexts from which a programme exists is as important as understanding the programme itself. Yet Karam et al. (2017), did not explore how organisations developed and interpreted transformative pedagogies, nor were they able to compare these experiences across different models of programme. Finally, Karam et al.

(2017) only highlights the influence of the government, without exploring the other broader policy environments and shifts from which these organisations must operate within.

Transformative interpretations of empowerment education are therefore seen as important dimensions of refugee youth education. However, NGOs are at risk of being driven towards manipulation of transformative programming into its 'banking' counterpart or are deterred from the implementation of such pedagogies at the outset, despite the perceived relevance of transformative pedagogies for refugee's unknowable futures.

### **2.1.5. Uniting conceptualisations of refugee youth education**

I suggest therefore that all four conceptualisations identified have relevance to refugee contexts. Yet across the reviewed literature on refugee education, emphasis is primarily placed on transformative visions of education, with only one paper found that aims to bring together the variety of conceptualisations in to one coherent framework in recognition of the need for refugee education to draw on multiple concepts (Bajaj, Argenal and Canlas, 2017). It is however, based on the refugee context in the United States, which while holding some useful parallels to the lives of refugees globally, is in stark contrast to the Jordanian context. Moreover, it did not explore how NGOs navigate the demands of these various and often conflicting conceptualisations of education, instead only prescribing a vision of what is hoped can be achieved, rather than what can be.

I argue therefore, for a greater need for literature on refugee youth education to recognise and acknowledge the various conceptualisations, each of which providing value to refugees and complementing each other as part of a holistic education. When embracing these diverse education conceptualisations, the contradictions that can exist between them start to become apparent and subsequently begin to pose questions around how education is conceptualised by different actors in refugee contexts responsible for negotiating the different demands and agendas of actors. I therefore propose a new framework for exploration of refugee youth education in Jordan that acknowledges all four of the conceptualisations outlined in this chapter and highlights the core components of each for a holistic refugee youth education programme. I later use this framework for analysing the data presented in the finding's chapters 4-6 of this thesis, where I explore how NGOs conceptualise and enact education programmes amidst these competing conceptual demands for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan.

*Concepts deemed within the scope of NGO refugee youth programming.*

Human capital	Certified human capital
Protection and Wellbeing	- Welcoming, safe and supportive environments
Citizenry	- Horizontal-citizenry, related to network relations between diverse community groups - Vertical-citizenry, orientated around social cohesion and nation building
Empowerment	- Meaningful participation and equitable power sharing - Engagement in critical reflection and action on interpersonal and community socio-political processes

## **2.2. NGOs and their role in shaping refugee education**

I had always considered a job with a non-government organisation (NGO) to be the inevitable endpoint of my academic journey. I studied International Development during my undergraduate degree in 2010 and sat alongside others hoping the degree would provide the requisites for one of the elusive NGO jobs. I, like others on the course, sought NGO roles for many reasons but above all because I wanted the opportunity to help others negatively impacted by global inequalities. Through these organisations, cohorts of students like me continue to seek opportunities to make change in line with our various belief systems. Yet despite my intentions of utilising the academic system to prepare me with the skills for working within the NGO sector, instead the articles we read and the discussions we had began problematising the very nature of NGOs and their ability to be a mechanism for change. NGOs, which I once thought of as grassroots organisations, seeking to engage with social and political concerns, were shown to exist in a contested politicised space shaped by the demands of donors and the state, with varying degrees of engagement with civil society impacting the ability of NGOs to become the agents of change I and others had hope for them to be (Lang, 2012; Banks, Hulme and Edwards, 2015).

Education appeared an area particularly susceptible to influence due to its inherent political nature. Every domain of education policy, practice and research is influenced by ideological and political interests, attitudes, and values and beliefs, including how educators organise their classrooms, how they relate to different groups of students and how education contributes to the distribution of power and capital used as the basis for the stratification of our society between the haves and have nots (Desjardins, 2015). In this section therefore, I explore the literature on education NGOs in refugee contexts and the literature exploring the ideological and political influences that may alter NGO's enactments of refugee youth programmes for refugees, to suggest that a research gap exists around NGO's potential to be the change makers that I and my fellow students hoped for them to be.

### **2.2.1. NGO Roles in Refugee Contexts**

NGOs are as diverse as they are many. Their spheres of operation and approaches span disciplines; their sizes vary from a few individuals in community organisations, to multi-million-dollar organisations spanning multiple continents. Rather than try to delineate the many variations of NGO, I suggest it is instead helpful to look at the roles these NGOs play. Lewis (2004) provides a helpful typology: NGOs as implementers; NGOs as catalysts and NGOs as partners.

**The role of *catalyst*** is defined as an NGO's ability to inspire, facilitate, or contribute towards developmental change among other actors at the organisational or the individual level. This includes grassroots organizing and group formation, empowerment approaches to development, lobbying and advocacy work, innovation in which NGOs seek to influence wider policy processes, and general campaigning work.

**The *implementer*** role is concerned with the mobilisation of resources to provide goods and services to people who need them; whereas a catalyst is understood as a person or thing which brings about change — to inspire, facilitate or contribute to improved thinking and action to promote change.

**The role of *partner*** encompasses the growing trend for NGOs to work with government, donors, and the private sector on joint activities, as well as the complex relationships which have emerged among NGOs, such as 'capacity building'.

Early research on NGOs primarily focused on demonstrating their roles as *catalysts* with the ability to influence state policies and shape state interests. Fisher (1997) and Keck and Sikkink (1998) provided foundational work in this area, highlighting the capacity of NGOs to create pressures for greater political participation and accountability, thus serving as a counterbalance to state power. Similarly, Ndegwa (1994) and Clarke (1998) emphasised the



comparative analyses of power and authority in global governance, underscoring NGOs' potential to significantly affect state dynamics. In refugee contexts, NGOs have been acknowledged for their role in public advocacy, which aims to raise awareness of refugee situations (Evans and Shields, 2014; Paniagua and D'Angelo, 2017). Reynolds and Lynch (2014) conducted multi-region field visits between 2005 and 2011 to gather evidence about stateless populations served by Refugees International - a Washington D.C.-based advocacy organization known for acting as a catalyst on behalf of refugees. These visits included interactions with government officials, UN representatives, local legal experts, and members of stateless communities. The gathered qualitative data offers a detailed understanding of the conditions and challenges faced by stateless individuals, arguing that NGOs engage in public, legal, and political spheres to support refugees, and highlighting their critical role in ensuring change through well-timed research and advocacy. The advocacy role of NGOs extends to the international arena, where they influence policymaking and shape global agendas. By participating in international forums, engaging with multinational organisations, and forming transnational networks, NGOs amplify the voices of marginalised groups and push for more equitable and just policies, emphasising NGOs' ability to generate and disseminate knowledge, positioning them as crucial players in the global governance landscape (Pincock, Betts and Easton-Calabria, 2020). Yang and Saffer (2018), for example, identified 463 prominent international NGOs involved in refugee issues and explored news articles mentioning the NGOs and the refugee crisis between January 1, 2015, and January 1, 2016, as well as tweets mentioning the NGOs and the refugee crisis in 2015, finding that NGOs have significant influence on traditional media coverage, providing powerful avenues for advocacy. NGO contributions in both local and international contexts are therefore vital, particularly as global challenges become increasingly complex.

Yet in the context of Syrian refugees, it is NGOs role as implementers that has drawn greatest attention in the literature providing insights into logistical and operational challenges faced by NGOs (Tall *et al.*, 2023). NGOs are seen contributing to refugee communities by providing education, healthcare, and vocational training, which facilitates refugees contribution to their new communities (Röth, Nimeh and Hagen-Zanker, 2017). Reports on NGO activities, such as the Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAMDER, 2013) in relation to Syrian refugees in the border cities of Turkey, highlights the role of NGOs in assisting Syrian refugees and the challenges that NGOs faced while providing their services. NGOs were widely heralded as playing important roles in the refugee context by providing basic services and humanitarian aid, namely in relation to safety and health services.

However, a historically high failure rate in NGO projects, particularly in the early stages of interventions, drove research attention towards NGO challenges, successes and failures

(Tall *et al.*, 2023). Tall (2023) for example, explores the challenges faced by NGOs in Jordan, drawing on a sample of 181 employees from 45 active NGOs using a questionnaire, identifying that organisational structure, organisational culture and funding are significant in the project's success. Others highlighted a lack of local community participation, even though community participation had been highlighted as a significant factor in the development of the NGO project plans (Pimoljinda and Siriprasertchok, 2017). Gradually however, the study of NGOs moved from a peripheral concern as a small group of actors support larger mechanisms and institutions, to the centre of the field as an array of new policies introduced in 2016 began to emphasise the role of partnerships in refugee research (Stroup and Wong, 2016), which in the next section I argue is in need of particular emphasis.

### **2.2.2. NGOs and the Importance of Partnerships**

NGOs are widely seen as part of a broader ecosystem of national, international, and transnational actors that informs and influences their actions (Brumat, Geddes and Pettrachin, 2022). Consequently, there is a substantial body of literature exploring their efficacy amidst these various actors. Early studies in education, such as those by Libal and Harding (2011) on Iraqi refugees in Jordan, examined collaborations between international and local NGOs. Their research, which included 85 interviews with humanitarian and human rights NGOs and UN agencies, advocated for capacity-building in local organisations and emphasised the importance of relationships with international actors in programme implementation. Over time, the literature shifted from early understandings centred on conflict and cooperation as the primary modes of interaction between NGOs and other actors (Coston, 1998) to more complex analyses of power dynamics (Onur Bahçecik and Turhan, 2022). Despite this shift, the analysis of these interactions has remained relatively underexplored. Leun and Bouter (2015) highlight the need for more comprehensive research to fully understand the intricacies of multi-agency collaborations.

This need has only increased the past decade due to a series of shifts in the NGO operating environment. The first shift is increasing emphasis placed on the impacts of the process of 'NGO-ization'. NGO-ization refers to a process "by which social movements professionalize, bureaucratize, and institutionalize in vertically structured policy-outcome-oriented organisations that focus on generating issue-specific and, to some degree, marketable expert knowledge or services" (Lang, 2012, p. 64). This is a socially and politically constructed process pulling the loosely networked groups from the local to the transnational level and into formalised structures. The dynamics of control are altered by NGOs increasing dependency on national and international donors whose demands for higher standards and larger scales increased operating costs (Lang, 2022). While increases

in standards and further accountability may appear to serve the broader beneficiaries, the accountability channels became established with the funders, rather than the beneficiaries of the NGO services and subsequently altered the agendas NGOs were able to pursue (Banks, Hulme and Edwards, 2015; Heiss and Kelley, 2017).

Second is the influence of NGOs roles within global mechanisms. ‘Professionalized’ NGOs increasingly found themselves with a seat at the table of national and global policy debates around refugee education (Lang, 2022). This is not to say NGOs voices are necessarily resulting in change, but that the dynamic shift allows NGO voices to be heard, and in turn also greater opportunity for global mechanisms to influence how NGOs act and enact activities within the increasingly politicised space (Pritchett, 2018).

Third, at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, a new initiative, agreed between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organisations including 18 donor countries and 16 international aid organisations from the United Nations (UN), international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCRCM) aimed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action through channelling a greater proportion of funding directly to local and national responders (Metcalf-Hough, Fenton and Manji, 2023). The ‘Grand Bargain 2.0’ iterated on the original Grand Bargain and launched in 2021, went even further committing to prioritising greater support for the leadership, delivery and capacity of local responders and the participation of affected communities in addressing humanitarian needs (GBLocalisation, 2024). The localisation agenda transformed NGO operations by emphasising local in-country actors such as NGOs in the decision-making processes. In turn – at least in theory – NGOs were anticipated to gain greater control over dimensions such as planning activities and setting objectives of programming than found in the literature pre-2016 (Pincock, Betts and Easton-Calabria, 2020).

Finally, while refugees have long been perceived as able to exploit opportunities to shape agendas of their services (Jacobsen, 2002; Erel, 2010; Betts and Collier, 2017), in September 2016, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and in doing so significantly altered the dynamics between refugees and service providers. The New York Declaration highlighted the importance of the international refugee regime and contains a wide range of commitments by Member States culminating in the Global Compact on Refugees affirmed in 2018 emphasising:

- making clear the duty of states and relevant stakeholders to improve access to education and develop policies on refugees’ inclusion in national education systems and;

- placing emphasis on incentivising host countries to adopt more fair inclusive approaches by providing financial and technical support.

This policy shift significantly altered the relationship between refugees, states, NGOs and donors. Suddenly refugees were more than merely victims of forced migration, but objects which are traded in exchange for financial and technical support (Cole, 2018) in what Tsourapas (2019) has termed ‘refugee rentier states’. This strategy had been prominent in Jordanian refugee policies since the settlement of Iraqi refugees in the 2000s but accelerated during the Syrian crisis and in light of policy shifts in 2016 (El-Abed, 2014; Tsourapas, 2019). As Cole (2018, p.2) convincingly argues through interview research with Eritrean refugees in Kampala and Asmara between 2016-2017, “if refugees have become objects which are quantified, valued and traded – commodified at its most extreme – then it is clear what direction the re-valuation of refugee status is going in for states but less clear as to what its remaining ‘value’ is for refugees”. It is not however, only refugees and the state impacted by these shifts. With the commodification of refugees, NGOs are also presented opportunities to exchange services aligned with donor or state agendas for funding, rather than seek to identify and pursue the agendas of refugee communities. I argue therefore, that the literature on NGOs and their roles in shaping the in-country agenda, undertaken prior to these 2016 policy shifts, largely assesses a context misrepresenting the current refugee operating environment.

#### **2.2.2.1. Post-2016 refugee education and the ‘localisation’ agenda**

In light of the policy shifts between 2016-2018 discussed in the previous section that placed renewed emphasis on local actors, there has been a ballooning of literature on ‘localisation’ in refugee contexts (Brabant and Patel, 2017; Pincock, Betts and Easton-Calabria, 2020; Roepstorff, 2020; Brumat, Geddes and Pettrachin, 2022). Although there is some debate about the precise definition of localisation, it can generally be described as the process of recognising, respecting, and enhancing the leadership of local authorities and the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action (Brabant and Patel, 2017). Localisation aims to better address the needs of affected populations and prepare national actors for future humanitarian responses. The primary commitments associated with the localisation agenda focus on aspects such as financing, partnership, capacity strengthening, coordination, recruitment, and communication.

Yet the localisation literature exploring these dynamics and NGOs after the 2016 policy shifts has largely overlooked the diversity of actors and dynamics that shape NGO actions. Most of the research has placed emphasis on state-NGO relations. Onur Bahçecik and Turhan (2022) for example, draws on interview data with an unspecified number of

members of Turkish humanitarian NGOs and secondary sources to examine the interactions between the Turkish state and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs). They argue that traditional views of state–NGO relations as either conflictual or cooperative are insufficient. Instead, the relationship encompasses a range of interactions, including competition and co-optation. The study highlights that while ideological proximity between the state and NGOs can facilitate cooperation, it does not eliminate the potential for conflict. Humanitarian NGOs in Turkey maintain a degree of autonomy and can influence state actions, illustrating a dynamic and multifaceted relationship that cannot be easily categorised. Yet the state-NGO exploration overlooks the many other stakeholder influences and mechanisms.

Carvalho and Dryden-Peterson (2024) take a broader political economy approach to exploring the role of host governments in education service provision for refugees. They propose that the political economy of refugees is distinct from that of citizens due to issues of responsibility and uncertainty about refugees' futures. They outline three models of refugee education: traditional humanitarian, development, and responsibility-sharing. Under the humanitarian model, international actors primarily manage education, focusing on short-term goals. The development model integrates refugees into national systems with long-term objectives. The responsibility-sharing model that shapes the post-2016 refugee response architecture combines elements of both, leading to complex and negotiated responsibilities among national and international actors. The authors argue that understanding these dynamics is crucial for equitable and effective policymaking in refugee education. Yet their approach is theoretical, rather than grounded in empirical data, providing a useful framework but not the unpacking of how these models manifest in practice.

Another body of literature explores power between NGOs, but outside of the refugee context. Brien and Evans (2017) for example, interview 32 NGO leaders involved in children's rights across Canada. They find that non-profit organisations in Canadian immigrant settlement services play a crucial advocacy role but face significant challenges in influencing policy. Government consultations are often seen as predetermined and not genuinely open to NGO input. Non-profits use coalition advocacy through umbrella organisations to amplify their voice, though their capacity is constrained by competitive funding models and limited research resources. Despite these challenges, evidence-based advocacy and strategic relationships with both political and public service sides of government are seen as essential for effective policy engagement. Yet the Canadian context provides a significantly different setting than that of Jordan. Moreover, the data collection was undertaken in 2009 and 2011 providing data that does not reflect the 2016 policy shifts.

Pincock, Betts and Easton-Calabria (2020) provide a valuable case study, arguing for the importance of research into the role of power and interests amidst local actors. They use ethnographic research on the interactions between international institutions and refugee-led organisations in Kampala and Uganda to explore how 'localisation' unfolds in practice within humanitarian governance. While they highlight the recent policy shifts, their focus on interactions between international institutions and refugee-led organisations overlooks the breadth of other power dynamics in local contexts, such as other NGOs, coordination mechanisms, Ministries of Education, and internal NGO processes.

Brumat, Geddes and Pettrachin (2022) conducted the most thorough study on refugees. They reviewed literature from six countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Jordan, South Africa, and Turkey), analysing 252 documents. Their goal was to determine if global standards are implemented at national and regional levels, or if responses are influenced more by local contexts, which could lead to adaptation, resistance, or even rejection of international standards. They find that while the global has an important normative and aspirational resonance, there is significant evidence for the localisation of global standards on asylum and refugee protection, indicating the power of local actors to alter norms. While the study helps illuminate the importance of the power dynamics at the local level, it focuses on the state as the local actor and its relationship with global policy, rather than explore the dynamics that exist between local, state, NGO and other actors more broadly.

Jung et al. (2023) takes a broader approach to assess how international stakeholders – including INGOs - navigate the domestic refugee contexts of Jordan and Turkey. They analyse tools employed by stakeholders to manoeuvre the refugee contexts by drawing on 16 semi-structured interviews with representatives of international stakeholders. They argue that international stakeholders present a depoliticised approach that portrays them and the actors they work with as service providers while working with national governments that engage in rent-seeking. Subsequently, they demonstrate the politicised and malleable nature of the refugee context where actors alter the activities based on their various incentives and mandates. Jung et al. (2023) however, nor any of the other studies reviewed as part of this thesis explore the consequences on education, which as I have argued in the previous section is often perceived as a space prone to outside influence by stakeholders with divergent perceptions of the role of youth education.

Finally, Zino (2019) provides one of the few comprehensive studies of Jordan, drawing on 70 semi-structured interviews with host government officials, UN officials, and NGO representatives in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon between June 2016 and August 2016 in an exploration of relationships between the governments and NGO educational services. Zino (2019) compares activities across the countries, suggesting that the opportunities, strategies, and capabilities of NGOs to overcome obstacles to their provision of refugee education services are directly related to NGO relationships with government partners; and

that higher refugee enrolment rates are also attributable to the relative willingness of a host government to cooperate with NGOs. While Zino's findings echo the importance of relationships, its focus on state-NGO relationships overlooks the much broader global policy impacts that NGOs operate within and the other forces that influence NGO enactments, including refugees themselves.

#### **2.2.2.2. Addressing the research gap**

In light of the predominant focus in the literature on a narrow subset of actors, I follow calls from Roepstorff (2020) and others (Richmond, 2012; Pincock, Betts and Easton-Calabria, 2020) for a shift to a critical localism approach to explore education NGO's roles that emphasises the multitude of processes of authority and power that unfold within local contexts, and are shaped by interactions with a multitude of actors, stakeholders and their policy instruments, both internationally and nationally (Roepstorff, 2020). The local, instead of being conceived as a fixed spatial and temporal category, or a fixed set of actors, is understood as a highly contextual and relational concept in flux that is a site of ongoing construction and reconstruction (Roepstorff, 2020). Moreover, actors are perceived not as passive recipients or as constrained by their environments, but as active agents of potential change, mobilising opportunities, succeeding in acts of change, and conceding in equal measure. As Ball (2008, p. 7) argues "policy makers do not always translate directly and obviously into institutional practices" instead "policies are contested, interpreted and enacted in a variety of arenas of practice and the rhetoric, texts and meanings". In education a policy-practice gap is common as policy passes through numerous systems on its way from global policy makers to the classroom, and even more so if those policies are deemed to be disconnected from the demands of the refugee population (Mendenhall, Russell and Buckner, 2017). NGOs, therefore, can engage in a dialectical relationship with policy and other competing sources of authority – including refugees themselves - creating influential connections that shape programming for refugees. Moreover, NGOs hold the opportunity to circumvent policy altogether. As Buckner et al. (2018) finds in a survey of refugee organisations in 16 countries, and 44 key informants in Lebanon, school administrators, refugee families, traditional community leaders and community civil society organisations are just a few of the identified actors interacting with and altering refugee education policy, who "have their own sources of authority derived from their proximity or shared religious and cultural backgrounds, which may compete with national authority". Subsequently, the study finds:

"where the government's stated commitment to education must be realised, we find that policies are not fully implemented and that many unofficial educational

programmes are operating in contradiction to government policy.” (Buckner, Spencer and Cha, 2018, p. 444)

The study goes on to argue that refugee contexts in particular are susceptible to these kinds of policy transformations:

We argue that, while such gaps between policy and practice in education are common, refugee contexts present distinct challenges for policy implementation due to the role of international actors in setting policy, weak state authority and refugees’ lack of legal status. We suggest that a better starting place for understanding education policy implementation is to understand the often competing sources of state and non-state authority that affect decision-making at the local level. (Buckner, Spencer and Cha, 2018, p. 444)

Yet Buckner et al. (2018) focus solely on the Lebanese context, and while highlighting the importance of research at the local level do not progress in to analysing the role of NGOs within the policy-practice gap they identify. As development and humanitarian actors working in or with education, NGOs are a local actor who have increasingly moved beyond gap-filling initiatives into capacity building and service delivery activities for state-based services (Ulleberg, 2009; IASC, 2016) and in turn have become deeply enmeshed in this politicalised space and the debates around the conceptualisations of the goals of education amidst increasingly uncertain and complex global sociological, ecological and technological trends (International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021). Within this context, NGOs require exploration as part of their broader networks and the power dynamics that exist and shift within, as opposed to previous research that has predominantly focused on binary relationships between NGO and state; NGO and refugees; or NGO and other NGOs.

By undertaking research with NGO staff, I aim to understand first-hand the different drivers of the education programme conceptualisations experienced by staff operating refugee programmes rather than approach an analysis of the dynamics between any two particular actors. I do so by engaging with NGO staff on their experiences of enacting refugee youth programmes for Syrian refugees in Jordan, to allow the most influential power dynamics that exist to surface. In doing so, I aim to highlight potential entry points to alter the trajectory of current refugee education approaches, and to identify whether NGOs under the umbrella of recent policy changes, are in fact the depoliticised actors that the ‘ngo-ization’ literature has theorised.





## Chapter 3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological framework employed in this study to explore the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in shaping the goals of refugee youth education programmes for Syrian refugees in Jordan between 2019-2020. This chapter also details the epistemological stance, research design, data collection methods, and analytical procedures used to investigate how NGO staff conceptualise the goals of education for Syrian refugee youth, as well as the ethical considerations pertinent to this research.

### 3.1. Epistemology

The collaborative, dialogic nature of this research is underpinned by social constructivist epistemology where both the researcher and participants co-construct meanings of the social phenomena (Crotty, 1998). The conveying of emotions - which some may perceive as object reality (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) - were seen as products of the many surrounding stimuli that construct and shape reality, in part, by mine and the participants social, cultural, economic and other intersecting privileges and disadvantages (Crotty, 1998; Robson and McCartan, 2016). It is believed therefore, that a quantitative or objectivist approach would disguise the many complex interactions that the researcher can aim to decipher (Miller, 2004). Instead, an ethnographic approach was chosen to help understand not only the perceptions and experiences of staff and the intersecting stimuli that surround a context and shape the construction of knowledge (Straubhaar, 2014). It is believed that having adopted quantitative or objectivist approaches instead would have disguised many of the complex interactions that the researcher can aim to decipher (Miller, 2004).

My qualitative approach is informed by critical ethnography. While ethnographically informed qualitative methodology recognises the importance of identifying one's bias, it often does so with the goal of removing biases. Critical ethnography in contrast, embraces the inherent political nature of ethnography, and of the researcher with the goal of social change (Wolcott, 2008). This is not to suggest I engaged the context without any attempt at neutrality. Instead, it means that during data collection, analysis of my data and when presenting these findings I critically reflected on my biases to identify the potential consequences on this research projects, while maintaining my goal of impact in the hope of benefiting refugee communities (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003; Turton, 2005).

I approached this research with the view that the researcher and the research participants are simultaneously undergoing and exercising power and hold the ability to co-construct the narrative, rather than more traditional views of the researcher as bearer of knowledge and as powerful over the interview candidate, able to extract objective knowledge for analysis (Dona, 2007; Lammers, 2007). I therefore, reflected on my positionality throughout the research process and the positionality of the participants, in an attempt to gain some understanding of the implications of these stimuli (Straubhaar, 2014).

## 3.2. Methods

This research draws on several data sources:

1. **Semi-Structured Interviews:** Thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted between March 2019 – June 2020 with NGO staff across seven international and national NGOs operating in Jordan. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility in exploring the participants' perspectives while ensuring consistency in the core topics covered.
2. **Document Analysis:** Relevant documents, including global, NGO and government policy were analysed. This method provided insights into the refugee youth education policy prescriptions related to the conceptualisations of refugee youth education programming, to be able to then identify their role in NGO staff's everyday experiences.

These methods were deemed essential to address the research questions thoroughly and to provide insights into the complex interactions between policy, practice, and professional experiences of NGO staff. The choice of methods was driven by the need to explore how NGO staff conceptualise the goals of refugee youth education, the challenges they encounter, and the factors influencing these conceptualisations. The ethnographic approach was chosen to capture the lived experience of NGO staff operating programming amidst a variety of agendas and stakeholders, which standardised quantitative methods might overlook. The next sections explore the sampling and these methods in further detail.

### 3.2.1. Selection of Participants

I first arrived in Jordan in September 2019 to learn Arabic. I initially intended to start the data collection between May 2020 and May 2021, but as I had arrived early and my ethics process had already been completed and approved, I began immediately with interviews. I chose to postpone planned classroom observations until 2020 to reduce the amount of travel required while I was studying Arabic. In the beginning of 2020, COVID-19 interrupted the research and the planned classroom observations were cancelled. Instead, I had to resort to using the interview data I had already collected, complemented by additional online interviews via video calls until I had to leave Jordan in May 2020 given the risks of COVID-19 pandemic. I tried to resume my research interviews after leaving Jordan, however, the severity of the impact of the pandemic made it very difficult for NGO staff to commit to participation in my research.

For the interviews that did take place, I initially used purposeful sampling (Mertens, 2010) and did not set limits on the number of NGOs participating in the research. Staff from seven NGOs participated in total. Out of the seven NGOs, I engaged with three NGOs more extensively to interview multiple staff within each of the organisations, which enabled me to triangulate the data. Subsequently, I steered most of my grey literature review and exploration of the NGO operations to those three. Connections to the NGOs were established through personal contacts made working in Jordan and through academic networks, however once attending the Education Sector Working Groups in 2019, I began introducing myself and my research to NGOs beyond my immediate network. Identifying participants became particularly difficult at the onset of COVID-19 in May 2020. It proved more difficult to encourage participation when not able to be in Jordan in person. Staff were also overwhelmed with the workload imposed by the pandemic and less willing to allocate time to take part in voluntary research interviews. When considering the research objectives of identifying themes across NGO conceptualisations of education in Jordan, I was however able to establish a viable data set from the data collected up to and over the COVID period, and eternally grateful to the many who made time for me to pursue this research during very difficult times managing programming during the pandemic.

I offered the interview candidates complete anonymity both as individuals and organisations. This presented challenges in presenting my findings when aiming to demonstrate distinctions between the funding modalities of NGOs and although I have strictly adhered to the anonymity agreed upon in hindsight the level of anonymity, I had offered may have been more than required to ethically protect the interests of those involved. That said, some of the revealed findings suggest instances where NGO staff circumvented policy, which may not have been revealed without these firm assurances of anonymity.

I had considered grouping the statements under pseudonyms yet attempts to do so made it clear to anyone with Jordanian context knowledge who was being discussed and clear which interview candidates were based on their roles and organisational affiliations. Fortunately, as the research analysis continued it became clear that NGO staff voices in the conceptualisations of refugee youth programming were more influential than the NGOs themselves, which allowed NGO staff to be seen as a collective presenting similar themes independent of their associated NGO. This NGO staff voice helped with analysis and presentation of the data as I was able to reflect on a collective phenomenon rather than what may be seen as an organisational one.

### **3.2.2. NGOs**

Interviews were held with staff from a total of 7 NGOs, consisting of 4 international NGOs and 3 Jordanian NGOs. While this provided breadth, the access to perform in-depth

analysis through multiple interviews with multiple staff at the same NGO remained more limited. I therefore chose three NGOs to focus on to provide depth. These three were chosen based on availability of access. The three took very different approaches to refugee youth education, and had different funding modalities, presenting a valuable set of contrasting case studies. All the organisations had been operating youth programmes for the entirety of the Syrian crisis. The first, had been providing non-formal education to Syrian refugee youth and disenfranchised Jordanians in the same classroom in host communities, and outside of formal school hours. The organisation has been providing Jordanian students opportunities to continue their education for over twenty years. In 2006 the organisation started providing services to Iraqi refugees, and in 2011 at the onset of the Syrian crisis started serving Syrian refugees through more than 150 classes across Jordan in both host communities and refugee camps. Its target was to reach out-of-school youth. It drew on Freirean pedagogies and Paulo Freire features in much of the discussion with senior staff and the NGO director. Its goal was to emphasise supportive relationships between youth and trained adults and applying a positive, youth-driven learning environment. The main process elements were:

- (1) creating roles for action where roles were not envisioned before
- (2) youth participation in decision-making
- (3) adult support
- (4) asset-building activities, and
- (5) a pro-social environment.

The programme ran a few hours a day, every day. At the end of the programme learners were provided an opportunity to sit the 10th grade Jordanian exam. It's funded by large international donors. Despite its focus on academic outcomes, it emphasises holistic programming with a predominant focus on inquiry-based learning. Despite its academic opportunities, it predominantly emphasises holistic programming with a focus on inquiry-based learning over certified outcomes.

The second, is a large international NGO offering an unaccredited educational programme. It was a one-year, intensive programme running every day to deliver three main interventions: teaching of literacy and numeracy skills; training in livelihood skills toward employment, and various life-skills including the building of individual self-confidence and awareness of the role's youth can play in rebuilding their community and nation. In the refugee context in Jordan, the approach that was being followed at the time of data collection claimed to have been made more context-specific, modifying the programme content, adding new technical skills, and amending the programme according to the evolving context. It was funded by a Western government.

The third, seeks university access for youth through remedial education, yet employs diverse teaching methods to advance their academic skills. It provides youth training opportunities and offers scholarships to high achievers to focus on their studies. It places particular emphasis on the community centric components, integrating a community service element as a requisite for scholarships and support. Despite its focus on academic outcomes, it emphasises holistic programming with a predominant focus on inquiry-based learning. It is these distinctions that I aim to highlight above all, as they demonstrate the diversity of the participants involved in the research. It is entirely funded by private donors.

### 3.2.3. Interviews

Interviews with key participants were used to help understand the challenges, approaches and experiences of conceptualising youth education programmes for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan. A total of 30 interviews were undertaken between March 2019 and June 2020 with staff from across 7 NGOs. Everyone was interviewed once, except for 1 programme implementer and 1 youth programme coordinator, who were initially interviewed together, then interviewed again separately. Subsequently, a total of 29 individuals participated in the research. Each participant was asked to allocate 1 hour for the interview. The length of interviews varied primarily based on the participant’s availability, with the longest 2hrs 30 minutes, and all of the interviews lasted for more than an hour.

A summary of interviews is provided below. The job titles vary between organisations and in many instances are unique to each NGO allowing identification of the NGO and interview participant. Therefore, to maintain anonymity, I group interviews under titles that are representative of their role.

#### *Summary of interviews*

<u>Candidate Type</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>#</u>
Number of non-Government Organisations	Ensuring a diversity of NGOs, both international and national, helped identify cultural and policy implications that may alter the findings when using different samples	7
MoE Staff	The Jordanian Ministry of education are the country lead on programme implementation. Understanding their role in shaping these programmes is integral to ensuring different perspectives are captured beyond merely those articulated by NGOs alone.	2
International Donor staff based in Jordan	Many organisations are accountable to donors for continued funding, and they are key partners for development and humanitarian programming. Understanding their conceptualisations and being able to compare these to the conceptualisations of the	2

	programme implementing organisations helps shed light on contradictions, and potential forms of resistance by organisations in their enactment.	
NGO Directors based in Jordan	NGO directors provide oversight of programme design, implementation and reporting to the donors. In the case of local NGOs, they are often based in country.	1
NGO Operations Directors	NGO Operations Directors provide a wide-angle lens, often involved in all elements from donor funding, staff recruitment and coordination of programme implementation.	1
Programme Directors	Similar in role to youth programme coordinators, yet some NGOs combine oversight of youth and children rather than have dedicated youth teams	2
Youth Programme Coordinator	In-country programme directors are often the focal point for donors and the MoE. They split their time between head offices in Amman and programme centres.	3
Programme implementer	Implementing staff are often those most in touch with refugees on a daily basis. They predominantly work out of youth programme sites with minimal head office time and subsequently less exposure to the MoE and donors.	19

Interviews with key staff from organisations were undertaken at the offices of the relative organisation or remotely via zoom (only 1 youth programme coordinator, 1 NGO director and 1 programme implementer were interviewed remotely). Individual and group interviews took place with interested stakeholders as opportunities arose, and in locations that suited the participants. A small group interview with a programme implementer and youth programme coordinator provided a valuable form of interview as it created an open-ended group discussion, guided by the researcher, but ultimately allowing depth of discussion facilitated by each other that cannot always be achieved individually (Robson and McCartan, 2016). This group discussion was followed by a one-to-one interview with each individual.

Interview techniques were deemed suitable for creating a space for reflection and exploration of deeply held and unique individual beliefs that can more accurately reflect the actual beliefs, feelings and experiences of participants (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003; Miller, 2004). I attempted to explore issues in the humanitarian and development sector that from prior experience in research projects suggested these face-to-face forms of data collection garner information not typically shared via alternative means such as email, phone or Zoom, where candidates do not feel as comfortable speaking openly and critically of their organisations or other organisations.

NGO staff interviews were held in English except for two in-country programme coordinators, where I required an Arabic translator. Birbili (2000) suggests an interpreter can impact research in three ways: a) the effect on the participant; b) the effect on the communicative process; and c) the effect on the translation. Having secured funding to hire

a translator I was able to ensure sensitivity to the context and also gain additional confidence in the translation and fluidity of the interview to help mitigate these risks. Due to the small number of interviews using a translator, I also gained confidence in the accuracy of the data by being able to triangulate the translation interviews with those that were done in English.

Data for all of the interviews were recorded on a notepad and on a recording device after receiving permission from the interviewees, then transcribed for data analysis.

### **3.2.4. Document analysis**

I utilised document analysis to understand the potential influence of global and national systems and policies on how NGOs conceptualise refugee youth education in Jordan. NGO policy dominated the document analysis, and provided insights into the policy environment from which NGO staff operate, and the potential influences this policy may have on implementations. Literature was critically analysed in order to explore various interpretations (Randolph, 2009). While much of this was in English, particularly that around the humanitarian and development sector, some of the local and government policies were retrieved in Arabic and Arabic speakers used to help translate key sections. Primary datasets for the three selected primary NGOs included:

- Programme evaluations from the start of the Syrian crisis in 2011 to 2022
- Theories of change
- Programme reports and monitoring and evaluation matrixes
- Meeting minutes, particularly from educations sector working group meetings
- Terms of Reference for programmes
- Funding proposals
- International and national policy documents

These bodies of literature were treated as part of the findings and coded accordingly, as they are cited explicitly in the findings section to demonstrate the influence of these bodies of literature on the operation of NGOs and the conceptualisations of the goal of refugee youth education.

When documentation had been provided from NGOs for part of the document analysis, I attained permission to reference the NGOs by name. I do not overlap NGO staff interviewed with NGOs involved in document review to ensure anonymity.



### **3.3. Reflexivity**

This thesis stems from my professional and academic experience within this field, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Before undertaking this research, I held roles with several international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that directly engaged with Syrian refugee communities in Jordan and neighbouring countries. These roles involved designing and implementing education programmes aimed at improving access and outcomes for displaced youth. Through these opportunities were outside of my PhD work, I gained first-hand insights into the challenges of navigating donor priorities, balancing national and international policy frameworks, and responding to the diverse and often underrepresented needs of refugee youth. I also participated in education sector working groups in Jordan and had worked in Jordan on two private research contracts relating to refugees, where government representatives, NGOs, and international organisations collaborated in refugee education research. This experience invoked interest in the role of NGOs, and the socio-political dynamics and power relations shaping refugee education in Jordan. My positionality enabled me to critically examine the operational constraints and transformative potential of NGOs - which are central themes of this thesis - yet also led me to begin formulating my views of NGO roles prior to undertaking the research and subsequently adding an element of bias. This positioning influenced not only the selection of methods and participants in the research but also the interpretation and presentation of the data.

Recognising that my previous connections to Jordan and the region significantly influenced the research, I approached the research with a conscious effort to reflect on how my background, experiences, and the relationships I formed within the field may impact the co-construction of knowledge. Ultimately, I tried not to detach my data from my other experiences, but to allow my other experiences to inform the data, which aligned with my critical ethnographic methodological approach that emphasises engagement instead of disengagement with one's own presence in their research. It allowed me to see my experiences as benefits. It is distinct from merely presenting a section on my positionality and subjectivity with the aim of mitigating the impacts of my biases, instead I engaged my experiences as a resource in shaping and understanding the research.

### **3.4. Research Ethics**

This research gained ethical approval from the UCL Institute of Education prior to commencing field work<sup>1</sup>. Signed consent was obtained for interviews. Permission was gained from the organisations the staff represented when the staff felt doing so was

---

<sup>1</sup> UCL Ethics Reference Number: Z6364106/2019/07/147

necessary. Interview data has been anonymised as per agreement with the interview participants.

While ethics consent forms are standard practice in this form of research, I recognised that elements of the process had potential to be misunderstood or people's willingness to consent to change throughout the research. Pittaway et al. (2010) suggest therefore, the addition of an ongoing negotiation in which the conditions of participation are continuously discussed and participants maintain control over the research procedures as well as the manner of their engagement. These same principles apply to the organisations and staff involved, who negotiate the research needs with the learning times, teacher needs and pressures (Adelman and Chopra, 2019). By adopting these approaches in parallel to the consent forms and information sheets, I aimed to mitigate some of these effects.

The interview was viewed and designed in such a way as to provide an opportunity for candidates to reflect with me on the processes and actions surrounding their organisations and their experiences. The participants were encouraged to contribute to guiding the interview and exploring areas they felt relevant to the research. Nevertheless, while hitting all the right notes from a methodological perspective, such approaches do carry risk as interviews with staff who are in close proximity to the Syrian refugee crisis risks evoking upsetting or disturbing memories (Krause, 2017; Magilo and Pherali, 2019). This research therefore, committed to respect of the participants that ensures this research adheres to the fundamentals of the do no harm approach (Lawrance, Kaplan and McFarlane, 2013).

A translator was used for two of the interviews, with the rest undertaken in English. Funding for an experienced translator was secured, in order to mitigate risks that other individuals I bring into the sites may not adhere to ethical standards. Identifying this translator was done in collaboration with the organisations involved. While this may present some methodological issues in the relationship between the translator and the organisations, these have been deemed less significant than the importance of ensuring the right translator is used on site. I met the translator in advance and emphasised the importance of ensuring the fluidity of the conversation and accurately translating the content, however the translator had been on many research projects before and therefore was well versed in the procedure. I outlined to the translator the importance of data privacy and walked through the ethical commitments of this research to ensure adherence the agreement made with the participants.

The research considered transformation as a potential education conceptualisation, which some have suggested can be seen by national governments as disruptive and can hold the potential to incite resistance against existing structures, occasionally in violent ways (Evans, 2008; Proctor, 2015). As Proctor (2015, p. 2) notes, "confident, outspoken and politically conscious young people, it turns out, are not the types to sit quietly by when the

society around them disappoints". Claims, however, that these are inherently violent or contradictory to shared goals have been disputed with little evidence of a correlation between enactments of transformative refugee programming and violence (Leenders, 2009). Nevertheless, the research process acknowledged these claims and did not prescribe, enact, test or advocate for any particular conceptualisation of education during the research. Instead, it outlined an exploration of existing programmes and their operations to understand how they arrived at their current conceptualisations and what drove them, before drawing comparisons to the literature.

Safety and security considerations were made for the fieldwork in Jordan. Throughout the research period I was based in Amman, which had always been a popular tourist destination and deemed safe by the UK Foreign Common Office. Having had extensive prior experience working alongside Syrian refugee youth and teachers in Jordan and living in Amman and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, I was well situated to navigate the research project. Yet the onset of COVID-19 in 2020 quickly altered the nature of the research project.

On no occasions did any interview participant indicate or appear upset or uncomfortable with the questions or the interview process. Prior to each interview, participants were provided with a comprehensive overview of the study's aims, the nature of the questions, and the intended use of their responses. Informed consent was obtained in writing, ensuring participants fully understood their right to withdraw at any time without explanation or consequence.

COVID-19 presented a series of new ethical dilemmas that had not been foreseen in advance. At the onset of the crisis a strict lockdown was implemented in Jordan. By May 2020, it was apparent that things were not going to return to normal in the short-term, and there was little use staying in Jordan to try and continue the research. Airports were closed but I was eventually flown back to the UK by the British Embassy in 2020. My intent had been to continue the research remotely. This proved challenging, not only for logistical reasons, but ethically. The extent of the pandemic created significant strain on NGO staff, both professionally and personally. Their already limited resources were further stretched. I felt that asking for remote interviews could place an undue burden and divert energies away from the crisis. Those who I had already agreed to interview and organisations who had already agreed to be involved were most challenging, as they felt an obligation to the research, yet were placing themselves under additional pressures for the sake of my PhD research. I provided those individuals and their organisations reassurances that they were still able to withdraw. On occasions I felt personally obliged to encourage some to do so. My research in the context of COVID-19 felt at times too insignificant to continue pursuing interviews and organisations to the degree I had up to that point. This certainly had an impact on the breadth and depth of data I was able to obtain, but removing undue

pressure on staff to meet commitments to interview was felt necessary to abide by the do no harm commitment of this research.

I considered returning to Jordan over the years that followed, particularly for observations and interviews with teachers. I felt however, that travelling around to centres during a pandemic and risking the spread to vulnerable populations far outweighed the value of the research, especially as the visit would also have entailed flying to Jordan from the UK.

Instead, I continued the research remotely. Without the ability to be in-country and pursue contacts the momentum of the research had been impacted, and the opportunity for observations restricted. Ethically however, it had been deemed necessary to remove undue pressure on participants in the research.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

I developed a framework based on existing literature to understand the various conceptualisations of refugee youth education, presented in section 2.1.5. This framework guided the structuring of research questions, initial coding of findings, and analysis. Employing thematic analysis then enabled the identification of key themes and patterns in participants' responses related to the established conceptualisations.

This approach - well-suited to the exploratory nature of the research - allowed themes to emerge organically from the lived experiences of individuals involved in the education of Syrian refugee youth, while maintaining structure through the pre-established framework. It also facilitated the identification of new conceptualisations beyond those derived from the literature, such as the "pathways" concept discussed in Chapter 4. Additionally, this methodology enabled the exploration of tensions and contradictions in educational goals, deepening the understanding of the complexities involved in refugee youth education. I drew on the approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012), who highlight the theoretical flexibility of thematic analysis. I chose this approach as it provides the flexibility I feel necessary for a project exploring complex social and political forces yet provides rigid steps that help ensure rigour demanded by research. It's clear process is also easily understood, making it well suited for policy and the general public who I hope the research to reach (Braun and Clarke, 2012).

I used Atlas.ti to store my dataset and manage coding. I included all my data in Atlas.ti, including interview transcripts, policy documents, meeting minutes and my own notes. I reviewed the documents and meeting minutes for relevance to the research and then included that smaller subset of documents in the coding process. The selected policy documents – particularly the NGO policy documents – were coded by theme and used to draw the conclusions presented in Chapter 5 on the themes of NGO policy around refugee youth education programme enactments. I established the framework of

conceptualisations of refugee youth education presented in the literature review of this research in chapter 2 before starting the coding through review of the literature, and used the framework for initial coding of data on how NGO staff conceptualise refugee youth education. Once I had categorised the findings by these themes, I began to code areas where interview participants and NGOs crossed over between multiple conceptualisations. I then coded by influencer, namely staff, policy or practice, and finally began critically reviewing the experiences reflected on each category to unpick the sociocultural and power dynamics that may be at play in the manifestation of refugee youth education programme conceptualisations.

## **Chapter 4. NGO staff conceptualisations of the role of Syrian refugee youth programming in Jordan**

This chapter delves into the multifaceted perspectives of staff members, exploring how their backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences shape the education initiatives they develop and implement. This chapter will investigate who these staff members are, their professional and personal histories, and how these elements contribute to their potential roles as ambassadors for refugees. Understanding these conceptualisations is crucial, as they directly impact the structure, content, and delivery of educational programmes aimed at Syrian refugee youth.

The first section will examine the notion of certified human capital within NGO conceptualisations. Prior research discussed in Chapter 2 suggests that NGOs often prioritise objectives like psychosocial support and child protection over academic achievements, and I look at the realities in practice. Then, the chapter explores the emphasis on protection and wellbeing. For many NGOs, creating a safe and supportive learning environment is paramount. This focus stems from the recognition of the trauma experienced by refugees and the often-violent conditions of formal schooling in Jordan.

The concept of “citizenry” and its interpretation among NGO staff will also be addressed. While integrating refugees into the social fabric of the host community and fostering a sense of belonging is a common goal, the practical applications of this concept can vary widely.

Empowerment is explored and emerges as a central theme in the conceptualisations held by NGO staff. This section investigates how staff aim to foster meaningful participation, equitable power-sharing, and engagement in critical reflection among youth.

Finally, the chapter explores an alternative solution: dropping out of school. The reasons behind dropout rates and the challenges in retention are discussed to explore whether in fact any of the conceptualisations of refugee youth education make sense for refugee youth, and whether refugees instead should merely not attend.

### **4.1. Certified human capital**

Before this research, my perception of NGOs in Jordan had largely been that they underplayed academic, human capital outcomes in favour of other objectives such as psychosocial support and child protection. Indeed, it has been noted in other contexts, that activities by NGOs have often been muddled with activities of child protection actors (Nicolai, Anderson, *et al.*, 2019) indicating the more welfare orientated approach of many NGOs.

I was surprised therefore, that there was such an employment focus articulated in the conceptualisations of NGO staff:

I feel that we are all part of neoliberalism, and I think we should recognise that. And, you know, in reality, Syrian youth, they want to get a job here and in Syria. And that's the kind of the power, the power structures, which all means they want opportunities. (Regional Youth Programme Coordinator)

It seems so obvious and logical, yet we don't consider that when we bring our proposals [to donors], that people may actually need money for living, to survive. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

I think the Syrians that we have talked to who were out of school believe that learning is important, but they equate formal school with either a route to university undergraduate afterwards or directly to a job. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

Academic success was treated as integral to creating these opportunities for employment. Despite Jordan having extremely limited employment opportunities for refugees (Lenner and Turner, 2018), academic preparation for employment still featured as a priority, at times above other outcomes:

That is one of its primary purposes. You know, we're not trying to, to create this fluffy education with this, hearts and minds. So, we'll give everyone a hug child protection type program, because fundamentally we've entered into an industry, a sector which has a purpose. And that purpose is to try and create an employee. Who are we to deny refugees that opportunity? (Youth Programme Coordinator)

Across the interviews, it became apparent that staff with different levels of responsibility for delivering programmes and across the NGOs involved in the research perceived certified human capital to align with the challenges refugees face over their unknowable futures. Certifications were perceived as a potential access card for future opportunities, that could be utilised over a lifetime. Indeed, certification has long been associated with creating opportunities, and staff were not looking to deprive refugees the capital required to access them.

I think sometimes we must remind ourselves how we got here, how I got here in Jordan, as a Jordanian in this job, with this level of opportunity. It was through my education. I don't mean what I know, what I learnt, I mean that I can show that I went to this school and got this grade. I don't even know how much of what I learnt at school I still use today, but I know for sure that having finished school and having done well opens doors for me. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

Here the interview participant reflects on their own experiences and opportunities that were created through their education as a Jordanian. In doing so, they are suggesting we need to remember that refugees can also benefit in similar ways and subsequently these certified outcomes must not be forgotten for refugees. Although success stories for refugees in the education system in Jordan are rare in relation to the size of the population, there are examples of refugees who have achieved academic success and attained scholarships for further education or employment overseas (Abu-Amsha, 2014; Ahmadzadeh *et al.*, 2014). Subsequently, it has been found through a number of research projects, that refugees value education and see it as an opportunity to change their perceived trajectories for them and their families (Ahmadzadeh *et al.*, 2014; JENA, 2014, 2015; UNICEF, 2020). NGOs, therefore, were not only rationalising certified education, but responding to the demands of refugee communities and hanging their hopes on changes to refugees' circumstances.

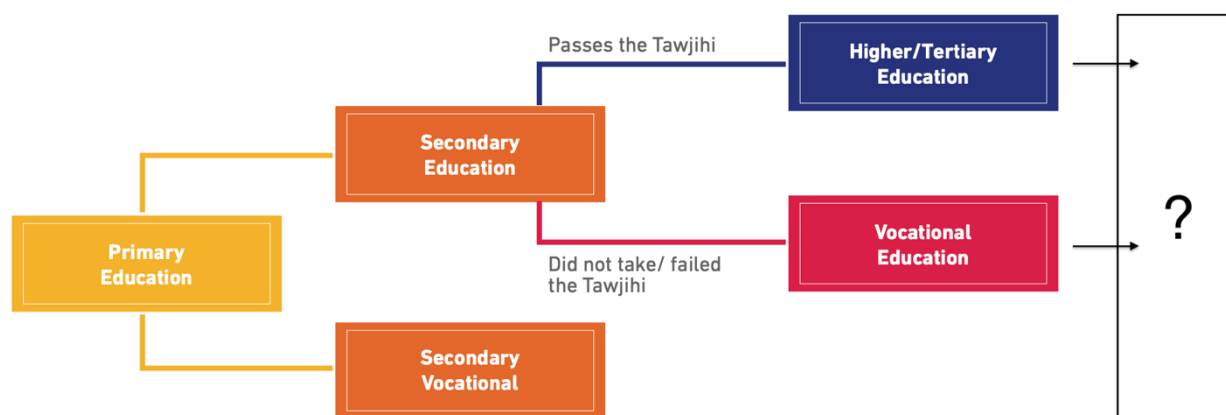
Two interview participants however, reflected concerns that academic foundations were overshadowed by the programming NGOs offered and a drive for human-capital approaches should be further emphasised. A Jordanian NGO staff worker who once held a role training teachers for the MoE succinctly captured the concern:

My goal was to offer certified education, but [the NGO] vision was different. We had different priorities. My priority is schooling, but from the humanitarian stance it was all about safe spaces as a priority. Maybe they don't see it, they are not aware, that in Jordan education is a tool for living. There is a risk that these programmes are too focused on feel good, which makes it hard for the MoE to believe in these programmes. (Youth Programme Curricula Advisor)

This interview participant had suggested that academic objectives were rarely realised and were in fact overshadowed by the alternative conceptualisations of the role of education, despite the proclaimed support for academic outcomes by other staff. In the context of Jordan, employment restrictions have resulted in over 57% of Syrian refugees over the age of 15 working in the informal sector (AAGF, 2019). It is not the only driver, for example, 60% of Syrian families in host communities rely on supplemental income earned by children and 97% of school-aged Syrian children are at risk of non-attendance at school because of their families' financial hardship (AAGF, 2019), yet in the protracted refugee context the pathways for education were unclear. Subsequently, even with certified opportunities, refugees are not inherently going to be provided the same opportunities.



*Depiction of the education pathways available to refugees in Jordan, and the unanswered question of what refugees are expected to do with that education*



Subsequently, I asked interview participants who claimed to support academic outcomes if they felt other conceptualisations of the role of education overshadowed academic objectives. A participant, and ardent supporter of academic outcomes who as noted in the interview snippet quoted above that they do not want “to create this fluffy education with this hearts and minds” (Youth Programme Coordinator), replied:

I mean, if you're asking me, I think part of a good education is both socially and psychologically, we learn better in the right environments. I mean, it's not like an additional bolted on component to learning. It is how we learn. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

Indeed, some of the concepts being discussed were conceptualised as early as 1943 through established frameworks such as Maslow's (1943) needs, which suggested a set of fundamental components needed for effective learning. While interview participants framed the discussions as wellbeing or social emotional learning, many of the principles underpinning these concepts were in fact well-established foundations of learning.

Moreover, the non-academic concepts were seen as foundational to reaching youth from refugee and other communities susceptible to dropping out (UNICEF, 2020). Most interview participants therefore, shared the view that the learning environment had both intrinsic values and were integral to academic success.

... we know we have to get kids to the final test whether the test is a, is cycle one, two, three. But that is not the primary goal for the facilitators for at least the first four months. The art of the thing is to make them feel ok, that certificates is not the primary goal. Only then do we have a chance of getting them one [a certificate] (NGO Director).

Of course I would want to get every refugee the best education, and learn about history, and learn about politics, and culture, and science. But this isn't like where you are from. Here refugees first of all are just trying to survive. They want to make sure there is food on the table every day, and a future that is sustainable. If education can't do that, then of course it would come second, I think, for you it would become second too (Programme Implementer).

It seemed that academic objectives played a seminal role in the conceptualisations of the role of refugee youth education, but staff negotiated the weighing of the different components based on the experiences of the communities. With 13% of refugee children and youth out-of-school in Jordan in 2020, and the risk of drop-out increasingly higher by age (UNICEF, 2020), it is evident that something being offered by MoE schools is not deemed suitable by out-of-school refugee youth, and NGOs were rebalancing the components delivered in an attempt to reach those excluded.

A pattern could be seen where these balancing acts were often done on a site-by-site basis. In refugee camps for example, where vulnerabilities were seen to be higher and potential futures different, NGOs provided more focus on psycho-social services and community and skills building for refugees, whereas the same NGOs would provide a more academic focus in initiatives outside of camps. These adjustments were also seen across Jordan outside of camps too, where NGO initiatives in Amman provided a more academic focus than in rural areas where youth often navigated multiple jobs and perceived their potential futures and value of education to be different. Each enactment carried the same components, but the balance differed indicating attempts to steer the goals of programmes towards perceived futures.

NGOs spoke proudly of their programmes ability to balance these different conceptualisations:

the advantage we have in running our programmes ourselves is we can both certify according to the system and work with the system, fortunately in Jordan, while also being very attentive to some of the other qualitative things. So, we can learn, I guess, and then feed that back into the system. So, we get to explore concepts like wellbeing. We get to do some psychosocial stuff. We get to sort of really build relationships between, you know, look at the more subtle things that our system just never could, but still offer accreditation at the end. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

This interview participant is referring to one of the partnerships established between the MoE and their NGO. Jordan has taken an unusual step of authorising a number of NGO programmes to issue recognised Jordanian 10<sup>th</sup> grade certificates on passing of an MoE

facilitated test at the end of the programmes, permitting space for experimentation of alternative concepts to gaining 10<sup>th</sup> grade certificates:

So, we try to make sure that people are demonstrating what they're able to do as opposed to sitting down and doing the standardised test. So, we were trying to push the more sort of wellbeing agenda, but not too much, you know, people still know that they're coming out with a certificate like the other people who went to the normal system, but it's a bit ironic that they actually have more technical skills when it comes to social, emotional learning. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

In this instance, staff appeared to view the approach of emphasising non-academic outcomes as an alternative approach permitted by partnerships with the MoE to allow providing certified education. They had compared their approach with the formal education system and seen themselves as the alternative to it, requiring space to provide their non-academic focused programming. While this labelling as alternative may appear innocent, it tended to present an image that there was less value to their wellbeing approach, which in reality is established as a fundamental component of effective learning and student retention. Moreover, there was no data found that explores how NGO services in Jordan compare to MoE services in terms of academic outcomes that control for variables such as NGOs focus on hard-to-reach populations, time available for teaching, or competencies outside of MoE curricula. It may well be that these NGO services provide viable academic avenues.

## **4.2. Protection and wellbeing**

Interview participants frequently expressed the importance of a welcoming and safe environment for learners (as defined in Chapter 3). A belief that many refugees had experienced trauma fuelled the desire for a focus on environmental factors. However, the formal school experience in Jordan appeared to be the most significant driver of the emphasis placed on welcoming and safe environments. Jordan has long struggled with violence in schools, for both Jordanian's and refugees alike. According to a 2015–2016 survey by the MoE, 18 per cent of Syrian and non-Syrian participants reported verbal abuse and 11 per cent physical violence by teachers and peers (UNICEF, 2020). Interview participants shared their own experiences:

Students often say to us, if I go there my teacher doesn't pay any attention to me and then verbally harasses me in front of the other students, and I feel humiliated. Those barriers and quality issues, that if we [as NGOs] just address them then we are doing just fine. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

The feedback we get from youth is also the way the NGO now treats them differently from how they were treated in school. So, there's a sense we definitely do recruit for staff and for community trainers that make that possible, so, we are different to the government schools. We definitely do recruit for capacity to communicate with youth, friendliness, I think is really important. (Regional Youth Programme Coordinator)

It became clear that NGO staff had been exposed to both the research on violence in schools and anecdotal evidence of the violence in schools. Subsequently, protection and wellbeing conceptualisations were elevated in staff's views of the role of refugee youth education.

These findings were of little surprise. While there is undoubtedly a need for a focus on welcoming, safe and supportive environments, it is the component which has received greatest attention in the literature and interventions in Jordan (UNICEF, 2020). Interview participants spoke with pride of the various means of creating welcoming environments:

... if one of our children didn't want to come this day, we leave the chair empty so he can know and feel like my face, his face and the other children inside the caravan, they would say, if they kept his chair then they are going to keep my chair.  
(Programme implementer and teacher in camps)

We have been very proud of our accelerated learning programme curriculum; we designed it and implemented it and in partnership with the Ministry of Education. But it is not the first bit we do, the first thing, the important thing is we create a space that people want to come to. Everything from how we design the classrooms, and where we locate them. And the teachers, we do regular visits to schools where our programme implementers will go to a different school every day so we are constantly monitoring the teachers and communicating with the students. It shows we care when we go like this to the students too (Country Director)

Paradoxically however, staff while united over the importance of welcoming spaces, were not always opposed to integrating refugees into host-country schools where incidents of violence, abuse and discrimination were seen as significantly higher than those reported in parallel NGO activities. During an Education Sector Working Group meeting - a monthly meeting with stakeholders held to coordinate activities in Jordan - an international organisation representative made a case for the need for integration into Jordanian schools. They rationalised the view by highlighting that 10 years had passed since the beginning of the Syrian crisis and that integration would provide the only sustainable long-term approach. In 2016 only one-third of the annual external financing need of US\$2.4

billion had been met, and there was little prospect of gaps closing (UNESCO, 2018, p. 252). The working group consisted of representatives from 23 NGOs who, paradoxically, in the same session were discussing an upcoming vulnerability assessment, which highlighted the risks to children and youth in host-country schools. Despite these findings, some of the staff attending the meeting were still supportive of integration of refugees. Exhausted by the limitations and with little hope of change in the near future, integrating refugees in to host-country schools and aiming to facilitate change in the host-country system appeared to staff to provide the only viable means of sustainable refugee education in Jordan, despite the repercussions of potentially less welcoming, supportive or participatory spaces. I asked an interview participant interviewed after the working group meeting who had expressed the need for integration how they can consider integration into schools known to be violent and be against addressing the violence:

We know how bad the violence is in schools. We don't need a study to tell us that, it is well known in Jordan, but if we did need a study then there are about a hundred of them already, and we have money allocated for this and programmes designed to address this. But if we separate refugees into their own programmes, we divert money away from Jordanian schools to refugee schools, so then refugees may be safer, but Jordanians are not. Is about equal treatment and opportunities. So we can't fix everything all at once, but if we at least try and be more efficient with our resources we can make a dent (NGO Director)

It became apparent that NGO staff while emphasising the importance of welcoming, safe and supportive environments, were required to negotiate the component against other intersecting demands, in this instance the limited funding and long-term nature of the crisis. Each staff member seemed to negotiate the balance for themselves, with the staff divided on the best approach. One staff member emphasised it is time for integration, despite the potential repercussions for refugees:

It has reached the point we, where we must look towards getting them [youth] into host-country schools. أعني [I mean], not just here but in other countries too. It has been too many years, decades we haven't been able to reach refugees, all over. No, it's time now, even if it means, even if things aren't exactly how we want them to be. We know there are problems, but we are not going, we just need to start thinking now about how to fix these problems [in host-country schools instead].  
(Programme Implementer)

Conversely, an NGO staff member from the same NGO objected to the integration approach:

... that's because there's this, the comment from [organisation in the Education Working Group] was very 'it's got to be all about the government'. And it just feels like a naive approach because that's not getting you the results. And if the children and the young people are not the priority then what are we all doing here in the first place? (Youth Programme Coordinator)

It appears then, the staff conceptualisations, while inclusive of welcoming and safe environments, were also cognisant of political and financial limitations of countries that were negotiated to find a compromise between themselves, the best interests of refugees and the limitations and hope for change to those limitations in the context.

A youth programme implementer suggests however, that protection is a conceptualisation that must be contextualised too:

Protection is, of course protection is really important. It's not that we ignore it. But protection needs vary just like anything else, we are starting to see youth now who were born here in Jordan. Are they refugees? Well yes, but did they go through the same trauma as other refugees? Trauma, sure, it's not like life is easy for refugees. It's not what we usually think of though. So, we may not like it, but this is just what life is like here. We do our best, but if we try and put everyone in a bubble, if we try and reach for our ideals, then we just would never be able to have anyone in school. (Youth Programme Implementer)

It seems then, that protection while emphasised as important, was also contextualised alongside refugee's other needs. There had been no simple ranking system of priorities that placed protection at the top, despite what some of the literature and NGO mandates may lead us to believe. Risk and reward were considered, and compromises had become the norm.

### **4.3. Citizenry**

Exploring the concepts around different forms of citizenry appeared to invoke confusion among the NGO staff. In all interviews, participants asked for clarification of what exactly was meant, and we struggled to find a shared narrative.

The requests for clarification immediately posed questions for me over how easily staff identify with the concepts as opposed to for example academic success, which invoked clear answers and a shared understanding of the scope of the question.

I provided a definition of what was meant, at first focusing on the horizontal integration - cultural wealth of communities as discussed in Chapter 2 - and the importance of integrating that wealth into learning spaces, eventually settling with the first interview participant on 'family and community engagement' - which was then used in subsequent

interviews - and did then invoke responses. NGO staff indicated family and community engagement were salient in their conceptualisations of the citizenry role of refugee youth education, although only two immediately identified an example related to the provided definition:

One of the unique things about this organisation, is that the people that we work with, the community, are also the people that work here. And when you see your neighbour teaching your children you think, ok, we're going to be fine. It's helping make like the community inside the camp. We're building trust. (Programme implementer)

So, it's about who takes responsibility for young people's learning and what is the purpose of these two things? So, I think that parents and communities should have more linkages to the education systems and more ownership over the education systems or awareness of what their kids do, why they do it, they should question the system more. And then there should be, that would lead to a situation where there is much better understanding of the purpose of education. And it's much more diversified than just saying it's about economic development. It's about personal development. It's about social. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

These interview participants identified with a series of benefits to education from community engagement, including awareness raising of education and its purpose in the learning centres, greater community responsibility for the processes and improved sense of belonging to the learning system when refugee populations are integral to operations.

For most interview participants however, family and community engagement were acknowledged although it often seemed as if they were searching for examples that fulfil the criteria of the question:

there's been a gradual progression of sort of community staff hiring and empowerment. Yeah. So, this was something that was recommended in that evaluation from probably 2015. And some of that we worked on even when I was there and has continued to be relevant because initially, I mean, I managed [organisation] staff, national staff, and we had an initiative, we had trainers and cleaners and maintenance who were from the community. But it was difficult in Jordan, because of some of the rules. (Regional Youth Programme Coordinator)

community, community can mean so many things, yes, we of course value the refugee community and what it can bring, but also the Jordanian community. It's not like you can work here without seeing these distinct communities so we engage them how they identify, and sometimes we do things specifically about those

communities, like talking about refugees in the classroom with Jordanians being there, but this is difficult, it's not such a defined thing. (Programme Implementer)

When the participant refers to rules, they are highlighting the restrictions in place in Jordan on hiring Syrians for certain roles. Of particular note are teachers, who are not allowed to be hired in teaching roles for Syrians or Jordanians - even in programmes designed and implemented for Syrian refugees - due to a feeling that elevating the strategy would be met with resistance from the Jordanian community and government. In this instance however, the participant perceives the question to be in relation to recruitment of Syrian refugee staff rather than engagement in the cultural dimensions of families that can be brought into the learning spaces.

It appeared a series of barriers drove these loose and different connections to family and community engagement strategies. First, at least one of the staff questioned whether it was correct to place emphasis on community and family engagement strategies in learning spaces:

But we need to put less emphasis on the system doing that and have a more conscientious approach to communities and the parents' role. But I also don't know that the education system can do it to be honest, because I feel like in the West, we don't have a good example of that either. We still have a huge amount to learn about what happens outside of classroom settings, right? (Youth Programme Coordinator)

The interview participant raises a view which can help explain why the family and community engagement strategies were treated more informally than other components. First, there appeared to be a concern over whether the learning spaces had a role to play in community engagement, or whether it should be left to others outside of the education system. Second, that there were insufficient examples of successful engagement with families and communities. Both these explanations would help explain why it appeared that family and community engagement had not featured as significantly in staff conceptualisations of the role of education.

An alternative explanation, however, may lay in the context. Jordanians and Syrians have long had close ties, a shared language, and — particularly in the North — many centuries of cultural assimilation. Moreover, as Chatty (2017) has argued, the shared Islamic faith between the two communities can create a basis for assimilation. It can be assumed therefore, that the need for family and community engagement strategies may be less significant, as Jordanian's and Syrians have many points of cultural and community parallels, as opposed to for example integration of Sudanese into the context.



In the case of Jordanian citizenship - explored in Chapter 2 as vertical citizenship - it had been much easier to establish a shared understanding. It did, however, immediately invoke scepticism from interview participants, wary of how it may manifest. An interview participant speaks of the Jordanian school system practices which refugees are encouraged to attend:

A personal reflection on the system in Jordan would be that I hear a lot of narrative about democracy and the importance of young people having pride in their country. I mean, this is very explicit in the national youth strategy. It's almost nationalistic in a way, you know, we want young people to grow up and believe in Jordan and love Jordan. Cause that's the only thing that's going to hold the country together. And the education system is being used for that. Do you know if you have 10 years in the education system where you are singing, standing with the flag every day and looking at pictures of the King, I'm not saying these are bad things, but should they really be part of education? Is that what education is for? No, I don't think so. So it bothers me a lot that we promote in many ways systems like that. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

Here the interview participant expresses concern over the use of education as a means of achieving the vertical integration discussed in Chapter 2. They were however, referring to practices seen in Jordanian schools. They, like the other NGOs participating in the research had opted not to include these overt vertical integration steps in their NGO programming, over concerns that it was not the place of the NGO or youth learning programme.

These views were shared across all the interviews, however one participant indicated there was a hidden curriculum that underpinned the NGO system that reinforced vertical integration:

So, on the macro level, you have these agendas that say the government is the duty bear. Everyone [in the NGO sector] is compelled to recognise that as a starting point. And the starting points are very much that it's not really about what you think is important. It's about respecting the sovereignty of the country in a way, right? So that's our starting point as international actors. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

The interview participant notes a principle currently enacted in all humanitarian and development contexts, the recognition of 'the sovereignty of the country'; that is, recognising the state as the lead in all education related activities, including those enacted by NGOs. I asked the participant how these policies manifested:

Well, I don't know of course. It's called a hidden curriculum for a reason, right?  
(Youth Programme Coordinator)

While NGOs, therefore, were not seen overtly enacting vertical integration activities, the nature of being immersed within the larger government systems raised questions over whether the intended enactments of NGO staff conceptualisations could be taken at face value. While this research focuses on NGO conceptualisations, they raised important questions over how the NGO is perceived by refugees, whether they are seen as an extension of the state or independent. Moreover, it raised questions over the everyday activities of teachers and other staff in learning spaces - primarily of Jordanian descent - that may carry Jordanian values that facilitate vertical integration despite the NGO intent not to overtly impose vertical integration. These topics remained outside of the scope of the research, as these actors were not included, and classroom observations were not undertaken but highlights a vital area for further research.

Global citizenry (Moul, 2017) in contrast, had been seen as key to programme conceptualisations, although once again had been hard to define with the interview participants. A description following that outlined in Chapter 2, highlighting 'global commons' in relation to protection of the planet, peaceful societies and recognition of a diverse world helped facilitate the conversation on global citizenship. After I had explained the concept, staff highlighted its importance:

I think that's, that's why I make the distinction between education and learning. Like there are things we need to learn. We need to learn how to be with other people. We need to learn how to see ourselves through the eyes of other people. We need to understand how to interact so that everyone benefits and there's lots of stuff we need to learn to be good humans or the best versions of ourselves. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

When probing with the interview participant over how these were enacted within a context limited in terms of resources, all interview participants agreed there were significant barriers:

Ok, so of course we have this, we think this is important. But let's be realistic. This isn't like your education at home, we do not have that sort of money, the luxury of these big things. We are hanging on by a thread here, and then we are asked, hey, have you managed to achieve this really complicated, this integration of democratic values and sustainable growth for your beneficiaries? When some of my teachers, they are new graduates, they have barely had an education themselves? (Youth Programme Coordinator)

The interview candidate made an important observation, that posed questions over what is realistic to achieve in youth programmes in Jordan. While the conceptualisations of the role of refugee youth education included global citizenship, the gap between theory and practice remained striking.

It seemed then, that integration as a Jordanian citizen - vertical integration - had been the only element that NGO staff had emphasised as not being a part of their conceptualisation of the role of education. Horizontal integration however, while recognised as important to the NGO conceptualisation, had been difficult to articulate indicating a need to better formulate a shared narrative that allows communication over these elements, and subsequently allow for greater advocacy for their inclusion in refugee youth programmes.

## **4.4. Empowerment**

### **4.4.1. Meaningful participation and equitable power-sharing between youth and adults**

Integral to interview participants conceptualisations was the idea of creating environments that facilitate participation of all those involved in the classroom activities. Staff felt the refugee context required a heightened sense of belonging and participation to draw in out-of-school children, and to help with school retention. An NGO staff member provides an example:

And you [the refugee] are in your comfortable zone and you've been like 23 months inside the house and you don't want to go out, but I would call him and say, you need to go more. It's a beautiful day outside. Let's go out. And then you would hear it from outside. And then you would think about it. And then you would discover what the meaning of going out is. So, it's a bit difficult, but if the child, especially the children, if they don't hear their right, they're not going to ever know them.

(Programme Coordinator in Amman)

Here the interview participant highlights how the refugee context not only benefits from participation and belonging but suggests it requires it. The Programme Coordinator demonstrates their engagement with refugees to advocate for change deemed by the staff member as beneficial to refugees, by engaging in dialogue around potential opportunities and benefits to be had, while allowing refugee communities to then choose to act based on these presented perceptions.

Emphasis is placed on the learning context by all the interviewed staff:

Because kids at that level have mouths and we don't have ears. We don't have ears here. So, once they get convinced that actually they can say something and there's an ear, they will hear me, then you really want to talk after that. (NGO Director)

So, the art of it is you can be a leader without authority. And the way you do that is you eventually let somebody else say, so, how was your weekend? This is one of your friends to you. Everybody looks around like that wasn't a teacher? Is that OK teacher? I mean you know the story. So, he figures out it's ok to ask questions and that you may not have the book in your hand. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

Let us say attitude is very much important. How is [the teacher] dealing with the students? How are they looking to be working with the social, emotional learning competences, the classroom management, all of these things, how he's teaching mathematics, what is the most strategic teaching he can follow? (Programme Director)

From the above interviews across three different NGOs the centrality of learner involvement becomes clear. Listening, carrying the right attitudes and classroom management practices, and attempting to create equitable power balances all feature as components of the programme conceptualisations.

I asked the interview participants for different examples of how this can be achieved:

Let's say a kid beat up a small kid. What happens usually? You call the cops and they haul the kid off and everybody kind of the whole thing just kind of just goes away. No, not here. You say, wait, what happened? And you ask each kid what happened. And so some think something entirely different happened. And then you hear people afraid to say it was a crime. Then maybe it was a crime? And if there was a crime then somebody needs to be collecting all those things that make the evidence of it being a crime. Ok, that's the prosecutor. Equally so it may not have been a crime. You have to have somebody who is collecting all the other things that would make it not a crime. So then somebody who was not involved is actually going to hear the story. And they're going to decide together what they think. This is massive man. This is massive because it makes you a person to go through that, everyone is involved, everyone is thinking about it. It's not just something that happened once and forgotten. We use it, it's got that kind of, it's reflective. That is what we strive for. (NGO Director)

In these examples, the NGO staff highlight innovative means of creating meaningful participation. In the instance of the school bullying, the staff member goes a step further, demonstrating how they not only create meaningful participation by incorporating all of

the learners in the activity, but also aiming for equitable power sharing by assigning each learner a role in the larger process.

Interview participants explained how these shifts in dynamics dramatically changed the relationship of the learners with their teacher:

So, he [the teacher] would have to take a taxi and it'll cost three times more. And that's really heavy. You can't go home and get the JD [Jordanian Dinar] from your wife and pay the cost. And without it you won't get home. So, he [the teacher] was quite worried and his guys [the learners] spotted him. 'Hello sir. How are you?'. And then they realised. 'Are you not feeling well? What's wrong?' And one of the kids goes I know what's wrong. He doesn't have enough money to get on the bus. He would've been on the bus today going home, but he isn't. OK. Very smart. And so, the teacher has to say no I have the money, but he doesn't have it. So, they [the learners] all took a collection. They gave him the rest of the money he needed to get on the bus. He [the teacher] said because of the bus this is real emotional for me. He said I got on the bus and he started weeping and said look at those kids. And for the first time they were not animals. (NGO Director)

In this instance, the participant provides an example of how learner and teacher had gained a vested interest in each other that formed a relationship participants felt central to healthy learning environments. These examples became so common staff almost became dismissive of the question around whether meaningful participation featured in their concepts, instead suggesting to me that participatory approaches were axiomatic.

There were, however, concerns raised over the ability to successfully implement the conceptualisations:

The softness of the methodology actually does work. Although you know without experienced teachers, one of the first things when you get into a situation you will go back to the old way. So, you may try to group kids in a circle at first, but you're still very didactic and using authoritarian teaching. But at least you got them in a circle and the coordinator [who supports teachers] can say the circle is a really good idea. You know you don't need rows. Circles are great. It's really great that you came up with this circle. Now let's try step number two. Ask them, what did you see on the way to school today. How is life on Friday. You know. Anything interesting happen in the mosque, you know so, out of this discussion which children are a little bit afraid of at the beginning, especially if, when you take your authoritarian role where everything shuts down. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

The participant provides an example of some of the challenges implementing participation. Low resources hinder the ability to enact the complex conceptualisations held by the NGO staff highlighting how many classrooms do not necessarily achieve the idealistic visions outlined.

Yet these challenges do not detract from the concept being integral to their understanding of refugee youth education, and integral to the understanding of an effective learning space for Syrian refugee youth. It is yet another complex dimension which requires NGOs to navigate competing priorities amidst low resources in order to identify how and what emphasis to place on the role of creating meaningful participation and engagement.

#### **4.4.2. Engagement in critical reflection and action on interpersonal and community socio-political processes**

Critical reflection was frequently cited, and staff spoke fluidly about their conceptualisations. I had anticipated it to be hard to define critical reflection with staff and had also anticipated a steer towards critical reflection as a skill that could be learnt, obtained or stored. Instead, critical reflection was widely identified as part of a process of self-discovery:

I always tell our board and also people who come here, Oh, our work is not about making people become something else. It's about who they are and exploring themselves, to experience, and then explore how they want to be in the world.  
(Programme implementer)

So, by critical thinkers I mean bringing people to question things, but to question them in a critical way, not to like impose their story or anything, but just question things and try to understand, okay, what does this mean for me, what does this mean for my community? What does this mean for the world? What is the role of Jordan? (International Donor)

The above quotes all echo a similar sentiment towards critical reflection, that it is a journey of self-understanding in relation to a much wider world than their academic or school related content. They do not imply its use on pre-set content through a curriculum, but instead outline a vision of critical reflection as a curiosity that can be instilled and allows application in a wide array of contexts. What is noteworthy however, is the different positions of each of the candidates, ranging from programme implementers to directors and even donors. In all spheres, there is an acknowledgement and appreciation of the role of critical reflection suggesting that the scope for implementation into refugee youth programming is significant.

Political engagement in particular had been perceived as a broad category that traversed a diversity of issues:

I mean, political issues sound controversial, but I don't just mean elections or what the king said about this. I do mean that, but not just that. I mean, it's all political, education is political, food can be political. It is all part of one big story we want to understand, to, to learn about (Youth Programme Coordinator)

Staff emphasised the role of the teacher to facilitate critical reflection on socio-political processes, but in directions set by the learners to manifest in ways the learners deemed appropriate to them:

So, they [the learners] said I don't know what Easter is, for example. So, as a teacher, we would build on that, but it was always an enjoyable journey cause you never know what's gonna happen. And whether a girl is going to say, oh, this is great. But at the end of the day, I'm just going to marry my cousin and just sit at home and do nothing. And we were fine with that because I mean, at least now she's developed some skills that she's going to, you know, use with her children and her in her own family and so on. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

It appeared then, critical reflection was a central component of staff conceptualisations. However, it was perceived to be particularly important in offsetting government schools in Jordan and for refugee youth:

if you look at the way that education is delivered in a lot of schools, the teacher will go through the textbook that the kids have and then they will be required to memorise it. ... for example, I'm going to give you an example related to gender equality. So, in textbooks you see a little bit of everything. So, in some textbooks they're having for example, six books that say, hey, women and men are equal, you know, like it's normal for a woman to work. ... And it's normal for a man to help with the, you know, cleaning the house and things like that. And then you will see in another textbook, and this is all real, saying well woman are going or joining the labour market in the last decade or so, in Jordan and this has had a negative impact on the nuclear family model and had an impact on the wellbeing of the household. So, you'll have a lot of contradictory information. And then the teachers, some teachers they're just teaching the curriculum and they don't have the tools to bring their students to analyse that information and to think for themselves, wait a minute. Is this true? What does it mean? (International Donor)

even what we are doing currently, like in one way or another, it is really important in the camps for young people to have a platform to voice their needs, their assumptions on what is going on, how they are impacting their community. (Programme Implementer)

It may be the most challenging thing we try and do, but the most important thing we do. I go to these centres to visit and when I see these kids talking about their worlds, it's a beautiful thing. You can see it in their eyes, it seems youth at this age, they are very... let us say active. They want to engage with the world. This is something we can bring here to Jordan, these kids cannot find this sort of thing here, you know, not with their parents, or in their schools. (NGO Country Director)

Indeed, critical reflection has long been emphasised as a vital component of education and in particular in refugee contexts (Yeo and Yoo, 2022). Yet while there was consensus over critical reflection as a process and a shared identification with its importance and relevance, staff also identified with a series of limitations:

In contexts like this, I actually think we should tread very carefully when we talk about doing this thing [critical reflection in programming]. We need to tread very carefully because we are in a way important, our concept of education as an agency, as an international community, et cetera. I actually believe we have to practically; we have to be very careful not to do harm in that sense. If we go out and help all these young people to be critical thinkers and then, emotionally they are like, 'I'm aware of my level of emotional awareness', they could be thrown out by their parents because critically, you know, criticising how people do things, it's dangerous and it's not necessarily, yeah. So, there's a question about degrees to which you push for certain agendas. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

There's a lot of countries where people may be very used to challenging our communities, or it's really, the idea of challenging systems is not that; the entire idea of challenging something here is not very widespread, not in education at least, and, well this would not go down well here. We have to keep being able to work here, you know, we must compromise. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

Here the first interviewee had identified a potential impact of the critical reflection processes: the disruption of the family unit. The interview participant seemed uncomfortable carrying the consequences that can occur from critical reflection, in particular on social processes and avoided critical reflection on social processes. In the second interview participants conversation, the participant indicates that they had to make



compromises, adapting the programming away from their conceptualisations to avoid controversy in the Jordanian and Syrian communities.

For some however, certain political topics had been deemed an area not to explore with learners:

It's like a lot of research, Western research about these kinds of contexts. And a lot of them are coming into these military contexts and they're bringing in their weapons [referring to education philosophies and approaches], of course, that works in Geneva or New York. And they're not contextualising or thinking about how people think about knowledge here, and it's totally several hundred years of industrial revolution and you put them in a precarious position. We shouldn't include discussion of politics in our schools, for example that's the area where we draw the line on learning and reflection. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

We will make sure that, that we know the culture and we implement what's behind that culture they are living and all they bring from Syria, but for politics, the perspective, no, we don't take this ... So, we don't involve ourselves with this ... They are still children really. We don't want to enforce any messaging for them. (Programme implementer)

Engagements in political issues have indeed raised questions in the literature over the potential threats to the status quo, for facilitators to impose their political opinions on learners, or for the potential of co-option of programmes engaged in political topics by violent groups (Evans, 2008; Magee and Pherali, 2019). A Jordanian participant who had worked on programming that entailed analysis of socio-political processes shared their experiences and the challenges it created for implementers:

... when I was working with [another NGO], the discussion was, like you are working with an organisation that is funded by [a particular donor] and you are providing political or civic education programmes where you are trying to impose American ways of doing politics and all this stuff. But for young people I would say there's an appetite. But people, they are saying that, yeah, I had really tough discussions with, friends about working with an American organisation. And they are saying you are trying to impose on the state a way of doing politics and all this stuff, and you are mind washing people and all this stuff. I would say, if you are bringing this into the NGO, let's say like schools, you would really need to be cautious. (Programme Implementer).

Many of the NGO staff, therefore, perceived critical reflection as a process of exploration of the learner's world, but with limitations on what spheres of that world

should be explored. What had initially been described as a fluid process of self-discovery, had then been discussed as a more formally applied sphere of learning that included interpersonal topics, but excluded socio-political topics. An absence of critical reflection on social and political issues poses a problem for the existing literature on critical reflection, which has emphasised mastery of underlying processes and practices within a given society as integral to education's role in transformation (Zimmerman, 1995; Freire, 2000). Yet pursuit of these roles threatens the very ability to reach refugee populations in countries where governments, parents or even refugees object to perceptions of political discussion within their education.

Some participants rationalised the exclusion of socio-political processes by pointing to alternative spheres where these forms of reflection can take place:

It does seem to me, it gets problematic when we start to talk about education being the place for it [critical reflection on political processes]. You know, a lot of the things that this program is doing, I imagined it would usually come from, from other avenues from various churches, mosques, community clubs, or family, I don't know. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

There were however three participants, while recognising the issues, who felt that there should be little to no bounds set on critical reflection, and that the approach needed to be carefully managed:

What education does is it teaches young people to be politically correct when it makes them lose that capacity to question, this is what education is about. Do you want this kind of education? I don't want this kind of education. (Programme Director)

And it has to be very, so it has to be facilitated in a very careful way that you give little nuggets on the table. And then you kind of let people pick them up as opposed to bringing in your idea of what it is. I'd say it's like, it's like the concept of co-creation of knowledge instead of catapulting and alienating (Youth Programme Coordinator).

These participants highlight the compromises staff made in enacting their conceptualisations and the innovative ways they often devised to circumvent restrictions. Subsequently however, the concerns over critical reflection for action meant varying degrees of political engagement took place with refugee youth while at the NGO centres. Instead, NGO staff largely saw their role as the preparation of learners to use their new knowledge gained through critical reflection in their future pathways after leaving the NGO centres, preparing learners to pose questions and be prepared for what may be ahead,

rather than directly addressing what the staff or learners felt were the pressing socio-political issues of the day. These findings pose questions over the potential for enactments of transformative education as envisioned by Freire (1998), as praxis - action taken as a result of reflection – is not actively facilitated. In turn, the lack of bottom-up participation, ownership, or transformation restricts refugees from shaping the education conceptualisations from within the school in the few places where their voices are heard, and their audience appears sympathetic to the need for their ongoing shaping of their educational worlds. The exception however, being where NGO staff engage in acts of resistance and its subsequent risks to facilitate discussion on these topics.

Conversely, community level critical reflection and action featured as an ongoing process facilitated by the NGOs during the programme implementation:

In some cases, because we want young people to be engaged within their community and giving back to them and all this stuff, we tried to come up with social initiatives that are mainly targeting the community. So, we were just brainstorming with the young people to come up with ideas or initiatives that they see their community need and that they will support their community with. So, in that sense we were coordinating, for example with mosques, with the head of the district that they are living in and all the stuff, which is in one way or another, it's a gathering and they are engaging with the community members in a different way than they are used to. In a way that brings what we are learning to their community. (Programme Implementer)

... they [the learners receiving scholarships] give us each four hours of community service a week where they work with children, whether it's through storytelling or the arts or sports in our community led campaigns. They have history and they have a story and they have gifts and they have pains and they have this is the mission and everything we've built within was built based on a very early discerning process with the community. (Programme Director)

And so, giving back to the community, there's also, like what are the open days where youth would apply their vocational skills to support the community? So, people are studying, tailoring that the community could bring clothes for repair to our centre where the youth would then do that. Similarly, the students studying, cooling systems, someone could bring a broken fridge out of it. So, there's that kind of element of community engagement. (Regional Youth Programme Coordinator)

Community level engagement — as demonstrated through these examples — entailed engaging with community issues, taking action based on identification of those issues, and

also draws on employment related skills such as those gained through vocational education in line with the conceptualisations posed by the literature. What becomes clear across the interviews on community action, is that community is largely defined as the Syrian refugee community, not the broader Jordanian community. In this narrower space of the Syrian community, NGO staff felt more willing to engage in community level action where the repercussions were seen as less significant than engaging with broader Jordanian community issues.

What I have shown from the interviews in this section is that while staff held a relative consensus over the meaning of critical reflection, and its value and relevance to refugees' learning, they had to navigate the controversies of the context that led to altering conceptualisations of the goals of the programme. In particular, the socio-political nature of the programme goals were downplayed to avoid creating tensions in society, and to ensure the NGOs' presence could be maintained.

#### **4.5. Dropping out of school – the unspoken alternative**

NGOs often assume that their conceptualisation of education inherently surpasses the alternative options available to refugee youth. Interviews for this research also began with this premise, exploring the different conceptualisations of education. Yet, it also explored whether the very idea of spending significant amounts of time, energy and money on education is worthwhile for refugee communities. With 13 per cent of refugee children and youth out-of-school in Jordan in 2020 (UNICEF, 2020) and only 41 per cent of refugees enrolled in secondary school worldwide (UNHCR, 2023b), many refugee communities appear to have voted with their feet. I queried with interview participants if they accepted this potential outcome:

I think there will always be some level of out-of-school children. It's going to be hard for some, who are farming, and whose parents are farming, and whose great grandparents were farmers, to ever consider doing more. I shouldn't have said more, I don't mean more, I mean for some that is just what they want, and as long as they have the opportunity for an education, and understand what education could mean for them, and they get to choose, then we have done our job. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

For this interview participant, the goal of reaching out-of-school children had not been about increasing enrolment, but about increasing access and ensuring that refugees understood the potential benefits of education. One organisation even hired refugee community members to go into areas where enrolment had been low to communicate available education opportunities.

My job isn't to get people in to school. It is to make sure people know about their opportunities. But I do believe that for most people, except maybe those with the really sick, or those who are the only ones that can go and earn, that education is the better option. We provide a programme that runs just 2 hours a day to make this the case. Of course, we want to reach everyone and those who are sick or who work, but we only have so much money (Youth Education Community Coordinator)

It appears therefore, that being out of school for parts of the school day had been accepted by NGO workers as a very viable, and sometimes suitable alternative for refugee communities. When combined with the knowledge of the minimal returns of education for refugees without the right to work, and a protracted refugee crisis with little sign of change in refugee's short- to medium-term futures, it is perhaps inevitable that many within the refugee community will never reap the rewards of investment in an education.

Some NGO staff however, suggested that there was always a role for education, for everyone:

Everyone can benefit from education. But this is why we use such a broad definition of education. This is why you are asking me about wellbeing, and empowerment. Because the world is tough. You think it's an easy life for these refugees who drop out of school? You think because they are out of school and that maybe that is best for them, because they can't work anyway, that they don't have any problems anymore? Of course not. We need to reach everybody, everyone should be able to read, and write and understand math, and navigate the internet, and have the opportunity to access the knowledge that has been created in the world. Only with that will refugees be able to make informed decisions, their decisions (NGO Director)

Here the interview participant takes an alternative view. They propose that education should be available to everyone and that without education refugees are not sufficiently informed to be able to make decisions around their unknowable futures. In turn, education for this participant needs to be adapted into whichever modality is required for it to become accessible for everyone. This highlights however, a narrowing of the conceptualisations of education. A human capital focus still exists, but in relation to the skills required to navigate the refugees world. In particular, the interview participant refers to navigating the internet, suggesting a focus on a series of soft skills that are deemed necessary today to access many segments of society. Where this form of human capital differs however, is the interview participant did not associate the goals of human capital with certification. Instead, the goal is the skills themselves, not the recognition of the skills through established systems.

A vision of education for transformation helps conceptualise this view. An education grounded in discovery of one's world and the tools required to navigate that world are deeply rooted in the vision of education for transformation. Separating certification from this process provides an alternate vision of education, still grounded in all of the conceptualisations of the goals of education explored in this chapter yet adapted to suit the limited time available to many refugees.

A proposal of separating certification however, is problematic as disproportionate levels of power to transform the education system lay in the hands of those who benefit from it and who's vested interest and own privilege lay in the maintenance of the status quo (Darder, Baltodano and Torres, 2017). Moreover, if the reform and detachment of education from certification is not able to be achieved globally and for all, then refugees may well be denied educational certifications known to be a key means of stratifying society between the haves and have nots, and the heard and unheard. Education is after all, a key requisite in defying the odds inside and outside of education systems (Mayo, 2004).

Moreover, detachment from certification poses problems for the majority of the policy on refugee youth education. Certified education is the dominant policy objective facilitated by integration into rigid Jordanian education systems built around hours, and methods that are not well suited to all refugee youth. Proposing these models to donors would likely create issues, as indicated by one NGO staff member:

Our approach, to just reach people. Not to talk about the certificate, just to reach people. Then maybe we have a chance to build something together [with refugee communities]. If that isn't what our donors like, which I'm sure it wouldn't be, then well tough, we will just find a way to do it anyway. I mean we can meet the demands of the donor, that doesn't mean we can't also do the other things (Youth Programme Coordinator)

Here the programme coordinator who had been working at the NGO in Jordan for 6 years indicated that a step away from certification would indeed conflict with donor demands, yet these demands do not necessarily correlate with enacted programming. Instead, they work within the space between policies and agendas to implement alternative conceptualisations of refugee youth education programming that are not visible without exploring the complex dynamics that shape youth education programming. The importance of this role also becomes apparent, as the diversity of the refugee community needs, demands and futures requires a diversity of education approaches that balances and alters the conceptualisations of education.

School drop-outs therefore, were not perceived as a problem with the refugee, but a problem with the school system. Some NGO staff even opted to reject the term dropout:

I don't like this term school dropout, we don't use that term here. Dropout makes me think, it sounds like the student wasn't good enough, or smart enough, or was too lazy. From what we see here, from our experience in Jordan at least, these are not students who have dropped out, but students who have been excluded. They have been excluded by the design of our system, by the incompatibility of what we have made with their needs, with their desires. This problem needs to be addressed by creating an inclusive education (Youth Programme Coordinator)

Here the interview participant sees school dropouts as an inevitable by-product of the education system. Subsequently, it emphasises why staff members deem adaptive, context specific programming that engages with diverse conceptualisations of education necessary to reach refugee youth.

#### **4.6. Pathways as a shared narrative**

While the categories used to structure the findings provide useful boxes for codifying educational programme approaches for refugee youth and for exploration with NGO staff, interviewed staff rarely approached their conceptualisations through these, or any other identifiable conceptual framework. Instead, staff started with their understandings of the needs of the population and realities of the context, informed by their histories, by needs assessments, and by everyday interactions to devise what they felt were suitable solutions:

You're, not talking about livelihoods. You're not talking about shelter. You're also not only talking about education, you're talking about a demographic and this demographic includes everything. So, it's so, hard to define, like, what is youth programming. It is not only educational. It is not only livelihoods. It is not only shelter. It is not only transferable interpersonal skills because we're not working on one thing. You're working with a demographic, not a programmatic intervention. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

I mean, at the, at the more philosophical meta level, the challenge that we have here is what is, who is education serving? And that's the, that's the problem we have here in Jordan and in many, many places. And the system doesn't really allow the student to be at the centre of education design for pretty much any subject. I mean, in Jordan and in many places in the Middle East, everything is framed around the one exam that determines your future, that tells you it's a, it's a tragic way to grow up, experiencing learning that you are the sum of your performance on one exam, your family's pride. How many bullets are shot in your honour? It's a very difficult way to grow up. We have a chance to show a different way. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

Ultimately therefore, it seems staff conceptualised programming in ways that they felt aligned with the needs of the population, which often meant it was problematic to answer the question ‘how are the goals of education conceptualised for refugees?’ as it is malleable, never static, and evolving to suit the needs of the community served. It meant that although many had served refugees with components identified in this chapter, they were not driven there by a conceptual understanding, but arrived through exploration of the context and an understanding of the uncertainty the context creates.

Subsequently, a consistently identifiable conceptual thread that captured this adaptability is a focus on the concept of pathways rather than goals, which featured repeatedly in interviews:

I think what education means in this context and in programming, it means giving the opportunities and the pathways for young people to become this, it’s gonna sound cheesy, the best version of themselves they can be. The entire idea of pathways that’s, it’s not one thing it is anything, well, that is conceptualisation number one. So, it’s pathways to further education. So, it’s pathways to livelihoods, it’s pathways to social engagement, it is a pathway to wellbeing and not all pathways lead to livelihoods.  
(Programme Implementer)

So, what are the objectives of education so far? So, for us, our goals are around young people being, I mean, connected, socially being active members in their community, progressing towards their educational aspirations or progressing towards the future they want.” (Regional Youth Programme Coordinator)

If you were to ask me, what do you want your daughter to be like when she’s older? I wouldn’t say a genius or, you know, good at physics. The first thing that will come to mind would be, I want to have empathy, to have respect for people. I want them to be humble, a good listener, all these things that don’t necessarily need to be learned in a formal standardised school setting or that you could, you know, we don’t really have good tools for assessing these things either, which I think scares people. But this is the path we want, to these things. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

A pathway became much more about the process than conceptualising the outcome or goal, and about that process being grounded in the individual learner. These pathways provided an anchor for staff to rationalise programme decisions. It had been grounded in the idea of identifying the multitude of futures refugees envisioned for themselves, acknowledging the uncertainty around whether those futures would be reached, and then



designing programming to facilitate well-rounded skills and opportunities that facilitated adaptability.

#### **4.7. Summary**

This chapter has underscored the multifaceted nature of NGO staff's conceptualisations of education - including certified human capital, protection and wellbeing, citizenry, and empowerment. Furthermore, it highlights the critical process through which NGO staff arrive at these conceptualisations, often navigating a complex terrain of personal beliefs, personal experiences, organisational mandates, and the external socio-political landscape.

A significant insight is the interplay between NGO staff's individual experiences, their interactions with refugees, and the broader policy environment. This interplay not only shapes their understanding of what education for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan should aim for but also influences the strategies and approaches they employ in their programming. Staff conceptualisations are not static but are continually evolving in response to the changing needs of the refugee population, the shifting policy directives, and the learning and adaptation that occur through their work.

Empowerment – the meaningful participation and equitable power-sharing between youth and adults alongside engagement in critical reflection and action on interpersonal and community socio-political processes – reflect an attempt to move beyond traditional education goals toward a more holistic, participatory, and transformative educational experience for Syrian refugee youth. The approach acknowledges the agency of youth and their capacity to contribute to their communities and emphasises facilitation of self-discovery of potential futures. However, this chapter has also drawn attention to the constraints faced by NGO staff, including resource limitations, policy restrictions, and the tensions that can exist when pursuing education approaches thought to be difficult to measure and to predict.

However, NGO staff rarely conceptualised their work within these or any other strict frameworks. Instead, they focused on the immediate needs and contextual realities of the populations they served, drawing from personal experiences, needs assessments, and daily interactions. This approach led to programming that was fluid and adaptable, making it difficult to define the specific goals of education for refugees. Staff frequently emphasised *pathways* over fixed goals, focusing on creating opportunities for youth to develop holistically and adapt to an uncertain future, rather than pursuing predefined educational outcomes. This perspective prioritised the process of learning and personal growth over specific achievements or traditional educational milestones.

While the concept of pathways provides a valuable contribution to the understanding of NGO conceptualisations of refugee youth education programmes, it also highlighted a

limitation. In all of the reviewed conceptualisations, a common thread was a lack of a clear means to articulate their conceptualisation of what education should be for refugee youth, which hindered their role as ambassadors.

The findings from this chapter contribute to the broader theoretical and empirical literature on refugee education in several key ways. Firstly, they challenge the dominant human capital framework that has traditionally underpinned educational programming in refugee contexts. While human capital remains a significant consideration, the emphasis on pathways rather than static goals offers a more flexible and responsive approach to education that aligns with the lived realities and aspirations of refugee youth. This shift calls for a reevaluation of existing educational theories that predominantly focus on economic outcomes, advocating for a more holistic understanding of education that incorporates wellbeing, citizenship, and empowerment.

Secondly, the chapter highlights the role of NGO staff as crucial mediators in the educational process. Their ability to navigate and negotiate between policy directives and the needs of refugee communities suggests that theories of educational implementation must account for the agency and interpretive work of these frontline workers.

Thirdly, the concept of pathways as opposed to fixed educational goals introduces a dynamic and process-oriented perspective to the literature on refugee education. This concept emphasises the importance of adaptability and responsiveness in educational programming, suggesting that future research should focus on how educational pathways can be effectively designed and implemented to support diverse and evolving refugee needs.

Finally, the findings underscore the importance of involving refugee communities in the conceptualisation, formulation and implementation of educational programmes. This participatory approach resonates with empowerment theories and highlights the need for educational models that are not only inclusive but also reflective of the voices and preferences of the refugee populations they serve.

## Chapter 5. Policy influence on NGO staff and their ability to shape Syrian refugee youth education in Jordan

This chapter delves into the intricate interplay between national and global policies and how they enable or limit NGOs' ability to enact their conceptualisations of refugee youth education programming. As NGOs navigate these policy landscapes, they are often caught between adhering to governmental regulations and addressing the nuanced needs of refugee communities. The national policies in Jordan, heavily influenced by global policy shifts, impose a framework within which NGOs must operate. The Jordanian Ministry of Education (MoE) and other government bodies enforce these regulations, ensuring that NGO initiatives align with national educational strategies. This alignment is demonstrated through key policy documents such as the Jordan Educator Strategic Plan (2018) and various iterations of the Jordan Response Plan (Government of Jordan, 2014; MoPIC, 2015, 2020). These documents reflect a strategic shift towards integrating Syrian refugees into the national education system, emphasising a human-capital approach that prioritises economic returns from education.

However, the influence of policy on NGO activities is not straightforward. While NGOs are required to comply with national regulations, they also possess a degree of autonomy that allows them to implement programmes reflecting their organisational mandates and the immediate needs of the refugee populations they serve. This duality often leads to a complex negotiation process where NGOs must balance the demands of policy compliance with the practicalities of on-the-ground implementation.

This chapter will explore several dimensions of policy influence on NGOs to look at the interplay between geopolitics, international policy and local relationships:

1. **Jordan's National Policy and Refugee Program Implementation:** An examination of how Jordan's national policies, particularly those formulated post-2011 in response to the Syrian crisis, impact NGO operations.
2. **Relevance of NGO Global and National Policies:** A critical examination of how global NGO policies are translated into national contexts and how they influence educational programming.
3. **Internal Influencers on NGO Conceptualisations:** An analysis of the internal mechanisms within NGOs, such as theories of change and organisational mandates, that shape their educational strategies.

By drawing on interviews with NGO staff and analysis of policy documents, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how policy environments shape the conceptualisations and enactments of refugee youth education by NGOs in Jordan.

Through this exploration, the chapter seeks to highlight the opportunities and challenges faced by NGOs in their critical role as intermediaries between policy frameworks and the educational needs of Syrian refugee youth.

### **5.1. Jordan's national policy relating to refugee programme implementation**

NGOs in Jordan, big and small, are exposed to global policy shifts. Even those at the grassroots levels cannot fully operate outside of the influence of policy shifts, as governments impose various regulations on NGO sectors. Yet, there were very few mentions of global policy around programme conceptualisations in the research data. This is not to suggest that global policy was not informing Jordanian education, in fact quite the contrary. Instead, it reflected that within Jordan, NGOs largely referred to the Jordanian policy which has been aligned with global policy, rather than to the global policy itself. As a youth programme coordinator notes:

We don't really have much contact with that [global policy] level, with people at that level. And we are mostly just drilled into the idea that the MoE is the duty-bearer, the policy setter. I am sure they get their share of pressure, but if it gets to us then it is through them. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

We know about all the international policy, we follow the Global Compact evolution, and it definitely has a big role. But we look to the MoE for this sort of thing, and what they adopt, we adopt (International NGO Director)

It became apparent that it was the national policy that acted as a conduit for global policy, with no mentions by any interview participants of global policy beyond reference to the shifts that had occurred nationally. This is not to suggest that global policy is not influential, merely that its influence had been namely imposed on national policy, and it was the national policy that NGOs in Jordan cited as their guiding policy recognising the MoE as duty bearers of education provisions.

Based on analysis of the interview data over the period of the data collection (2019-2020), I highlight the following key national policy documents that were frequently mentioned around the Syrian refugee response in Jordan:

- Jordan Educator Strategic Plan 2018-2022 (HKJ, 2017)
- Jordan Response Plan (2017-2019; 2018-2020; 2019; 2020-2022) (MoPIC, 2020)

Firstly, the 2018-2022 Education Strategic Plan (ESP) had become the primary Jordanian education strategy to include Syrian refugees and Jordanians under one strategic plan. It cemented a policy shift that had gradually been implemented over several years to emphasise vulnerability rather than refugee status as the basis of support (HKJ, 2017). It outlines a series of key focus areas applicable to refugees and Jordanians alike:

- Early Childhood Education and Development
  - Access and Expansion
  - Quality of ECED
- Access and Equity
  - Infrastructure
  - Inclusive Education and Special Needs
  - Lifelong Learning and Non-formal Education
- System Strengthening
  - Institutional Performance Management
  - Management of Educational Information Systems
  - Risk and Crisis Management
- Quality
  - Curriculum and Assessment
  - ICT in Education
  - School Leadership and Community Participation
  - Accountability (Education and Quality Assurance Unit)
  - Safe and Stimulating School Environment
- Human Resources
  - Selection, Recruitment and Pre-service Qualification of Teachers
  - Selection & Development of Leadership at Administrative Levels
  - In-service Professional Development and Teacher Licensing
  - Teacher Rewards and Incentives
  - Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Control of Teacher Policies
- Vocational Education
  - Improving Management
  - Increasing Access
  - Improving Quality

(HKJ, 2017)

These objectives outline the broad areas from which the education sector places its focus, encompassing both refugees and Jordanian's alike. Yet, there is no mention of the

specific means of achieving these objectives in either of these documents, nor is there any mention of what 'quality' means in the context of the policy. Moreover, the scope of the broad objectives was so vast that it seemed difficult to find a type of education approach that would not fit within the strategy. An interview participant with an NGO programme implementer who had been working before and after the Education Sector Plan (ESP) had been implemented noted:

I mean of course we all know about the ESP, and it is really a very important document. I mean it tells us, it says what the country is going to be doing, what it hopes for, and it was integral to getting Jordanians included in the response. And getting Syrians included in the education system. But when it comes to, you know, what should we do in the classroom. That's not really what it is designed for.  
(Programme implementer)

These sentiments were shared by all of the interview participants, and it seemed therefore, that while the ESP certainly had a role to play when it came to the implementation of NGO programming its influence on conceptualising the goals is minimal.

The second primary policy document, the Jordan Response Plan, is instead aimed at providing a more focused strategy for guiding NGOs in Jordan on refugee responses, and subsequently seemed as if it may provide more concrete direction on NGO programme enactments. The Jordan Response Plan is often revised as the situation changes - which can lead to the overlap seen in the time periods of each plan - yet together has been the central strategic instrument for the Syrian refugee response since 2014. It is a document created collaboratively between the international community and the Government of Jordan to serve vulnerable Syrian refugees. The Joint Response Plan (JRP) active at the time of the research outlines the following education sector specific objectives (MoPIC, 2020, p. 43):

- To provide, develop and sustain qualified human resources for the educational system including planning, data collection, disaggregation, and analysis, inclusive education skills and ICT on MoE and MoHE levels.
- To strengthen Safe Learning Environment and community engagement at MoE schools aiming to foster a quality inclusive education system.
- To increase access to quality inclusive education for children (both male and female) in early childhood.
- To increase access for quality inclusive formal and non-formal education for children of both sexes at MoE schools programs.

- To increase access to inclusive higher and vocational education and improve its quality.

However, it provides little in the way of providing details on how the goals can be achieved. Its aim to “increase access for quality inclusive formal and non-formal education” (MoPIC, 2020, p. 44) in particular, opens a wealth of opportunities for varying visions of education, as it does not specify or define ‘quality’, nor does it limit non-formal or alternative approaches.

There were, however, a series of key components mentioned in the document around how NGOs should serve and the mechanisms they should aim to serve them through which had a significant impact on NGOs. In 2015, after what the JRP describes as a “a major paradigm shift in Jordan’s response to the Syria crisis” (HKJ, 2017), the policy documents began to emphasise the ‘vulnerability approach’, placing emphasis on populations based on vulnerability instead of refugee status. It is this change that promoted the inclusion of Syrian refugees in to Jordan’s national education strategy (ESP) for the first time and “reconciling the programming objectives” of refugee programming as a humanitarian response with Jordanian MoE led programming (HKJ, 2017, p. 3). Recognising the protracted nature of the Syrian crisis, and a growing dissatisfaction among some of the Jordanian population over a perception of Syrian refugees being favoured over the needs of Jordanian’s, the policy shift aimed to better reflect the needs of the population as a whole. Programmes once providing non-Jordanian curricula were now pressured to shift to Jordanian national curricular frameworks to create greater opportunities for transition between NGO schools and MoE schools. An NGO staff member having spent 8 years working for an NGO serving refugees in Jordan notes:

... the policy shift really, really shifts what we do every day. I imagine I'm not the only one who's trying to work out what it means, what it should mean. Trying to formulate it. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

It became apparent that these policy mechanisms were steering NGO programming implementations. An interview participant who worked for Jordan’s Donor Coordination Unit notes concerted efforts to steer NGO programming to align with the ESP:

What NGOs were doing before, with their alternative curriculums, that completely took away legitimacy of the new policy, of you know, the ESP, what the government is offering and whatnot, which is why recently we started intentionally, or at least the last few years, the, we did not want, we were actively reaching out to donors saying, don't give money [to a programme deemed not to be abiding by the new policy]. We don't want money going to the programmes. We don't want this. (MoE Staff)

These national shifts towards providing both vulnerable Syrian and Jordanian children and youth not only shifted the target population but the means of accessing them too. Greater emphasis was placed on Jordanian curriculums, and also bridging learners from parallel Syrian only schools into Jordanian schools where investment in classrooms, resources and teachers could benefit both populations. The quote from the MoE staff member demonstrates some of the means of ensuring NGOs enact the new policy approach that had been felt by NGO staff. These shifts resulted in refugee youth education coming under the remit of a new set of Jordanian policy, and included two primary policy documents:

- Jordan National Human Resource Development (HRP) (MoPIC, 2016)
- Jordan 2025 - A National Vision and Strategy (HKJ, 2015)

These two documents outlined the strategic goals of Jordan and had been explicitly referenced by the Education Sector Plan (HKJ, 2017):

Within each element of the [Education Strategic Plan], the Ministry has endeavored to integrate the objectives of the National Strategy for Human Resource Development (2016-2025) and Jordan Vision 2025.

These country wide policy documents provided greater detail as to how the education sector should be steered. The HRP reads (HKJ, 2016):

The Committee believes that the role of schools should be to ensure that every child is supported to realise their potential, develop a love for learning and for Jordan's national values, acquire valuable knowledge and skills, gain important qualifications, and prepare for a happy and prosperous life. (HKJ, 2016 p.26)

It points to both Jordan's national values and the importance of qualifications, indicating that citizenship and human-capital are areas the sector is steered towards. It goes into further detail on human-capital objectives:

- The system prepares Jordanians for work and life
- Students are clear on their career options and supported in making the right decisions
- Employers are engaged in curricula development early on to align skills needed
- Employers recruit from a talented pool of people who meet their needs



The Jordan 2025 strategy continues in a similar vein:

- Educational outcomes, the knowledge, skill and attainment levels of our people, is vital to the cohesion and vibrancy of our society and strength and competitiveness of our economy. Our education system helps to reaffirm our cultural identity and prepare our young people to be responsible and active citizens.
- Second, there is too much focus on academic as opposed to vocational training. Only 13% of students in the public education system are studying vocational course, well below comparable international standards. This means that a significant number of graduates will immediately join the ranks of the jobless, despite the ready availability of jobs for vocationally skilled workers.
- The promotion of cultural development in its holistic sense, and raising awareness and enlightenment, is the basis for protecting stability and ensuring civil peace in light of the growing negative societal phenomena that is threatening the stability and civil peace, such as violence in its many forms, intellectual extremism and exaggeration. The culture and youth sector, as well as the education sector, bear the greatest burden in this regard.
- A new development model must be built; the current development model is unable to encourage young population to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the national economy by finding decent job opportunities and support youth Innovation and entrepreneurship.

(HKJ, 2015, p. 27)

Through these passages, it is evident that the strategies emphasise human-capital as an outcome of education in Jordan. It also explicitly notes education's role in citizenship building with youth "for protecting stability and ensuring civil peace in light of the growing negative societal phenomena that is threatening the stability and civil peace, such as violence in its many forms, intellectual extremism and exaggeration" (HKJ, 2015, p. 27). Yet neither specifically addresses any variation in the goals for refugee education over Jordanian citizens, despite their distinctly different legal statuses, cultures and communities. Instead, references to refugees are primarily on the burden Syrian refugees place on the education system:

- In 2015/2016 school year, there were over 143,000 Syrian students enrolled in public schools, an 875% increase from 2011/2012 year.

- The situation of Syrian refugees in Jordan also has a major impact on Jordan's prospects for continued growth and development – the support and generosity Jordan provides to the approximately 1.3 million Syrians<sup>5</sup> (including refugees and residents) within the Kingdom's borders is well known.

(HKJ, 2016, p. 99)

It seemed then that this policy shift had a significant impact on NGO conceptualisations of the goals of refugee youth education. Yet when I asked interviewees about these policies and their impact on NGOs in practice, both NGO and donor staff indicated there is space outside of the policy in practice:

Well, we don't really think about the policy in our work, I mean we do, it's there, you can see the impact here, but it's not a conscious part of our everyday work. We feel the policy. Or maybe I should say we feel the pressure of the policy. But when it comes down to what we actually do in practice, we work under our NGO's mandates which always places protection and refugee voices first. (Operations Directors of an International NGO)

It's a balancing act. Yes, we have to adhere to the policies laid out by the government and international bodies, but there's also an understanding that these policies can't cover every nuance of the refugee experience. In practice, we often have to interpret these guidelines in ways that best serve the immediate needs of the refugee communities. This sometimes means prioritising protection and educational accessibility. (International Donor, Europe)

Look, we are aligned with the global policy, and the national policy, we are going to fund people if they can demonstrate that they align, they align with that too. We can't go and fund someone who is just going to ignore Jordan's policy, they are the duty bearers, they need to set the strategy. But, of course sometimes we need to put more focus on things like protection for refugees, and we never really cracked the out-of-school children problem. So, what can we do, we have to make sure people are aligned to the policy, but after that, we know that NGOs have got to do what they have got to do, we have to trust their expertise too. (International Donor, USA)

Clearly global and national policy was impacting the everyday experience of NGO staff, yet not directly as part of conscious action by NGO staff. Moreover, policy had not been the only influencer of how NGOs conceptualised the goals of refugee youth education. As

noted by both the operations director of an international NGO and a donor, there still remained space when deemed necessary for alternative initiatives.

## **5.2. Global and national NGO policies relating to refugee programme implementation**

Global and national NGO policy aims to guide country level programming. Our understanding of how these materials translate in to in-country programme design and implementation, however, is limited. I use the analysis in this section to demonstrate the relevance of NGOs global and national documents in understanding how NGO programming is designed and enacted.

Reviewed literature was selected by first identifying the organisations active in refugee youth education programming in Jordan. Of these organisations, two are explored in depth in this section, chosen based on their different sizes, scopes and approaches, as well as their available public literature and willingness to share internal documents. The identified NGOs for the global and national policy review were not a part of the identification process for staff interviews, therefore while anonymity is kept for staff interviews and their associated organisations, this review provides details on the NGO document review.

The first, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), is an international NGO operating in camp and non-camp settings, providing youth programming in both. The organisation operating across 34 countries has been implementing programmes in Jordan for over 11 years. NRC in Jordan focuses on areas such as shelter, education, youth development, and livelihood opportunities. Their education team offers flexible academic support to selected students through Learning Support Services and psychosocial support via NRC's Better Learning Programme, ensuring that students, teachers, and parents are well-prepared for the educational environment (Shah, 2017). The NRC Jordan also runs a youth education and training programme that provides vocational training, further learning opportunities, and social engagement activities for young people in refugee camps. All training programmes offered are accredited by national or international authorities, ensuring the quality and recognition of the qualifications received. The programme includes mentoring and apprenticeships, which help young refugees gain practical skills and experience.

Secondly, Questscope is a Jordanian NGO that has been operating since 1988, funded primarily by donors from the US and UK. Over its 30-year history, it has expanded its focus to include Syrian refugees, providing vital services to 6,000 Jordanian and Syrian youth across Jordan (Internal Documents, 2019). Questscope's centres operate in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE), using MoE school facilities outside of regular school hours to implement their unique programming and pedagogy (Internal Documents, 2019).

One of Questscope's flagship initiatives is its Non-Formal Education (NFE) programme, designed to offer alternative learning opportunities for out-of-school youth. This programme aims to provide young people who have missed out on traditional education to acquire essential literacy, numeracy, and life skills. Through a flexible and adaptable curriculum, students can progress at their own pace, gaining the knowledge and confidence needed to re-enter formal education systems or pursue vocational training. Upon completing the programme and passing the final tests, students can receive official Jordanian 10th grade certificates, placing emphasis on bridging learners back into the Jordanian school system.

Questscope also places a strong emphasis on mentorship and personal development. Their mentorship programme connects at-risk youth with trained mentors who provide guidance, support, and positive role models. This relationship helps young people navigate the challenges they face, build resilience, and develop a sense of purpose and direction. Mentors work closely with their mentees to set goals, overcome obstacles, and celebrate successes, fostering a supportive environment that encourages personal growth (Questscope, 2023).

Furthermore, Questscope integrates psychosocial support into all aspects of their programming. They provide targeted interventions to help individuals cope with stress, build emotional resilience, and improve their overall wellbeing. This holistic approach ensures that participants not only gain academic and vocational skills but also receive the emotional support necessary for long-term success.

For a broader review of theories of change in the final section, I use documents obtained through public sources for the selected NGOs, as well as examples from other NGOs to demonstrate the broader concept of a theory of change and its role.

### **5.2.1. NGO mandates**

Across the reviewed literature, there appeared to be an alignment between the two NGOs and the broader global and national policy. NRC's "Core Competency Strategy" (NRC, 2018) for example, targets formal basic education with the goal of accredited education:

Children and youth are supported to enrol and progress through formal basic education, resulting in accreditation ... This is our first priority, in line with the global policy shift towards mainstreaming refugees into national education systems reflected in the Sustainable Development Goal 4 Framework for Action and the New York Declaration. (NRC, 2018, pp. 3–4)

The NRC 2018 strategy active at the time of the research, highlights the goal of mainstreaming refugees into the national system as the ‘first priority’. An NRC programme review notes how these aims are put into practice through aligning with the Jordanian curriculum:

Teacher support officers interviewed specified that they were very firmly committed to following the Jordanian curriculum, and ensuring that the focus remained in close alignment with NRC’s programme and to the content that should be taught in the formal schooling system (Shah, 2017, p. 39)

Here, it is shown that NRCs approach, in light of the new vulnerability approach that encourages refugees and Jordanian students to be served together, had been attempted by shifting to the Jordanian formal school system curriculum as closely as possible. It indicates the tangible impact of global and national policy on NGO refugee youth education enactments in Jordan in alternative ways, in this instance through informing NGO strategies that were also influential on NGO youth enactments.

Accreditation, however, was not the only component emphasised in the policy. Protection and well-being, also featured heavily:

Safety: children and youth are physically and emotionally safe in our learning spaces, free from harm, violence or abuse. Protection is a priority programme development area for NRC; protection risk reduction and implementation of safe programming principles are essential components of education programming.

Well-being: children and youth affected by conflict, violence and displacement are provided with psychosocial support, so they can begin to recover. (Shah, 2017, pp. 7–8)

Protection noted above in the NRC strategy as ‘safety’, had been listed as priority 2 after priority 1 that aimed at supporting learners to “enrol and progress through formal basic education, resulting in accreditation” (NRC, 2018, pp. 3–4). Protection which had once been the bedrock and priority guiding principle of refugee responses outlined by the UNHCR (2009, p. 5), had been seconded by the focus on alignment to the Jordanian formal curriculum and accreditation. It spoke to why many NGOs had pursued integration into Jordanian schools despite their known risks of exposing refugees to violence (UNICEF, 2020). The NRC literature, however, only cites alignment with the global policy shift towards mainstreaming refugees as the driver of this prioritisation and provides no rationale or basis for how they came to this prioritization, or who had been consulted during its formation (NRC, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019; Shah, 2017). After asking staff in

country, nobody was able to ascertain the drivers of this decision other than to point to the global and national policy, indicating again its influence on NGOs and thereafter the operations of NGO refugee programming in Jordan.

There is little mention of empowerment across the documents reviewed, and when empowerment is mentioned, it related to economic empowerment rather than forms of transformation. NRC's Youth Education programme strategy notes (NRC, 2016):

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has been implementing empowerment programming for crisis-affected youth around the world since 2003. The model known as Youth Education Pack (YEP) has typically included technical and vocational education and training (TVET) with life skills and non-formal education, serving young people aged 15-24. (NRC, 2016, p. 10)

Technical and vocational education skills feature as key objectives of the programme, aligning with the broader Jordanian government policy and understood in many of the policy documents as a form of economic empowerment. An NRC evaluation emphasises how youth empowerment for employment is emphasised over other conceptualisations such as personal growth, meaningful participation or transformation (NRC, 2015):

Many YEP programs are successful at empowering youth to find employment or self-employment, though results vary. ... There is little evidence however, of meaningful youth participation in the development or management of the Programme. (NRC, 2015, p. 12)

Questscope in contrast identifies more clearly than NRC some of the foundations of what is enacted in the classroom, in particular its grounding in "Participatory Learning Methodology" (Questscope, 2023). They represent a much smaller proportion of the NGOs reviewed in Jordan, one of only two found with such clear emphasis on a conceptualisation of pedagogy for more than employment focused outcomes<sup>2</sup>. Questscope's methodology literature states:

We rethink why young people want to learn and create space for them to help design and drive their own education. The teacher becomes a facilitator of learning and a personal mentor to students — and everyone learns together.

---

<sup>2</sup> The second organisation is also Jordanian and much smaller than the international NGOs, subsequently asking not to be identified for the literature they provided)

The Theory of Change in Participatory Learning Methodology (PLM) is designed to generate 3 essential elements for youth-oriented learning:

1. If the relationship between facilitator and learner is a true adult-youth partnership, and
2. If learning is approached through dialectic pedagogy (dialogue-based interaction), and
3. If the learning environment is responsive to learner initiatives (establishing learner “agency”),

Then the resulting social and emotional culture supports thirst for learning, development of critical thinking, and academic achievement leading to further pathways for study.

(Questscope, 2023)

A review of the programme evaluations of Questscope indicate these methods are attempted in practice (USAID, 2018, p. vi):

The facilitators were able to create a safe environment where students were respected, treated as equals, and were part of the decision-making process. This created a bond between facilitators and students, which in turn fostered social and emotional learning, and resulted in positive behavioural change and enhanced academic performance.

Based on the reviewed documents, it appeared therefore, that some NGOs are indeed attempting to implement dimensions beyond human-capital despite the broader global and national policy steer. Questscope’s emphasis on positive behavioural change indicates elements of a personal-growth approach to empowerment. Their focus on participatory learning methodologies, relationships between facilitators and learner agency indicate attempts at equitable power sharing. Finally, their mention of critical thinking for pathways to further study and youth agency suggest there may also be elements of attempts at transformation.

Questscope however, did also recognise the importance of human capital. It is a programme that provides learners the opportunity to gain a 10th grade certificate by sitting the exam at the end of their course, and the accreditation appeared important (USAID, 2018, p. vi):

The certificate equivalence and education pathways were reported to be unclear to both students and facilitators which caused confusion among students and frustration to those who were incorrectly informed. The curriculum of the Arabic language was considered insufficient to prepare students and qualify them to pursue their academic education.

It becomes apparent that NGO approaches differ from organisation to organisation. Human-capital is found present in the conceptualisations of the goals of the programmes of the reviewed NGOs, yet to varying degrees other dimensions, such as protection and empowerment also featured, indicating multiple influences on the conceptualisations beyond merely policy.

A notable absence in the reviewed documents is the literature was citizenry. While community participation featured, citizenry in the vertical sense of nation-state building had been absent. According to one interview participant, this is intentional:

We wouldn't do things like that, no no. Maybe we are more about integration now into government schools, but we still haven't forgotten our humanitarian principles of impartiality (Youth Programme Implementer)

It seems for this participant NGOs in Jordan intentionally avoided direct involvement in national citizenry to maintain apolitical programming. Global citizenry had not been mentioned by participants in relation to their programmes, although global citizenry conceptualisations in policy at the time had been nascent and perhaps merely reflective of the period of data collection.

### **5.2.2. Theories of change**

A key component identified in guiding NGO conceptualisations of refugee youth education is the theory of change (Matthew, 2022). Theories of change provide a basis for breaking programming actions down into parts, showing assumptions made and the linear strategies proposed to achieving goals. It allows planners to illustrate complex pathways that can begin with small in-country actions at the programme level and feed into long-term outcomes and objectives. Through the formulation of these theories of change, NGOs can communicate a rationale both for fundraising purposes, but also as a basis for an in-country strategy. In short, a theory of change offers a “way of thinking about how a project is expected to work” (Stein and Valters, 2012, p. 5).

An interview participant who oversees implementation of programming across Jordan indicates the value of theories of change for youth programming:



I think in conventional youth education, there's an idea that the purpose of education is to progress to the next level, next grade, next grade. Whereas for youth it's always a question of, well, what's next, what's next? And we can very easily transpose that onto our theory of change, you know, to show, to break this idea of linear pathways. (Programme implementer)

Here the participant who is involved in programme delivery points to the theory of change as a valuable tool for conceptualising different pathways. Yet, despite the proposed value of the theory of change, very few of the interview participants linked their programmes to theories of change. An NRC youth programme evaluation for Jordan (NRC, 2015, p. 24) notes:

This review finds little evidence that NRC has operationalised any coherent theory of change to underpin [the youth programme]. ... It is unclear that the programme is grounded in any established set of outcomes, toward which all the activities should be geared.

Similar evaluations of UNICEF educational programmes highlighted the same gaps:

The Evaluators were informed that the Programme has so far been implemented without a (documented) Theory of Change (TOC) or a logical framework, both key design documents for any undertaking (UNICEF, 2017b, p. 25)

Although some related documents have been produced by UNICEF [Jordan Country Office] JCO for the Programme, a true TOC, as defined by UNICEF, did not previously exist. (UNICEF, 2017a, pp. 32–33)

It appears then, that for development of youth programming in Jordan theories of change are often lacking and subsequently questions whether they hold much value in understanding how NGOs conceptualise youth education programming. This is not to suggest that the logic of change is not implicitly embedded in the ways the programmes set out their goals, but to suggest that the theories of change as an instrument were not identified as a driver of the education conceptualisations.

I sought answers to why this may be the case and consider that it may simply be a matter of internal management priorities that would be beyond the scope of the research to identify. I did, however, identify through one interview participant that the theory of change is seen by many as a means of depicting large scale programme objectives, rather than individual learning objectives:

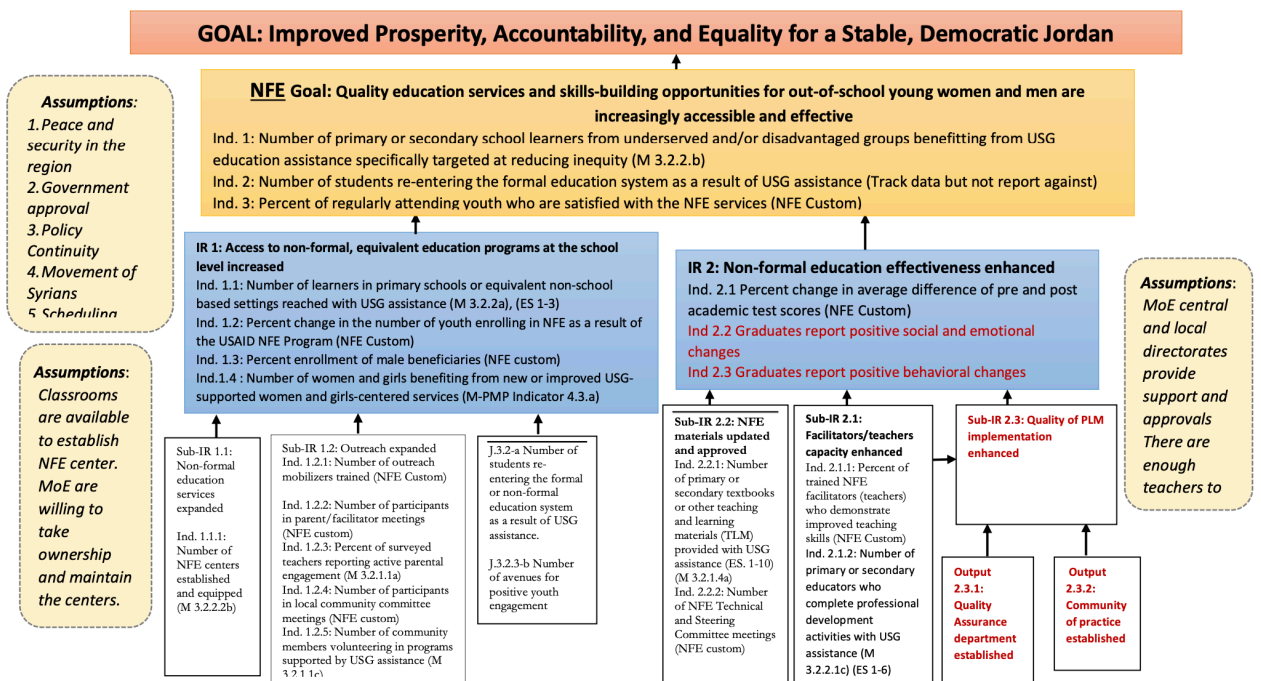
Yeah, but now I'm thinking of all the theory of change and the diagrams we tried to do to conceptualise, this is mostly about the right to education, access, equal

access. Not, you know, not this many youth will get jobs, and this many will feel better (Youth Programme Coordinator)

This interview participant’s comment highlights a distinction between two different forms of conceptualisation of the goals of education. The first, a meta-narrative around the right to education, and the second around individual goals. A review of the theories of change that could be found for Jordan indicate a focus on these meta-narratives. All spheres of the concepts identified in this thesis, human-capital, protection, citizenry and empowerment tend to feature. An example theory of change from Questscope which sought to engage in understanding together with those working in NGOs on refugee projects for Syrians in Jordan also indicates a role in creating a ‘stable democratic Jordan’, indicating citizenry spheres. The theory of change notes that two additional elements were added that were not present in the original draft, including “Graduates report positive behavioural changes” , indicating a focus on personal growth approaches to empowerment too.

Example Theory of Change for Questscope, Jordan (USAID, 2018)

Figure 2: USAID NFE Program – Results Framework – \*\*\* In red are few changes made to the framework to reflect important components of the Program that were not included in the original one \*\*\*



Yet there is little in terms of conceptualising what these elements mean in practice, or how to reach them.

It seems then that all of the conceptualisations - human-capital, protection, citizenry and empowerment - feature in the few theories of change that did exist, yet outlined as meta-narratives around proposed outcomes rather how to achieve them, or how to

balance how different conceptualisations such as human-capital may conflict with the goals of protection when integration into host country schooling is prescribed for academic based programming prone to violence.

When I queried the gap with interview participants, an NGO youth programme implementer in camps suggested:

there is a distinction between a formal documented theory of change, and an ongoing process of discovery and responsiveness. The theory of change is important, but ultimately it tells us what we want to achieve. Not necessarily how to achieve it at the classroom level, or what it means for each person. (Youth Programme Implementer)

Theories of change therefore, appeared to only be a small part of the process of formulating programme enactments, and primarily provided broad metanarratives around activities, outcomes and goals, without detailing specific programme practices.

### **5.2.3. Malleable NGO policy**

A dominant theme across all the NGO literature is a focus on malleable programming, that is context specific and adaptive. NRC indicates a goal of “flexible, and, if possible, accredited alternative (non-formal) learning opportunities” (NRC, 2018, p. 6). It places emphasis on “contextualised programmes” identifying context as a “fundamental determinant in how we design and implement our programmes” (NRC, 2018, p. 6). According to the literature, these contextual components are identified through evidenced-based needs assessments, context analyses and monitoring and evaluation to garner feedback that ensures that a programme can rapidly adapt to changing contexts and emerging trends (NRC, 2018). An NRC youth programme evaluation demonstrates this pattern in Jordan:

according to the [Jordan Country Office] Youth Adviser, the objective [of the programmes] was purposely left vague on the assumption that youth programmes have different outcomes for different participants, and they also have different goals and reasons for joining the Programme, beyond simply economic empowerment. (NRC, 2016, pp. 12–13)

In short, NRC policy appears to promote flexibility in their programming emphasising the importance of context specific interventions. NRC also note that Jordan in particular places greater emphasis on this malleability than other contexts:

In Jordan, NRC has been experimenting with a more nimble model that aims to: modify programme content continuously according to the evolving context; connect youth to higher education; partner with distance learning providers to offer online courses; create links between young people and their communities; and serve a wider age group than the typical YEP programme. Unlike in other NRC country offices, the Youth Programme in Jordan was independent from NRC's Education unit for the past few years. (NRC, 2016, p. 8)

Questscope, despite outlining in more detail some underpinning principles of the programmes, also emphasise a beneficiary centric and adaptable approach to programme implementation: "a way to learn from and with the local community to understand a problem better":

The vision of Questscope is to walk alongside people who live in risk, to include them in articulating how they want to make things better, and to build their competencies to improve those things. 60% of the world is younger than 35, so, commitment to youth leadership is a priority ... By shaping and contributing to the very programmes from which they benefit, youth participate in their community as agents of change. (Questscope, 2023)

In Questscope's case, their greater focus on empowerment allows space for each classroom and each learner's individual journey to take shape in its own way. These patterns are seen across the reviewed documents of NGOs in Jordan, where NGOs provide varying degrees of detail and allow variable programme outcomes based on refugee community needs. It seems then, that NGO policy largely outlines the vision of goals reflective of global and national policy, and the principles of how they are to be reached such as in the case of Questscope's emphasis on participatory pedagogies. Yet there still remained space to alter the programme enactments at other levels of NGO organisation - especially at the in-country level. This may help explain why during interviews, participants never raised or referenced their internal NGO policy, or internal NGO documents. Instead, I had to prompt interview participants on several occasions referring to language used on their organisations websites and internal documents to understand how these ideas were considered and implemented in practice:

I mean, so, first of all, we recognise the mandate that [my organisation] has. So, we work with young people affected by displacement due to conflict, whether it's refugees, IDPs, those giving quite a specific area that we work in or, or groups that we work with. But beyond that, I don't know, I wouldn't say we think about the other stuff [policy documents] for programme content, we have our own

mechanisms, our own ways and ideas that we do together with the community. Not everyone here is the same you know, we have to see where we are, and what people need, and then we work out what we do (Regional Youth Programme Coordinator)

Unanimously, interview participants identified with the sentiment of the statements that programming is also steered by in-country practice. Subsequently, the global and national policy reviewed cannot be assumed to translate directly to implemented practice.

I argue therefore, that available NGO literature found in promotional materials, annual reports, policy and theories of change primarily outlines all-encompassing idealistic meta-narratives around outcomes NGOs aim to achieve, without particular focus on modalities that may be required to become 'empowered', to create a 'stable democratic Jordan' or any of the other broad objectives outlined in the literature, nor how to handle the potential conflicts that can exist between different conceptualisations.

### **5.3. Summary**

At the beginning of this thesis, I outlined an aim of revealing some of the conceptualisations held by NGOs of the goals of education for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan amidst a new wave of refugee policy that often implies a narrow focus on human-capital centric education, despite a recognition of refugee's unknowable futures and the diversity of needs and pathways refugees pursue. In this chapter, I have aimed to demonstrate the role of policy, which — while significant and certainly influential — does not create carbon copies of educational programmes but exists in a contested space altered by policies adopted at the national level. I also explored NGO policy and other available materials, such as promotional materials, annual reports, and mission statements, identifying that while they outline the change NGOs seek to achieve such as the right to education, when it comes to implementation to achieve that change much of the conceptualisation takes place in country, in recognition of the importance of context appropriate programming.

Through this analysis, I aimed to demonstrate that while policy domains are important, the in-country influencers of the conceptualisations of the goal of refugee youth education programmes are also dominant and necessary to help address the potential gaps and challenges inherent in policy, such as the potential for policies to overlook the nuanced needs of diverse refugee populations. I suggest therefore, that actors are engaged in a dialectical relationship with policies, where they not only implement but also interpret, adapt, and sometimes resist policy directives, suggesting that the outcomes of such engagements are not predetermined but are subject to negotiation and reinterpretation, which I explore in the next chapters.

## **Chapter 6. In-country influences on NGO staff and their ability to shape Syrian refugee youth education in Jordan**

This chapter begins by identifying critical external influencers, including the Jordanian Ministry of Education (MoE) and various donors. Second, it explores the dissemination of conceptualisations within and between NGOs. Training sessions, conferences, and the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) are highlighted as key platforms for knowledge sharing and coordination. It then explores the absence of refugee communities in the formation of programme conceptualisations, despite widespread acknowledgement of the importance of community input.

### **6.1. MoE and donors as key actors in shaping education Conceptualisations**

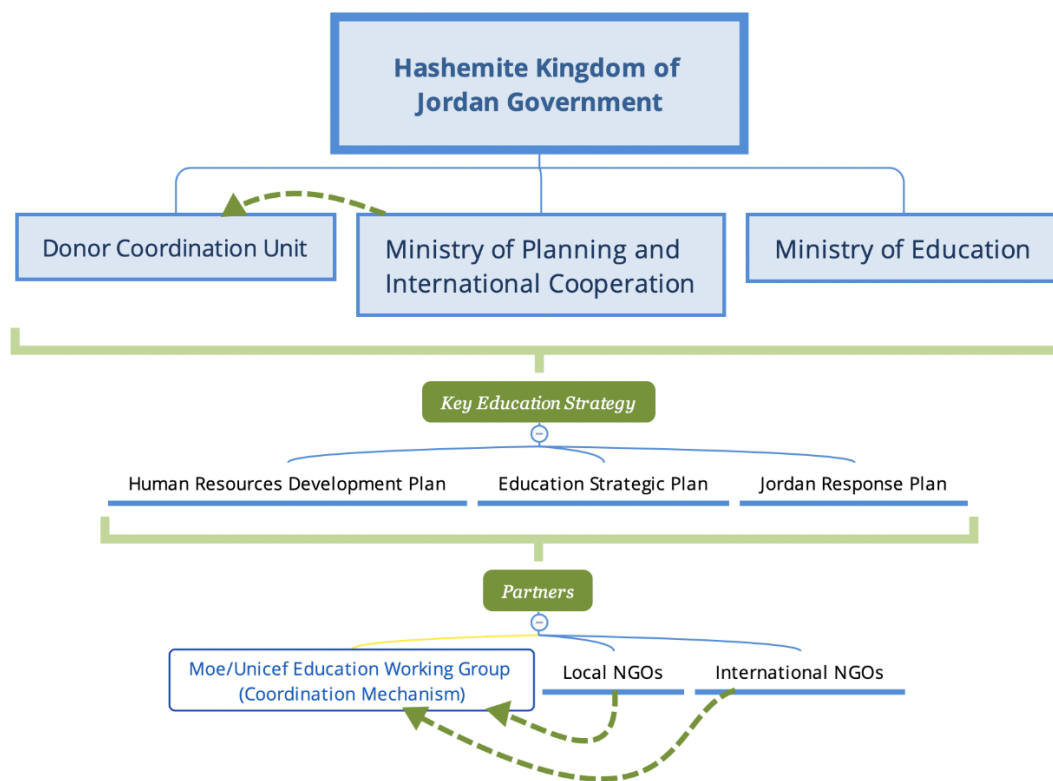
Donors and the MoE officials were found to have played one of the most significant roles in this process. Interview participants highlighted the extent of the differences between NGO implementation visions and those of the donors and MoE, with a senior programme coordinator of Jordanian nationality who had been working with refugees for 6 years noting:

If you are talking about humanitarian organisations, like in meetings, then we kind of have our ducks in a row. As in a row as they can be. Okay. But if the ducks are other stakeholders, like donors, then, no, those ducks, I don't even know if we're swimming the same lake. Different lakes, different types of ducks. Different. Yeah, definitely. Nope. Not aligned. We [NGOs], we all think whatever we're doing is the best version of what should be done. But if you zoom out to the MoE. It's not, I mean if you don't go down to the nitty gritty of details it looks aligned, but if you look at the [education] space, it's definitely not. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

It is widely accepted in humanitarian and development responses that governments are the primary duty bearers for the right to education (UNESCO, 2018). This entails not only providing suitable services but monitoring and regulating other educational services. Jordan is no exception, with interview participants and their organisations acknowledging the Ministry of Education's central role and the governments broader policy objectives. Central to this policy, is the Human Resource Development plan 2016-2025 (HKJ, 2016), which is both cited in the Jordan Education Strategic Plan (HKJ, 2017) and frequently cited by interview participants. The title of the plan is reflective of the general steer of the policy towards production of human capital.

It is from within this broader policy environment that NGOs must then operate. Jordan aims to align NGO programming towards their shared broader objectives through the

Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), and the Donor Coordination Unit (DCU) who review all NGO initiatives to ensure alignment with Government objectives and the various education strategies.



(As described by in country NGO and MoE staff, 2020)

Programming that operates in Jordan must pass through these mechanisms and undergo monitoring and evaluation by the Jordanian government departments to ensure consistency in education responses and effective distribution of resources. Interview participants in several different roles, including donors and NGO staff highlight the human resource development centrality of the applied strategy:

... for Jordan it's all about relating to the human resource development strategy. So, trying to build the workforce of tomorrow with Jordan, recognising that they don't have a lot of natural resources or any of that. (International Donor)

... ensuring that there youth and children are prepared to enter or to participate in the knowledge economy. That's a sentence that you hear a lot, knowledge economy, ensure that workforce is globally competitive. So, something that we get caught out with a lot. At least I've come across a lot here, it's we have to think about the rhetoric that the government and the prime minister is using now. It's about ensuring that youth and children are able to compete in the knowledge economy to

be global, to be productive and able to work, at least that's the lens through which the school literacy focus is about. (International NGO Programme implementer)

MoE interview participant in Jordan:

Interviewer: Do you think that it is, is it fair to say that Jordan's approach to education is sort of human capital centric, about skills and employment? Is that fair to say?

MoE staff member: I think that's a very, very accurate, we are, we're a country that's very low on natural resources and it's always been, it's always been the idea that the only thing we should invest in that makes sense is to invest in is our human capital. (MoE Staff)

It became apparent that the MoE's goals were focused on human-capital development. NGOs in contrast – based on their policy documents reviewed in the last chapter - had emphasised an education that shifted based on the needs and demands of the community, which while focused on human-capital for some, had not reached many out-of-school refugees that appeared to be seeking alternative conceptualisations to be able to prioritise education attendance. Jordan's explicit desire to seek economic growth as part of its country-wide development plans (HRP, 2016), appeared to inform the approach to education aimed at returns through select refugee access to Jordanian markets, and increased donor funding through alignment with international policy.

However, there was also a recognition that the MoE were subject to multiple pressures that had to be balanced:

I remember at one point, and if you pick up papers, newspapers, you'll find this a couple of years ago at one point the ministry for some reason removed Quranic verses from the textbooks and people went wild and they actually went down in the streets and they've burned books and it was, it was a whole riot, but of course it was downplayed in the media. So yeah, these are some of the subtle or at least the weird things that the ministry has had to juggle. (International Donor)

Here the donor speaks of the pressures from the Jordanian community on the Ministries. Similarly, interview participants noted the influence of donors on the MoE activities and donor influence dominated the interview participant responses. An interview participant notes:

I think everyone is trying to align with the minister of education and strategy to the Jordan response plan, to the strategic response plan, the MoE is doing its best. But again, it's also that the most important is the donor community because they do



have the money. If I plan something that is only the priority of the minister of education or the schools, without matching the same with the donor priorities, it would not work. (Programme Director)

Donors appeared to hold two primary forms of influence over the conceptualisations of programmes, a form of soft power, where technical assistance or research informs approaches and influences programming; and second a hard power, namely orientated around conditional funding where NGOs are forced to take different actions to maintain their funding. The first, a form of soft power. An MoE official notes:

We do all genuinely view them [donors] as partners. So, a lot of the time, for example, a minister needs like technical assistance or advice, or our counterparts at the US they would help and that just gives even more influence. (MoE Staff)

Here, the interview participant refers to donor networks which the MoE draws on for technical expertise and guidance, which in turn impacts the shape of enacted policy. Donors appeared to maintain a level of soft power, dominating the available technical sphere of education design and implementation that subtly informs enacted education programming. An MoE official notes:

I think sometimes in education every now and then we have buzzwords and all of a sudden, there's like a lingo. There are keywords that come up every couple of years and you just notice everyone's starting to speak the same language and everyone is trying to gear their agenda towards the same, towards the same agenda or the same objectives. It seems to come in waves, right? It's like something comes in Vogue because we say, well, everyone's all suddenly in early childhood education and it's the most important thing. And yeah, then it moves towards some other area. Inclusion is suddenly the hot topic. It always starts with the donors, I don't know where they get it from, maybe they just wake up one day and think, right, I like this today. But it is a real thing, we see it a lot. (MoE Staff)

A complex power dynamic appeared to exist between the MoE, donors and NGOs. It seemed MoE officials sensed the influence of the donor system, and the wider international humanitarian and development system, but were unable to fully pinpoint where the drivers were coming from. Once the momentum had begun however, MoE staff suggested it became hard to turn back:

Once you do that, you have got 10 million with everybody understanding that you actually know what the real problem is and then how are you going to backtrack

that if you are wrong? And actually, say we want something else? That doesn't look good. What would you do? (MoE Staff)

Many held different conceptualisations of the goal of refugee education, each had a vested interest in each other, and subsequently each contributed to a carefully balanced and negotiated ecosystem of co-dependence. What this suggests is that each of these actors plays a role in shaping the ecosystem. It is an ever-shifting balance that requires the agency of involved parties to form on an ongoing basis.

The second form of power is the hard power. Another MoE official notes:

You cannot ignore the huge role that the donors play in Jordan. They do have power that comes with them. When you look at the incentive structure, the money, the, you know, we have as government an incentive to always be on the same page with donors. (MoE Staff)

Here the interview participant refers to the financial incentives for strong relationships with donors and subsequently the role donors play in shaping education programming. The result seemed to be that NGOs were required to balance the priorities of both the MoE and donors in designing and enacting programming, and the MoE were required to balance needs of the Jordanian population, the government, and the donors, in a network of co-dependence. An NGO staff member notes:

It's kind of balancing between the donors' priorities, the minister of education priorities, the beneficiaries needs and gaps. So, it's kind of having this balancing between these two, three, four different priorities for us, how we are doing things, how we are responding to the ultimate goal of the intervention. To the school needs to the top priorities of the ministry of education. We take some, some of these priorities that donors say all stakeholders agree on, say funding for disabilities and that is what we do (Programme Director)

This director reflected two common patterns across the interviews. The first, NGO staff all felt that a significant part of their role was to reflect the interests of the refugees; or as the Director quoted above calls the 'beneficiaries'. This isn't to suggest that other interests were ignored, merely that refugee interests were emphasised.

There is no doubt here for me, it is refugees' preferences that we aim to reflect the most. Who am I to decide after all. I am here to serve them not the other way around (Programme Implementer)

I think you will find different answers [to the question of whose interests should be reflected]. For many of the people coming in here to Jordan from the US, or the UK [interview participant pointed to the interviewer reflecting that the interviewer is from the UK] then you will hear it's all about the refugees, the refugees the refugees. If you talk to some of the Jordanian staff, you will hear a more measured answer. They have seen the struggles here for Jordanians. This isn't like refugees arriving in Germany, we have issues here too. They are here working for refugees, they know that this is why there is this money here from donors, that it pays their wages. I know that too, so refugee interests are most important, but now we try and provide more balance (Youth Programme Coordinator)

It appeared from the interviews therefore, that the needs were complex and the beneficiaries diverse, including both refugees and Jordanians. Nevertheless, NGO staff provided a significant voice advocating for refugee interests. While this isn't a substitute for refugee participation, it provided an entry point for refugees and highlighted the importance of their role.

Second, it seemed that rather than actors having equal influence, it was the donors rather than NGOs that acted as the first entry point for decision making around enacted programming. However, donors were not all aligned with each other; different donors took different approaches and supported different conceptualisations of the goals of refugee education. This finding had been reinforced by interview participants from NGOs that had alternative funding mechanisms and highlighted far more flexibility in the design of their programming, which they attributed to donor flexibility. The first, a Jordanian NGO had been established by a CEO of a large corporation, and received its funding consistently from a number of large organisations engaged in corporate social responsibility:

I think that other organisations don't have the private sector commitment like we do, they have a donor centric approach, which makes them develop their practice [in certain ways] ... I think like-minded private sector entrepreneurs have a more activist approach to driving the operation forward. I think others get trapped because the door that their approach is through is under different pressures. So, we just reach out to people. We go, and we have a conversation. Because it has the ability, the listening is daily, the conversation is ongoing. We are here, we are not going. This is not an organisation that is stepping in and out with projects, parachuted in and out. This is different. (Jordanian NGO Youth Coordinator)

Here the interview participant speaks to the prevalence of alternative funding mechanisms as an 'activist approach'. They highlight greater flexibility provided by their private donors that allows them to pursue their conceptualisation of refugee youth

education programming that they deem to contrast with other donors, namely government backed donors.

Conversely however, a youth programme coordinator from another NGO that is entirely government backed indicates similar levels of flexibility:

It's not about [my NGO], it really isn't, it's about the sector because we're fine. You know, we're not looking for funding. We're not looking for acknowledgement even. We just want to be a part of something bigger. I'm really blowing our trumpet, but I think there wasn't really anyone else who has that agenda on that networking group, which is a real pity, because it makes a big difference. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

In this instance the interviewee indicated that by having secured long-term funding, the pressures to adapt programming to donor policies had eased off, and instead they could work towards 'something bigger', highlighting their wider vision of education. Notably, they were government backed, leading NGOs to recognise that the flexibility in funding they sought could be provided by both government and private sector donors. The flexibility provided opportunities to pursue their own conceptualisations of the goals of refugee youth education, which they felt at times stood in contrast to the policy environment that guided enactments and provided a more valuable, or 'bigger' return on investment for refugees.

It became apparent that the diversity of donor approaches provided opportunities for varied conceptualisations, which suggested donors did not shape the education responses, but the nature of each of the individual donors interacted with the MoE and other influencers to inform conceptualisations of refugee education.

Moreover, once funding had been provided, the actual enactments of the programmes, the everyday processes and implementations were passed to the in-country implementers, and follow-up and accountability mechanisms lay largely with the NGOs themselves to self-report. NGOs were also looked to as a primary conduit for refugee interests into the responses and to navigate the malleable and political nature of the NGO education implementation space in Jordan where different interests can intersect and shape the programme enactments.

## **6.2. Dissemination of conceptualisations within and between NGOs**

Dissemination of conceptualisations within and between organisations were found to be a significant influencer of how NGO staff come to formulate their conceptualisations of refugee youth education. All interview participants regardless of the size or focus of the NGO referred to training and knowledge sharing activities as informing their approaches to

the programming. Training sessions as well as workshops or conferences were regularly on staff's schedules. Particularly salient were introductory training sessions to the organisations, which all staff had to attend. I queried what these sessions entail with a staff member at an NGO who ran the sessions in different countries:

It's basically just to talk you through the thought process behind this conceptualisation, I mean, first of all, recognising the mandate that [my organisation] has. We work with young people affected by displacement due to conflict, whether it's refugees, IDPs, those giving quite a specific area that we work in or groups that we work with. And then I always start off by talking about, who are these young people? I often talk around what are their needs, the needs of young people so you understand a period of training youth being a period of change and transition, better benefits, physical, psychological change in social, social roles, changes in the rules in the family. And then also why do we work with young people (Regional Youth Programme Coordinator for a International NGO)

A staff member attending their NGO introduction session comments:

When I started here, I did an introduction workshop. It was over 2 days, but there was also a bunch of onboarding documents I had to read. It was clear to me what it was for, they even talk about the [NGO name] way of working, and the [NGO name] culture. It wasn't just about how we work in the office; this was a really detailed vision of the NGO goals (Programme Implementer for an International NGO)

It seemed that the introductory training sessions, like the reviewed literature in the last chapter, engaged with the NGOs mandates, policies and broad meta-narratives around goals. The second interview participant quoted above highlights the influence of these sessions.

However, there were no mentions of engaging in the conceptualisations of how education should be enacted or how different potential outcomes should be balanced. When I queried this with the interview participants, they suggested:

... those sort of things, they are done at the country level, where you know the context. (Regional Youth Programme Coordinator for an International NGO)

There wasn't really anything on how to actually design the programme, and you know I knew most of this already because of how they work in Jordan, that's why I came to work here. (Programme Implementer for an International NGO)

It seemed two patterns emerged from these introduction sessions. First, the sessions instilled the importance of country level design, rather than a broad NGO wide approach that had to be applied. Second, that at least for the NGO staff member quoted above, that the choice of working for the NGO had been driven by the preconceived ideas of what they did for refugees in Jordan, rather than the approach being conditioned upon arrival. The research however, was unable to collaborate this pattern across other interview participants as the finding had been identified after the data collection process had long ended, however it presents an interesting reflection of the complexity of how these approaches are formed over time, whether NGO staff arrive with preconceived ideas and expectations, or if those expectations are met.

Conferences and training sessions for established staff followed different patterns, where according to interview participants, often “focused on lessons learnt from previous programme implementations and exchange of ideas from research and policy” (Youth Programme Coordinator). I had anticipated therefore, that these activities would be prone to discussion around enacted programme conceptualisations. Instead, however, staff indicated that these sessions were also not directly steered at shaping conceptualisations:

I have been to more conferences and events that I can count. Very rarely do I come back with anything useful. It's usually a way for someone to just launch a new thing or create a splash, or to be able to write a blog after and say how a diverse group came together to save the world, you know. It's kind of required though most of the time [by my organisation] ... but you know, the networking part of these events are usually more useful, sometimes I hear things from other people working in other countries and it gets me thinking. Mostly over lunch more so than in the sessions, but it all counts (Youth Programme Coordinator)

In this instance, the youth programme coordinator above echoes a pattern found across the NGO staff that these training activities are not significant in shaping how the programme should be designed or delivered, instead providing greater control to in-country staff and in line with the findings of the NGO policy review in Chapter 4 which emphasised the importance of the programming being agile to allow adaption to evolving needs. However, a programme implementer interviewed at the same time as the youth programme coordinator interjected to clarify:

I think sometimes we get something useful from those sessions, I do. But they are not that common and when you compare it to the amount of work we do here in Jordan, and the programmes that we interact with everyday, the influence of a

PowerPoint slide one week, it's all relative, it's not really going to be something we can easily trace back and say, yeah sure that meant we did this (Programme Coordinator)

Both interview participants agreed on this broad point, that the influence of training activities such as workshops, is there, but in the grand scheme of the programme implementation, its impact is minimal. The Youth Programme Coordinator, however, also points to another key finding, that is the dissemination of concepts and ideas through informal mechanisms. These mechanisms were not only confined to training programmes and conferences. Indeed, the broader everyday experience and interaction between NGOs in Jordan and other countries and contexts creates an environment that allows exposure to diverse actors and ideas that consciously, or subconsciously can influence programming. I refer to these processes as dissemination through osmosis. NGO staff can often move between countries and contexts and interact with different actors in the same field. These movements of people result in the movement of knowledge across and between contexts. A senior coordinator of programmes across the MENA region for their NGO comments:

I can think of people, colleagues who've worked in different countries and the kind of similarities across the models, across the different countries because they are bringing back experience in that approach with them and taking it, and putting it elsewhere. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

I've often when I have done consultations or have visited on my deployments. I feel we're often, it's interesting actually we're often on the same page. Like for example, I was in Mali in February, and I did a workshop. I would develop strategy, and they had a Youth Empowerment model. And in fact it was coming to the end of her most recent project and they had changed the project over the lifespan quite a lot. And, you know, the example of Jordan, Jordan had changed the programme in the same way, and I can't explain it, we just are on the same page ... I've observed that in so many parts of Africa, as well as central West Africa, where youth programmes take one country and I'm gonna stop and do the program somewhere else. And they're sharing the results of materials and approaches and yes, there will be adaptation, but it's still the sort of informal sharing of approaches even within the larger organisational level. (Regional Youth Programme Coordinator)

It became apparent that dissemination through osmosis may play a significant role in the movement of knowledge and concepts that are applied in contexts such as Jordan. Subsequently, I also sought mechanisms where NGO actors came together both with other staff from their organisation and staff from other organisations to try to identify dissemination through osmosis that can lead to cross-pollination of ideas. Unanimously,

staff agreed that the most significant point of convergence of NGOs for dissemination of ideas and knowledge is the Education Sector Working Group in Jordan. Jordan, like many refugee response contexts has an Education Sector Working Group which brings together NGOs and international multilateral organisations to facilitate inter-organisational relationships. The working group meetings are seen as a key site for exploration that was accessible to this research. Regular meetings take place at set intervals, where stakeholders — namely implementers although occasionally donors and ministry officials — meet to collaborate over shared objectives. In Jordan the Education Sector Working Group had identified with the following objectives:

1. To provide an information-sharing and coordination forum in which all relevant organisations and institutions collaborate to support access and equity for all children, adolescents and youth to relevant education, vocational education/TVET and higher education pathways in current and future development and humanitarian programming.

2. Ensure a cross-sectoral approach to education – i.e. protection, equity, gender equality, GBV, CWD/PWD and provision of strong coordination and collaboration among all sector and cross-sectoral members.

3. To enhance education system capacity in planning and implementing education, vocational education/TVET and higher education interventions aligned to the extent possible with national plans and priorities, adopting universal standards for addressing the multi-faceted consequences of natural and human disasters, and working in such a way as to strengthen the resilience of national institutions, communities and individuals to cope with and respond to current and future crises.

4. To generate relevant data and research evidence and share information in a timely manner in line with international, national and sub-national platforms and frameworks ... and act as a knowledge-sharing platform to reflect member agencies' technical experiences and lesson learnt at local, regional and global levels.

(UNHCR, 2022)

The mandate of the Education Sector Working Group highlighted above indicated why interview participants felt it was an important site to understand the dissemination of learning around programme implementation and its impacts on the conceptualisations of education in Jordan. Point 4 on creating a knowledge platform to reflect technical experiences and lessons learnt appeared particularly relevant as it indicated that the



working group was used as a means of disseminating lessons and could therefore influence conceptualisations of the role of refugee youth education.

I started by trying to identify if there were any clear commonalities between the organisations approaches that had been driven by the Working Group that I would be able to attribute to cross-pollination. Yet the approaches adopted by NGOs were diverse, with all NGOs drawing on their own materials, methodologies, and in some instances their own curricula aligned with the MoE and designed to bridge learners into the Jordanian education system, rather than demonstrate identifiable points of convergence around shared approaches. When asking interview participants, none were able to give examples of where their approaches had been the result of influence from a fellow NGO in the coordination meetings. Instead, it seemed organisations had already identified their approaches prior to beginning participation in the working group meetings. I queried why participants felt there was not cross-pollination:

It's not like the coordination group is really for that sort of thing. We are all very independent organisations, we have our own ways of working, but we are all trying to get to the same endpoint, and that is why we come together here [in the working group]. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

It seemed the organisations used similar language around their goal of reaching out-of-school children with accredited education, yet the approach to getting there differed. An interview participant explains:

I would say everyone has different approaches, but they're not, they don't sit too far apart. So, people have somewhat the same objective in mind. They'd just be very different paths of how to get there, but it's not that people see the objectives as completely different. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

Here, the youth programme coordinator appears to speak to the meta-narratives identified in the last chapter, where organisations propose broad visions, yet the details of what those visions look like for the individuals or how to get there are left to implementers. It appeared that instead of trying to unite in a shared vision participants viewed their different approaches and varied outcomes as comparative advantages deemed to be aligned to meet the shared drive to help and support refugee communities rather than needing alignment in terms of their chosen approaches.

While the working group did not appear to facilitate cross-pollination between NGOs, it did appear to be a significant avenue for global and national policy, as well as MoE policy to be disseminated. A UNICEF guided study on vulnerable Jordanians and Syrians had been discussed across several working group meetings, with the goal of guiding programming

towards specific populations as outlined in the MoEs new vulnerability approach that aimed to reach populations by vulnerability rather than nationality or refugee status. These tools not only provided NGOs with a means to identify vulnerable populations, but also held NGOs to account by highlighting Jordanians in need and exposing programming that did not target the population. Similarly, a donor attending one of the working group meetings spoke on the importance of integration into host country schools, making a case for how it provides more viable long-term programming, and shaping the channelling of their funding over the coming years. These forms of accountability and advocacy that took place provided a means for gradual assimilation of ideas, knowledge and visions of programming which shaped refugee youth programming enactments.

It appeared therefore, that that education working group is a valuable site for research that allows for assessment of the informal interactions between participants in and around the coordination meetings. However, the meetings focused primarily on global and national visions outlined in policy rather than alternative conceptualisations between NGOs, which are instead often derived from the NGOs' own mandates and staff. This is not to suggest that it isn't a viable and valuable space to use for advocacy of certain conceptualisations of the goals of refugee youth education; instead, merely that those opportunities were used by actors advocating for establish policy, rather than alternative visions.

### **6.3. Refugee youth absence from formation of programme conceptualisations**

All stakeholders acknowledged their desire for refugee youth - and their wider communities - to have the ability to steer the programming, yet there were few opportunities for them to do so:

There isn't anywhere else in Jordan for them to have that as refugees, nobody listens to them, they [refugees] have very little say in their lives, in their schooling, anything really. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

We try and let them [refugee youth] come and decided what we do that day. We want them to be able to tell us about what they learn. But we have to meet the goals we are told we have to meet, and we have to report to our donors, so sometimes, well I guess too much, we have to do what we have to do (Programme Implementer)

Refugee youth did not participate in Jordan's educational governance processes, nor were they going to be able to work in most of the established NGO programmes upon graduation or obtain funding for their own programmes due to restrictions imposed by

Jordan. Subsequently, I could not identify many means for refugee youth to directly inform their programming towards conceptualisations that they felt aligned with their needs. The only exception in terms of accountability is the needs assessment. A needs assessment aims to generate essential data that highlights populations' education needs and makes those needs clear to donors, education agencies, local officials and communities. Such assessments can also identify pre-existing and available resources and services for use in education response strategies. Approaches to these needs assessments are as diverse as they are many. Secondary literature from Jordan highlights the use of participatory action research by one of the NGOs in Jordan (Morton and Montgomery, 2012) - where researchers and participants work together to understand a problematic situation - as well as large scale surveys (JENA, 2014, 2015). These needs assessments, while sometimes perceived merely to extract data from an affected population, also constituted one of the few means of an upward influence on enacted programming.

One of the Interview participants highlighted the needs assessment as a means of informing their approach:

All of our programmes start with doing a kind of a needs assessment, a needs assessment we select around 50 schools, 40, 45 to 50 schools to do the assessment, trying to understand the needs and gaps in each school. And the governorates from different points of views. So, looking to their needs from the school principal point of view, the needs from the teacher's point of view, from the students' point of view and from the parents. So, it allows us to collect these different, say point of views, and to understand the exact needs of the beneficiaries, either the Syrian refugees or other refugees. (Programme Director)

In this quote, the interview participant highlights the needs assessment as the first in the string of steps towards programme design and enactment. It starts as a foundation for their approach. The interview participant however, continues:

After that we make the analysis, and we look at how we can match these results with the donors' priorities (Programme Director)

Rather than see donors as steering their priorities towards the established needs, they instead indicated a need to negotiate the results of the needs assessment with donor priorities. I queried how these negotiations tended to go to try and identify if refugee voices were prioritised over donor preferences. Interview participants were divided over the question:

What the organisations do is not so far from what the people think should be done. It's not that controversial, really like lots of times people are asking questions, and it

almost always is the kinda thing they are looking for (Youth Programme Coordinator, International NGO)

The youth programme coordinator's quote above reflects the shared view of many of the interview participants; that the programming does largely reflect the best interests of refugee youth. Yet interview participants also expressed that despite this relative alignment, the system used in guiding the conceptualisations is still flawed:

... there's no mechanism of accountability for the end user to hold the implementers accountable. Unless donors actually have some sort of, unless donors can set up a mechanism with the receivers of education, by which they tie the funding to a performance rating from the end user, but that never happens (Youth Programme Coordinator, Jordanian NGO)

It became apparent therefore, that while the programming did seem to reflect refugee preferences – at least according to those available to this research – interview participants felt that without sufficient mechanisms for refugee participation and accountability for the enacted programming, then the system was never going to be sufficient in ensuring refugee's interpretations of the conceptualisations of the goals of education were incorporated.

Levels of refugee participation in forming the process however, appeared to vary by NGO, and particularly their funding sources. Three of the NGO staff took great pride in the relevance of their programming to refugees based on their continual engagement with the refugee community:

Nothing in [this organisation] was exported from the West and implemented. It was always more participatory, more from the perspective of the community, more from the perspective of the youth. So, there is this pattern of neighbouring and the sense of shared authorship ... we have sessions where the parents, and uncles and everyone is invited to the centre, where we hear about the challenges, they are facing ... and also so we can advocate for keeping the students in school (Programme Director)

So, we started kind of step by step with identifying the needs of the community [through needs assessments]. And then once they did these main things, the other clear issue was that, you know, all the parents were talking about their children going to university. And the team was aware of that. Nowadays the idea of you getting a university degree is just not going to get you anywhere in life [as a refugee], on an individual level, and it's also not going to create the change that we want to see in our communities. But sometimes, this is what the community wants,

so, this is what we do, we don't answer to anyone else (Youth Programme Coordinator).

We really like to try to constantly engage community and young people, and consultation sessions, for example, when we did the revision for our two years of strategy, we really conducted sessions, with our staff, from the community and with the young people where we took them through the strategy that we had in mind. And like late 2018, we had a funding cut at some point. So, we had like focus group discussions again on what to do, consultation discussions with our staff, from the community and from young people, just to understand more from them, like what programmes they see as high priority for the population. (Programme Implementer)

This view stood in contrast to the other interviewees who noted that after a needs assessment they “look at how we can match these results with the donors’ priorities” (Programme Director), suggesting the funding mechanisms played a significant role in the ability to adapt the approach of formulating the conceptualisations of education - in this instance by being able to have far greater involvement of refugees.

It seemed therefore, that refugee participation in the shaping of the conceptualisations of the programming relied primarily on the needs assessments and evaluation mechanisms, but also NGOs close working relationship with refugees who continually relayed feedback and altered the programming accordingly through negotiation between the competing influencers such as donors. It had not been perceived as a substitute for their direct involvement in the decision making around the conceptualisation of their education, instead merely an opportunity for NGOs to garner feedback, and then to act as advocates on the behalf of refugee youth. NGOs were one of the few actors identifying as directly representing refugee rights, and in many cases NGOs presence there at all was contingent on the refugee presence. NGO staff, therefore, held opportunities to be a key driver in ensuring the enactment of refugee youth education programming in line with refugee youth and the broader communities’ interests.

#### **6.4. NGO staff and their ability to retain control of programming**

While policy, the MoE, donors and refugees all played a role to varying degrees in shaping the conceptualisations of the goals of Syrian refugee youth education, it was still the NGO staff who appeared to be most prominent, sitting between these actors and the implementation holding significant power over the final manifestations of the education programmes. The centrality of NGO staff quickly became apparent, and a view broadly held across interview participants, to the extent it has been difficult to select just a few examples to provide:

How I describe us, in Arabic it translates to something like, I say 'someone who sees the holes and tries to patch them'. We are out there to change the system of education. We do our best with, with advocacy groups. We're part of the conversation. We produce paperwork, we produce programmes. We talk with the ministry, we talk with the teachers, but at the end, we, we create this space that allows for our community, at least to evolve and to develop within the framework of what we have. (Programme Director)

So, for example, when I was setting up a host community program, it was a time when [my organisation] was really expanding. ... And I was told we want to create a new programme, we have this budget for some different grades. And then I mentioned my idea and then she said, 'ok great, so, where are you starting?'. And I assumed it was part of this big decision, but it was actually okay, I just needed to start it. We'll start. (Regional Youth Programme Coordinator)

Across all the interviews, with NGO staff, donors and the MoE, there was a widely held belief that the staff working within the NGOs held significant power and influence over the ultimate enactment of the programmes and as noted in the quotes above, the space to alter the trajectory of programming. In some instances, donor staff spoke about NGO staff at other organisations with respect and a sense of admiration, speaking of some as if they were celebrities:

Have you interviewed [NGO Programme Coordinator] for your research? She has been working here a long time, it's so impressive these things she does at [NGO]. It's all about the youth participation there, I would have liked to have done more of what she does here (Youth Programme Coordinator)

I think you should probably speak to [NGO Programme Coordinator] if you really want to find out about youth and, and sort of the more activism and political engagement side of things (NGO Country Director)

These interview participants refer to an individual who had also been mentioned by two other interview participants, with great respect. It had been her work on innovative approaches and visions of an alternative conceptualisations beyond the policy focus that had been revered, suggesting NGO staff longed for alternative conceptualisations.

It seemed NGO staff either used their position to navigate the space allowed within the limitations of the various other drivers of programmes or aspired to do so. They wanted to act as advocates and activists for what they felt were important shifts in refugee youth education. NGO staff members reflected on the significance of NGO staff:

I think we definitely have a role to play here, a couple of us are trying to better connect the curriculum to concepts that are very important in the world we live in today, including gender, quality considerations, climate change, human rights. Just to give you a really basic example, last year, I brought into Jordan our financial management advisor, the one who gives us a green light whether or not to disperse money. Because I wanted her to see and understand the context we work in. And this is not something that we typically do, but, you know, I was really glad I did because then she was like, Oh my God, I understand so many things now, you know, and I cannot just look at this on paper and say, yes, you can disburse or no, you cannot disburse. I need to understand the context and now I understand it. But ultimately, I don't think it's something that's going to just naturally change much. I think it's something we'll always have to navigate, to work at. (Programme Director)

So for host communities, we had donors who actually came to [the organisation in Jordan]. The donor was looking to fund something else, like shelter or livelihoods or legal systems, a club. And then it was us that said, look, we've got this youth project like this, and then through advocacy and discussion it happened. (Regional Youth Programme Coordinator)

So, if [another interview participant] and I left, I mean, [the organisation] would still be doing what it would be doing and the ducks will still be aligned, but the way it was done, it would probably change a lot. Maybe someone would come and they would, what they really want to focus on is the importance of transition to employment when it comes to youth and education. Are we still doing youth and education in that? Yes. But it's not what we would be doing. You can still be in line with donors, and with the organisation, but there is like a five-metre space around the line we can walk in and still be in line. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

Indeed, these staff appeared to reflect the impact NGO staff can have on the conceptualisations of programmes and allocation of funding through advocacy and influence on programme implementations. In turn, the current refugee education space in Jordan can be seen as much as a product of those that work in the space at any particular time as it can be seen as a product of policy.

This is not however, to suggest that they were always effective:

... we want to be directly filling this gap that nobody else is. We do a lot of advocacy.  
... So, on the one hand, we're trying to push for meetings talking about excluded adolescents in the system, why they're at a school, how complex it is, how we can think about addressing it at all levels, how this is the priority need and how

education needs to look to fill the gap. It doesn't always go anywhere though, because there are not enough other people speaking the same language or the same understanding, sometimes the Ministry just says no, we need more classrooms instead, our response is to build new classrooms, and the donors say, okay, great. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

In these instances, NGO staff were seen engaging in forms of activism, driving, and shaping agendas as part of a negotiation between the various forces that dictate the enactment of refugee youth education programmes.

What this section has highlighted is that NGO staff can act as gatekeepers to refugee youth education programming, engaging in forms of activism to revise enacted programmes. Without representation from refugees directly in donor and MoE mechanisms, trust is placed in these NGO staff to accurately establish the appropriate conceptualisations on behalf of the refugee community.

#### **6.4.1. NGO Staff Backgrounds**

With NGO staff adamant about their centrality to the process and influence, I began to enquire further into the background of the staff to try and better understand where their conceptualisations that manifested in changes to programming may stem from and its implications on refugee youth programming. All the interviewed NGO staff were academically high achievers. All the staff from the Global North had attended universities and achieved Masters in related topics. Jordanian staff also held graduate certificates from a range of universities in the region, although often top-tier universities modelled on those in the Global North such as the American University of Cairo. Others had experience working in Europe on related programmes. A Jordanian interview participant when queried about the pattern affirmed that highly educated staff, largely from private schools and universities modelled on Western education systems made up the majority of staff:

##### Interviewer:

... how many people at [your organisation] went through the Jordanian public school system as opposed to private school system?

##### Participant:

None, maybe one, maybe one or none. So, if for example, with implementation, with those NGOs that work a lot on implementation such as those embedded in the Syrian camps, a lot of the community mobilisers and those sorts are probably from a more, I guess humble background, you know, like the public education, or maybe



lower socioeconomic backgrounds, if that makes sense (International Youth Programme Coordinator)

It appeared the interview participants were very aware of this pattern and conscious of its impact. A Jordanian interview participant highlights their recognition:

Interviewer: Where do your opinions about education come from?

Participant: Well, the same way your opinions do, many places, your education for example.

Interviewer: Do you think your education [at a private school and Western university] has resulted in some, privileged that has changed your conceptualisations then?

Participant: Oh my God. A whole, lot of privilege that I need to acknowledge on a daily basis, a whole lot of privilege that has definitely influenced what I do every day ... So if I think what is the problem with a lot of things in Jordan it is because the most privileged are so, privileged. They, they don't even, they don't even have views on things because they're so, blinded by their privilege. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

They perceived a level of privilege and indicated that the same privilege is at the root of some of the issues in Jordan, resulting in a blinding to the realities of Jordan. When pressing further as to how the participant felt they were able to hold their role while also their privilege, they replied:

but my education views were there, I think like all of my other views prior to [joining my organisation] they're not there because I experienced them first hand. Cause I didn't, I went to the best private schools in the country. Then I got scholarships to go to AUC [the American University of Cairo] and then another to go to the US, I don't get to complain about the education system not being inclusive enough. But again, privilege, privilege, privilege, and acknowledging privileges are a very important thing. I think the acknowledgment of privilege and the understanding of how 98% of people living in this country lack, because that's where they come from. I had this fantastic educational journey, but I present less than 1% of people who live in this country. But where do these opinions come from? They come from interests. They come from the fact that you're interested to know what kind of education and opportunities are available to others? I know I got all of this privilege and education, but I know my cousins who still live in refugee camps, for example, and then obviously my interests in what I studied. (Youth Programme Coordinator)

The question appeared to pose a challenge for the participant to fully answer. NGO staff indeed often held relative privilege in terms of wealth and academic credentials, with many holding a university education and all having obtained sought after jobs at NGOs in Jordan. Subsequently they were revered in the refugee community and as central actors in negotiating on behalf of refugees, they held significant power and responsibility over the enacted programming. What was also taken from the conversation was that they felt conscious of their privilege and the impact that can have on their role to the extent they acknowledge it on a daily basis, and subsequently were able to take a critical position of themselves and those around them when engaging with the question of education conceptualisations. They reflected how these critical positions altered how they implemented programming, and how they interacted with donors, seeing themselves as advocates and activists for a cause rather than implementers of top-down policy or programming. However, placing trust on those with privilege to be able overcome the influences of that privilege on the conceptualisations of programming by critically reflecting did not seem a sufficient substitute for refugees' notable absence from policy formation. Yet it remained one of the few means for refugees' preferences to be relayed.

Another intersecting driver of NGO staff conceptualisations was an element of institutionalisation after being immersed within the NGO sector:

No, we've been here for nine years. We've literally been institutionalised to walk in the same line. It's no coincidence. It's been in the space for, for long enough for us to be put in a line. But, a line that I think is not a terrible line to be in. And it's a fine line (Youth Programme Coordinator)

... we've already been made by our organisation, by language, by the buzzword and by what is the buzzword that is happening now, what we talk and do every day. I think we're definitely [working] in similar ways and that we sound just similar, just a little bit. Just we use the same language (Programme Implementer).

It seemed that many of the NGO staff felt that their experiences in the NGO sector were also major drivers of their conceptualisations. Their own experiences were so prominent the staff expressed grave concern over their impact. The solution posed was critical engagement with their own histories in order to understand and operate more effectively in the context. It did not seem to be posed or accepted as a sufficient substitute for direct refugee participation in the process, yet NGO staff were one of the few means for relaying refugee preferences, once again highlighting the importance of understanding NGO staff's conceptualisation of refugee youth education, how they use their positions of influence to alter refugee programming, and the potential risks this hold in accurately reflecting the preferences of refugees.

## 6.5. Summary

In navigating the complex landscape of refugee education in Jordan, NGO staff operate within a web of influences that shape their conceptualisations and implementations of educational programmes for Syrian refugee youth. This chapter has highlighted the multifaceted nature of these influences, encompassing both internal organisational dynamics and external pressures from donors and governmental policies.

The role of external actors, particularly the Jordanian Ministry of Education and international donors, cannot be overstated. These entities exert substantial influence through funding mechanisms and policy directives, shaping the educational strategies of NGOs. Despite the alignment required with these policies, NGO staff consistently demonstrate a capacity for negotiation and adaptation, ensuring that their programmes address the immediate needs of refugee communities while adhering to broader policy frameworks.

The dissemination mechanisms within and between NGOs, such as training sessions, conferences, and the Education Sector Working Group, serve as critical platforms for aligning activities and sharing knowledge. However, the impact of these mechanisms on the conceptualisation of educational goals is often limited, with NGOs frequently discussing established programme frameworks rather than developing new, context-specific educational paradigms within the working group.

A critical gap identified in this chapter is the relative absence of refugee communities in the formation of programme conceptualisations. While community input is widely acknowledged as important, structured opportunities for refugees to influence educational programming remained limited. Needs assessments were a critical tool in capturing refugee voices, yet their implementation and impact varied widely among NGOs. Subsequently, the importance of refugee staff is further emphasised as they hold an opportunity to act as ambassadors for refugee preferences.

NGO staff were seen operating in a challenging environment where they must balance the expectations and requirements of multiple stakeholders, including international donors, local governments, and the refugee communities themselves. Their role extended beyond technical expertise to include navigation and negotiation of the myriad demands and political pressures placed on conceptualisations of the role of education for refugees. While this role can be beneficial in enabling NGOs to develop and apply tailored interventions that address unique challenges, it also meant that there is significant variation in how policies are interpreted and implemented in-country. NGO staff claim to integrate multiple conceptualisations they believe better serve the complex and evolving needs of refugee youth often in ways that do not align with the agendas or mandates of others. Yet these

conceptualisations were enacted in a nuanced landscape where power, policy, and practice intersect and compete not only with each other but with the NGO staff's own histories, personal goals, and understandings of refugee youth education, shaping the programme enactments in unpredictable ways and posing questions over NGO staff's abilities to accurately reflect refugee preferences.

Overall, this chapter underscores the necessity for a nuanced understanding of the interactions between various actors and mechanisms that influence NGO-led education initiatives. It highlights the importance of ongoing advocacy, policy engagement, and the opportunity for empowerment of NGO staff to create educational environments that truly meet the needs of Syrian refugee youth in Jordan. By appreciating these complexities, stakeholders can better support the development of effective and responsive educational programmes that address both policy requirements, and the unique challenges faced by refugee communities.

## **Chapter 7. Discussion: NGOs and their ability to instigate change**

### **7.1. Global and national policy Influence on NGOs**

The literature reviewed, particularly the works by Pincock, Betts, and Easton-Calabria (2020) and Brumat, Geddes, and Pettrachin (2022), emphasises the importance of global frameworks in shaping policies. However, this research reveals that while Jordanian NGOs are aware of global policy frameworks like the Global Compact on Refugees, their practical reference point remains firmly rooted in national policies. Interview participants were familiar with the evolutions of global refugee policy and identified the influence of global policy on national policy, yet viewed the Jordanian government as the duty bearer, and therefore when shaping their programmes around policy used Jordanian policy as their key point of reference. This supports calls for exploring global policy as only part of the broader policy context that shapes programme enactments (Brumat, Geddes and Pettrachin, 2002).

Further research, however, would be required to confirm these patterns, as it is not possible to conclude whether NGOs would still reference country level policy so decisively if the policy did not align with global policy. It provides useful insights however, for the growing body of literature on education systems (Pritchett, 2015, 2018), by questioning the assumption that the key entry point for understanding policy influence is the intersection between global or national policy and implementation, by highlighting the importance of local actors in deciding which policy provider they draw upon for their conceptualisation and implementation.

In terms of the impact of Jordan's policy on NGOs, Jordan's alignment with the Global Compact on Refugees (UNHCR, 2018b), has meant NGOs have had to adapt their programmes to meet integrated policy directives. NGOs are encouraged to further implementation of educational strategies that facilitate the integration of Syrian refugee youth into the national education system, emphasising inclusivity and human capital development. One significant impact of these shifts is the increased pressure on NGOs to adopt Jordanian curricula and align their educational programmes with national standards. This means that some NGOs have transitioned from providing alternative educational programmes to integrating refugee students into public schools, using the same curriculum as their Jordanian peers. Additionally, the integration policies have driven NGOs to focus on both academic and vocational training to better align with the human-capital emphasis of Jordan's national strategies. These policy shifts to integration are facilitated by influential actors in Jordan. The MoE ensures that NGO initiatives align with national educational strategies through a series of regulatory bodies that require NGOs to report on operations. This alignment ensures that educational programmes are not only compliant with national goals but also contribute to the broader objective of economic and social integration of

refugees within Jordanian society. Donors also exert considerable influence through their financial support, which often comes with specific conditions and expectations. Their funding priorities impact the types of educational programmes that NGOs can implement. Donors typically support initiatives that align with both global education policies and the strategic objectives outlined by the Jordanian government. The findings underscore the extent to which donor influence and regulatory bodies can steer NGO activities toward specific educational goals, often aligned with global policy frameworks such as the Global Compact on Refugees and supports the observations made by Mendenhall, Russell, and Buckner (2017), who argue that NGOs are increasingly embedded within host-country policy frameworks as a result of donor agendas and MoE policy.

The findings also highlight how the shift to integration in host country schools has led to a narrowing of the space for NGOs to enact alternative conceptualisations of education, which - as outlined in Chapter 2 - NGOs have historically aimed to do as key implementers of refugee education. This finding is consistent with the literature that discusses the 'NGO-ization' process, where NGOs become increasingly professionalised and dependent on external funding, often leading to shifts in their agendas away from alternative conceptualisations (Lang, 2022).

Yet the research also shows that despite these external influences, NGOs retain a degree of flexibility that allows them to innovate within the broad policy frameworks. While the MoE, donors, and the shifts towards integration have certainly had an identifiable impact on NGO practice, some of the global and national policy enforced in Jordan is broad and at times ambiguous, therefore leaving room for NGOs to still influence the nature of their programmes. For example, the Jordan Educator Strategic Plan (2018-2022) and the various iterations of the Jordan Response Plan (Government of Jordan, 2014; MoPIC, 2015, 2020) largely emphasise concepts such as inclusivity and quality education without specifying in detail what an education should look like to achieve those goals. Moreover, the Jordanian policy framework encourages NGOs to innovate and respond to specific educational challenges faced by Syrian refugee youth, such as overcrowded classrooms and resource shortages, to ensure that educational interventions are both relevant and effective in improving the educational outcomes for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan. Jordanian policy therefore allows NGOs some level of flexibility for a diverse range of educational strategies that can better meet the needs of refugee students. NGOs can implement learner-centred pedagogies that focus on interactive and participatory methods, which are particularly effective in engaging refugee children who may have experienced trauma. They can also employ culturally responsive teaching strategies that acknowledge and incorporate the diverse backgrounds of Syrian refugee students. Furthermore, NGOs can introduce flexible learning schedules to accommodate students who need to balance school with work or household responsibilities.

NGOs in Jordan, therefore, are not merely passive implementers of policy but are engaged in a dialectical relationship with these policies. They interpret, adapt, and at times can resist policy directives based on their understanding of the local context; a point that is crucial for understanding the complexities of refugee education and the power dynamics at play. These findings reinforce the relevance of the localisation literature, as discussed by Roepstorff (2020) and Brumat, Geddes and Pettrachin (2022). Localisation sees social phenomena as a constellation of diverse groups of individuals, communities, organisations, and institutions where the social, cultural, legal, and governmental constructs are formed (Roepstorff, 2020). Understanding systems through the localisation lens encourages the application of diverse and in-depth research approaches that complement each other in enriching the understanding of the context. Moreover, localisation emphasises the temporal dimensions of these systems; that is, reminding the reader that these systems are not static but evolve over time. This nuanced understanding of the interaction between NGO autonomy and donor/government influence adds depth to the existing literature on NGO operations in refugee contexts.

In summary, global and national policy does inform the conceptualisations of refugee youth education and NGO enactments, yet it does not translate into monolithic educational approaches. Instead, NGOs hold opportunities to influence and steer programming and subsequently can be susceptible to influence from others. The research suggests that the localisation agenda provides a valuable framework for understanding these processes by accounting for the diverse and evolving interactions between various actors, including NGOs, state actors, and international donors, which can benefit from incorporating detailed analysis of how NGOs navigate and negotiate their roles within this complex landscape to fully capture the intricacies of these interactions.

## **7.2. Influence of NGO policy and in-country mechanisms**

Internal NGO policy is another important component shaping the implementation of programming in Jordan. NGOs are not only directed by the individuals within them, but by the strategic goals set by the organisations. Yet the literature reviewed by this research, including NGO strategies, theories of change and advocacy materials were found to provide broad, sweeping visions for educational initiatives without prescribing specific programme implementations. This broad approach is justified in the documents based on a need to allow NGOs to interpret and adapt the strategic visions to suit the immediate and contextual needs of refugee youth. While this flexibility can be beneficial in enabling NGOs to develop tailored interventions that address unique challenges, such as overcrowded classrooms and resource shortages, it also means that there is significant variation in how these policies are implemented on the ground. The research findings show NGO staff draw on their internal mechanisms for knowledge dissemination, such as training sessions,

conferences, and working groups, to translate these broad policy visions into actionable strategies. These platforms serve as venues for sharing insights and discussing approaches that have worked in other contexts. Introductory training sessions for NGO staff were also seen to cover the organisation's mandate, the specific needs of refugee youth, and the underlying theories of change guiding their educational interventions. By ensuring that all staff members have a cohesive understanding of the NGO's goals and strategies, these sessions aim to maintain a consistent approach across different programmes, however the research also shows that these mechanisms are largely overshadowed by preconceived ideas of refugee youth education, and in-country practices. NGO policies reviewed were seen encouraging the practice of in-country formulation of the details of each programme, as an approach to remaining adaptable to the context and needs of Syrian refugee youth.

The Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) is significant in the Jordanian context, serving as a forum for coordination among NGOs, the Ministry of Education (MoE), and international donors. This group allows for the cross-pollination of ideas and helps ensure that educational programmes are aligned with both national and global policy directives yet largely embraces the diversity of educational conceptualisations of NGOs and provides a mechanism for coordination more than accountability for enacted approaches. Further research, however, is required in this area where more observations can be undertaken and the influence of the working groups over time can be investigated.

These findings support the literature on the importance of organisational learning and knowledge sharing within NGOs (Banks, Hulme, and Edwards, 2015, Reynolds and Lynch, 2014), such as Libal and Harding (2011), in their study of collaborations between international and local NGOs working with Iraqi refugees in Jordan, who emphasised the importance of capacity-building initiatives in enhancing local organisations' ability to implement effective programmes. This research, however, expands on their findings by demonstrating how internal mechanisms within and between NGOs—such as training sessions, conferences, and working groups—also play a crucial role in disseminating knowledge and best practices across organisations. In particular, the global reach of these mechanisms and cross-pollination not only between countries but also continents present an area for further research to understand how NGO programmes are informed across borders in an ever-shrinking world.

However, while NGO policy and in-country mechanisms were identified as important, it was ultimately the individual NGO staff that appeared to be most significant in translating and interpreting broad policy visions into practical, on-the-ground interventions, explored in the next section.



### **7.3. NGO staff and their roles as transformative intellectuals**

NGO staff were seen operating in a challenging environment where they must balance the expectations and requirements of multiple stakeholders, including international donors, local governments, and the refugee communities themselves. Their role extended beyond technical expertise to include navigation and negotiation of the myriad demands and political pressures placed on conceptualisations of the role of education for refugees. While this role can be beneficial in enabling NGOs to develop and apply tailored interventions that address unique challenges, it also meant that there is significant variation in how policies are interpreted and implemented in-country. NGO staff integrate multiple conceptualisations they believe better serve the complex and evolving needs of refugee youth often in ways that do not align with the agendas or mandates of others. These shifts in implementation can be taken covertly or overtly. NGO staff, therefore, held opportunities to engage in acts of resistance against agendas they perceive as misaligned with a holistic approach to refugee education.

NGO staff claimed that these acts of resistance often placed emphasis on shaping educational programmes towards refugees' preferences, with the goal of prioritising the wants and needs of the refugee community. While formal mechanisms such as needs assessments were cited, it was the NGO staff integration with refugee communities that were most often cited as fuelling NGO staff understandings of those needs. Refugees often have valuable insights and perspectives on their own educational needs and the barriers they face, which can inform more effective and relevant programming (Salem, 2018), and NGO staff were aiming to reflect those perspectives in their programming. By doing so, NGO staff held opportunities to act as ambassadors for refugees', navigating the complex interplay of policy directives and on-the-ground realities to develop educational interventions that are aimed to be both relevant and impactful. Giroux (1985) describes individuals engaging in these acts as transformative intellectuals; "professionals who are able and willing to reflect upon the ideological principles that inform their practice, who connect pedagogical theory and practice to wider social issues, and who work together to share ideas, [and] exercise power over the conditions of their labor" (p. xxiii Giroux (1989)). Transformative intellectuals are those who actively engage in creating a more just and equitable society by fostering critical awareness, empowering students, and employing pedagogical practices that promote critical dialogue and reflection (Giroux, 1989). These individuals are ostensibly committed to social justice, integrating theory and practice, and adopting a collaborative and democratic approach to their programming. They see themselves as agents of change, continuously engaging in self-reflection to challenge and transform structures both within and outside educational institutions (Pherali, Abu Moghli and Chase, 2020). Considering the role of NGO staff as transformative intellectuals provides a new perspective of NGOs beyond implementers of pre-prescribed programming, and

instead as potential agents of change with the power to significantly impact the operation of refugee youth programming.

NGO staff, however, are not immune to the pressures of their surrounding contexts. This research revealed that NGO staff face significant pressure to conform to external expectations while also pursuing their own agendas, particularly those that align with labour market demands (De Lissovoy, Means, and Saltman, 2017). Like educators and other stakeholders in the education system—many of whom are Jordanian—NGO staff are also engaged in the struggle for sustainable livelihoods and like others amidst a capitalist society are compelled to pursue routes that increase and valorise their labour to compete for wage earning opportunities (Allman, McLaren and Rikowski, 2003; Darder, Baltodano, and Torres, 2017).

Moreover, an exploration of NGO staff backgrounds revealed a pattern of highly educated individuals from higher income segments of the Jordanian community, raising questions around their positionality when critically evaluating and altering education enactments. As Freire (2000) argued, it may be too much to expect those who have benefited most from the education system to challenge it, given that their returns have been substantial, and their privilege depends on the status quo education system being recognised and valued. Amidst these pressures, it is perhaps little surprise that NGOs have been criticised for being ineffective at instigating reform due to their deep immersion in the larger donor and government-driven system (INCITE, 2017). I suggest therefore, that NGO staff are not only engaged in a dialectical relationship with policies to carve space for conceptualisations of education suited to refugee communities, but also engaged in a dialectical relationship with their own histories, incentives and mandates over what those conceptualisations should be.

Finally, for NGOs to maintain their ability to operate in Jordan, they must carefully navigate their roles and the conceptualisations they bring to their programming, avoiding engagement in educational activities that might be deemed controversial such as those involving topics deemed controversial or overly political. Subsequently, NGO staff are also subject to external pressures, conceding at times to powerful voices encouraging actions that may steer programming away from refugee's preferences and presenting a complex dynamic in which staff must balance their professional obligations with the demands of their operational environment. This dynamic reflects the broader challenges faced by NGOs in maintaining the integrity of their educational missions while operating within the constraints imposed by both local and international stakeholders.

NGOs, therefore, are in constant contest with both internal and external forces that may alter the trajectory of refugee youth education programmes. They are presented with opportunities to act in the interests of refugees but must identify a means to do so while preserving their opportunities to participate within the system, changing the system, and

not being influenced by the system. To understand the challenges and limitations faced by NGO staff, I draw on the concept of hegemony, which helps explain how control is maintained through a dominant social class over subordinate groups (Darder, Baltodano, and Torres, 2017). Hegemony is perpetuated by shaping cultural norms, values, and ideologies, guiding the beliefs and behaviours of groups to align with the interests of the ruling class. This control is exerted through key cultural institutions—such as the media, education, religion, research institutions, and international organisations—that propagate ideologies justifying and naturalising the existing social order, making it appear inevitable or universally beneficial. In the context of NGO activities, particularly in refugee education, these hegemonic forces can manifest in the form of education agendas that rationalise economic and political goals misaligned with the needs of refugee communities. It acknowledges not only the external systems of power that staff must navigate but also the internalised ideologies that shape their actions and decisions.

Hegemony, however, is an on-going phenomenon, never static or absolute, never total nor secure. Hegemony is a weapon which must be continually struggled for, won, and maintained through a process of fighting to retain its dominant position of power (Arnot, 1982). Subsequently, critically engaged NGO staff hold opportunities to engage in counter-hegemonic processes to alter established norms. Andreotti and Stein (2015) provides a helpful typology for understanding NGO staff's opportunities to enact counter hegemonic processes and the challenges in each, outlining three core approaches: system walkout, system hospicing and system hacking. The first approach, *system walkout*, involves a deliberate decision to reject and disengage from the mainstream humanitarian and development system. This approach entails a commitment to creating alternatives and establishing parallel models that operate outside the prevailing structures. For those working with refugees, system walkout might manifest as a refusal to participate in education systems that are seen as oppressive, exclusionary, or misaligned with the needs and aspirations of the refugee communities. This could involve developing independent educational initiatives that are tailored to the specific cultural and social contexts of refugees or advocating for alternative pedagogical models that challenge the standardised approaches imposed by international agencies and governments.

While system walkout allows for the creation of innovative and potentially more relevant alternatives, it also carries significant risks. As Apple (2012) cautions, choosing to walk out of the system does not always lead to more effective or fruitful outcomes as by stepping outside the mainstream system, learners and staff may be branded as dropouts, radicals, or failures, rather than being recognised for their legitimate critique of the system's incompatibility with their needs. This stigmatisation serves as a powerful tool for the dominant system to maintain its control and discredit those who challenge it. The system's ability to label and marginalise dissenting voices reinforces the existing structures,

making it difficult for alternative models to gain legitimacy and broader acceptance. Moreover, system walkout requires substantial resources, both material and intellectual, to build and sustain parallel structures that can offer viable alternatives to the mainstream. For NGO staff and educators, this path demands a deep commitment to their vision and often entails significant personal and professional sacrifices. The challenge lies not only in developing these alternatives but also in ensuring their sustainability and effectiveness in the face of the dominant system's resistance and the challenges that are faced securing resources.

System walkout is, therefore, a double-edged sword. On one hand, it represents a powerful act of resistance to the hegemony of the existing system, offering the possibility of more contextually appropriate and empowering educational models for refugees. On the other hand, it risks isolating those who pursue this path, potentially leading to outcomes that are no more effective than the system they sought to leave behind. The success of system walkout depends on the ability to build strong, resilient alternatives that can withstand the pressures and stigmatisation imposed by the dominant system, while also gaining recognition and support from the communities they serve.

Andreotti's second concept, *system hospicing*, presents a different approach to navigating the complexities of the humanitarian and development sectors. This concept involves engaging with a system that is perceived to be in decline, with the understanding that it is in the process of ending or transforming into something new. *System hospicing* is about acknowledging the failures and limitations of the current system, learning from its history, and providing what can be seen as a form of "palliative care" to help manage its decline. This approach requires NGO staff and other stakeholders to maintain the integrity of the process, even as they deal with the frustrations, anger, and hopelessness that often accompany the collapse or transformation of established structures. For those working within the humanitarian and development fields, *system hospicing* may appear attractive, especially for those who rely on the existing system for their livelihoods. By choosing to hospice the system, staff may find themselves navigating the complexities of the sector with the least resistance, as they are not outright rejecting the system but rather engaging with it in a way that acknowledges its inevitable decline. This approach allows them to continue their work while attempting to mitigate the negative impacts of the system's failures, effectively cleaning up the mess and preparing the space for something new to emerge.

However, *system hospicing* is not without its significant challenges and emotional tolls. As Andreotti and Stein (2015) point out, this process is far from glamorous. It involves confronting the harsh realities of a system that may be failing refugees, dealing with the emotional and psychological burdens of working within a structure that is no longer viable, and facing the collective failures of the sector. This can lead to feelings of frustration and

hopelessness, as those engaged in *system hospicing* may come to realise that their efforts are, at best, temporary fixes rather than long-term solutions. As Andreotti puts it, “this is unlikely to be a glamorous process; it will entail many frustrations, an uncertain timeline, and unforeseeable outcomes without guarantees” (Andreotti and Stein, 2015, p. 28). *System hospicing* carries the risk of effectively accepting the status quo, seeing refugees’ current situations as *fait accompli*. By choosing to work within a system that is in decline, there is an inherent acceptance of the limitations and injustices that the system perpetuates. While this approach may appear pragmatic, especially for those who see no viable alternative or are unable to leave the system, it can also lead to a sense of resignation. The focus becomes more about managing decline rather than actively seeking transformative change, which can be disheartening for those who originally entered the field with the hope of making a meaningful difference.

Andreotti and Stein’s (2015) final category, *system hacking*, offers a nuanced and strategic approach to navigating and subverting the existing humanitarian and development systems. *Hacking* involves creating spaces within the established system where individuals can be educated about the inherent violence, injustices, and limitations of that system. The goal is to reorient their desires and aspirations away from the dominant narratives and towards alternative, more equitable outcomes. This approach requires NGO staff and other stakeholders to engage with the system in a way that allows them to “play the game” of institutions while simultaneously bending the rules and manipulating the system’s resources to create new possibilities. *System hacking* is about working within the system but not being entirely of it. It involves a deep understanding of how the system operates, including its rules, norms, and power structures, and using that knowledge to subtly subvert and challenge the status quo. Freire (2000, p. 178) aptly describes this process as having “one foot inside the system and the other foot outside,” recognising the need to participate in these structures to effectively challenge them from within. This dual positioning allows NGO staff to leverage the resources and opportunities provided by the system while simultaneously working to undermine its more harmful aspects and advocate for transformative change.

One of the key strengths of *system hacking* is its ability to use the system’s own tools against it. By remaining embedded within the system, NGO staff hold opportunities to gain access to the resources, networks, and platforms necessary to promote alternative ideas and practices. They can use these tools to educate both their colleagues and the communities they serve about the system’s inherent flaws and the ways in which can perpetuate inequality and violence. This education is not just about raising awareness but also about reorienting desires—encouraging individuals to envision and strive for a future that is not dictated by the system’s limitations.

However, *system hacking* is not without its challenges. Operating within the system requires a careful balancing act. Those who engage in *hacking* must constantly navigate the tension between working within the constraints of the system and pushing its boundaries. This approach demands a high level of strategic thinking and adaptability, as it involves bending the rules without breaking them outright and challenging the system from within without being co-opted by it. The risk of co-optation is significant; by engaging with the system, there is always the possibility that the system will absorb and neutralise the efforts to subvert it, thereby maintaining its dominance.

Moreover, *system hacking* requires a continuous engagement with the consequences of participating in the system. Those who hack the system must remain vigilant about the impact of their actions, both on themselves and on the communities, they aim to serve. There is a constant need to reassess and adjust strategies, as the system's dynamics evolve, and as new challenges and opportunities arise; a process some of the NGO staff claimed to actively engage in. This makes *system hacking* a dynamic and iterative process, one that demands ongoing reflection, creativity, and resilience.

System hacking seems to aptly describe how the NGO staff interviewed for this research perceive their roles. Daily, they strive to act as transformative intellectuals, manoeuvring within the system to shape educational programming in ways they believe best align with the needs of the refugee community. In this complex environment, they experience successes and setbacks, make compromises, and at times, even unintentionally work against the interests of the communities they aim to support.

In summary, I reveal the refugee context as a site of conflict; that opportunities for resistance exist for NGO staff, yet they are in constant contest with a variety of dominant forces, gaining and conceding ground throughout. Through this research, I highlighted the importance of understanding these power dynamics, and emphasise the value of the concept of hacking and hegemony to depict the constant negotiation NGO staff engage in. I also highlight therefore, the importance of supporting NGO staff in pursuit of education approaches aligned with the preferences of refugee communities and call for a deeper understanding of the potential impacts and limits of NGO staff as agents of change in the context of refugee education.

#### **7.4. Hacking for transformation**

In the previous section I highlighted the potential role of NGO staff in shaping refugee youth education in Jordan, and their claimed preferences to align their educational programmes with the wants and needs of refugee communities. In this research, I also explored how NGO staff perceived those wants and needs to be able to understand how they mobilise their power to shape programming. Using the framework identified in the

literature review to guide the interview process, I explored the emphasis NGO staff placed on certified human capital, protection and wellbeing, citizenry, and empowerment.

NGO staff views on refugee youth education were constructed based on a variety of identified needs and demands, leading to a range of conceptualisations combining into unique models based on their unique contexts, reflecting the staff's recognition of the uncertain futures and shifting needs of refugees (Dryden-Peterson, 2017). These actions were informed by their interpretations of the evolving needs of each segment of the refugee community, resulting in a constantly evolving conceptualisation that could never be tied down to a fixed concept over time. While previous studies have acknowledged the need for fluidity and adaptability in educational programming for refugees (Dryden-Peterson, 2017), only one study was found that attempts to integrate the diversity of conceptualisations into a holistic framework and present them as existing simultaneously (Bajaj, 2018). This research therefore, contributes to this small but important body of literature by providing the framework presented in Chapter 2.1.5 and by encouraging further emphasis on engaging with multiple conceptualisations simultaneously. Additionally, it advances the work of Bajaj (2018) by exploring the power dynamics involved in negotiating these different conceptualisations with other stakeholders in the refugee context.

The diversity of NGO staff's conceptualisations however, while rich and multifaceted, highlighted challenges in presenting a unified, coherent narrative to stakeholders, including policymakers, funders, and the broader public. This diversity led to difficulties in advocating effectively for resources, policy changes, or public support, due to a lack of consistent messaging that is required to establish and normalise practices (Buckner, Spencer and Cha, 2018). This underscores the importance of developing and disseminating a coherent narrative that can unite the various perspectives within the NGO sector which can resonate with external audiences, thereby enhancing NGO's ability to successfully influence refugee youth education agendas.

I therefore draw attention to a theme referenced by NGO staff that holds the potential to unite NGO staff around a shared vision and narrative, and a potential conceptual core for further research; that is the concept of pathways. NGO staff described their programmes as conceptualised around facilitating pathways for refugees to identify for themselves their vision of a future amidst their evolving and often unknowable futures. This approach justified the diverse programmes and the dipping in and out of different education concepts, as each path paved by each refugee can differ. This approach, however, did not consist solely of asking refugees their preference for a pathway, but involved engaging with refugees through educational programmes designed to help reveal to refugees the opportunities, limitations and risks involved in different pathways, as the ability for refugees to effectively identify optimal educational paths may not only be

hampered by policy and practical barriers, but by deeply ingrained societal and psychological factors. A focus in the literature on the importance of youth empowerment (Martínez *et al.*, 2017) highlights the sense of pervasive disempowerment currently present in refugee contexts that could result in refugees beginning to perceive their own oppression as natural, or their opportunities or abilities as limited. Bourdieu and Wacquant (2005) use the term “symbolic violence” to describe this misrecognition of power structures by dominated, oppressed communities – in this instance, refugee communities. This misrecognition shapes one’s habitus (Bourdieu, 1984); the actions taken based on accepted understandings of the world and their place within it. This manifests in refugees’ belief and acceptance of their own perceived inferiority and avoidance of pathways that may in fact be available to them; for example, the perception of not being school material or not likely to pass, and subsequently dropping out of school.

While refugees are therefore highlighted as the most important actor in dictating the shape of refugee education, addressing the challenges of facilitating them to make informed decisions requires NGOs to take a multi-faceted approach that not only provides educational opportunities and amplifies refugee voices in the shaping of programming but also actively works to dismantle the psychological and societal barriers to help refugees identify and overcome any internalised barriers that may limit their aspirations or visibility of available pathways.

While staff did not directly associate their vision of pathways with any named conceptualisation identified in the literature, it most closely resembled the conceptualisation of education as transformation. Transformation is a conceptualisation that does not identify with one particular goal but embraces the ongoing creation and recreation of education programmes with refugees at its centre. Transformative approaches embrace uncertainty and unknowable futures by promoting self-discovery through critical reflection. It places experience at the centre of programme design, allowing refugee youth programming to evolve towards pathways chosen and subsequently suited to refugees’ unknowable futures. These approaches do not define a utopia, escape, or liberation requiring set outcomes for education; instead, it aims to reveal a series of possible pathways from which refugees can choose to embrace or deny (Biesta, 1998). Transformation can both reflect the NGO objectives by emphasising acts of empowerment and help provide an established narrative to NGO staff conceptualisations, facilitating acts of counter hegemony. Amidst this understanding, NGO staff roles diverge from one of ‘doing’ - setting objectives for refugees, implementing, and measuring outcomes - and becomes one of ‘undoing’ where the NGO staff’s role is to help undo entrenched perceptions of hopelessness, to uncover realities and reveal opportunities and pathways for refugees previously disguised. These transformative approaches are inseparable from



praxis; that is, informed action based on refugees' evolving understandings of available pathways revealed through the process of reflection (Freire, 2000).

Delving into the murky waters of open-ended discovery and philosophy advocated by transformative pedagogies, however, is bound to be controversial. This research highlighted how critical reflection and praxis, central to transformative approaches, while highly valued by NGO staff, remains contentious. This controversy may lead NGOs to overlook many areas of discussion, including Jordanian politics and spheres of social resistance that may disrupt family or national community units (Magee and Pherali, 2017). NGO staff indicated they often circumvent the praxis components of their implementations, focusing instead on instilling the values of critical reflection and praxis rather than actively engaging in the processes during the programmes. Indeed, NGO staff must navigate and enact transformative pedagogies in ways that do not risk their operational status in Jordan.

#### **7.4.1. Critical reflection on the education system as a 'system hack'**

In light of the challenges to transformative approaches highlighted in the last section, I propose a suitable approach to implementation of transformative concepts is to start with critical reflection on the education system itself. Implementation of critical pedagogies highlighted in the literature have broadly taken one of two approaches: the integrative or the additive (De Lissovoy, Means and Saltman, 2017). Changes in teaching, learning and content can either be integrated into existing curricula - where it is mainstreamed into already existing subjects and becomes a dimension across the curriculum – or it is added by giving its own slots in the timetable (Reardon, 1988). While the integrated approach holds significant value, it also poses the greatest potential for resistance from stakeholders as it involves a shift away from other established conceptualisations. The additive, conversely, allows opportunities to hack existing systems to incorporate transformative approaches through what Lissovoy et al. (2017) term a 'curricular strike': "teachers refuse (for a set period) to follow the official curriculum, and instead implement projects and conversations not already given by the standards but instead answerable to the goals set by the community and the imagination of the education" (2017, p.36). A curricula strike removes many of the pressures applied by stakeholders to follow established norms (Peterson, 1990; Lipman, 2004). It provides one of the few, if not the only space that is not accountable to high-stakes testing, providing opportunities for refugees to engage in transformative approaches without risks to their academic opportunities, and provides opportunities for NGO staff to 'hack' transformative approaches into existing programming with reduced risk of political controversy or donor resistance.

If the goal of transformative education is to explore our own worlds, then there are few better worlds for refugee youth to start with than the one from which the exploration takes

place: education. Refugees should have a clear understanding of what education is, data on pass rates, graduation rates, pathways the education has created for previous students, and students should have a clear understanding of the academic debates around the power constellations of the education they are within. Through this process of discovery, both refugees and NGO staff can then be better equipped to navigate education how they see fit and negotiate the challenges it will present them. These implementations do not require dismissal of the many other components of refugee youth education such as human capital, nor does it impose the extremes of Andreotti and Stein's (2015) framework of walk-out or hospicing. Instead, it provides an opportunity for NGOs to hack; to incorporate as segments alongside existing activities a counter-hegemonic pedagogy that does not require the overhaul of programmes, or significant resources of an entire programme, but instead allows enough space within existing programming to critically discover what that programme means for refugees.

My hope is that transformation as a conceptual core orientated around 'undoing education' - where the role is to undo misconceptions and reveal realities around education and its possible pathways - rather than 'doing', in terms of achieving certain prescribed outcomes - provides a conceptual core that can be added to existing programmes and facilitate counter-hegemonic goals. Moreover, it holds the potential to unite NGO refugee youth practitioners around actionable steps and provide a shared narrative on counter-hegemonic approaches that prioritises facilitating refugees to gain the context required to make informed decisions on which routes to pursue for their own unknowable futures. It is not proposed as a panacea, but as another tool in a toolkit for transformative intellectuals seeking to hack established norms in order to place refugees at the centre of their education.

## Chapter 8. Summary and Conclusion

This thesis has explored the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in shaping education initiatives for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan through an in-depth exploration of the perceptions of NGO staff involved in the programme implementation. By investigating how NGO staff conceptualise the goals of refugee youth education, this research has provided a nuanced understanding of the forces at play in the creation and implementation of educational programmes in refugee contexts.

The methodological approach adopted in this thesis was designed to capture the complex and dynamic nature of NGO operations within the context of refugee education in Jordan. A qualitative research design was employed, centred around semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted with NGO staff from seven international and national NGOs operating in Jordan between 2019 and 2020. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the perspectives and experiences of NGO staff, providing rich qualitative data that illuminated the various factors influencing their conceptualisations of refugee youth education. The semi-structured interviews were instrumental in capturing the nuanced views of NGO staff, enabling the research to delve into their personal beliefs, professional experiences, and the broader socio-political context within which they operate.

I used existing literature to develop a framework for understanding the different conceptualisations of refugee youth education, then used the framework to help structure the research questions, and to initially codify the research findings. I then analysed the data using a thematic analysis approach, which allowed for the identification of key themes and patterns in the responses of participants relating to the identified conceptualisations. This approach was particularly suited to the exploratory nature of the research, enabling the emergence of themes that were not predefined but rather rooted in the lived experiences of those involved in the education of Syrian refugee youth, while providing structure to the interviews through the pre-established framework. The approach allowed new conceptualisations to emerge beyond the initial framework established from the literature, such as through the presentation of the concept of pathways in Chapter 4 identified through thematic analysis of the findings. These methods also allowed for the exploration of the tensions and contradictions that arose in the conceptualisation of educational goals, providing a deeper understanding of the complexities involved.

The findings of this study reveal the multifaceted role that NGOs play in shaping refugee youth education in Jordan. Several key themes emerged from the analysis:

- 1. Diverse Conceptualisations of Education Goals:** NGO staff often operate youth programmes incorporating multiple conceptualisations of refugee education,

including human capital development, protection and wellbeing, citizenship, and empowerment. These conceptualisations are not static; rather, they are fluid. For example, while human capital development is frequently emphasised by donors and international policies, NGO staff claim to integrate elements of psychosocial support and empowerment into their programmes, reflecting a more holistic understanding of the needs of refugee youth. The research introduces the concept of pathways as a unifying narrative that could help NGOs present a coherent vision of refugee youth education. This concept emphasises assisting refugees in identifying and pursuing their own interpretations of their educational futures amidst uncertain and evolving circumstances. Closely aligning with the idea of education as transformation, it advocates for flexible, refugee-centred approaches that empower individuals – refugees and NGO staff alike - to navigate their complex realities.

2. **Policy may not always translate into practice:** A significant finding of this research is the revelation that policy, while well-intentioned, may not always translate into practice as envisioned. The disconnects between policy and enactments underscore the importance of understanding the local context and the dynamics at play within NGO operations explored through this research.
3. **Influence of Socio-Political Context:** The socio-political environment in Jordan, characterised by fluctuating donor priorities, national policy shifts, and limited resources, influences the way NGO staff conceptualise and implement educational programmes. This context creates a challenging landscape where NGO staff must balance competing demands from various stakeholders and policies, leading to demands for creation of educational programmes that may be at odds with the preferences and needs of the refugee communities they aim to serve.
4. **NGO Staff as Ambassadors and Change Agents:** The research highlights the potential role of NGO staff as both ambassadors for refugees and agents of change within the broader educational and policy landscape. However, this role is fraught with challenges, particularly when NGO staff's personal beliefs and experiences clash with organisational mandates or donor expectations. The findings suggest that while NGO staff have the potential to shape refugee education, their ability to do so is often constrained by external factors beyond their control, that poses questions over NGO staff's effectiveness at advocating for refugee preferences.

The conclusions drawn from this study underscore the complex role that NGOs play in shaping the educational futures of Syrian refugee youth in Jordan. Several important conclusions can be drawn from the research. The findings suggest that a narrow focus on human capital development, while important, is insufficient to address the full range of needs faced by Syrian refugee youth. Education programmes that solely focus on economic

outcomes risk neglecting other crucial aspects of education, such as psychosocial wellbeing, social cohesion, and empowerment. Therefore, there is a pressing need for a more holistic approach to refugee education that balances these diverse goals and responds more effectively to the complex realities of refugee lives.

The study highlights the importance of supporting and empowering NGO staff in their potential roles as advocates and change agents, able to incorporate holistic visions of education aligned with refugees' unknowable futures. Given the influence that NGO staff may hold over the design and implementation of educational programmes, it is essential that they are provided with the necessary tools and training to align these programmes more closely with the needs and aspirations of refugee communities.

The research has important implications for both national and international policy. It suggests that current policy frameworks, which increasingly favour the integration of refugees into host-country education systems, may need to be re-evaluated to ensure they are responsive to the specific needs of refugee populations. Policies that focus primarily on economic integration may overlook other critical aspects of education that are vital for the long-term wellbeing and empowerment of refugee youth. Policymakers should consider the broader impact of education policies on refugee communities and work towards more inclusive and flexible frameworks that accommodate the diverse goals of refugee education. Moreover, the research has highlighted that NGO staff are engaged in a dialectical relationship with these policies and subsequently, policy reform is not the only entry point to shift refugee youth education practice away from narrow conceptualisations of the role of refugee youth education.

Central to the findings of this study is the recognition of transformation as a theoretical framework for understanding and guiding refugee education. Transformation, in this context, refers to the process by which refugee youth not only acquire knowledge and skills but also undergo significant changes in their perceptions, worldview, and capacity to critically engage with their circumstances. This theory is rooted in the idea that education should do more than prepare individuals for economic participation; it should empower them to critically reflect on their experiences, challenge oppressive structures, and actively shape their futures.

The importance of transformation as a conceptual core lies in its ability to address the multifaceted needs of refugee youth. Unlike approaches that focus primarily on human capital development, a transformative approach to education encompasses a broader set of objectives, including psychosocial wellbeing, social cohesion, and the fostering of critical consciousness. This holistic perspective is crucial in the context of refugee education, where learners often face complex challenges that extend beyond the economic sphere, including trauma, displacement, and social marginalisation. By integrating transformation into the core of educational programmes, NGOs can ensure that refugee education is not

merely about imparting vocational skills or basic literacy but about fostering resilience, agency, and a sense of empowerment among refugee youth. This approach aligns with the broader goals of education as a means of social justice, where the aim is to equip learners with the tools they need to navigate and transform their circumstances, rather than simply adapt to them.

Furthermore, the research suggests that NGO staff who embrace transformative education principles are well positioned to advocate for refugee youth in ways that resonate with the lived realities of these communities. By focusing on transformation, NGOs can create educational programmes that are more responsive to refugees' unknowable futures and the diverse and evolving needs of refugee youth, ensuring that education serves as a pathway not only to economic opportunity but to personal and collective empowerment. This underscores the need for policies and organisational practices that support transformative approaches to refugee education, recognising their potential to foster meaningful and lasting change in the lives of refugee youth.

In the context of transformative education, critical reflection on the education system itself offers a powerful means to 'hack' existing structures and introduce change without requiring a complete overhaul. This approach allows NGO staff and educators to strategically embed transformative practices into the curriculum in ways less likely to require large scale reform or controversial programming, enabling refugee youth to critically engage with their educational experiences. By examining the system's output, such as pass rates, graduation statistics, and the opportunities it has historically provided, as well as education's power to both create opportunities and also constrain possibilities by reinforcing existing social hierarchies and norms, refugee youth can gain a critical perspective on how education functions within their lives. This reflective process could help empower refugee youth to question the assumptions and power dynamics that shape their education, fostering a critical consciousness that moves beyond passive acceptance. It encourages them to explore how education serves their needs and how it can be adapted to better support their future aspirations. By incorporating critical reflection into existing educational programmes, NGOs can create spaces within the curriculum where transformative ideas can flourish, providing an alternative narrative to the predominant focus on human capital development in Jordan.

### **Contribution to research**

This thesis has made a contribution to policy, practice, and the academic discourse on refugee education by providing a comprehensive examination of the role of NGOs in shaping educational outcomes for Syrian refugee youth in Jordan. By delving into the diverse conceptualisations of education, the challenges encountered by NGO staff, and the broader socio-political and policy contexts, this research enriches our understanding of the

intricate dynamics at play in refugee education. The role of NGOs in refugee education is a central theme in this research, and the thesis significantly contributes to the body of literature by exploring how these organisations navigate the complex interplay between global policies, national directives, and local realities, as well as by providing a new framework in Chapter 2 for understanding the diverse conceptualisations of refugee youth education.

The literature highlights that NGOs have historically been pivotal in filling the gaps left by state systems and how they are increasingly embedded in state policy, especially in contexts of displacement where state resources are often stretched thin (Dryden-Peterson, 2011; Mendenhall et al., 2017; Menashy, 2019). This thesis furthers this literature by demonstrating how NGO staff are not merely passive recipients of policy and funding, nor are they confined to the gaps left by state systems but actively engaged in shaping the broader context around them with varying degrees of success.

Localisation, as discussed in Chapter 2, involves the transfer of power and decision-making from international to local actors (Roepstorff, 2020) and presents a growing field of literature on the importance of the 'local' in shaping humanitarian and development processes. This study contributes to this body of literature by underscoring the challenges and opportunities that arise when NGOs are tasked with aligning global educational agendas with the local needs and preferences of refugee communities, as well as the importance of the multitude of actors at the local level that hold power to influence the enactment of refugee youth education programmes.

Another significant contribution of this thesis is its exploration of transformative education as a conceptual core in refugee contexts. The literature on transformative education, rooted in the works of Paulo Freire (2000) and others, emphasises the role of education in fostering critical consciousness and social change. This thesis expands on this by highlighting the importance of the concept of transformation to the specific context of Syrian refugee youth in Jordan. It argues that education should not only be about imparting knowledge and skills but should also empower refugee youth to critically reflect on their circumstances, challenge oppressive structures, and envision alternative futures. The literature review suggests that while transformative education is widely acknowledged in theory, its practical implementation in refugee settings remains underexplored. This research contribution, therefore, is particularly relevant in discussions about how to make education more responsive to the 'unknowable futures' of refugees (Dryden-Peterson, 2017), offering a pathway for educational programmes that are not only economically beneficial but also socially and politically empowering.

## **Future research**

This study opens several avenues for future research, each of which could significantly enhance our understanding of refugee education and improve the design and implementation of educational interventions for refugee populations. Further research is required into the long-term impacts of different conceptualisations of refugee education on the lives of Syrian refugee youth. This research should focus not only on immediate educational outcomes, such as academic achievement and retention rates, but also on broader life outcomes, including economic mobility, social integration, mental health, and personal empowerment. Understanding how various educational approaches affect the long-term prospects of refugee youth is crucial for informing policy and practice. Such studies could help determine which educational models are most effective in supporting refugee youth in navigating the challenges of displacement and building meaningful, sustainable futures.

Additionally, more research is required to explore the role of refugee communities in the design and implementation of education programmes. This includes investigating how refugees themselves perceive and value education, how their cultural and social contexts influence their educational needs and aspirations, and how they can be more actively involved in shaping the educational interventions that affect their lives. Research in this area could lead to more culturally sensitive and community-driven educational models, ensuring that programmes are not only responsive to the needs of refugee populations but also empowering them to take an active role in their own education journeys.

Furthermore, there is a need to examine the broader implications of integrating refugees into host-country education systems. This line of inquiry should consider both the benefits and challenges of integration, including the potential for social cohesion as well as the risk of exacerbating existing inequalities or creating new forms of exclusion. Future research should explore how different integration models impact refugee students, their host-country peers, and the broader educational environment. It is essential to understand how integration policies affect not only educational outcomes but also social dynamics, resource allocation, and the overall inclusivity of education systems.

Finally, further research into transformative approaches to refugee education and their similarities with NGO staff conceptualisations of 'pathways' is of importance. As this study has highlighted, transformative education, which emphasises critical reflection, empowerment, and social justice, offers a powerful framework for addressing the complex and multifaceted needs of refugee youth. However, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these approaches can be most effectively implemented in diverse refugee contexts, what their long-term impacts might be, and NGO staff's ability to enact transformative programming. Investigating the practical application of transformative pedagogies, the conditions under which they thrive, and NGOs role in the process is crucial. This research has drawn primarily on NGO staff claims of their capacity as change



makers and requires further research to triangulate these claims. Such research would not only contribute to the academic discourse but also provide actionable insights for NGOs, educators, and policymakers striving to create more inclusive and empowering educational environments for refugee youth.

## References

AAGF (2019) *Employment trends, challenges and opportunities for refugees in Jordan*. Available at: [https://www.alghurairfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Employment-trends-challenges-and-opportunities-for-refugees-in-Jordan\\_3.pdf](https://www.alghurairfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Employment-trends-challenges-and-opportunities-for-refugees-in-Jordan_3.pdf).

Abu-Amsha, O. (2014) *The Resilience of Syrian Refugee Children in Lebanon: What do they need to acquire quality education?* Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/21072>.

Adelman, E. and Chopra, V. (2019) 'Field of Education Within Conflict-Affected Settings', in M. Mendenhall (ed.) *Data Collection and Evidence Building to Support Education in Emergencies*. Available at: <https://resources.norrag.org/resource/525/data-collection-and-evidence-building-to-support-education-in-emergencies>.

Ahmadzadeh, H. *et al.* (2014) 'Ensuring quality education for young refugees from Syria: mapping exercise on quality education for young refugees from Syria (12-25)'. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/584698257.pdf>.

Al-Amoush, S. *et al.* (2014) 'BELIEFS ABOUT CHEMISTRY TEACHING AND LEARNING—A COMPARISON OF TEACHERS' AND STUDENT TEACHERS' BELIEFS FROM JORDAN, TURKEY AND GERMANY', *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education*, 12(4), pp. 767–792. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10763-013-9435-7>.

Al-Amoush, S.A. *et al.* (2011) 'Jordanian prospective and experienced chemistry teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning and their potential role for educational reform', p. 18.

Al-Amoush, S.A., Markic, S. and Eilks, I. (2012) 'Jordanian chemistry teachers' views on teaching practices and educational reform', *Chem. Educ. Res. Pract.*, 13(3), pp. 314–324. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1039/C2RP20022H>.

Allman, P., McLaren, P. and Rikowski, G. (2003) 'After the Box People: The labour-capital relation as class constitution – and its consequences for Marxist educational theory and human resistance', p. 24.

Anderson, A., Magee, A. and Nicolai, S. (2020) 'Strengthening coordinated education planning and response in crises: Syria Case Study'. Available at: [https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/200506\\_syria.pdf](https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/200506_syria.pdf).

Anderson, B.R.O. (2016) *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Revised edition. London New York: Verso.

Andreotti, V. (2014) 'Soft versus Critical Global Citizenship Education', in S. McCloskey (ed.) *Development Education in Policy and Practice*. Palgrave Macmillan. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137324665.0009>.

Andreotti, V. de O. (2011) '(Towards) decoloniality and diversality in global citizenship education', *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 9(3–4), pp. 381–397. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2011.605323>.

Andreotti, V. de O. and Stein, S. (2015) 'Mapping interpretations of decolonization in the context of higher education', p. 20.

Apple, M.W. (2012) *Education and power*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.

Archer, D. and Cottingham, S. (1996) 'Action research report on reflect'.

Arnot, M. (1982) 'Male Hegemony, Social Class and Women's Education', *Journal of Education*, 164(1), pp. 64–89. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/002205748216400106>.

Bajaj, M. (2018) 'Conceptualizing Transformative Agency in Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Social Justice', *International Journal of Human Rights Education*, 2(1), p. 22.

Bajaj, M., Argenal, A. and Canlas, M. (2017) 'Socio-Politically Relevant Pedagogy for Immigrant and Refugee Youth', *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 50(3), pp. 258–274. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2017.1336499>.

Ball, S.J. (2008) *The education debate*. Bristol: Policy Press (Policy and politics in the twenty-first century).

Banks, N., Hulme, D. and Edwards, M. (2015) 'NGOs, States, and Donors Revisited: Still Too Close for Comfort?', *World Development*, 66, pp. 707–718. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.09.028>.

Barbelet, V., Hagen-Zanker, J. and Mansour-Ille, D. (2018) 'Lessons learnt and implications for future refugee compacts', p. 8.

Barroso, M.M. (2002) *Reading Freire's words: are Freire's ideas applicable to Southern NGOs?* Centre for civil society, London school of economics and Political Science, p. 33. Available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/29193/>.

Bellino, M.J. (2018a) 'Wait-citizenship: youth civic development in transition', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 48(3), pp. 379–396. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1403311>.

Bellino, M.J. (2018b) 'Youth aspirations in Kakuma Refugee Camp: education as a means for social, spatial, and economic (im)mobility', *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, pp. 1–16. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2018.1512049>.

Bellino, M.J. and Dryden-Peterson, S. (2018) 'Inclusion and exclusion within a policy of national integration: refugee education in Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, pp. 1–17. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2018.1523707>.

Bello, B.G. (2011) 'Empowerment of young migrants in Italy through nonformal education: putting equality into practice', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 16(3), pp. 348–359. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1354571X.2011.565634>.

Bennett, C. (2015) *The development agency of the future: Fit for protracted crises?* ODI. Available at: <https://www.odi.org/publications/9490-future-development-agencies-protracted-crises>.

Betawi, I.A. (2017) 'Away from home: psychological well-being of Syrian children at Azraq Refugee Camp in Jordan', *Early Child Development and Care*, pp. 1–9. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2017.1345895>.

Betts, A. and Collier, P. (2015) *Help Refugees Help Themselves*, *Foreign Affairs*. Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/levant/2015-10-20/help-refugees-help-themselves>.

Betts, A. and Collier, P. (2017) *Refuge: Transforming a Broken Refugee System*. Penguin Books, Limited.

Biesta, G.J.J. (1998) 'Say you want a revolution... suggestions for the impossible future of critical pedagogy', *Educational Theory*, 48(4), pp. 499–510. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.1998.00499.x>.

Birbili, M. (2000) *Social Research Update 31: Translating from one language to another*. Available at: <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU31.html>.

Blackburn, J. (2000) 'Understanding Paulo Freire: reflections on the origins, concepts, and possible pitfalls of his educational approach', *Community Development Journal*, 35(1), pp. 3–15. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/35.1.3>.

Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. Available at: <http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=nVaS6gS9Jz4C&oi=fnd&pg=PR12&dq=Distinction:+A+Social+Critique+of+the+Judgement+of+Taste&ots=72mQse1PjK&sig=NaZqRQ6B5TRTHJBuro2ZSCi7EWc>.

Brabant, K.V. and Patel, S. (2017) 'Understanding the localisation debate'.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp. 77–101. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2012) 'Thematic analysis.', in H. Cooper et al. (eds) *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol 2: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological*. Washington: American Psychological Association, pp. 57–71. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004>.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1992) 'Ecological systems theory', in R. Vasta (ed.) *Six theories of child development: revised formulations and current issues*, pp. 187–249.

Brown, H. et al. (2019) *Vulnerability Assessment Framework - Population Study 2019*. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/68856.pdf> (Accessed: 16 September 2019).

Brumat, L., Geddes, A. and Pettrachin, A. (2022) 'Making Sense of the Global: A Systematic Review of Globalizing and Localizing Dynamics in Refugee Governance', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 35(2), pp. 827–848. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feab092>.

Buchanan, J. et al. (2020) *The futures of work: what education can and can't do*. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374435>.

Buckner, E., Spencer, D. and Cha, J. (2018) 'Between Policy and Practice: The Education of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 31(4), pp. 444–465. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fex027>.

Bungu, L. (2019) 'The Past, Present and Future State of Citizenship Education in Zimbabwe', in L.I. Misiaszek (ed.) *Exploring the complexities in global citizenship education: hard spaces, methodologies, and ethics*. First edition. London [England]: Routledge.

Burde, D. et al. (2017) 'Education in Emergencies: A Review of Theory and Research', *Review of Educational Research*, 87(3), pp. 619–658. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316671594>.

CARE (2017) *How urban Syrian refugees, vulnerable Jordanians and other refugees in Jordan are being impacted by the Syria crisis*. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/60392> (Accessed: 22 November 2018).

CARE (2018) *How Urban Syrian Refugees, Non-Syrian Refugees and Vulnerable Host Communities in Jordan are Coping and Meeting Challenges, Eight Years Into the Syria Crisis*. Available at: [https://www.care-international.org/files/files/publications/reports-issue-briefs/2018\\_CARE\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_Summary\\_web\\_final.pdf](https://www.care-international.org/files/files/publications/reports-issue-briefs/2018_CARE_Needs_Assessment_Summary_web_final.pdf).

Cargo, M. *et al.* (2003) 'Empowerment as Fostering Positive Youth Development and Citizenship', *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 27, pp. S66–S79. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5993/AJHB.27.1.s1.7>.

Carvalho, S. and Dryden-Peterson, S. (2024) 'Political economy of refugees: How responsibility shapes the politics of education', *World Development*, 173, p. 106394. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2023.106394>.

Chang, H.-J. (2009) *Bad samaritans: the myth of free trade and the secret history of capitalism*. paperback ed. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Press.

Chatty, D. (2017) 'The duty to be generous (karam): Alternatives to rights-based asylum in the Middle East', *Journal of the British Academy*, 5, pp. 177–199. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5871/jba/005.177>.

Chimni, B.S. (2017) 'Reforming the International Refugee Regime: A Dialogic Model', in H. Lambert (ed.) *International Refugee Law*. 1st edn. Routledge, pp. 411–428. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315092478-18>.

Chinman, M.J. and Linney, J.A. (1998) 'Toward a model of adolescent empowerment: Theoretical and empirical evidence', *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 18(4), pp. 393–413.

Christophersen, M. (2015) *Educating Syrian Youth in Jordan: Holistic Approaches to Emergency Response*, p. 28. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep09544>.

Clarke, G. (1998) 'Nongovernmental organization (INGOs) and politics in the developing world', *Political Studies*, (46), pp. 36–52.

Cochran, J.A. (2020) 'Jordan's solution to the refugee crisis: idealistic and pragmatic education', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 47(2), pp. 153–171. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2018.1491290>.

Colclough, C., Kingdon, G. and Patrinos, H. (2010) 'The Changing Pattern of Wage Returns to Education and its Implications', *Development Policy Review*, 28(6), pp. 733–747. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7679.2010.00507.x>.

Cole, G. (2018) 'Questioning the value of "refugee" status and its primary vanguard: the case of Eritreans in Uganda', (124), p. 29.

Coston, J.M. (1998) 'A Model and Typology of Government-NGO Relationships', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 27(3), pp. 358–382. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764098273006>.

Cotton, D.R.E., Stokes, A. and Cotton, P.A. (2010) 'Using Observational Methods to Research the Student Experience', *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 34(3), pp. 463–473. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2010.501541>.

Crisp, J., Talbot, C. and Cipollone, D. (2001) *Learning for a Future: Refugee Education in Developing Countries*. Available at: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=ED480207> (Accessed: 10 November 2015).

Crotty, M. (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London: Sage Publications. Available at: <http://books.google.com/books?id=j4hXocGn1yIC&pgis=1>.

Darder, A., Baltodano, M.P. and Torres, R.D. (2017) 'Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction', in *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*. Routledge, pp. 1–23.

Davies, L. and Talbot, C. (2008) 'Learning in Conflict and Postconflict Contexts', *Comparative Education Review*, 52(4), pp. 509–518. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1086/591295>.

De Lissovoy, N., Means, A. and Saltman, K. (2017) 'Creating a Pedagogy in Common', in A. Darder, M.P. Baltodano, and R.D. Torres (eds) *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*. 3rd edn. Routledge.

Denzin, K. and Lincoln, S. (eds) (2011) 'The discipline and practice of qualitative research', in. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Ltd.

Desjardins, R. (2015) 'Education and Social Transformation: Education and Social Transformation', *European Journal of Education*, 50(3), pp. 239–244. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12140>.

Desjardins, R., Torres, C.A. and Wiksten, S. (2020) *Social Contract Pedagogy: a dialogical and deliberative model for Global Citizenship Education*. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374879>.

Devictor, X. (2019) *2019 update: How long do refugees stay in exile?* Available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/2019-update-how-long-do-refugees-stay-exile-find-out-beware-averages>.

Dona, G. (2007) 'The Microphysics of Participation in Refugee Research', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20(2), pp. 210–229. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fem013>.

Dryden-Peterson, S. (2006) 'The Present is Local, the Future is Global? Reconciling Current and Future Livelihood Strategies in the Education of Congolese refugees in Uganda', *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 25(2), pp. 81–92.

Dryden-Peterson, S. (2016) 'Refugee Education : The Crossroads of Globalization', *Educational Researcher*, 45(9). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X16683398>.

Dryden-Peterson, S. (2017) 'Refugee education: Education for an unknowable future', *Curriculum Inquiry*, 47(1), pp. 14–24. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2016.1255935>.

Dryden-Peterson, S. *et al.* (2019) 'The Purposes of Refugee Education: Policy and Practice of Including Refugees in National Education Systems', *Sociology of Education*, 92(4), pp. 346–366. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040719863054>.

Dryfoos, J. (2005) 'Full-service community schools: A strategy—not a program', *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2005(107), pp. 7–14. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.124>.

DSP (2022) *Financing for Protracted Displacement in the Syrian Refugee Context in Jordan - January 2022*.

Dyer, C. and Choksi, A. (1998) 'The REFLECT Approach to Literacy: some issues of method', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 28(1), pp. 75–92. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305792980280106>.

EIRCC (2023) *Taking Stock in Jordan: the evidence Landscape and gaps in Jordan's educational response to the Syrian refugee crisis*. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/taking-stock-jordan-evidence-landscape-and-gaps-jordans-educational-response-syrian-refugee-crisis>.



El-Abed, O. (2014) 'The Discourse of Guesthood: Forced Migrants in Jordan', in A.H. Fábos and R. Isotalo (eds) *Managing Muslim Mobilities*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, pp. 81–100. Available at: [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137386410\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137386410_5).

Erel, U. (2010) 'Migrating cultural capital: Bourdieu in migration studies', *Sociology*, 44(4), pp. 642–660. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038510369363>.

Evans, B. and Shields, J. (2014) 'Nonprofit engagement with provincial policy officials: The case of NGO policy voice in Canadian immigrant settlement services', *Policy and Society*, 33(2), pp. 117–127. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polsoc.2014.05.002>.

Evans, R. (2008) 'The Two Faces of Empowerment in Conflict', *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 3(1), pp. 50–50. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2008.3.1.50>.

Fisher, W.F. (1997) 'Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 26(1), pp. 439–464. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.26.1.439>.

Freire, P. (1974) *Education for Critical Consciousness*. London: Continuum. Available at: <http://login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lfh&AN=9538739&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

Freire, P. (1985) *The politics of education: Culture, power and liberation*. Westport: Bergin and Garvey.

Freire, P. (1998) *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield. Available at: <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=XbOv4eTFSdEC&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=Pedagogy+Of+Freedom&ots=Xql4sBuodq&sig=j3WJJOF3R8v80RpODZcd8UZxJMU>.

Freire, Paulo (1998a) *Pedagogy of hope: reliving pedagogy of the oppressed; : with notes by Anna Maria Araujo Friere; / translated by Robert R. Barr*. New York: Continuum.

Freire, Paulo (1998b) *The Paulo Freire Reader*. Edited by A.M.A. Freire and D. Macedo. New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd.

Freire, P. (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

GAGE (2019) *Adolescents in Jordan: Voice, Agency, Mobility, Social Cohesion*.

Gammeltoft-Hansen, T. (2019) 'The Normative Impact of the Global Compact on Refugees', *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 30(4), pp. 605–610. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijrl/eey061>.

Gay, G. (2000) *Culturally responsive teaching\_ theory, research, and practice*.

GBLocalisation (2024) *THE GRAND BARGAIN WORKSTREAM 2: LOCALISATION*. Available at: <https://gblocalisation.ifrc.org>.

Gill, S. and Niens, U. (2014) 'Education as humanisation: dialogic pedagogy in post-conflict peacebuilding', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 44(February 2015), pp. 1–9. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2013.864522>.

Giroux, H. (1985) 'Teachers As Transformatory Intellectuals', *Social Education*, (v49), pp. 376–79.

Giroux, H.A. (1989) 'Introduction: schooling, cultural politics, and the struggle for democracy', in *Critical Pedagogy, the State, and Cultural Struggle*. SUNY Press. Available at: <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=hYi-EISvOfMC&pgis=1>.

Giroux, H.A. (2001) *Theory and Resistance in Education: Towards a Pedagogy for the Opposition*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group. Available at: <https://books.google.com/books?id=Kal3FT7SkbEC&pgis=1>.

Government of Jordan (2014) 'Final Draft: National Resilience Plan (2014-2016): Proposed Priority Responses to Mitigate the Impact of the Syrian Crisis on Jordan and Jordanian Host Communities', (June 2014).

Haddad, E. (2008) *The refugee in international society : between sovereigns*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hammond, J.L. (1998) *Fighting to Learn: Popular Education and Guerrilla War in El Salvador*. Rutgers University Press. Available at: <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=7o1pbkFclEwC&pgis=1>.

Hantzopoulos, M. and Shirazi, R. (2014) 'Securing the State through the Production of "Global" Citizens: Analyzing Neo-Liberal Educational Reforms in Jordan and the USA', *Policy Futures in Education*, 12(3), pp. 370–386. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2014.12.3.370>.

Harb, C. and Saab, R. (2014) *Social Cohesion and Intergroup Relations: Syrian Refugees and Lebanese Nationals in the Bekaa and Akkar*, pp. 1–45. Available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=5807>.

Harrell-Bond, B. (1995) 'Refugees and the International System: The Evolution of Solutions'. Available at: <http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&btnG=Search&q=intitle:Refugees+and+the+International+System+The+Evolution+of+Solutions#0> (Accessed: 1 January 2014).

Harrell-Bond, B. (2021) 'Can humanitarian work with refugees be humane?', in G. İnanc and T. Lewis (eds) *Forced Displacement and NGOs in Asia and the Pacific*. 1st edn. London: Routledge. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003145233>.

Hart, R. (1992) 'Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship', *Innocenti Essays*, 4, pp. 1–39.

Heiss, A. and Kelley, J. (2017) 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place: International NGOs and the Dual Pressures of Donors and Host Governments', *The Journal of Politics*, 79(2), pp. 732–741. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1086/691218>.

HKJ (2015) *Jordan 2025, A National Vision and Strategy*. Available at: <https://leap.unep.org/countries/jo/national-legislation/jordan-2025-national-vision-and-strategy>.

HKJ (2016) *Jordan National Human Resource Development (HRP)*. Available at: <http://mohe.gov.jo/en/Documents/National-HRD-Strategy.pdf>.

HKJ (2017) *Jordanian Ministry of Education Strategic Plan*. Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Available at: <https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/en/2018/education-strategic-plan-2018-2022-6461>.

İGAMDER (2013) *Report on the Activities of Non Governmental Organisations for Syrian Refugees in Turkey*. Available at: <https://igamder.org/uploads/belgeler/IGAMSuriyeSTK2013.pdf>.

INCITE (ed.) (2017) *The revolution will not be funded: beyond the non-profit industrial complex*. Durham: Duke University Press.

INEE (2016) *Background Paper on Psychosocial Support and Social and Emotional Learning for Children and Youth in Emergency Settings*. Available at: [http://toolkit.ineesite.org/resources/ineecms/uploads/1126/20161219\\_PSS\\_SEL\\_Background\\_Note\\_Digital\\_Final.pdf](http://toolkit.ineesite.org/resources/ineecms/uploads/1126/20161219_PSS_SEL_Background_Note_Digital_Final.pdf).

Jacobsen, K. (2002) 'Can refugees benefit the state? Refugee resources and African statebuilding', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 40(04). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X02004081>.

Jacobsen, K. and Landau, L.B. (2003) *Researching refugees: some methodological and ethical considerations in social science and forced migration*. Available at: <http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&btnG=Search&q=intitle:Researching+refugees:+some+methodological+and+ethical+considerations+in+social+science+and+forced+migration#0>.

JENA (2014) *Joint Education Needs Assessment. Za'atari Refugee Camp*. Available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=7394>.

JENA (2015) *Access to Education for Syrian Refugee Children and Youth in Jordan Host Communities*. Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/access-education-syrian-refugee-children-and-youth-jordan-host-communities-joint>.

Jennings, L.B. *et al.* (2006) 'Toward a Critical Social Theory of Youth Empowerment', *Journal of Community Practice*, 14, pp. 31–55. Available at: [https://doi.org/10.1300/J125v14n01\\_03](https://doi.org/10.1300/J125v14n01_03).

Johnston, R., Baslan, D. and Kvittingen, A. (2019) *Realising the Rights of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Jordan from Countries Other Than Syria with a Focus on Yemenis and Sudanese*. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/71975.pdf>.

Jung, A. *et al.* (2023) 'Navigating through depoliticisation: international stakeholders and refugee reception in Jordan and Turkey', *Third World Quarterly*, 44(5), pp. 1021–1038. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2023.2174510>.

Kabeer, N. (1999) 'Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment', *Development and Change*, 30(3), pp. 435–464. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00125>.

Karam, F.J., Monaghan, C. and Yoder, P.J. (2017) "'The students do not know why they are here": education decision-making for Syrian refugees', *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 15(4), pp. 448–463. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2016.1222895>.

Karsgaard, C. and Davidson, D. (2021) 'Must we wait for youth to speak out before we listen? International youth perspectives and climate change education', *Educational Review*, 75(1), pp. 74–92. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.1905611>.

Keating, A. and Janmaat, J.G. (2016) 'Education Through Citizenship at School: Do School Activities Have a Lasting Impact on Youth Political Engagement?', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 69(2), pp. 409–429. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsv017>.

Keck, M. and Sikkink, K. (1998) *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Kennan, G. (1947) *The Sources of Soviet Conduct*. Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/russian-federation/george-kennan-sources-soviet-conduct>.

Kim, S. *et al.* (1998) 'Toward a New Paradigm in Substance Abuse and other Problem Behavior Prevention for Youth: Youth Development and Empowerment Approach', *Journal of Drug Education*, 28(1), pp. 1–17. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2190/5ET9-X1C2-Q17B-2G6D>.

Klees, S.J. (2016) 'Human Capital and Rates of Return: Brilliant Ideas or Ideological Dead Ends?', *Comparative Education Review*, 60(4), pp. 644–672. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1086/688063>.

Kloos, P. (1969) 'Role conflicts in social fieldwork', *Current Anthropology*, 10(5), pp. 509–512.

Krause, U. (2017) 'Researching forced migration: critical reflections on research ethics during fieldwork', (123), p. 39.

Krieger, S. (1985) 'Beyond "subjectivity": The use of the self in social science', *Qualitative sociology*, 8(4), pp. 309–324.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995a) 'But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy', *Theory Into Practice*, 34(3), pp. 159–165. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849509543675>.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995b) 'Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy', *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), p. 465. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/1163320>.

Lammers, E. (2007) 'Researching refugees: preoccupations with power and questions of giving', *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 26(3), pp. 72–81. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdi0244>.

Lang, S. (2012) *NGOs, Civil Society, and the Public Sphere*. 1st edn. Cambridge University Press. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139177146>.

Lang, S. (2022) 'NGO-ization of civil society', in Gonçalves, G. and Oliveira, E., *The Routledge Handbook of Nonprofit Communication*. 1st edn. New York: Routledge, pp. 32–38. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003170563-5>.

Lawrance, A., Kaplan, I. and McFarlane, C. (2013) 'The Role of Respect in Research Interactions With Refugee Children and Young People', in K. Block, E. Riggs, and N. Haslam (eds) *Values and Vulnerabilities. The Ethics of Research with Refugees and Asylum Seekers*. Australian Academic Press, pp. 103–126.

Leenders, R. (2009) 'Refugee Warriors or War Refugees? Iraqi Refugees' Predicament in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon', *Mediterranean Politics*, 14(3), pp. 343–363. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629390903346848>.

Leghtas, I. (2018) *Out of Reach*. Available at: <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2018/9/10/out-of-reach-legal-work-still-inaccessible-to-refugees-in-jordan>.

Lenner, K. and Turner, L. (2018) 'Making Refugees Work? The Politics of Integrating Syrian Refugees into the Labor Market in Jordan', *Middle East Critique*, pp. 1–31. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2018.1462601>.

Leonard, J. (2011) 'Using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory to Understand Community Partnerships: An Historical Case Study of One Urban High School', p. 34.

Lerch, J.C. and Buckner, E. (2018) 'From education for peace to education in conflict: changes in UNESCO discourse, 1945–2015', *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 16(1), pp. 27–48. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2017.1387769>.

Lewis, D. (2004) *The Management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations: an Introduction*. 2nd ed. Florence: Taylor and Francis.

Libal, K. and Harding, S. (2011) 'Humanitarian Alliances: Local and International NGO Partnerships and the Iraqi Refugee Crisis', *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 9(2), pp. 162–178. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2011.567153>.

Lipman, P. (2004) *HIGH STAKES EDUCATION: Inequality, Globalization, and Urban School Reform*. Abingdon, UK: Taylor & Francis. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203465509>.

Lischer, S. (2000) *Refugee involvement in political violence: quantitative evidence from 1987-1998*. Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4ff583642.pdf> (Accessed: 3 April 2018).

Lischer, S.K. (2005) *Dangerous Sanctuaries: Refugee Camps, Civil War, and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid*. Cornell University Press.

Magee, A. and Diwakar, V. (2020) 'Strengthening coordinated education planning and response for Rohingya in Bangladesh'.

Magee, A. and Pherali, T. (2017) 'Freirean critical consciousness in a refugee context: a case study of Syrian refugees in Jordan', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, pp. 1–17. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1403312>.

Magee, A. and Pherali, T. (2019) 'Paulo Freire and critical consciousness in conflict-affected contexts', *Education and Conflict Review*, (2), pp. 44–48.

Magilo, F. and Pherali, T. (2019) 'Ethics of Educational Research in Crisis-Affected Environments', in M. Mendenhall (ed.) *Data Collection and Evidence Building to Support Education in Emergencies*. Available at: <https://resources.norrag.org/resource/525/data-collection-and-evidence-building-to-support-education-in-emergencies>.

Marfleet, P. (2006) *Refugees in a global era*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Available at: [https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?q=refugees+in+a+global+era&btnG=&hl=en&as\\_sdt=0%2C5#0](https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?q=refugees+in+a+global+era&btnG=&hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5#0) (Accessed: 27 February 2015).

Martínez, X.U. *et al.* (2017) 'Exploring the conceptualization and research of empowerment in the field of youth', *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 22(4), pp. 405–418. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2016.1209120>.

Maslow, A. (1943) 'A Theory of Human Motivation', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 208(4), pp. 313–313. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.115.179622>.

Matthew, A. (2022) *Getting Real about Unknowns in Complex Policy Work*. Available at: <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/publications/getting-real-about-unknowns-complex-policy-work>.

Mayo, P. (1999) *Gramsci, Freire and adult education: possibilities for transformative action*. London: Zed Books (Global perspectives on adult education and training).

Mayo, P. (2004) *Liberating praxis: Paulo Freire's legacy for radical education and politics*. London: Praeger (Critical studies in education and culture series).

McCaffery, J. (2005) 'Using transformative models of adult literacy in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes at community level: examples from Guinea, Sierra Leone and

Sudan', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 35(4), pp. 443–462. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057920500368548>.

McCaffery, J. (2007) 'Transformative Literacy, Conflict Resolution and Peace-building: Examples from Sierra Leone and Sudan', in F. Leach and M. Dunne (eds) *Education, Conflict and Reconciliation: International Perspectives*. Peter Lang, pp. 131–150. Available at: <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=9jqmjmDxMBQC&pgis=1>.

McLaren, P. (2017) 'Critical Pedagogy: A Look at the Major Concepts', in *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*. Routledge, pp. 56–78.

McLaughlin, T.H. (1992) 'Citizenship, Diversity and Education: a philosophical perspective', *Journal of Moral Education*, 21(3), pp. 235–250. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305724920210307>.

Menashy, F. (2019) *International aid to education: power dynamics in an era of partnership*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Mendenhall, M., Russell, S.G. and Buckner, E. (2017) 'Urban Refugee Education'.

Mercy Corps (2014) *Advancing Adolescence: getting Syrian refugee and host-community adolescents back on track*.

Mertens, D.M. (2010) 'Transformative Mixed Methods Research', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6), pp. 469–474. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410364612>.

Metcalfe-Hough, V., Fenton, W. and Manji, F. (2023) *The Grand Bargain in 2022*. Available at: [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2023-08/HPG\\_report-Grand\\_Bargain\\_2023\\_master\\_rev.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2023-08/HPG_report-Grand_Bargain_2023_master_rev.pdf).

Miller, K.E. (2004) 'Beyond the frontstage: trust, access, and the relational context in research with refugee communities.', *American journal of community psychology*, 33(3–4), pp. 217–27.

MMC (2018) *Monthly Trend Analysis*. Available at: [http://www.mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Monthly-Trends-Analysis\\_August.pdf](http://www.mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Monthly-Trends-Analysis_August.pdf) (Accessed: 22 November 2018).

Mohajer, N. and Earnest, J. (2009) 'Youth empowerment for the most vulnerable: A model based on the pedagogy of Freire and experiences in the field', *Health Education*, 109, pp. 424–438. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/09654280910984834>.

MoPIC (2015) *Jordan Response Plan 2015*. Available at: <http://www.jrp.gov.jo>.



MoPIC (2020) *Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2020-2022*. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/77262>.

Morand, M. (2012) 'The Implementation of UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas'.

Morton, M. and Montgomery, P. (2011) *Youth empowerment programs for improving self-efficacy and self-esteem of adolescents*. The Campbell Collaboration. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4073/csr.2011.5>.

Morton, M.H. and Montgomery, P. (2012) 'Empowerment-based non-formal education for Arab youth: A pilot randomized trial', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(2), pp. 417–425. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.11.013>.

Morton, M.H. and Montgomery, P. (2013) 'Youth Empowerment Programs for Improving Adolescents' Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem: A Systematic Review', *Research on Social Work Practice*, 23(1), pp. 22–33. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731512459967>.

Mosselson, J., Morshed, M.M. and Changamire, N. (2017) 'Education and Wellbeing for Refugee Youth', *Peace Review*, 29(1), pp. 15–23. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2017.1272281>.

Moul, R. (2017) *Promotion and implementation of global citizenship education in crisis situations*, p. 51. Available at: <https://www.gcedclearinghouse.org/sites/default/files/resources/252771e.pdf>.

Mustafa, M. and Cullingford, C. (2008) 'Teacher autonomy and centralised control: The case of textbooks', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 28(1), pp. 81–88. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2007.07.003>.

Nasrallah, M. (2022) *Opportunities and challenges to support out-of-school children and youth through accelerated learning programmes: a case study of Jordan*. Available at: <https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/ACCESS-Jordan-EN-FINAL-v4.pdf>.

Natsios, A. (2011) *The Clash of the Counter-bureaucracy and Development*. Available at: [https://www.cgdev.org/files/1424271\\_file\\_Natsios\\_Counterbureaucracy.pdf](https://www.cgdev.org/files/1424271_file_Natsios_Counterbureaucracy.pdf).

Ndegwa, S. (1994) 'Civil society and political change in Africa: the case of non-governmental organizations in Kenya', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 35(1–2), pp. 19–36.

Nicolai, S. (2009) *Opportunities for change: education innovation and reform during and after conflict*. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001838/183808e.pdf>.

Nicolai, S., Anderson, A., et al. (2019) 'Strengthening coordinated education planning and response in crises', p. 76.

Nicolai, S., Hodgkin, M., et al. (2019) *Whitepaper: Education and Humanitarian-Development Coherence*. USAID, p. 57. Available at: [https://eccnetwork.net/wp-content/uploads/Education-and-Humanitarian-Development\\_April-2019.pdf](https://eccnetwork.net/wp-content/uploads/Education-and-Humanitarian-Development_April-2019.pdf).

No Lost Generation (2016) 'Syria Crisis Education Strategic Paper London 2016 Conference'.

Novelli, M. (2010) 'The new geopolitics of educational aid: From Cold Wars to Holy Wars?', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 30(5), pp. 453–459. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2010.03.012>.

NRC (2015) *Strategic Research into the Youth Education Pack (YEP) Model*. Available at: [https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/evaluations/nrc-youth\\_review-2015.pdf](https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/evaluations/nrc-youth_review-2015.pdf) (Accessed: 24 February 2019).

NRC (2016) *NRC Jordan youth programme evaluation*, NRC. Available at: <https://www.nrc.no/resources/evaluations/nrc-jordan-youth-programme-evaluation/> (Accessed: 7 February 2019).

NRC (2018) *Global Education Core Competency Strategy 2018-2020*.

O'Brien, N.F. and Evans, S.K. (2017) 'Civil Society Partnerships: Power Imbalance and Mutual Dependence in NGO Partnerships', *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 28(4), pp. 1399–1421. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9721-4>.

OCHA (2019) *Humanitarian Development Nexus - The New Way of Working*, OCHA. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/es/themes/humanitarian-development-nexus> (Accessed: 27 April 2019).

OECD (2022) *Jordan PISA 2022 results*. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/publication/pisa-2022-results/country-notes/jordan-d1c865b3/>.

Onur Bahçecik, Ş. and Turhan, Y. (2022) 'Mapping relations between state and humanitarian NGOs: the case of Turkey', *Third World Quarterly*, 43(5), pp. 979–996. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2022.2040978>.

Oxford University (2011) *Strengthening Youth Opportunities*. Available at: [http://www.questscope.org/sites/default/files/documents/Attachment 5 - B- Oxford\\_s Impact Study-Stakeholder Report-2011.pdf](http://www.questscope.org/sites/default/files/documents/Attachment 5 - B- Oxford_s Impact Study-Stakeholder Report-2011.pdf).

Paniagua, A. and D'Angelo, A. (2017) 'Outsourcing the State's responsibilities? Third Sector Organizations supporting migrant families' participation in schools in Catalonia and London', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 47(1), pp. 77–90. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2016.1152883>.

Pashby, K. (2018) 'Identity, Belonging and Diversity in Education for Global Citizenship: Multiplying, Intersecting, Transforming, and Engaging Lived Realities', in I. Davies et al. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Citizenship and Education*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, pp. 277–293. Available at: [https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59733-5\\_18](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59733-5_18).

Petcharamesree, S. (2023) 'Borders, Citizenship, "Imagined Community" and "Exclusive State" and Migration in Southeast Asia', in S. Petcharamesree and M.P. Capaldi (eds) *Migration in Southeast Asia*. Cham: Springer International Publishing (IMISCOE Research Series), pp. 23–38. Available at: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25748-3\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25748-3_2).

Peterson, R. (1990) 'Teaching how to read the world and change it', in C. Walsh (ed.) *Literacy as praxis: Culture, language, and pedagogy*. Ablex Pub, pp. 156–182.

Pham, P. and Vinck, P. (2017) *Peacebuilding Education Social Cohesion: Indicators Framework*. Available at: [http://s3.amazonaws.com/inee-assets/resources/Social\\_Cohesion\\_Assessment\\_Framework\\_20170420\\_\(HHI\).pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/inee-assets/resources/Social_Cohesion_Assessment_Framework_20170420_(HHI).pdf) (Accessed: 3 November 2017).

Pherali, T., Abu Moghli, M. and Chase, E. (2020) 'Educators for Change: Supporting the Transformative Role of Teachers in Contexts of Mass Displacement', *Journal on Education in Emergencies*, 5(2), p. 147. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.33682/gtx6-u5q8>.

Pimoljinda, T. and Siriprasertchok, R. (2017) 'Failure of public participation for sustainable development: A case study of a NGO's development projects in Chonburi province', *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 38(3), pp. 331–336. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.kjss.2016.08.016>.

Pincock, K., Betts, A. and Easton-Calabria, E. (2020) 'The Rhetoric and Reality of Localisation: Refugee-Led Organisations in Humanitarian Governance', *The Journal of Development Studies*, pp. 1–16. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2020.1802010>.

Piper, B. *et al.* (2020) 'Are Refugee Children Learning? Early Grade Literacy in a Refugee Camp in Kenya', *Journal on Education in Emergencies*, 5(2), p. 71. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.33682/f1wr-yk6y>.

Pittaway, E., Bartolomei, L. and Hugman, R. (2010) "'Stop Stealing Our Stories": The Ethics of Research with Vulnerable Groups', *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 2(2), pp. 229–251. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/huq004>.

Pritchett, L. (2015) 'Creating education systems coherent for learning outcomes: Making the transition from schooling to learning', *RISE. Research on Improving Systems of Education* [Preprint], (December).

Pritchett, L. (2018) 'The Politics of Learning: Directions for Future Research', p. 51.

Proctor, K. (2015) *Youth and Consequences: Unemployment, Injustice and Violence*. Available at: [https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/MercyCorps\\_YouthConsequencesReport\\_2015.pdf](https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/MercyCorps_YouthConsequencesReport_2015.pdf) (Accessed: 6 November 2017).

Psacharopoulos, G. and Patrinos, H.A. (2018) 'Returns to investment in education: a decennial review of the global literature', *Education Economics*, 26(5), pp. 445–458. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09645292.2018.1484426>.

Questscope (2023) *Our Methodologies*. Available at: <https://www.questscope.org/en/methodologies>.

Rai, S.M., Parpart, J.L. and Staudt, K. (2007) *(Re)defining empowerment, measuring survival*.

Randolph, J.J. (2009) 'A guide to writing the dissertation literature review', *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 14(13), pp. 1–13.

Rau, S. and Van Esveld, B. (2017) *Following the money: lack of transparency in donor funding for Syrian refugee education*. New York, N.Y.: Human Rights Watch.

REACH (2014) *Understanding Social Cohesion and Resilience in Jordanian Host Communities*. Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/understanding-social-cohesion-and-resilience-jordanian-host-communities-assessment>.

Reardon, Betty. (1988) *Comprehensive peace education : educating for global responsibility*. Teachers College Press.

Refugee Studies Centre (2016) *EU–Jordan deal opens door to employment of refugees in special economic zones*. Available at: <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/news/eu2013jordan-deal-opens-door-to-employment-of-refugees-in-special-economic-zones> (Accessed: 22 November 2018).

Reilly, J. and Niens, U. (2014) 'Global citizenship as education for peacebuilding in a divided society: structural and contextual constraints on the development of critical dialogic discourse in schools.', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative & International Education*, 44(1), pp. 53–76. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2013.859894>.

Reynolds, S. and Lynch, M. (2014) 'Refugees International: A Case Study on NGO Advocacy to Venerate Nationality Rights', *Tilburg Law Review*, 19(1–2), pp. 153–162. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1163/22112596-01902015>.

Richmond, O. (2012) *A Post-Liberal Peace*. 0 edn. Routledge. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203810262>.

Risberg, E.J. (2021) 'Global Citizenship Education for Non-Citizens?', *JSSE - Journal of Social Science Education*, p. Vol. 20 No. 2 (2021): Citizenship and Civic Education for Refugees and Migrants. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4119/JSSE-3912>.

Roberts, P. (2000) *Education, literacy, and humanization: exploring the work of Paulo Freire*. Westport, Conn: Bergin & Garvey (Critical studies in education and culture series).

Robiollé, T. (2018) 'Promotion and implementation of Global Citizenship Education in crisis situations', p. 24.

Robson, C. and McCartan, K. (2016) *Real world research: a resource for users of social research methods in applied settings*. Fourth Edition. Hoboken: Wiley.

Rocha, E. (2012) 'A Ladder of Empowerment', *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 17, pp. 31–44.

Roepstorff, K. (2020) 'A call for critical reflection on the localisation agenda in humanitarian action', *Third World Quarterly*, 41(2), pp. 284–301. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2019.1644160>.

Ross, E.W. (2016) 'Broadening the Circle of Critical Pedagogy', in N.E. McCrary and E.W. Ross (eds) *Working for Social Justice Inside and Outside the Classroom*. Peter Lang. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3726/978-1-4539-1704-6>.

Röth, H., Nimeh, Z. and Hagen-Zanker, J. (2017) 'A mapping of social protection and humanitarian assistance programmes in Jordan'.

Russell, S.T. *et al.* (2009) 'Youth Empowerment and High School Gay-Straight Alliances', *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 38(7), pp. 891–903. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-008-9382-8>.

Sabella, T. and Crossouard, B. (2017) 'Jordan's primary curriculum and its propensity for student-centred teaching and learning', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, pp. 1–16. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1340828>.

Salem, H. (2018) *The Voices of Reason: Learning from Syrian Refugee Students in Jordan*. REAL Centre. Available at: [http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/real/downloads/REAL%20Policy%20Brief%20Syrian%20Refugee%20Student%20A4\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/real/downloads/REAL%20Policy%20Brief%20Syrian%20Refugee%20Student%20A4_FINAL.pdf) (Accessed: 30 March 2018).

Save the Children (2016) *Child Protection and Education "Makani ('My Space') Approach in Jordan: Integrating child protection, education, youth empowerment and psychosocial support for Syrian children"*. Available at: [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/cp\\_mainstreaming\\_education\\_final.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/cp_mainstreaming_education_final.pdf) (Accessed: 7 February 2019).

Schram, T.H. (2006) *Conceptualizing and proposing qualitative research*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.

Seeley, M. (2015) 'Jordanian Hosts and Syrian Refugees: Comparing Perceptions of Social Conflict and Cohesion in Three Host Communities', p. 112.

Shabaneh, G. (2012) 'Education and Identity: The Role of UNRWA's Education Programmes in the Reconstruction of Palestinian Nationalism', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 25(4), pp. 491–513. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fer055>.

Shah, P. (2015) 'Spaces to Speak: Photovoice and the Reimagination of Girls' Education in India', *Comparative Education Review*, 59(1), pp. 50–74. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1086/678699>.

Shah, R. (2017) *Evaluation of NRC's education programming in the camps of Jordan*.

Shier, H. (2001) 'Pathways to Participation: Openings, Opportunities and Obligations', *Children & Society*, 15, pp. 107–117. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/CHI.617>.

Shirazi, R. (2011) 'When projects of "empowerment" don't liberate: Locating agency in a "postcolonial" peace education', *Journal of Peace Education*, 8(3), pp. 277–294. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17400201.2011.621370>.

Shirazi, R. (2012) 'Performing the "Knights of Change": male youth narratives and practices of citizenship in Jordanian schools', *Comparative Education*, 48(1), pp. 71–85. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2011.637764>.

Singh, M. (2018) *Pathways to empowerment: recognizing the competences of Syrian refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000262918>.

Souto-Otero, M. (2016) 'Young people's views of the outcomes of non-formal education in youth organisations: its effects on human, social and psychological capital, employability and employment', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 19(7), pp. 938–956. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2015.1123234>.

Stein, D. and Valters, C. (2012) *Understanding theory of change in international development*. Available at: <https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/56359/>.

Stiglitz, J.E. (2002) *Globalization and its discontents*. 1st ed. New York: W. W. Norton.

Straubhaar, R. (2014) 'The stark reality of the "White Saviour" complex and the need for critical consciousness: a document analysis of the early journals of a Freirean educator', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 45(3), pp. 381–400. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2013.876306>.

Stroup, S.S. and Wong, W.H. (2016) 'The Agency and Authority of International NGOs', *Perspectives on Politics*, 14(1), pp. 138–144. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S153759271500328X>.

Syria:Direct (2013) *Questscope Director: 'We're talking about an entire generation without educational access'*. Available at: <http://syriadirect.org/main/36-interviews/863-we-are-talking-about-an-entire-generation-without-access-to-education-questscope-s-muthanna-khreisat>.

Tabulawa, R. (2003) 'International Aid Agencies, Learner-centred Pedagogy and Political Democratisation: a critique', *Comparative and General Pharmacology*, 39(1), pp. 7–26. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305006032000044913>.

Tall, B. *et al.* (2023) 'Factors affecting the success of development projects of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Jordan', *International Journal of Construction*

*Management*, 23(10), pp. 1756–1767. Available at:  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15623599.2021.2007324>.

Torres, C.A. (2015) 'Global Citizenship and Global Universities. The Age of Global Interdependence and Cosmopolitanism: Global Citizenship and Global Universities. The Age of Global Interdependence and Cosmopolitanism', *European Journal of Education*, 50(3), pp. 262–279. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12129>.

Travis, R. and Bowman, S.W. (2012) 'Ethnic identity, self-esteem and variability in perceptions of rap music's empowering and risky influences', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 15(4), pp. 455–478. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2012.663898>.

Tsourapas, G. (2019) 'The Syrian Refugee Crisis and Foreign Policy Decision-Making in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey', *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 4(4), pp. 464–481. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogz016>.

Turton, D. (2005) 'The Meaning of Place in a World of Movement: Lessons from Long-term Field Research in Southern Ethiopia', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 18(3), pp. 258–280. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/refuge/fei031>.

Tyler, F.B.F. (2007) *Developing Prosocial Communities Across Cultures*. New York: Springer.

UN (2016) *New York Declaration*. Available at:  
<https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/declaration>.

UNESCO (2015) *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives*. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO (2018) *Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: Migration, Displacement and Education – Building Bridges, not Walls*. Paris: UNESCO. Available at:  
<https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2019/migration> (Accessed: 30 December 2018).

UNESCO (2024) TVET Country Profiles - Jordan.  
<https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/Dynamic+TVET+Country+Profiles/country=JOR>  
(Accessed: 1 December 2023)

UNHCR (1951) *The 1951 Refugee Convention, UNHCR*. Available at:  
<https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html> (Accessed: 16 September 2019).

UNHCR (1967) *UNHCR - Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*. Available at:



[http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html#\\_ga=1.17161337.1570318294.1383669107](http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html#_ga=1.17161337.1570318294.1383669107)  
(Accessed: 4 March 2015).

UNHCR (2009) *UNHCR policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas*. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-policy-refugee-protection-and-solutions-urban-areas>.

UNHCR (2012) 'UNHCR Education Strategy'.

UNHCR (2014a) *Assessment of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Needs of Displaced Syrians in Jordan*. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/41640>.

UNHCR (2014b) 'Finding Durable Solutions'. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/4a2fc046e.pdf>.

UNHCR (2015a) *Alternatives to camps - response in urban and rural settings*. Available at: <https://emergency.unhcr.org/emergency-assistance/shelter-camp-and-settlement/alternatives-camps-response-urban-and-rural-settings>.

UNHCR (2015b) *Vulnerability Assessment Framework - Jordan Refugee Response*. Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/jordan-refugee-response-vulnerability-assessment-framework-baseline-survey-may-2015>.

UNHCR (2017) *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework: Delivering more comprehensive and predictable responses for refugees*. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-crrf.html>.

UNHCR (2018a) *Desperate Journeys: Refugees and migrants arriving in Europe and at Europe's borders*. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/desperatejourneys/>.

UNHCR (2018b) *The Global Compact on Refugees*. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html>.

UNHCR (2018c) *Towards a global compact on refugees, UNHCR*. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/towards-a-global-compact-on-refugees.html> (Accessed: 8 May 2018).

UNHCR (2018d) *Two Year Progress Assessment of the CRRF Approach*. Available at: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/Progress%20assessment%20of%20the%20CRRF%20approach%20%282018%29.pdf>.

UNHCR (2019a) *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, UNHCR*. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-crrf.html> (Accessed: 11 April 2019).

UNHCR (2019b) *Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees*. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/handbook-procedures-and-criteria-determining-refugee-status-under-1951-convention-and-1967>.

UNHCR (2022) *Education Working Group - Jordan*. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/working-group/45>.

UNHCR (2023a) *Syria Regional Refugee Response*. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria> (Accessed: 22 November 2018).

UNHCR (2023b) *UNHCR Education Report 2023 – Unlocking Potential: The Right to Education and Opportunity*. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-education-report-2023-unlocking-potential-right-education-and-opportunity>.

UNHCR and Women's Refugee Commission (2016) *'We Believe in Youth': Global Refugee Youth Consultations*. Available at: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/youth/resources/1385-gryc-final-report-sept-2016>.

UNICEF (2021) *UNICEF study unveils the social and economic aspirations of young people in Jordan*. Available at: <https://jordan.un.org/en/157402-unicef-study-unveils-social-and-economic-aspirations-young-people-jordan>

UNICEF (2013) *No lost generation: Strategic Overview*. Available at: <https://www.nolostgeneration.org/media/1291/file/no-lost-generation--final-report--v3.pdf>

UNICEF (2015a) *Evaluation of Emergency Education Response for Syrian Refugee Children and Host Communities in Jordan*.

UNICEF (2015b) *The Investment Case for Education and Equity*. Available at: [https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/Investment\\_Case\\_for\\_Education\\_and\\_Equity-ENG.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/Investment_Case_for_Education_and_Equity-ENG.pdf).

UNICEF (2017a) *Assessment of The Makani Integrated Programme Jordan*.

UNICEF (2017b) *Evaluation of The Ma'An (Together) towards a Safe School Environment Programme 2009-2016 – Jordan*.

UNICEF (2019a) *Opportunities for Youth in Jordan*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/3676/file/London%20Conference%202019%20Youth%20Opportunities%20UNICEF%20JCO.pdf%20.pdf>.

UNICEF (2019b) *Social Innovation Incubators*.

UNICEF (2020) *Jordan - Country Report on Out-of-School Children*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/jordan/media/4886/file/Out%20of%20School%20Children%20Study%20.pdf>.

UNICEF (2022) *Jordan Country Office Annual Report 2022*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/media/136001/file/Jordan-2022-COAR.pdf>.

UNICEF, A. (2021) *National study on violence against children*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/jordan/media/9181/file/UNICEF%20VAC%20Report-ENG.pdf>.

Urdal, H. (2006) 'A clash of generations? Youth bulges and political violence', *International Studies Quarterly*, 50(July), pp. 607–629. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2006.00416.x>.

USAID (2018) *Final Evaluation Report Of USAID NFE Program*.

Van Der Leun, J. and Bouter, H. (2015) 'Gimme Shelter: Inclusion and Exclusion of Irregular Immigrants in Dutch Civil Society', *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 13(2), pp. 135–155. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2015.1033507>.

Wallerstein, N. (2006) *What is the evidence on effectiveness of empowerment to improve health?* Available at: <http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E88086.pdf>.

Wallerstein, N., Sanchez-Merki, V. and Verlade, L. (2005) 'Freirian praxis in health education and community organizing: A case study of an adolescent prevention program', in *Community Organizing and Community Building for Health*. 2nd ed. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. Available at: [https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?hl=en&q=Freirian+praxis+in+health+education+and+community+organizing%3A+A+case+study+of+an+adolescent+prevention+program&btnG=&as\\_sdt=1%2C5&as\\_sdtpr=#0](https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?hl=en&q=Freirian+praxis+in+health+education+and+community+organizing%3A+A+case+study+of+an+adolescent+prevention+program&btnG=&as_sdt=1%2C5&as_sdtpr=#0).

Washington, K. and Rowell, J. (2013) *Syrian refugees in Urban Jordan*. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=1922>.

Waters, T. and LeBlanc, K. (2005) 'Refugees and Education: Mass Public Schooling without a Nation-State', *Comparative Education Review*, 49(2), pp. 129–147. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1086/428102>.

Wolcott, H.F. (2008) *Ethnography: a way of seeing*. 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press.

Wong, N., Zimmerman, M. and Parker, E. (2010) 'A typology of youth participation and empowerment for child and adolescent health promotion', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 46, pp. 100–114. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-010-9330-0>.

Wong, N.T. (2008) *A participatory youth empowerment model and qualitative analysis of student voices on power and violence prevention. A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. University of Michigan. Available at: <http://goo.gl/yzlBrw>.

World Bank (ed.) (2007) *Building knowledge economies: advanced strategies for development*. Washington, D.C: World Bank (WBI development studies). Available at: <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/918571468183891451/building-knowledge-economies-advanced-strategies-for-development>

World Bank (2017) *Second Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy*. Available at: <http://projects.worldbank.org/P105036/second-education-reform-knowledge-economy?lang=en> (Accessed: 30 December 2018).

Yang, A. and Saffer, A. (2018) 'NGOs' Advocacy in the 2015 Refugee Crisis: A Study of Agenda Building in the Digital Age', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 62(4), pp. 421–439. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764218759578>.

Yeo, S.S. and Yoo, S.-S. (2022) 'Is refugee education indeed educational? The Freirean perspective to refugee education beyond humanitarian, rights, or development rationale', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 54(13), pp. 2203–2213. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2022.2081545>.

Yosso, T.J. (2005) 'Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth', *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), pp. 69–91. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006>.

Zero, A. (2021) 'Advancements and Limitations in Brazil's Democratic Management of Education Framework', in S. Wiksten (ed.) *Centering Global Citizenship Education in the Public Sphere*. 0 edn. Routledge. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003089551>.

Zimmerman, M. (1995) 'Psychological Empowerment : Issues and Illustrations', *American journal of community psychology*, 23(5), pp. 581–599.

Zino, B. (2019) *Governments, NGOs and the Provision of Education Services to Refugee Children in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon*.

**Appendix 1: Ethics Consent Form**



**Investigating Youth Empowerment Programmes for Syrian Refugees in Jordan - Research Ethics Consent Form**  
**2019-2020**

This research and interview is being conducted by Arran Magee, a PhD Candidate at the University College London Institute of Education (IOE), London. The interview will consist of a series of questions aiming at **understanding the conceptualisations and enactments of empowerment programmes used by various organisations serving Syrian refugee youth in Jordan**. Ethics approval has been obtained from the UCL IOE and research is overseen by Prof. Elaine Unterhalter, Prof. Tejendra Pherali and Dr. Alex Lewis, at the UCL IOE. Further details of the aims of this project can be found in the accompanying research description document.

<u>Primary Researcher</u>	<u>Research Overseer</u>
Arran Magee UCL Institute of Education University College London WC1H 0AL England, London a.magee.14@ucl.ac.uk	Dr. Tejendra Pherali Senior Lecturer in Education and International Development UCL Institute of Education University College London WC1H 0AL England, London t.pherali@ioe.ac.uk

**Please Initial Box**

I confirm that I understand the information provided to me by the researcher for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded and stored for a period of 4 years

NEED TO ADD SOMETHING ON HOW I UNDERSTAND THAT ALL DATA COLLECTED WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS/ ... (OR SOMETHING SIMILAR – SPEAKING TO THE POINTS OF ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY INCLUDING ANY PROVISOS AS DISCUSSED IN MY NOTES)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant                      Date                      Signature

---

Name of Researcher

---

Date

---

Signature



**Appendix 2: Research Participant Information Sheet**



## **Research Participant Information Sheet: Conceptualisations and Enactments of Youth Education Initiatives in Jordan**

Dear prospective research participant,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project into the conceptualisations and enactments of youth education initiatives in Jordan. As part of this research, I would like to hear your views, experiences and opinions on the topic. I provide this information sheet in order to outline your potential role in the research.

### **What is the purpose of the interview?**

The aim of the interview is to identify your, and if possible, your organisations conceptualisations of youth education initiatives in Jordan.

### **What for?**

Information gained from this researcher will contribute towards publications and advocacy on the findings, with the hope of providing a more solid foundation for the conceptualisation and enactment of effective youth education initiatives relevant to youth learners. Although results from this analysis may be made available through journals, presentations, events and other forms of distribution, your name will not be used. Best efforts will be made to make quotes anonymous, although due to a relatively low number of participants and a small context some individuals may be able to deduce identities. I therefore request that during our discussion you highlight areas or quotes that should be excluded.

#### Who is organising the research?

The research is funded by the Economic Social Research Council (ESRC) and being conducted by Arran Magee at University College London Institute of Education (UCL IOE), London. To ensure the interests of everyone involved, ethics approval has been obtained through the UCL IOE.

### **Do I have to take part?**

Your participation is voluntary. I would like you to consent to participate in this study as I believe that you can make an important contribution to the research. If you do decide to take part, you will be able to withdraw at any time. If you share something that you later decide you would like to change, you can do that too, by either submitting an amendment, or asking for the immediate and permanent removal of content or entire interviews.

### **What will I do if I take part?**

Interviews will be held via Skype, and you will be provided the option of whether you would like to be accompanied by others. If you are happy to participate in the research, I will discuss with you on our first meeting this information sheet. If you are happy to proceed, I will ask you to sign a consent form and return it to me. I will take notes throughout our discussion and may ask if I can record the interview so that I can listen back to our discussion later, although you can request our interview not be recorded if you prefer.

### **How do you store my interview?**

Only the primary researcher on this project (Arran Magee) will be aware of the names and organisations of the participants, as well as the raw interview data. Neither your organisation or any other organisation involved in this research will have access to the data or names of who said what. Information shared during the interviews and/or observations will be anonymised before use in any public or private materials and you retain the right at any stage to withdraw or request previously provided statements or interviews to be permanently erased at any stage. Data gathered will be encrypted and stored on secure devices owned and accessible only by the primary researcher. Personal data stored as part of this project adheres to European GDPR guidelines.

## What if I have another question?

You can contact me at any stage of the research, and I will be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Any conversations we have before agreeing to an interview date and signing the consent form will not be used in the research without your permission and will remain confidential.

### Local Data Protection Privacy Notice

#### Notice:

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk)

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in our 'general' privacy notice:

For participants in research studies, click [here](#)

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.

The lawful basis that will be used to process your personal data are: 'Public task' for personal data.

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk)

---

## Appendix 3: Semi-Structured Research Questions

1. Personal details
  - a. Name
  - b. Organisation
  - c. What role do you hold and what does it entail?
  - d. What did you do before?
  - e. How long have you been in your current role?
  - f. In what ways does that role link to youth empowerment education programmes?
2. Empowerment conceptualisations
  - a. What is youth empowerment education for you?
  - b. Does that align with your organisations vision (if it differs, further questions will be directed at both the interview participant and the organisation)?
  - c. Do you/your organisations strategies draw on any particular documented educational/empowerment approach?
  - d. What is youth empowerment education for? What aspirations do you/your organisation hold for youth through the empowerment programme?
  - e. What informs this vision? What guides it? Where did this concept come from?
  - f. Are there limitations on what visions of empowerment you can adopt?
  - g. Does this compare to other organisations interpretations? What are your views on others operating youth empowerment education in Jordan?
  - h. Have your or your organisations views changed over time?
3. Empowerment programme enactment
  - a. How do you/your organisation seek to achieve this vision?
  - b. Has there been any changes over the period of your programme and why?
  - c. What shapes or informs this vision
    - i. (examples to provide for participants struggling to understand the question include, political climate, demands of the population, financial constraints. List will be expanded based on responses to early interviews, and different examples used for each interview to try and avoid leading participants to certain areas and creating bias).
  - d. How do you feel you/your organisation are doing at achieving that vision?
  - e. What facilitates or prohibits those attempts?
4. What impact do you think your programme has on...
  - a. objectives of beneficiaries
  - b. the needs and desires of refugees from different backgrounds
  - c. the formation of national and international policy
  - d. the visions of humanitarian and development organisations
5. Any further questions or points you feel are relevant