

Study informs research of child development and learning in conflict-affected areas

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To provide effective aid to children who live in areas of conflict, it is necessary to understand precisely how they have been impacted by the crises around them. One area of importance is the effect of conflict and

trauma on a child's development and education.

In a new paper, [Global TIES for Children](#) researchers J. Lawrence Aber, Carly Tubbs Dolan, Ha Yeon Kim and Lindsay Brown present a review of opportunities and challenges they have encountered in designing and conducting rigorous research that advances our understanding of this effect. Global TIES for Children, an international research center based at NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU New York, generates evidence to support the most effective humanitarian and development aid to promote children's academic and socio-emotional learning.

This review focuses on their efforts to test the effectiveness of educational programming that incorporates skill-targeted social and emotional learning (SEL) programs. SEL programs are designed to help participants apply knowledge and skills towards managing their stress and feelings, establishing positive relationships, achieving goals, and making responsible decisions.

The results of the paper, titled "Children's Learning and Development in Conflict- and Crisis- Affected Countries: Building a Science for Action," published in the Cambridge University Press journal *Development and Psychopathology*, indicated positive impacts of remedial education and social and emotional learning programs on academic skills, and presented key themes to be addressed when designing future refugee education programming and related research.

Aber and colleagues note the importance of long-term partnerships between researchers, practitioners, policymakers and donors to provide higher-quality evidence for decision making about programs and policies. Additionally, context-relevant measures and research methods are needed to enable the study of under-resourced, crisis-affected communities.

The researchers also argue for a global research effort on building cumulative and revisable developmental science that is based on the children's lived experience in their own culture and context and grounded in ethical principles and practical goals. The paper's findings will also guide the development of effective research that can better study various communities and conditions.

"It is our hope that the findings of this paper can spark a conversation about how best to assess and meet the needs of children in conflict-affected areas, and can allow for the [development](#) of more effective aid programs," said Aber.

More information: J. Lawrence Aber et al, Children's learning and development in conflict- and crisis-affected countries: Building a science for action, *Development and Psychopathology* (2021). [DOI: 10.1017/S0954579420001789](#)

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