

CONVERGE COVID-19 Working Groups for Public Health and Social Sciences Research

Research Agenda-Setting Paper

This paper was written to help advance convergence-oriented research in the hazards and disaster field. It highlights areas where additional research could contribute new knowledge to the response to and recovery from the pandemic and other disasters yet to come. Questions about the research topics and ethical and methodological issues highlighted here should be directed to the authors who contributed to this paper.

Working Group Name:

COVID-19 and Children, Youth, and Schools

Working Group Description:

The CONVERGE COVID-19 Children, Youth, and Schools (CYS) working group will focus on creating a supportive and collaborative environment for research coordination in order to learn about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the effectiveness of pandemic response efforts as related to the rights of children and youth. These rights of central interest to this group include:

1. Safety, Survival, and Protection: in the areas of health, water sanitation, hygiene, child protection, psychosocial impacts, and social support.
2. Development: with a focus on life course transitions and educational continuity especially looking at differential impacts and outcomes of variations in education policy and programming as well as in home-based learning outcomes
3. Participation: engagement of children and youth in risk reduction, safety, and recovery efforts.

This CONVERGE Working Group is hosted by the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES) and has chosen a global remit on the broader concerns of COVID-19 impacts on children and youth, especially, but not limited to education. We have taken a medium and long-range view of research questions, and attempted to align our language to that of the child rights efforts of the [Global Campaign for Education](#). The initial researcher and practitioner constituency this Working Group has drawn from has primary experience in disaster risk reduction, child rights, school safety, and sustainable development globally. We have also reached out to the [Center for Reinventing Public Education \(CRPE\): Evidence Project Working Groups](#), which has a primarily North American remit and research and practice roots that are solidly in the education sector. CRPE is focused on immediate research questions for rapid response. As a result of these and other collaborations and connections, more than 140 individuals have provided inputs to the identification of priorities, and 80 have provided inputs into the selection of research questions.

We hope that the alignment of these two agendas (as shown in the table below) serve to better exchange knowledge across what were previously siloed efforts—both strengthening and identifying new collaborations and synergies. The stakeholders involved in this broader Working Group effort note the importance of integrating cross-cutting issues in relationship to growing socio-economic, educational, and

health inequities, inclusion and participation, the potential for other concurrent hazard impacts, and the need to learn from this experience and extrapolate to address all-hazard impacts in the future.

#	CONVERGE COVID-19 and Children, Youth, and Schools Priority Topics	CRPE Evidence Project Priority Topics
1	Innovations in Educational Continuity / Teaching and Learning	Innovation in Learning
2	Student, Family, and Teacher Well-Being	Family and Student Well-Being
3	Educational Impacts, Learning Acceleration, and Measurement	Learning Acceleration and Measurement
4	Education Sector Governance and School Safety Management	Governance
5	Economic Impacts of School Disruption and Resource Allocation	Resource Allocation
6	Safer School Facilities, WASH, and Nutrition in Schools	
7	Family Safety / Risk Reduction and Resilience Education	
8	Participatory Research with Children and Youth	
9	Inclusion and Equity: Gender, Race, Social Class, Disability, Immigrant Status, and Other Intersectional Considerations	
10	Child Protection and Social Protection	

Priority Research Topics and Specific Research Questions:

Priority Research Topics	Potential Research Questions
<p>1. Innovations in Educational Continuity / Teaching and Learning</p>	<p>The challenge of maintaining educational continuity in the face of all-hazards and risk has never been as apparent. The world is engaged in a giant experiment with an unprecedented opportunity to compare approaches and learn what works. We will need to be listening carefully to students, teachers, and parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to discuss and compare the impacts of COVID-19 on teaching and learning, can we develop a shared classification system to describe the ever-widening variety of educational interventions, methods, and mixes (while cognizant of content variations as well)? • What are the most effective and impactful education innovations in remote teaching and learning (including curriculum, pedagogy, professional development, supports to parents and students, assessment, retention) for different age groups, and especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized children)? • How are teacher, student, and parent roles changing in terms of, for example, staffing models, workload, tasks, activities, and agency? What does a progression of at-home co-production of learning, addressing potential inequities, look like, and how might this impact educational transformation? • What new and creative equity solutions are being found to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized children (including solutions that safeguard children and bridge the digital divide – addressing gender, disability, systemic racism, immigration/refugees, homeless, etc.)? • What policy, political, economic, and cultural enablers and barriers exist in relation to educational continuity and to the adoption of promising innovations?
<p>2. Student, Family, and Teacher Well-Being</p>	<p>The health crisis has cascading impacts on livelihood, housing, and food insecurity, as well as social isolation, anxiety, fear, grief, and uncertainty. Conflict, violence, and political crises are layered over this in many places. Intensifying these, educational disruption threatens student and family well-being with severe role discontinuities, and the potential denial of children’s access to free quality basic education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the pandemic impacted children and youth’s psychosocial health and well-being and what best practices have been demonstrated to minimize negative impacts on children and youth of different ages and in different contexts? • How have different educational continuity and reopening policies impacted children’s psychosocial health and well-being and sense of safety and security? • How can education systems weave academic and social-emotional development through adapted approaches for various contexts and age groups, and for vulnerable and marginalized children? • What community, family, and peer-to-peer assets for learning are being leveraged, and how can the education sector link to and strengthen these for the long-term? • What program approaches, tools, techniques, and supports maximize student, family, and teacher well-being in different contexts?

<p>3. Educational Impacts, Learning Acceleration, and Measurement</p>	<p>The interruption of the 2019-2020 school year caught most education systems without educational continuity plans. A rapid shift to remote learning strategies left most teachers unprepared and many students entirely excluded, resulting in looming disparities in educational progress as a result of educational disruption.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have various pandemic mitigation, response, and recovery policies and practices impacted children's rights to safety and survival, protection, development, education, and participation in different contexts? • What are the differential impacts of school disruption and educational continuity approaches on educational progress, enrollment, attainment, and advancement – including the significance of differences in social position (including gender, ethnicity/race, socioeconomic status, geographic location)? • Which learning opportunities and innovative or alternative teaching methods have shown improved learning outcomes for longer-term adoption, across different contexts? • What is the range and scope of educational continuity plans and what measures have been employed to assess their successes and shortcomings? • What is the range and scope of 'safe back to school' practices, and what measures have been employed to assess their successes and shortcomings?
<p>4. Education Sector Governance and School Safety Management</p>	<p>This pandemic has exacerbated the challenges of education sector governance and highlighted the overall failure to proactively operationalize school safety management with a comprehensive all-hazards approach to safeguarding children's safety and planning for educational continuity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can education sector policies and communications best support students, families, and teachers to cope with this unprecedented uncertainty? • How can education sector self-assessment tools be used to support planning and decision-making for school safety from pandemics and other hazards? • What strategies and policies are helping education authorities and systems to adapt, and to include teachers, families, and students in their decision-making processes? • What role have standards, accountability, and funding impacted school system response? • How are education authorities best managing the challenges of "safely back to school" and educational continuity, while not exacerbating inequities?
<p>5. Economic Impacts of School Disruption and Resource Allocation</p>	<p>Educational attainment and lifetime income are closely aligned, so one set of economic impacts will be carried by students. Education sector resources are expected to be stretched thinly with a looming recession. Educational continuity strategies have different costs. Strategic resource allocation will be needed mitigate these impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the long-term economic impacts of educational disruption for students? • What economic impacts are being born by families, teachers, and education systems? • How are education authorities making efficient use of existing resources, and how are they funding educational program changes and technological innovations? Will this change underlying cost structures for education in the future? • How can strategic use of education sector resources address learning gaps?

<p>6. Safer School Facilities, WASH, and Nutrition in Schools</p>	<p>The impact and implications of the use of schools as quarantine and testing centers is unknown. Safer school facilities typically depend on site selection, design, construction, and maintenance. Both long-term maintenance and water and sanitation facilities are often sorely neglected. Is this the opportunity to turn these around?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are best practices in limiting the use of schools as quarantine and testing centers? • What are best practices in ‘safe back to school’ protocols to protect and inspire confidence of students, families, and staff? • What are some of the best low-tech implementations of sustainable and sufficient WASH facilities, and ongoing maintenance and infection control in schools? • Does improvement of WASH facilities and acquisition of health skills and behaviors improve health outcomes, and school attendance for students and staff? • What cultural and contextual differences impact on health beliefs, behaviors, and outcomes among children and youth?
<p>7. Family Safety / Risk Reduction and Resilience Education</p>	<p>Child-centered risk reduction and resilience research and practice of the past two decades points to the importance of public education, evidence- and consensus-based actionable risk reduction measures, and the role that children and youth can play in family and community safety planning. In theory, this work adopts an all-hazards approach, and thus may have had positive outcomes for pandemic preparedness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has prior risk reduction education and resilience education had a differential impact on the adoption of pandemic prevention and mitigation measures amongst children, youth, and households, and have children demonstrated agency in this process? • What approaches to pandemic prevention and mitigation messaging have been most effective in promoting accurate understanding and desired behavior in children and youth? • What knowledge, attitudes, and skills do children and youth need to best cope with the impacts of this pandemic and future hazard impacts? • What role can evidence- and consensus-based, action-oriented ‘key messages’ for pandemic preparedness and response play in child and youth compliance with broader efforts to ‘flatten the curve’? • How have parents and teachers supported children to comply and cope with risk reduction activities (e.g., physical distancing, masking, handwashing, sanitizing)? What kind of support has been most effective?
<p>8. Participatory Research with Children and Youth</p>	<p>In committing to the idea of “nothing about us, without us”, we are concerned with how to include the voices of children and youth in this unprecedented research moment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we best capture and preserve the voices of children and youth across the world, in different contexts, so that lived experiences and practices might guide the development of future pandemic preparedness and inform more responsive and empowering policy, practices and risk communications? • What questions and messages do children and youth have for parents, teachers, decision-makers, and future generations? How do they see their roles and agency in pandemic prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery? • What can we learn from the historical record on children’s experiences with bushfires, cyclones, floods, pandemics, and earthquakes around the world? In what ways are children’s experiences of this pandemic different from past disasters? • What do children and youth say about the potential to transform education, based on their experience in this pandemic? • What methods, strategies, and ethical frameworks are most promising for engaging children and youth in the research that impacts them?

<p>9. Inclusion and Equity: Gender, Race, Social Class, Disability, Immigrant Status, and Other Intersectional Considerations</p>	<p>A ‘twin-track’ approach for full inclusion of marginalized groups suggests both (a) integrating inclusion considerations throughout all of the research efforts including through disaggregated data collection, reasonable accommodations, and other methods for inclusion in sampling, as well as (b) addressing the specific needs of these groups by targeting their unique concerns, issues, and capabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the intersectional effects of COVID-19 on children and youth? Here we are especially concerned with gender, race, social class, disability, immigrant status, and other categories of social difference. • What are the best practices for overcoming inequities and discrimination through policy and programming? • How can the arts and other innovative and creative resilience interventions be used to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on children with disabilities or functional access and communication needs?
<p>10. Child Protection and Social Protection</p>	<p>Child Protection and other broader social protections and social needs are part of the ‘normal’ landscape for assuring children’s rights. The disruption of these mechanisms and the impacts of this on children are of deep concern – including, but not limited to those services and protections provided by or at school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have child protection systems and the children they serve been affected, and how have the cascading impacts been mitigated? • How have nutrition security and support systems and the children they serve been affected, and how have the cascading impacts been mitigated? • How have school-based health services and the children they serve been affected, and how have the cascading impacts been mitigated? • How have the broad range of afterschool activities and ancillary support services been impacted, and what adaptations have been made to mitigate these impacts?

Ethical / Methodological Considerations:

Beyond the ethical and methodological considerations that apply to all human subjects research, this Working Group has placed specific emphasis on issues concerning children as research participants, and the measures taken to assure that in the process of carrying out research or delivering services, we “do no harm.” Flowing from this are needs for:

- IRB certification of research undertakings.
- Training and certification of researchers in human subjects / child subjects research and child-safeguarding, including informed consent from parents or guardians as well as informed assent/consent of child subjects.
- Commitment to low impact, empowering, transformative co-produced methods with children and young people and translating and sharing research outcomes for a range of audiences.
- Learning best practices for tackling issues that concern fears, anxieties, and threats, including: taking care not to add more demands to those already distressed and being ready to meet our obligation to provide accurate information and empathetic support in the process of data collection.

Other Frameworks, Considerations for Collaboration, and/or Resources:

Four frameworks that are important for various aspects of this research are:

- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Comprehensive School Safety Framework
- Evidence-based Practice Framework for Child-Centred Risk Reduction and School Safety

Contributors:*Working Group Leads:*

Lucille Anglès, Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES)

Brandi Gilbert, Community Science

Marla Petal, Save the Children

Briony Towers, RMIT University

In addition to the primary facilitators for this Working Group, more than 140 individuals provided inputs to the identification of priorities, and 80 offered inputs into the selection of research questions as identified in the two tables below.

CONVERGE COVID-19 Working Group. The following individuals contributed research questions via online survey.

Topics	Name	Affiliation / Contact Info	Country
1, 2, 9	Shawna Bendeck	Colorado State University	USA
All	Alain Philippe Binyet & Bi Mbog	OMEP: World Organisation For Early Childhood Education Cameroon	Cameroon
2, 3, 7, 10	Rita Burke	University of Southern California	USA
2, 4	Brandi Gilbert	Community Science	USA
1, 7	Mya Gordon	Save the Children	Global
1, 3, 7, 9	Nguyen Hai Dang	Plan International	Vietnam
2, 6, 7, 10	Ziqiang Han	Shandong University	China
All	Thomas Huggins	Beijing Normal University & Hong Kong Baptist University UIC	China
1, 3, 4, 8	Revathi N. Krishna	Monash University Accident Research Center	Australia
1, 2, 5, 8	Shefali Lakhina	Wonder Labs	Australia
1, 2, 8, 9	Hannah MacPherson	University of Southampton	UK
4	Petra Malison	University of Udine	Italy
1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10	Carly Manion	OISE, University of Toronto	Canada
1, 2, 3, 6,	Rishi Parajuli	University of Bristol	UK
All	Lori Peek	University of Colorado Boulder	USA
All	Marla Petal	Save the Children	Global
1, 3, 5, 7, 9	Muhammad Abdur Rahaman	Center for People & Environ (CPE)	Bangladesh
7	Carmit Rapaport	Independent	Israel
All	Naeem Shahzad	NUST	Pakistan
2, 3, 6, 7, 8	Pooja Shrestha	VSO	Nepal

All	Briony Towers	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)	Australia
1, 3, 8, 10	David Wardell	Independent	Thailand

Center for Reinventing Public Education Evidence Project Working Groups. The following individuals contributed research questions, via five virtual working groups, facilitated by CRPE. **Betheny Gross** served as the lead facilitator for this effort.

Topics	Name	Affiliation / Contact Info	Country
1	Amy Anderson	ReSchool	USA
5	Laura Anderson	Ednomics	USA
1	Thomas Arnett	Christensen Institute	USA
1, 5	Bailey Thomson Blake	Spark Schools	USA
3	Genine Blue	TNTP	USA
4	Sara Dahill Brown	Wake Forest University	USA
4	Deven Carlson	Oklahoma University	USA
5	Lisa Chu	Center on Reinventing Public Education	
2	Cassie Coddington	TNTP	USA
4	Sarah Cohodes	Columbia	USA
2, 3	Bailey Cato Czupryk	TNTP	USA
2	Mike DeArmond	Center on Reinventing Public Education	USA
3	Amy Feygin	American Institutes for Research / Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest	USA
4	James Fogharty	A+ Pittsburgh	USA
1, 3	Alix Gallagher	PACE	USA
1	Kate Gerson	Just Instruction	USA
2	Maithreyi Gopalan	Penn State University	USA
All	Betheny Gross	Center for Reinventing Public Education – Evidence Project	USA
2	Laura Hamilton	RAND	USA
4	Jeff Henig	Columbia University	USA
4	Paul Hill	Center on Reinventing Public Education	USA
4,5	Heather Hough	PACE	USA
3	Cara Jackson	Bellwether	USA
5	Hannah Jarmolowski	Ednomics	USA
4	Ashley Jochim	Center on Reinventing Public Education	USA
3, 4	Julia Kaufman	RAND	USA
5	Sara Kerr	Results for America	USA
5	Ben Kleben		USA
1	Robin Lake	Center on Reinventing Public Education	USA
2	Seth Litt	Parent Revolution	USA

3	Megan Kufeld	NWEA	USA
3	Mikia Manley	Mathematica	USA
1	Tanji Reed Marshall	Ed Trust	USA
4	Brad Marianno	University of Nevada-Las Vegas	USA
4	Julie Marsh	University of Southern California	USA
4	Ani Martinez	Remake Learning	USA
2	Lane McKittrick	Center on Reinventing Public Education	USA
3	Andrew McEachin	RAND	USA
4	Patrick McGuinn	Drew University	USA
1	Billy McRae	Zearn	USA
5	Larry Miller	Greenville Technical College	USA
2	Jeannie Myung	PACE	USA
1	David Nitkin	Transcend	USA
2, 5	Amber Northern	Fordham	USA
1	Morgan Polikoff	University of Southern California	USA
2	Paola Ramirez	RESCHOOL	USA
2	Anna Saavedra	University of Southern California	USA
3	Beth Schueler	University of Virginia	USA
3	Youssef Shoukry	Transcend	USA
5	Matt Steinberg	George Mason University	USA
2	Elizabeth Steiner	RAND	USA
5	Jonathan Travers	Education Resource Strategies	USA
3	Bi Vuong	Project Evident	USA
1	Sarah Woulfin	University of Connecticut	USA
2	Lakisha Young	Oakland Reach	USA

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