

Buad Kholes, Arianna Taddei, Catia Giaconi

INCLUDING JERUSALEM

Educational Justice, Inclusion,
and Community Resilience



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fondata da

UMBERTO MARGIOTTA †

diretta da

IVANA PADOAN E RITA MINELLO

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FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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Preface

Catia Giaconi

President of the Italian Scientific Society of Special Pedagogy (SIPeS)

As President of the Italian Scientific Society of Special Pedagogy (SIPeS), it is a true privilege to introduce this volume, which stems from an international research project rooted in the complexity of contemporary research within contexts of protracted emergency. SIPeS has long recognised how Special Pedagogy represents a frontier in which researchers are called to respond critically and creatively to the evolving challenges of inclusion (Caldin & d'Alonzo, 2012; d'Alonzo & Giaconi, 2024; SIPeS, 2024). These challenges include supporting self-determined and quality-oriented life paths for people with disabilities, promoting their inclusion across life environments, and strengthening professional competence, while addressing the growing complexity of educational and social contexts (Cottini, 2004; Giaconi, 2015; d'Alonzo, 2018; Caldin & Giaconi, 2021; Aiello & Giaconi, 2024). In the uniqueness of such challenges lies the precious contribution of this book, demonstrating how pedagogical research can continue to generate knowledge, dialogue, and transformative agency even in contexts marked by structural inequalities and profound vulnerability.

Since its foundation, the Italian Scientific Society of Special Pedagogy has framed Special Pedagogy as a discipline committed to advancing equity, participation, and social inclusion. Its mandate to protect every person's right to live a life of quality and fulfillment took shape through the constant – and still ongoing – critical examination of life environments, questioning the conditions that shape our daily experiences and promoting generative processes capable of building a genuine culture of inclusion (WHO, 2001; UN, 2006; Giaconi, 2015). Such an endeavour represents an act of ethical responsibility, rooted in our research tradition and projected onto our future, which are both inherently related to our scientific identity (SIPeS, 2024).

Discussing inclusion and social participation in an emergency context such as East Jerusalem requires us to critically re-examine some of the core concepts of our discipline: barriers, facilitators, the right to education, and vulnerability (UNESCO, 1994, 2011; UNESCO & UNICEF, 2015). Within this perspective, the questions addressed in this volume are not confined to the Palestinian context. Rather, they strive to extend beyond geographical boundaries, resonating with the concerns of the broader international scientific community and calling for meaningful change. Such an understanding lies at the heart of our scientific tradition and recalls the enduring legacy of Andrea Canevaro, one of the founding figures of contemporary Special Pedagogy. Canevaro encouraged us to attend carefully to both visible and invisible boundaries, questioning their meaning and educational implications while reminding us that there can be possibilities of passage (2006). Our Scientific Community is deeply grounded in the complementarity he saw between *boundaries*, which acknowledge and preserve uniqueness and differences, and *pathways*, which make encounter, dialogue, and community possible. The pedagogical challenge, therefore, is not to choose one over the other, but to hold them in creative balance (Aiello & Giaconi, 2024; d'Alonzo & Giaconi, 2024). It is this pedagogical intuition that we hope to cultivate, nurture, and carry forward through continuous reflection and research. These considerations therefore invite us to reflect on how inclusive educational systems can rise, evolve, and continue to uphold human dignity, democracy, and Quality of Life even when educational communities are confronted with instability, turmoil, and uncertainty.

Within contexts where the continuity of education is most severely challenged, Special Pedagogy is called upon to reaffirm its scientific mission, underlining how inclusive education represents a stance, a way of interpreting reality itself (SIPeS, 2024). It seeks to acknowledge and overcome existing barriers, to protect and value diversity, and to foster a sense of belonging as a form of citizenship and reciprocal recognition (Canevaro, 2006). Promoting inclusion in the most adverse circumstances implies navigating the dynamic intersection between the *actual* reality – grounded in concrete evaluations and actionable measures – and the *potential* one, which involves the ability to nurture a sense of desire, imagination, and hope (Giaconi, 2015). The complementarity of these two spheres allows for a solid projection towards different, alternative scenarios, which can guide everyday educational practice.

It is precisely within this intersection that this book is framed, presenting both theoretical reflections and empirical evidence grounded in an articulated process of shared-knowledge production. By channeling the voices of researchers, teach-

ers, pupils, and their parents, the Palestinian experience becomes far more than the subject of a study: it becomes a lens through which the international scientific community is invited to rethink the meaning of inclusion, educational responsibility, and social justice. Such an endeavour advances a particularly sound perspective, because it resists simplistic interpretations and reductionist narratives, embracing instead the complexity, depth, and multidimensional nature of educational reality. By doing so, this book avoids linear explanations or predefined solutions, offering a pedagogical perspective that recognises how inclusion is always shaped by the interplay between social, political, and cultural dimensions. In this sense, the volume invites us to welcome complexity as the starting point for its pedagogical inquiry.

The international cooperation between the University of Macerata (Italy) and the Al-Quds University (Palestine), at the very heart of this project, reflects SIPeS's longstanding commitment to promoting encounter and dialogue with other scientific communities, promoting reciprocity and mutual learning. The openness to intercultural dialogue here represents a process in which, as stated by Canevaro (2017), each part witnesses reality and asks themselves questions, coming together to advance knowledge by initiating a dialogue. To this end, the contamination between expertises and lived experiences, which will be among the objects of reflection in this book, emerges as a core trajectory within Special Pedagogy research, underling how meaningful change can only emerge through shared responsibility and a common vision for a better future (d'Alonzo & Giaconi, 2024).

Ultimately, this volume speaks not only to those involved in the Palestinian context, nor solely to scholars advancing research on Education in Emergencies. The book addresses all those who believe that inclusive education has the responsibility to generate well-being, safeguard human rights, and create opportunities for authentic participation within communities. The Palestinian experience, as will be illustrated in the following pages, reminds us that inclusion is never built under ideal circumstances. However, it can find a way to flourish amidst upheaval and constraints, as it foundationally relies on human relationships and competencies. Its dynamic nature implies the responsibility to construct and sustain it through every day practice, promoting professional agency, self-determination and empowerment, as well as community involvement and educational co-responsibility.

The reflections presented above highlight the urgency of developing a pedagogical understanding of co-design and collaborative networking as essential dimensions of professional practice and educational development, supporting the

active commitment (Canevaro, 2006) required to prepare professionals capable of inhabiting the complexity of the inclusive paradigm. As Canevaro consistently reminds us, inclusion is a journey in constant movement (2006, 2020a, 2020b): "...we can learn to know the pathways only by walking them. This means developing professional competences that enable us to understand boundaries, pathways, and limits" (Canevaro, 2006, p. 11).

This book thus faithfully unfolds around the core focus of Special Pedagogy: the centrality of the person within their life contexts (WHO, 2001; UN, 2006; Giaconi, 2015; Caldin & Giaconi, 2021; d'Alonzo & Giaconi, 2024; SIPeS, 2024). The educational question, as proved by the work of our Scientific Community, is never limited to the individual level, but always concerns the quality of the relationships, environments, opportunities, and communities that shape everyday experience. As a consequence, promoting inclusion means simultaneously supporting personal agency and transforming the contexts in which people live, so that participation, belonging, and the legitimate right to Quality of Life can become concrete possibilities for everyone.

By weaving together scientific rigour and lived experience, this volume authentically invites future generations of researchers and educators to continue rethinking existing realities to collectively build a solid, sustainable, and inclusive future for all.

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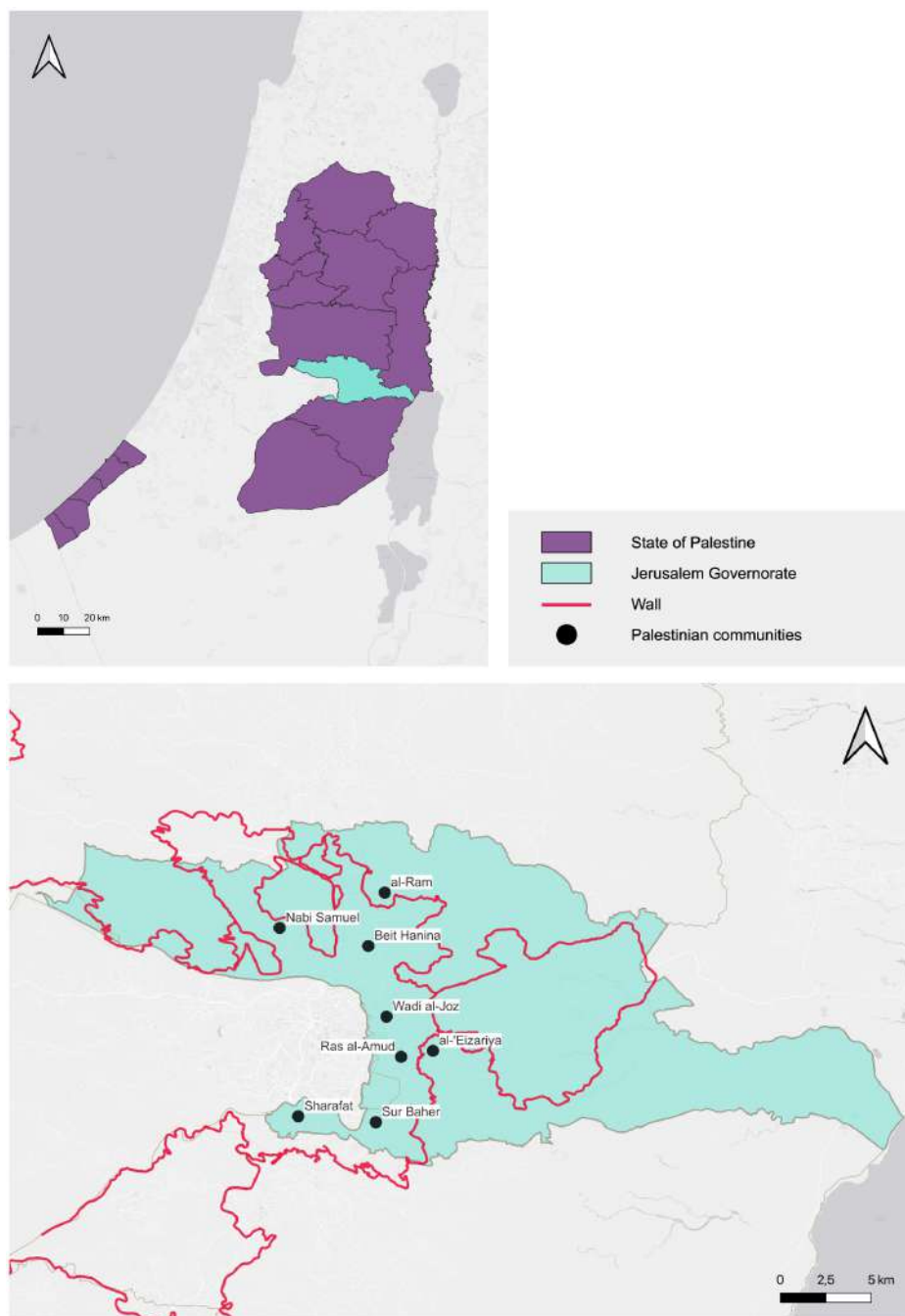


Figure 1. State of Palestine and Jerusalem Governorate

Introduction

Rethinking Inclusive Education in Emergencies: International Cooperation as a Pedagogical Research Practice

Arianna Taddei

1. Foreword

Inclusive education has become one of the major challenges in international educational research, particularly in contexts of protracted emergencies. When wars, humanitarian crises, and political instability disrupt the continuity of everyday life, the right to education extends beyond access to schooling, to encompass the preservation of spaces for social interaction, participation, and the creation of future opportunities. In such contexts, schools assume a role that transcends the transmission of knowledge, serving as key settings for the protection of rights, the promotion of social cohesion, and the enhancement of Quality of Life within educational communities (Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies [INEE], 2024).

Against this background, the present study was conducted as part of the European Project *Including Jerusalem: Promoting Inclusion as a Unifying Process for Primary School Children in Fragmented Communities of East Jerusalem*, funded by the European Union and coordinated by EducAid in partnership with the Child Institute, Al-Quds University, the Universities of Macerata and Bologna, the Italian–Swiss Educational Centre, and the Department of Education of the Palestinian Ministry of Education (MOEHE). The Project involved 20 primary schools in East Jerusalem and surrounding areas, with the aim of promoting inclusive education by addressing barriers that hinder participation, learning, and the full realisation of the right to education. The research, conducted jointly by the Universities of Macerata and Al-Quds, was not designed to monitor the implementation of the Project activities or to evaluate the effectiveness of a prede-

financed intervention model. Instead, it was conceived as a participatory pedagogical research process aimed at exploring how inclusive education can contribute to fostering individual and collective resilience in a context characterised by chronic emergency. Accordingly, the central question guiding the research extended beyond the effectiveness of inclusive practices, to examine the meaning that education assumes when school systems operate under conditions of protracted conflict, territorial fragmentation, and social vulnerability.

In this regard, inclusion is understood not as a set of organisational procedures or instructional arrangements, but as a pedagogical paradigm through which the relationship between rights, participation, and social justice can be critically examined. In emergency contexts, it requires educational institutions to recognise the multiple forms of vulnerability that shape people's lives and to create learning environments that value diversity, strengthen individual and collective resources, and support developmental pathways oriented towards Quality of Life.

Within this theoretical framework, inter-university cooperation represented far more than an institutional partnership. Rather, it functioned as a shared process of pedagogical knowledge production, grounded in the dialogue between different disciplinary, cultural, and professional perspectives. Collaboration between Italian and Palestinian researchers has enabled the development of a context-specific understanding of inclusive processes, recognising the value of the knowledge generated by educational communities and promoting a shared reflection on the conditions necessary to guarantee the right to education in crisis contexts (Pappé, 2019; Shah et al., 2020; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2022).

From this perspective, this research goes beyond simply being another activity carried out as part of an international cooperation Project, to offer a reflection on the complex dynamics shaping inclusive education within the Palestinian context of protracted emergency. It aims to contribute to the academic debate on inclusive education in emergencies, demonstrating how pedagogical research can foster dialogue, produce shared knowledge, and transform educational practices, thereby helping to strengthen participation, resilience, and the Quality of Life of the communities involved.

2. The Palestinian Context: Emergency as a Pedagogical Category

Understanding the meaning and impact of inclusive education in the Occupied Palestinian Territory requires moving beyond an exclusively geopolitical reading of the conflict towards a pedagogical perspective capable of questioning the ways

in which structural violence shapes educational processes. In Palestine, the emergency is not an exceptional or temporary event but a persistent condition that permeates everyday life, affecting both individuals and institutions and limiting opportunities to exercise rights, build social relationships, and envisage future possibilities.

The West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem are characterised by geographical, administrative, and political fragmentation, the consequences of which extend far beyond the spatial dimension. Restrictions on freedom of movement, checkpoints, physical separations, different administrative regimes, and the continuous reconfiguration of access to essential services have created a geography of inequality that shapes everyday life, restricts social participation, and undermines the full enjoyment of fundamental rights (MacKenzie et al., 2020; Pacetti et al., 2024; Taddei & Pacetti, 2018).

These conditions give rise to more than material barriers alone. Over time, borders acquire symbolic and cultural significance, reshaping the sense of belonging, relationships, and opportunities for participation. As a result, the fragmentation of space is mirrored by the fragmentation of educational experiences, community networks, and opportunities to develop shared pathways for growth. As Jamal (2007) and Zanini (1997) argue, physical barriers ultimately reinforce processes of exclusion that profoundly affect the quality of social relationships and communities' identities. Among the most significant challenges is the restriction of the right to mobility. Repeated security checks, restrictions on movement, and logistical constraints disrupt regular school attendance, reduce time available for learning, and hinder the development of stable educational relationships among students, teachers, and parents (Miaari & Lee, 2024; Samman, 2020). These challenges are further compounded by adverse conditions such as inadequate school infrastructure, limited educational resources, overcrowded schools, and restricted access to support services, which severely impacts students with disabilities and those experiencing greater vulnerability (Al-Masri et al., 2023; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2024; United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East [UNRWA], 2024).

In such instances, schools assume a role that goes far beyond the one traditionally associated with educational institutions. They represent one of the few places where it is still possible to ensure continuity, build bonds of trust, and preserve spaces for collective participation. Access to education thus becomes an indicator of the very possibility of exercising citizenship and keeping alive the prospect of human development, especially for children and adolescents growing

up in conditions of permanent vulnerability. For this reason, inclusive education should not be understood as the application of universally valid procedures. Instead, it requires a context-sensitive understanding of the local, political, and cultural conditions that shape students' participation and the organisation of school life. Educational planning must therefore identify and critically examine the material, relational, and institutional barriers that constrain participation, while also recognising the resources available within communities to foster inclusion and enhance Quality of Life (Giaconi, 2015; Giaconi et al., 2022; Schalock & Verdugo Alonso, 2002, 2006).

The escalation of conflict following the events of 7 October 2023 (UNRWA, 2024) has further exacerbated these conditions, turning the state of emergency into a full-blown humanitarian crisis. This inevitably impacts access to education. As a result, the precarious circumstances experienced by the educational communities involved in this study became even more acute, requiring continuous adaptation not only of teaching practices but also of the fieldwork on which this research was based. However, interpreting the Palestinian context solely through a lens of vulnerability would offer an incomplete picture of the situation. Despite the many challenges faced by schools, teachers, and local communities, they continue to develop adaptive strategies, foster solidarity, and implement educational practices that sustain students' participation even under the most adverse conditions. It is precisely in this tension between vulnerability and transformative capacity that the pedagogical focus of this research lies.

From this perspective, Palestine is not simply the setting in which this collaborative international Project is being implemented, but a unique vantage point from which to understand how inclusive education can function as a practice of social justice in contexts of protracted emergency. The central question extends beyond how access to schooling can be ensured to encompass the pedagogical conditions that enable educational communities to continue promoting participation, rights, and Quality of Life, even when the continuity of everyday life is under constant threat. It is precisely this perspective that makes the Palestinian context particularly significant for pedagogical research. Here, the emergency is not merely the backdrop against which educational practices currently unfold; rather, it is a lens through which meanings of inclusion, participation, and educational responsibility can be critically explored.

3. From Safeguarding the Right to Education to Building Inclusive Educational Communities

The growing recognition of Education in Emergencies (EiE) has fundamentally reshaped the way the international community understands the role of education in crisis settings. Whereas humanitarian responses have long prioritised health care, food assistance, and emergency relief, the past 2 decades have seen education increasingly recognised as an essential pillar for the protection of human rights and the reconstruction of communities. Ensuring continuity of educational pathways means safeguarding not only the right to learn, but also opportunities to maintain meaningful relationships, develop a sense of belonging, and nurture hope for the future, even in situations of heightened vulnerability (AICS & RIDS, 2015; Burde et al., 2017; European Commission, 2018).

The development of the EiE paradigm, promoted in particular by the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), has helped to overcome the view that education is an intervention that can be postponed in favour of other humanitarian priorities. Education is now widely recognised as an essential dimension of crisis response, providing one of the principal means through which communities can preserve continuity, dignity, and the capacity to envision and plan their futures, even in contexts affected by violence and social fragmentation (INEE, 2018).

This theoretical development becomes particularly significant when viewed through the lens of inclusive education. In emergency contexts, vulnerability is not determined solely by the presence of disability or special educational needs. Rather, it arises from the intersection of political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental conditions that may restrict participation and the exercise of rights. Inclusion therefore becomes an interpretive framework for recognising the diversity of disadvantage and guiding educational planning towards the removal of barriers to learning and participation. Accordingly, an inclusive education system cannot be defined exclusively by the availability of specialised services or compensatory measures. Instead, it is characterised by its capacity to create environments in which every learner is recognised as a valued member of the community, can participate fully in educational processes, and is supported in pursuing their own life aspirations, regardless of personal circumstances or contextual constraints. Inclusion thus becomes an overarching principle of the education system as a whole, rather than a set of interventions targeted at specific groups of learners (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Slee, 2018).

Inclusive education therefore fulfils both a pedagogical and a political function in advancing social justice. Its pedagogical dimension lies in guiding the design of learning environments that recognise diversity as an educational resource. Within such environments, educational practices become tools through which to address inequalities, strengthen individual and collective capacities, and empower communities. Its political dimension, in turn, lies in contributing to the development of fairer, participatory, and democratic communities, in which the right to education is recognised as an indispensable condition for the exercise of citizenship and the pursuit of social justice (Adams, 2008; Taddei, 2021).

This perspective is closely aligned with the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations [UN], 2006), which recognises the right to an inclusive education system as a cornerstone of full social participation. In emergency settings, this principle takes on even greater significance, as conflict tends to exacerbate pre-existing inequalities, increasing the risk of exclusion for all those living in situations of vulnerability. Inclusion, however, is not limited to safeguarding access to education. It involves building educational communities capable of supporting individual and collective well-being through meaningful relationships, active participation, and shared responsibility for education. From this perspective, school is not merely a place where knowledge is transmitted, but a social space that provides continuity, relational stability, and a sense of belonging. It offers children and young people opportunities to re-establish daily routines, process traumatic experiences, maintain meaningful relationships, develop trust and mutual recognition, and preserve their capacity to envisage the future (Pacetti et al., 2024; Taddei, 2021). It is this transformative potential that underpins the present research. The focus is not exclusively on describing the inclusive practices adopted in Palestinian schools, but on understanding the processes through which education can help to strengthen community resilience, promote participation, and support Quality of Life in contexts of protracted emergencies. From this perspective, inclusive education is not merely an object of investigation; it provides the interpretive lens through which the relationships between rights, communities, and human development are explored.

4. The Palestinian Education System as a Research Context

The current Palestinian education system represents one of the most complex contexts in which to examine the relationship between education, inclusion, and human rights. Prolonged political instability, restrictions on movement, socio-

economic hardship, and the escalation of the conflict have created conditions that profoundly disrupt educational continuity and undermine efforts to guarantee quality education for all students (Education Cluster, 2024; UNESCO, 2024).

Access to education is influenced by a variety of interconnected factors. Restrictions on movement resulting from checkpoints and territorial constraints often make it difficult for students and teachers to reach schools and universities, leading to delays, absenteeism, and repeated disruptions to teaching and learning. Additionally, many educational institutions operate in overcrowded conditions, with inadequate infrastructure, limited resources, and difficulties in accessing educational materials and technology, particularly in areas most exposed to conflict (Bonello, 2024; Fobzu, 2023; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA], 2018).

These structural challenges are compounded by the psychological and social consequences of the emergency. Children, adolescents, and teachers are exposed daily to experiences of loss, insecurity, and violence that affect both learning and educational relationships. Anxiety, stress, and trauma have become unavoidable aspects of the school experience, requiring schools to take on roles that extend far beyond the mere transmission of subject-specific content (Marie et al., 2020). The impact of the crisis is even more pronounced for students living in conditions of greater vulnerability. Limited access to support services, a shortage of specialised professionals, and persistent environmental barriers make it particularly difficult for students with disabilities and their families to participate fully in school life, thereby increasing the risk of educational exclusion (Al-Masri et al., 2023). Despite these challenges, the Palestinian education system continues to demonstrate significant resilience. Schools, teachers, and local communities have developed policy frameworks (MOEHE, 2015, 2017), organisational strategies, and pedagogical approaches aimed at sustaining access to education and continuity of learning wherever possible. Their experience demonstrates that, even in the most fragile contexts, education can serve as a powerful means of civic resilience, hope, and social cohesion (Al-Khansaa, 2024).

It is precisely this tension between vulnerability and transformative capacity that shaped the research presented in this volume. Rather than simply documenting the challenges faced by the Palestinian education system, the study sought to identify the practices, professional competences, and community resources that enable inclusive processes to be sustained in contexts of protracted emergency. From this perspective, the research is conceived as a process of collaborative knowledge production that extends beyond a purely descriptive approach. Through dialogue between Italian and Palestinian researchers, international cooperation becomes not

merely the context in which the study was conducted, but a methodology for scientific inquiry that values the exchange of diverse cultural perspectives as a means of understanding the complexity of inclusive processes in contexts of crisis.

5. Pedagogical Research in Emergency Contexts: Methodological Perspectives

Investigating inclusive education in emergency contexts requires a methodological approach capable of capturing the complex interplay between educational processes, socio-political conditions, and the lived experiences of the communities involved. In contexts affected by protracted conflict, pedagogical research cannot be confined to the collection of data or the evaluation of intervention outcomes. Rather, it must seek to understand how individuals make sense of their educational experiences and how these experiences contribute to fostering resilience, participation, and social change. From this perspective, the present study conceives of research as a dialogic and transformative process. Knowledge is not viewed as something produced external to the communities under investigation, but rather as a collaborative endeavour in which researchers, teachers, school leaders, students, and parents contribute to the development of interpretations that illuminate the complexity of educational practices within their specific contexts.

This methodological approach is grounded in the view that inclusive education cannot be analysed through abstract or universalistic interpretive frameworks. Educational practices derive their meaning from the contexts in which they unfold, reflecting the dynamic interplay of the cultural, political, social, and emotional dimensions that shape the everyday life of school communities. Understanding these processes therefore requires context-responsive methodologies capable of capturing multiple perspectives and integrating different levels of analysis. Along this directory the scientific partnership between the University of Macerata and Al-Quds University constituted a core methodological component of the research design. Bringing together researchers from different cultural contexts fostered a shared interpretation of the phenomena under investigation, reducing – although not eliminating – the risk of ethnocentric, or conversely overly empathetic, interpretations. At the same time, the partnership created opportunities for dialogue between academics and the educators embedded within Palestinian educational communities. In this way, international cooperation extends well beyond institutional coordination to become an epistemological resource that enriches the quality of the research and promotes mutual learning among all those involved. Conceiv-

ing of cooperation in epistemological terms means recognising that understanding inclusive processes cannot rely on the application of predetermined interpretive models. Rather, such understanding emerges through the collaborative construction of meaning among the different members of the educational community (Heron & Reason, 1997; Milstein et al., 2019). The research therefore adopts a dialogic approach in which participants are regarded not as passive subjects of investigation but as active contributors in the co-construction of knowledge. From this perspective, the study is situated within the tradition of pedagogical research committed to social transformation (Dewey, 1916; Mertens, 2007). Its primary aim was to explore the educational conditions that can foster participation, well-being, and the protection of the right to education, even in situations of heightened vulnerability. Consistent with this methodological orientation, the study employed a mixed methods research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023) to integrate quantitative and qualitative data and to capture the multidimensional nature of inclusive processes. The combined use of questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups made it possible to relate descriptive indicators to participants' accounts, providing a richer understanding of educational practices and of the meanings attributed by participants to inclusion, the right to education, and well-being. The study involved headmasters, teachers, students, and parents from the schools that participated in the Project, recognising the importance of incorporating multiple perspectives in understanding educational processes. Particular attention was paid to ethical procedures and to the collaborative development of the research instruments, to ensure that both data collection and interpretation reflected a genuinely participatory approach. Specifically, 4 key dimensions were identified as central to understanding inclusive processes in emergency contexts:

- The first concerns the *educational practices* adopted by teachers to promote student participation in learning, in contexts characterised by high levels of instability.
- The second focuses on the *professional competences* required of teachers, who are expected to combine educational, relational, and emotional support roles in highly complex situations.
- The third explores the *meanings attributed to the right to education and to inclusion* by the different groups of participants, recognising that these concepts take on distinct meanings in emergency contexts.
- The fourth dimension examines the *well-being of the educational community*, understood not simply as an individual outcome but as a collective process shaped by the quality of relationships within the school and community, a

sense of belonging, participation, and the school's ability to remain a place of growth even under the most challenging circumstances.

Rather than measuring the level of inclusion achieved by participating schools, the research sought to understand the processes through which educational communities foster participation and uphold the right to education in everyday practice given the context of persistent uncertainty. The focus was therefore shifted to the dynamics of change, the resources mobilised by teachers, and the forms of collective resilience that enable schools to sustain their educational mission even under the most challenging circumstances. These dimensions were not treated as independent categories but as interconnected aspects through which the quality of inclusive processes was understood. From this perspective, the study does not seek to produce generalisable models. Instead, it aims to generate contextually grounded knowledge capable of informing both theoretical reflection and educational practice. Its contribution lies in bringing the specificity of the Palestinian experience into dialogue with the international debate on inclusive education in emergency contexts, thereby contributing to the development of pedagogical perspectives that are responsive to the complexity of contexts.

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Section I

Pedagogical Backgrounds

Chapter 1

The Child Institute and the Journey of Empowerment in Inclusive Education: Reflections on Educational Resilience in Palestine

Buad Kholes

1. Introduction: Reimagining Inclusive Education Through Empowerment in Jerusalem

This Chapter examines empowerment in inclusive education under the unique circumstances that define daily life for Palestinians in Jerusalem. It is grounded in the understanding that inclusive education rests on several intersecting foundations: children's rights, education in emergencies, psychological well-being, and Quality of Life. It also rests on a commitment to supportive pedagogical strategies that create equal educational opportunities, ensure active participation without discrimination, honour individual needs, and build learning environments that are inclusive, safe, and conducive to holistic growth, all within a framework that values social-emotional learning.

In Jerusalem, the challenges of inclusive education are inseparable from the difficult political and social reality. Children face daily restrictions on movement, stark resource disparities, and chronic psychological pressure, both direct and indirect. Research shows that more than 40% of children in Jerusalem schools experience psychological stress that affects their learning (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2022; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2021), while teachers are caught between the demands of official curricula and the weight of children's daily traumas.

In this context, inclusive education is not simply a matter of integrating children with different needs into regular classrooms. It becomes a question of educational resilience: the capacity to keep learning alive despite overwhelming

conditions. Empowerment, therefore, represents not a theoretical idea but a humanitarian response: a response to children who cannot always find safe spaces to learn, to teachers working under multiple pressures, and to schools trying to fulfil their educational roles in a context that restricts movement, threatens psychological stability, and systematically reproduces vulnerability.

Inclusive education is not offered here as a ready solution, but as a possibility for growth, development, and restoration of education as a moral human act and responsibility, not just a system of assessment and standards. Over the course of this 4-year Project, theoretical reflection and field experience evolved in constant dialogue. University teaching became intertwined with school-based interventions, psychological support was provided through sustained collaboration between schools and families, and empowerment gradually emerged through everyday educational practice, shaped by continuous questioning, challenges, and small but meaningful transformations that progressively redefined what inclusive education could mean in such a complex context.

In this framework, promoting inclusive education means reconstructing the educational environment so that it can embrace diversity as an intellectual and human value. It represents a shift from a logic of assimilation to a logic of recognition, and from controlling difference to working with it as an educational resource.

In light of these considerations, this Chapter develops the theoretical foundations of empowerment as a guiding principle for inclusive education in contexts of protracted emergency. Drawing on contemporary scholarship in inclusive education, educational philosophy, resilience, and capability theory, it examines how empowerment contributes to rethinking the purposes of education beyond access and academic achievement, positioning it as a condition for educational justice, human development, and sustainable inclusion. This conceptual perspective provides the lens through which the empirical studies presented in the second part of this volume are interpreted, offering the theoretical basis for understanding how empowerment is enacted, experienced, and negotiated by teachers, students, and families within the educational reality of Jerusalem.

2. When Education Becomes a Project of Empowerment and Resilience

The journey to empowerment begins the moment a child feels the world around them is shrinking, and finds no means to thrive in school unless the institution transforms from an administrative place into a human environment capable of

turning weakness into strength. In contexts where children face social, political, or psychological pressure, inclusive education becomes an act of resilience, interpreted here as self-development despite fragmented surroundings. Palestinian educators have developed this capacity for resilience as part of their daily survival project.

Educational empowerment is central to the development of people capable of meeting the challenges of reality and contributing to civilisation. In the *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun (1967) argues that education is a noble craft aimed at acquiring *malaka*: a solid capacity for understanding, application, and creativity, rather than mere rote memorisation. He holds that knowledge and education are natural to human beings, arising from an innate intellect that distinguishes humans from other species, and that human beings flourish within a supportive communal environment. Accordingly, he links good education and a capable teacher to the learner's ability to acquire the skills and ethical disposition needed to persevere and contribute to society, even under emergency conditions or significant pressure. Simultaneously, he calls for respecting the learner's readiness and capacities, warning that oppression in upbringing weakens the spirit, whereas dialogue and feasible educational practice cultivate resilience and creativity.

This aligns with scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Sina, who focus on cultivating the soul in tandem with the intellect and personality, so that children become capable of both self and social empowerment. Education thus becomes a civilisational project for survival and flourishing, transforming weakness into strength and planting hope in the face of challenges (Al-Ghazali, 2010). In this vein, Paulo Freire (1970) argues that genuine education is not the production of skill but the reproduction of hope as a force capable of confronting and transforming reality. Similarly, John Dewey (1938) envisaged schools as spaces of social experience inseparable from public life. He frames educational resilience as a way of reorganising consciousness so that children can learn even in unsafe or unstable conditions. The developmental psychologist Ungar (2011) further reinforces these reflections, pointing out that resilience is not an individual trait but the product of supportive social structures capable of providing children with environments in which they can genuinely thrive.

Empowerment in education should not be interpreted as a compassion project or a rescue mission. Rather, it represents a process of transforming latent ability into social action within environments where children face pressures that threaten their psychological and social equanimity. As such, schools become the points of contact between weakness and potential strength, between withdrawal and potential emergence, and educational philosophy shifts from transmitting curricula

to developing persons capable of facing the world without collapse. This is not mere rhetoric; it requires an integrated support system (Ungar, 2011). From this perspective, empowerment is not simply about providing resources; it is about creating genuine opportunities for action and agency. This means treating ability not as a given attribute but as an educational construct that must be valued and cultivated within our schools and institutions. In moving towards inclusive education, we are not seeking a school that merely adds different children to classrooms; we are seeking an institution that recognises children's humanity and capacity to make decisions and find their own voices.

Inclusive education, then, is not about engineering classroom structure but about rebuilding a child's relationship with their own capacities. As fear diminishes, space for action expands; as difference is recognised, a nucleus of confidence forms. In Jerusalem, we need a discourse of capability that enables children to develop the ability to think independently, make decisions, and build psychological resilience.

3. The Conceptual and Theoretical Framework of Empowerment in Inclusive Education

Empowerment is among the most widely discussed concepts in contemporary educational literature, yet its frequent use does not mean its meaning is settled. In many contexts, empowerment agendas are reduced to technical procedures or short-term intervention programmes. However, critical educational literature insists that empowerment is, at its core, a long-term structural process involving the redistribution of power within educational systems, and which seeks to redefine the roles of students, teachers, and institutions in the production of knowledge and in decision-making. Empowerment is multifaceted and multi-tiered, operating at psychological, social, and institutional levels. Separating these dimensions from one another strips it of its meaning (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000).

In the context of inclusive education, empowerment becomes more complex. It is not only about providing access to education for children with different needs, it is also about reshaping the educational environment to respond to diversity as a natural human condition rather than an exception requiring special treatment. True inclusion is not achieved by placing a child with diverse needs in a standard classroom. True inclusion requires changing school culture, policies, and educational practices to ensure that differences are recognised and respected

(Ainscow, 2015; Slee, 2018). In this framework, empowerment becomes a precondition for inclusion rather than a subsequent outcome.

Empowerment is closely linked to social justice. Sen (2009) argues that empowerment encompasses not only providing resources but expanding individuals' capacity to enact choice and agency within their lived contexts. This understanding intersects with Nussbaum's (2011) view that an empowering education expands a child's emotional, cognitive, and social capabilities, providing tools to live with dignity, not just to pass through educational stages. As such, empowerment in inclusive education cannot be separated from the ethical dimension of education. According to Vygotsky (1978), a child's higher psychological functions develop not in isolation but through social interaction and cultural mediation, making the educational environment a decisive factor in building or undermining capacity. Contemporary literature builds on this: children's psychological empowerment requires secure relationships within schools, an educational language that does not exclude, and teachers who possess emotional competence alongside cognitive competence (Brackett et al., 2019; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

In emergency-affected environments such as Jerusalem, empowerment takes on an added dimension as a tool for psychological and social resilience. Research conducted in Jerusalem shows that schools operating in contexts of violence and political pressure can either reproduce trauma or become spaces for protection and psychological growth, depending entirely on the educational philosophy that schools adopt (Betancourt et al., 2020; Ungar, 2018). In this context, empowerment represents an existential necessity, protecting children from psychological collapse and enabling continued learning despite oppression.

Empowerment in inclusive education is, therefore, a process that redefines what school means, as well as the role of teacher and student, transforming education into a space of mutual recognition. In the Palestinian context, and specifically in Jerusalem, inclusive education is an act of quiet educational resistance that protects individuals from psychological erosion and rebuilds hope as an acquired capacity rather than a fleeting feeling.

4. The Philosophy of Empowerment: From Response to Reconstruction

Educational literature records a qualitative shift in how empowerment is understood, evolving from a circumstantial response that fills gaps or addresses the effects of crises to a structural approach for rebuilding educational systems in contexts of protracted emergency. Where schools face cumulative political, social,

and economic pressures, they become more than educational institutions; they are among the most important spaces in which meaning, identity, and the will to persevere are shaped. Research consistently shows that education in emergency contexts, if limited to the functional, can reproduce vulnerability rather than address it, while inclusive education is enabling and can redirect the educational experience towards resilience and human dignity (Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Kirk, 2019; Winthrop & Matsui, 2013).

John Dewey's philosophy stands as a deep intellectual root of the empowerment concept. Dewey links education to democracy and insists that real learning does not happen through rote memorisation but through experience and active engagement in problem-solving. In his view, schools are not neutral spaces; they are social environments that shape patterns of thought and action. When a child is excluded from participating in building their own educational experience, they are deprived of critical understanding and a sense of agency, which directly contradicts any sincere meaning of empowerment (Biesta, 2015; Dewey, 1938).

This perspective intersects with Paulo Freire's critique of banking education. Freire argues that treating the learner as a vessel for knowledge reproduces relations of domination, even when wrapped in the language of justice. For Freire, empowerment is an act of critical and ethical liberation enabling learners to interpret and make sense of their reality, name it, and act upon it. This vision matters particularly in contexts of protracted emergency, where helplessness is reproduced daily, and education is measured by whether it fosters critical consciousness rather than mere adaptation to circumstances (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2020). Lev Vygotsky (1978) enriched the philosophy of empowerment by insisting on the social nature of learning. The zone of proximal development – the distance between what a learner can do alone and what they can achieve with support – describes not a knowledge gap but a latent potential realised only through deliberate teaching within trusting relationships. On this reading, teachers act as enabling agents, and classrooms become environments that cultivate capacity rather than simply organise space. Contemporary scholarship affirms that this remains central to designing educational interventions in emergency contexts, where children's self-efficacy is subject to continuous depletion (Daniels, 2016; Fler, 2020).

From developmental social psychology, Michael Ungar offers the crucial insight that empowerment is an outcome of support systems rather than an individual trait. In contexts of protracted emergency, building 'resilience' in children in isolation from their environment is insufficient. What is required is rebuilding educational systems that enable access to psychological, social, and cultural resources. On this view, empowerment occurs when environmental conditions shift

in ways that allow children to act as agents rather than merely adapt (Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Ungar, 2012, 2018).

Research shows that absence of empowerment within inclusive education produces new forms of covert exclusion. For example, a child may be physically present in the classroom but absent from decision-making, constrained by low expectations, or confined by curricula that do not recognise their experience. Inclusive education is not measured by the number of integrated students but by the degree to which school culture shifts towards treating difference as an educational resource (Florian, 2019; Slee, 2018).

Empowerment in inclusive education is structurally linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations [UN], 2015), particularly Goal 4, which calls for ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all. Inclusive education, when understood as an empowering framework, does not stop at providing access to school but extends to building learners' capacities for active participation, decision-making, and a genuine sense of belonging and dignity. UNESCO reports make clear that inclusive education cannot be achieved without an empowerment approach that addresses power relations within schools, redefines the roles of teacher and learner, and ensures schools are psychologically and socially safe spaces, especially for the most vulnerable (Ainscow, 2020; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020). Florian (2019) and Slee (2018) further reinforce this idea by arguing that education that fails to empower marginalised groups remains unjust even when it achieves high quantitative indicators. Empowerment thus becomes a qualitative criterion for measuring the extent to which education actually contributes to sustainable development. This is consistent with World Bank and UNICEF reports that indicate that investing in the psychological and social empowerment of teachers and students is an essential condition for the sustainability of any educational reform (UNICEF, 2022; World Bank, 2021). Empowered teachers can adopt inclusive educational practices, empowered students can learn despite disruption, and empowered schools can transform into protective places that build resilience.

The relationship between empowerment, inclusive education, and sustainable development is most apparent in contexts of protracted emergency, where educational systems face intense political, economic, and psychological pressures. In Jerusalem, where political emergency intersects with social and economic pressure, educational empowerment is simultaneously a form of psychological protection and an educational practice. A child living in an unstable context needs a school that does not reproduce fear but provides a stable framework of relationships and

meaning. Indeed, schools that adopt empowering approaches in emergency contexts have been shown to reduce indicators of anxiety and school dropout while strengthening children's sense of belonging and their capacity to learn (Betancourt et al., 2020; Masten & Barnes, 2018; Sullivan & Simonson, 2016).

5. Challenges of Empowerment in the Context of Protracted Emergencies in Jerusalem

Despite the theoretical potential of empowerment, the application of inclusive education in Jerusalem schools faces deep structural challenges that cannot be addressed through superficial solutions. Protracted states of emergency produce particular patterns of vulnerability, featuring accumulation of chronic psychological stress, erosion of institutional trust, and normalisation of instability as a permanent condition of life (Barber, 2014; Masten, 2021). In this context, the central challenge for empowerment is not its introduction but its continuity.

Chief among these challenges is the psychological exhaustion of teachers and school administrators. A teacher working in an unstable environment, carrying heavy administrative loads in addition to exceptional emotional pressure, may find it genuinely difficult to adopt empowering practices that demand self-awareness and educational flexibility. Research consistently shows that the absence of psychological and institutional support for teachers contributes to high rates of burnout, which directly affects the quality of inclusive education (Day & Gu, 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

School cultures present a related challenge. Empowerment can be perceived as a threat to the system or an additional burden on teachers. In some schools, participatory practices are resisted out of fear of accountability or loss of control, a pattern the literature attributes to the need for safe spaces and adequate time in which to experiment and fail (Ainscow, 2015; Slee, 2018). Without addressing this cultural dimension, the risk is that empowerment remains rhetorical and produces no real change.

Another layer of difficulty is the scarcity and instability of resources. Empowerment initiatives that depend on short-term funding or specific individuals are vulnerable to interruption, which corrodes the trust of schools and families over time. Research on emergency contexts shows that sustainability requires integrating empowerment into the organisational structure of schools rather than tying it to temporary projects (Kirk, 2019; Winthrop, 2020).

At the family level, the presenting challenge is a potential erosion in trust be-

tween families and school, which may stem from earlier experiences of exclusion or stigma. Rebuilding that relationship requires time, patience, and genuine space for dialogue – all of which can sit awkwardly with the demands of conventional school timetables. Studies confirm that involving families in education in emergency contexts cannot be done superficially; their expertise and knowledge of their child's experience should be recognised and drawn upon (Epstein, 2018; Jeynes, 2016).

6. Towards an Ethical Framework for Inclusive Education

In light of the above, the crystallised philosophy of empowerment is presented here as an ethical framework for inclusive education. More than a mere technical approach, this represents a shift from a logic of 'crisis response' to a logic of 'system rebuilding'. Empowerment demands that we recognise children as capable of understanding and influencing their worlds, teachers as moral agents, and schools as spaces of democratic practice. This understanding draws on Nussbaum's arguments that education is central to cultivating human dignity, and on Giroux's call to restore the ethical and political dimensions of education (Giroux, 2020; Nussbaum, 2011).

In contexts of protracted emergency, empowerment protects individuals from psychological erosion and allows meaning to be reconstructed. Understood in this way, inclusive education is not classroom engineering – it is a moral contract in which the educational system stands by children, recognising their right to learn, express themselves, and belong.

Empowerment in inclusive education acquires its substantive meaning when examined through the lived experiences of teachers, parents, and students, rather than through abstract conceptualisations. In contexts of protracted emergency, field-based perspectives illuminate the gap between policy and practice and reveal how empowerment is enacted within everyday relationships in schools and families. Qualitative education research recognises these field perspectives as a critical entry point for understanding how meaning is produced in practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Liamputtong, 2019). In this context, the research team of the Including Jerusalem Project sought to explore the concept of empowerment through the voices and lived experiences of parents, students, and teachers in Jerusalem schools.

7. Conclusion: Empowerment as an Educational Ethic in the Context of Protracted Emergencies

This Chapter offered an in-depth reading of empowerment in inclusive education as an ethical educational project that goes beyond procedural policies and technical interventions. It explicitly stated that empowerment is not merely an improvement of an existing educational system; it is a structural condition for an educational system's reconstruction, especially in contexts of protracted emergency. Schools that do not examine the power relations operating within them, nor recognise children as capable subjects, nor support teachers as moral agents, will reproduce exclusion even as they adopt the language of inclusion.

When understood as an empowering practice, inclusive education shifts from a policy of access to an act of recognition, and from superficial assimilation of difference to conscious pedagogical engagement with it. Empowerment becomes not a separate goal but an organising logic – one that redefines educational success and grants resilience its human dimension. The empowered child not only succeeds academically; they also feel seen, heard, and capable of acting within an environment that respects their humanity.

Educational empowerment also moves hand in hand with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4: ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all. When empowerment means building students' capacities for critical thinking, psychological resilience, and social participation, it goes far beyond providing access to school. It becomes a driver of sustainable human development, instilling in children the ability to face ongoing challenges, protecting their right to learn despite emergency, and building generations capable of reproducing hope and creativity within their communities. In this way, empowering inclusive education becomes not only a local educational response but a genuine contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, transforming students from recipients into active participants in building a more just, sustainable, and resilient future.

It is within this conceptual and ethical framework that the second part of this volume is situated. Building upon the theoretical foundations developed in the present Chapter, the following contributions will examine empowerment through the perspectives and experiences of the educational actors directly involved in the Including Jerusalem Project, offering insight into how these principles are translated into pedagogical practices within a context of protracted emergency.

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Chapter 2

The Right to Education in Contexts of Protracted Emergency: A Rights-Based Perspective on Inclusive Education

Sawsan Victor Istephan

1. Introduction: The Right to Education in Inclusive Frameworks

This Chapter examines the right to learn within the framework of inclusive education in Palestine. It conceptualises the right to education as a fundamental human right that extends beyond access to schooling, to encompass meaningful learning, participation, and equity. It addresses key questions, including: What do we mean by the right to education, and how is it a core component of human rights? What is inclusive education, and what are its main goals?

This Chapter presents inclusive education as both a holistic philosophy and an ongoing process that responds to student diversity and promotes participation for all students. It examines key challenges to inclusive education, including poverty, inequality, limited resources, and exclusionary educational practices, situating these issues within the Palestinian context. Overall, this Chapter positions inclusive education as central to broader efforts to promote equity and advance the principle of Education for All.

Education is a core tenet of the dynamic social development model. The right to education is not only an autonomous human right but also a foundational instrument for the realisation of other human rights, reflecting the interdependence and indivisibility of human rights (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1999; United Nations, 1948). By enabling individuals and communities to develop their capacities, education empowers people to shape their own futures, claim their rights and uphold the rights of others, participate meaningfully in so-

cial life, and hold state institutions accountable for actions that may advance or undermine justice (Zendeli, 2017).

Education is a human right enshrined in international legal instruments, including the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), and is grounded in the inherent dignity of the individual. While the individual is the primary rights holder, education also generates significant societal benefits. It is universal, of high priority, and essential for the realisation of other human rights. States are legally obligated to ensure equitable, safe, and high-quality education at all levels, from primary to tertiary education. This obligation encompasses principles of non-discrimination, academic freedom, adequate teacher preparation, and transparent governance systems, while allowing flexibility in implementation to safeguard both individual dignity and collective well-being (UNESCO, 2005).

2. The Right to Education: Inclusion, Equity, and Lived Experience

The right to education should be understood as a lived and meaningful experience of education rather than being reduced to school enrolment alone.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1999) further clarified that the right to education entails not only access to educational institutions but also the provision of education that is available, accessible, acceptable, and adaptable to students' needs and circumstances (Tomaševski, 2001). Availability refers to the existence of adequately resourced and well-functioning educational institutions, including sufficient schools, qualified teachers, and appropriate infrastructure to serve diverse student populations. Accessibility concerns the removal of legal, financial, administrative, and social barriers that limit students' access to and continuation in education, such as discrimination, school fees, distance, and inflexible schedules. Acceptability emphasises the quality and rights-based nature of education, ensuring safe learning environments, relevant curricula, appropriate languages of instruction, and respect for students' dignity and parental choice within a human-rights framework. Adaptability highlights the need for flexible education systems that respond to diverse learning needs and changing social conditions, particularly for students affected by poverty, conflict, or marginalisation. The absence of any of these dimensions constitutes a violation of the right to education, even when children are formally enrolled, underscoring its central role in building inclusive and equitable education systems (Tomaševski, 2001). According to Sida (2003), the right to education is recognised as both a

universal human right and a basic human need; however, its realisation remains constrained for students with disabilities and special learning needs. Within a rights-based perspective, this right encompasses 3 interconnected dimensions: the *right to education*, which focuses on enrolment and the removal of access barriers; the *right in education*, which emphasises quality learning, meaningful participation; the *right to be heard*, and learning environments grounded in respect and tolerance, alongside reasonable accommodations and specialised supports; and the *right through education*, which relates to the transformative role of education in promoting human rights values, challenging stigma, and reducing social exclusion and segregation (Sida, 2003).

This multidimensional understanding highlights that inclusion cannot be achieved simply by placing students with disabilities within mainstream educational settings. It requires the transformation of educational systems, cultures, and practices to ensure that all students can participate and learn on an equal basis. Inclusive education is most effective when embedded within mainstream education reform in ordinary school systems, avoiding parallel structures that risk reproducing exclusion and discrimination. Such an approach recognises disability not as an isolated condition but as an experience that intersects with other dimensions of vulnerability, including poverty, displacement, conflict, and minority status (UNESCO, 2017). From this perspective, international frameworks have increasingly emphasised that inclusion extends beyond physical presence in schools. For example, UNESCO (2017) stresses that inclusive education requires the identification and removal of barriers to participation and learning, promoting educational environments in which diversity is recognised as a resource rather than a limitation. Consequently, inclusion involves not only ensuring access to education but also guaranteeing meaningful participation, belonging, and equitable learning opportunities for all students.

The right to education is a universal human right recognised under international law, applying to all individuals, including those with disabilities (CRPD, 2006, art. 24; United Nations, 1948; United Nations, 1966). Core international instruments uphold the principles of universality and non-discrimination, placing a responsibility on states to provide equitable educational opportunities through equitable and responsive education systems. However, recognising education as a universal right implies not only the obligation to make educational opportunities available but also the responsibility to address the structural, social, cultural, and environmental barriers that prevent some students from fully benefiting from them (CRPD, 2006). From this rights-based perspective, inclusive education is widely regarded as the most effective approach for ensuring non-discriminatory

access, as it requires education systems to adapt to student diversity rather than forcing students to conform to a standardised model (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2013). In this sense, inclusion represents the operational dimension through which the right to education becomes effective, translating universal principles into concrete educational practices capable of responding to diversity. The literature on the right to education further highlights that education plays a fundamental role in individual and collective development, contributing to the advancement of societies and to the promotion of social stability (UNESCO, 2015; United Nations, 1966). Beyond its intrinsic value as a human right, education performs multiple social functions. It contributes to security by fostering awareness of human rights, preventing violations, reducing conflict, and supporting social reconstruction in post-conflict contexts. It is also central to economic empowerment, as evidence shows that mass education is a key driver of long-term economic growth by equipping individuals with skills that enhance productivity. Education, indeed, promotes critical understanding, enables lifelong learning, supports meaningful participation in political decision-making, and allows individuals to engage effectively with public services (Zendeli, 2017). It fosters awareness of human rights, helps prevent violations and conflicts, and supports social reconstruction in post-crisis contexts. Education also serves as a powerful instrument for economic empowerment, equipping individuals with skills that enhance productivity and enable active, informed participation in decision-making and public life.

Nevertheless, the realisation of the right to education is particularly fragile in contexts affected by crises, where pre-existing inequalities are often intensified, and new barriers to participation emerge. As highlighted by the literature on Education in Emergencies (EiE), crises do not affect all students equally. Children already experiencing social, economic, cultural, or disability-related disadvantages are often those who face the greatest risks of exclusion and prolonged interruption of learning (INEE, 2010; Nicolai, 2009; UNESCO, 2020). Educational exclusion in crisis-affected contexts is widespread, with children frequently pushed out of learning for prolonged periods. In conflict zones and under occupation, schools may be attacked, and students and teachers may experience injury, trauma, and fear, reducing attendance and increasing absenteeism for students and teachers alike. Natural hazards similarly damage infrastructure, disrupt teaching, and, as disasters intensify, result in long-term physical, psychological, and educational harm. Forced displacement further increases the number of children whose right to education requires sustained protection and practical guarantees (UNESCO, 2020).

Ensuring education during emergencies should not be merely a practical response; it should be a legal and rights-based obligation that applies even under exceptional circumstances. Protecting students and restoring safe, inclusive, and resilient schooling is essential to fulfilling the right to education in crisis contexts. While the ICESCR allows temporary limitations under Article 4 – when necessary, reasonable, and proportionate – states remain bound by minimum core obligations, including providing basic education and working expeditiously towards full realisation. The protection of education in situations of armed conflict is recognised as a fundamental component of international humanitarian law, which requires the safeguarding of educational facilities, personnel, and students from violence and attacks (GCPEA, 2022; United Nations Security Council, 2011). Along the same lines, the Education 2030 Framework for Action emphasises the need for inclusive, responsive, and resilient education systems in emergencies, supported by international humanitarian law and key instruments such as the INEE Minimum Standards, Comprehensive School Safety Framework, and Safe Schools Declaration (UNESCO, 2023).

Governments alone cannot ensure inclusive and equitable education, as the required human and financial resources often exceed their direct capacity. Effective progress depends on partnerships among families, teachers, administrators, researchers, community organisations, public sectors (e.g. health and child protection), and minority groups at risk of exclusion. Family engagement is critical, although some parents and caregivers may require training, advocacy skills, and support to participate effectively. Inclusion is strengthened when schools coordinate with wider community actors, employers, universities, and public services, allowing collaborative efforts to reinforce impact. Teachers, especially school leaders, must take responsibility for all students, organise flexibly, and work across schools, while administrators adjust priorities to support school-led improvement (Ainscow, 2020).

In conclusion, inclusion is an ongoing, system-wide process that responds to student diversity by removing barriers and enhancing every student's presence, participation, and achievement within mainstream education. Inclusive education is both a moral and rights-based commitment and a practical investment that strengthens educational quality, expands future opportunities, and supports social and economic participation for persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups. Implementation remains challenging when policies, resources, school environments, and teaching practices are insufficiently prepared, and these challenges intensify in crises, conflict, disasters, and displacement. Achieving inclusive and equitable education requires sustained whole-system reform and strong part-

nerships with families and communities, creating resilient, welcoming schools where all students can thrive together.

As reconstructed in Chapter 5 and further examined throughout the second part of this volume, the Palestinian education context is characterised by constraints and barriers that continue to undermine children's ability to fully realise this right.

3. Inclusive Education in Palestine: Rights, Challenges, and Pathways to Equity

The Palestine Inclusive Education Policy (2015) underscores the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's (MOEHE) commitment to establishing a child-centred, inclusive education system that aligns with both national priorities and international obligations. The policy aims to raise awareness of inclusive education, promote non-discrimination, respect diversity, and expand access by removing environmental, attitudinal, and resource-related barriers that hinder students from attending their local schools. It emphasises enhancing participation and learning outcomes through flexible curricula, adaptive learning materials, and child-centred assessment methods, while ensuring equal educational rights via a 'twin-track' approach combining system-wide reforms with individualised support. Furthermore, the policy highlights the intrinsic link between quality education and inclusion, focusing on strengthening the skills of teachers, support staff, and school leaders, and advocating inclusive practices across all educational stages, from early childhood to vocational and adult education. All education provision is intended to be safe, protective, and strengthened through the active engagement of communities, parents and caregivers, and children (MOEHE, 2015).

As discussed so far, education can serve as a bridge between present challenges and future possibilities. The right to education is not merely a legal entitlement but a vital lifeline for communities under pressure. The daily rituals of Palestinian students, such as donning school uniforms and attending morning assemblies, symbolise resilience and determination, while each lesson learned contributes to building a future beyond the immediate constraints of occupation. Education becomes a powerful equaliser, enabling marginalised students to reclaim their narratives and envision opportunities beyond their immediate circumstances.

Despite these commitments, significant challenges remain. UNICEF (2018) highlights persistent exclusion: by age 15, roughly 25% of boys and 7% of girls are out of school, with children with disabilities disproportionately affected. This exclusion reflects not only individual circumstances but systemic barriers within

the education system. Environmental and political factors, including the ongoing occupation and recurrent conflicts, disrupt school access and increase dropout risks. Simultaneously, non-inclusive practices, such as rigid teaching methods, inadequate support for students with disabilities, and unsupportive school environments, further limit meaningful participation and learning for all students (UNICEF, 2018).

The Palestinian legal framework affirms every child's right to education and equal access. The Amended Basic Law (2005) guarantees equality and the right to education, while the Jordanian Education Law No. 16 (1964), still in force in the West Bank, and a proposed Palestinian Education Law emphasise compulsory and free basic education. The Palestinian Child Law No. 7 (2004) reinforces these rights by ensuring free compulsory education for all children, promoting equal opportunities, and enabling children with disabilities to access general education. It also assigns the state responsibility for supporting children with diverse needs through education and vocational rehabilitation, for fostering independence and encouraging participation, and for offering specialised classes, schools, or centres for exceptional cases. Furthermore, the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 4 (1999) enshrines non-discrimination and equitable access to services, obligating the state to protect rights, raise awareness, and provide appropriate curricula, teaching methods, accommodations, qualified teachers, and assessment for students with disabilities. Council of Ministers' Decision No. 40 (2004), implementing this law, requires universities to develop special education programmes and mandates MOEHE to adapt schools to meet the needs of children with disabilities (MOEHE, 2015).

The framework reconstructed above demonstrates that Palestine's commitment to inclusive education is firmly embedded in its policies and legal frameworks, which uphold every child's right to education, equality, and non-discrimination, while emphasising the removal of barriers and the improvement of school practices and learning environments. In this direction, the achievement of inclusive education in Palestine is understood as a comprehensive approach: it demands systemic reforms addressing school practices, infrastructure, teacher training, and data collection.

Indeed, without targeted interventions, children, particularly those with disabilities, remain at significant risk of educational exclusion. As will be discussed in the second part of this book, and as already highlighted in the previous Chapter, Palestinian students face substantial barriers to accessing education depending on their area of residence (e.g. the West Bank and the areas near the Wall). The challenges often extend travel times, increase costs, and compromise safety due

to settler attacks and ongoing security tensions. Children with disabilities encounter additional obstacles, such as inaccessible infrastructure, lack of appropriate transportation, and heightened safety risks, limiting their full participation in learning. Compounding these challenges, the worsening economic crisis makes it difficult for families to afford transportation and assistive devices, increasing the risk of school dropout and daily learning disruption. Together, these factors underscore the urgent need for inclusive policies that ensure safe, equitable, and consistent access to education for all students, particularly those with disabilities and special needs (Education Cluster, 2024).

In this regard, the lack of aggregated data and systematic evidence – specifically, which children are excluded from education, their specific needs, and the barriers they face – represents a major obstacle for policymakers and educators in developing targeted and effective inclusion strategies.

In this sense, capturing the diverse perspectives of students, teachers, and parents is essential to understanding what barriers affect participation in education and how inclusive practices are experienced in everyday school contexts. As will be explored in the second part of this book produced through the Including Jerusalem Project, listening to these perspectives provides valuable insights into the challenges and possibilities of advancing inclusive education in Palestine.

4. Conclusions

Inclusive education is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone for building equitable, resilient, and just societies. It requires more than formal enrolment; it demands that education systems adapt to student diversity, remove barriers, and create environments where every child can participate, belong, and thrive. International frameworks and Palestinian policies alike emphasise non-discrimination, equity, and accessibility, highlighting the importance of flexible curricula, inclusive teaching practices, individualised support, and safe learning spaces.

In Palestine, achieving inclusion is challenged by structural, political, and economic barriers, including occupation-related restrictions, conflict, movement limitations, limited infrastructure, and insufficient resources. Children with disabilities and marginalised groups are disproportionately affected, underscoring the urgency of systemic reforms, targeted support, and community engagement. Teachers, school leaders, parents, and local communities play a crucial role in implementing inclusive practices and fostering dignity, participation, and learning for all students.

Inclusive education is not a peripheral reform but a systemic transformation that strengthens overall educational quality, supports social cohesion, reduces inequality, and enhances future economic and civic opportunities. Its success is measured by the extent to which the most vulnerable students are included and empowered. In this context, inclusive education in Palestine is both a legal obligation and a practical necessity. It ensures continuity of learning, protects the right to education in crisis and non-crisis settings, and prepares a generation that values diversity, equity, and human dignity.

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Chapter 3

Well-being as Pedagogical Resilience: Reframing Inclusive Education in Contexts of Protracted Crisis

Nihad Majeed Abu Irmeleh

1. Introduction: Reframing Well-being in Protracted Crisis

Over the past 2 decades, well-being has become a central concept in global educational discourse, particularly in the context of improving the quality of education and promoting the psychosocial wellness of all students.

As highlighted in the Introduction to this book, the scientific literature on education provision in emergency contexts indicates that schools in conflict-affected environments are not neutral learning spaces. Rather, their roles and functions are shaped by structural violence, instability, and restrictions on fundamental rights, which redefine concepts of security, belonging, and educational continuity (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020). In such contexts, student well-being should not be considered an outcome of psychological interventions or separate support programmes, but rather as a capacity to continue learning and to maintain meaning during ongoing coercive conditions. Moreover, protracted emergencies, such as those experienced in Jerusalem, impose cumulative psychological and social pressures while limiting schools' capacity to fulfil their traditional role as safe learning environments, thereby requiring a contextual reinterpretation of well-being (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2021).

Contemporary literature on education affirms that well-being in education is a complex concept that extends beyond the absence of psychological distress to encompass relational, educational, and cultural dimensions, such as a sense of be-

longing, the presence of supportive relationships within schools, and a sense of empowerment, participation, and meaning (Jiang et al., 2025; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019; UNESCO et al., 2025). This knowledge, however, has largely emerged from research conducted in relatively stable education systems, where schools are assumed to provide safe and predictable learning environments. Consequently, these studies only partially capture students' experiences in contexts of protracted conflict, where schooling unfolds amid chronic uncertainty, cumulative trauma, and everyday resilience. Against this backdrop, inclusive education acquires added importance: UNESCO indicates that inclusive education in crisis contexts contributes to fostering a sense of belonging and recognition, and plays a protective role in supporting the psychosocial well-being of students, provided that it is practised as a context-sensitive process and not as a formal organisational policy (UNESCO, 2020).

From this perspective, well-being is understood not solely as an individual psychological trait or a personal capacity for adaptation, but as a product of supportive educational relationships, inclusive educational practices, and context-sensitive school policies, all shaped within educational environments operating under prolonged emergencies. This Chapter, therefore, aims to reframe well-being within the context of inclusive education in Jerusalem as a resilient educational practice that seeks to maintain continuity of learning, meaning, and dignity, despite the structural constraints imposed on the educational process (Dryden-Peterson, 2016; UNICEF, 2021; World Health Organization [WHO], 2022).

2. Conceptualising Well-being in Education: From Psychological to Socio-Educational Perspectives

The concept of well-being has long been recognised as one of the most contested constructs within educational research. Although it is frequently invoked in educational policy and practice, there is little consensus regarding its conceptual boundaries, theoretical foundations, or the dimensions it should encompass. Rather than representing a single measurable outcome, well-being has been conceptualised through multiple disciplinary perspectives, including psychology, sociology, public health, and education, each emphasising different aspects of human functioning and educational experience.

WHO (2022) defines well-being as a dynamic, multidimensional state that enables individuals to realise their potential, cope with life's pressures, and participate effectively in society. This comprehensive definition has become widely

adopted within international educational policies and has contributed to establishing a shared operational framework for promoting well-being across education systems. However, it also implicitly assumes a minimum level of structural and social stability to enable individuals to exercise agency and engage meaningfully with their environment. Such an assumption becomes increasingly problematic in contexts of protracted emergency, where opportunities for students to realise their potential are profoundly constrained by coercive political, social, and environmental conditions that lie outside their control.

Within research on education, conceptualisations of well-being have progressively evolved from predominantly psychological perspectives, towards broader socio-educational understandings. Jiang et al. (2025) demonstrated that well-being is often used in studies as an umbrella concept encompassing psychological, social, and educational dimensions, without sufficient clarity regarding how these dimensions interact within the school environment. The authors underscore that the lack of conceptual precision not only impacts scientific research but also influences the design of educational policies, where ready-made models of well-being are transferred to different contexts without critical adaptation.

The psychological approach has traditionally dominated conceptualisations of well-being in school education, primarily through the measurement of individual indicators such as life satisfaction, emotional balance, resilience, and mental health outcomes (Frazier & Doyle Fosco, 2024; Suldo et al., 2016).

While this approach has practical value, it involves a conceptual reductionism that separates well-being from the educational and social structures that produce learning experiences. From this perspective, Ecclestone and Hayes (2019) claim that such separation leads to what some researchers have termed the ‘medicalisation of schooling’, where students’ struggles are viewed as individual problems requiring treatment rather than as consequences of unfair or stressful educational conditions. In this context, the researchers advocate for reintegrating well-being within the educational structure of the school, linking it to educational equity, participation, and the recognition of diversity as central to student well-being (Ben-Arieh et al., 2014).

A study by Noble et al. (2008) offers a broader approach, viewing well-being as a product of equitable educational relationships, supportive school climate, and participatory educational practices. It found that students’ sense of well-being is more closely linked to relationship quality within schools, as well as their sense of belonging and participation, than to individual psychological interventions alone. In line with this view, Dodge et al. (2012) discussed well-being as a fluctuating balance between an individual’s resources and the challenges they face,

emphasising that this balance is directly influenced by social, economic, and political contexts. This perspective is particularly relevant to education because it recognises that student well-being emerges from the interaction between personal resources and contextual conditions rather than from individual characteristics alone. Furthermore, the study by O'Connor et al. (2018) confirmed that programmes that integrate well-being into classroom practices and school policies achieve a more sustainable impact than separate intervention programmes.

The implications of this conceptual shift regarding well-being become particularly evident in contexts of protracted emergency. As anticipated, most contemporary frameworks of well-being in education have been developed within relatively stable education systems, limiting their ability to explain student experience in contexts affected by conflict or occupation (UNESCO, 2020).

The literature on education in crises further reinforces the idea that well-being at school cannot be separated from the nature of the educational environment, school policies, and prevailing educational relationships. Miller and Rasmussen (2010) demonstrated that psychological interventions in conflict contexts have limited impact unless they are accompanied by changes in the educational and social environment in which students are placed. Their findings confirm that well-being in fragile environments is built through supportive educational practices, flexible school organisation, and educational relationships based on trust and recognition, not through isolated psychological interventions.

Accordingly, the socio-educational perspective presented in this section positions well-being as a relational dimension of educational quality, embedded within everyday pedagogical practices and shaped by institutional, social, and contextual conditions. This conceptual shift provides the basis for re-examining the relationship between well-being and inclusive education. It questions the widespread assumption that well-being is merely an outcome of inclusive schooling and instead explores how well-being may constitute one of its essential preconditions.

3. Well-being and Inclusive Education: A Reciprocal Relationship

Having reconceptualised well-being as a relational and socio-educational construct, it becomes necessary to examine its relationship with inclusive education. Rather than representing separate educational agendas, the two concepts appear increasingly interconnected, although the nature of this relationship remains debated within the literature.

Several studies, such as Allen et al. (2018) and Boyle et al. (2023), show that

the relationship between inclusive education and school well-being is often presented as complementary, with well-being viewed as a potential positive outcome of implementing inclusion policies within schools. Numerous studies have linked inclusive learning environments to improved indicators of student psychosocial well-being, particularly through enhanced sense of belonging and social acceptance. While these findings are significant, this approach remains limited if well-being is reduced to an outcome of inclusive education, rather than a fundamental prerequisite for its effectiveness.

Conversely, critical perspectives on inclusive education argue that the absence of well-being, understood in its broadest social, emotional, and relational dimensions, fundamentally compromises the realisation of educational inclusion. Slee (2018) contends that inclusive education is emptied of its ethical and pedagogical meaning when enacted within learning environments that reproduce exclusion or neglect students' psychological and social experiences, even when formal or organisational conditions for inclusion are ostensibly in place. From this standpoint, inclusive education policies cannot be meaningfully detached from conditions of safety, belonging, and recognition, which together constitute the substantive foundation of inclusive educational practice.

This problem becomes even more pronounced in protracted emergency contexts, where the literature on education in conflict zones indicates that students affected by trauma and structural violence face significant barriers to engaging with inclusive learning environments unless well-being issues are addressed first. Dryden-Peterson (2016) demonstrated that education in conflict contexts cannot be truly inclusive if well-being is not considered a prerequisite for building trust, participation, and educational continuity.

UNESCO reports confirm that inclusive education in crisis contexts is not limited to ensuring access or academic adaptation, but also requires school environments that support psychosocial well-being and are capable of responding to the diverse needs of students in unstable conditions (UNESCO, 2020). UNICEF further indicates that the absence of well-being in schools affected by emergencies leads to higher dropout rates, lower participation, and a diminished sense of belonging, thus limiting the actual impact of inclusive education policies, however comprehensive they may be in theory (UNICEF, 2021).

Accordingly, this Chapter argues that well-being and inclusive education should be understood as mutually constitutive dimensions of educational quality rather than as separate or sequential processes. In contexts of protracted emergency such as Jerusalem, well-being should not be regarded simply as a desirable outcome of inclusive education, as it constitutes one of the essential conditions

that enables inclusive educational practices to emerge and be sustained. From this perspective, an inclusive school is not merely one that ensures access or academic participation, but one that preserves student dignity, nurtures supportive educational relationships, and adapts its pedagogical practices to the structural realities in which education takes place. Reconceptualising well-being in this way has important implications for future research, educational policy, teacher education, and the design of inclusive support systems, calling for context-sensitive approaches capable of responding to the complex realities of Palestine and other settings affected by protracted crisis.

The following Chapters build upon such a perspective by examining how these principles are challenged, negotiated, and enacted within the Palestinian educational context. Moving from theoretical reflection to empirical inquiry in the second section of this book, the conditions that shape inclusive educational processes in contexts of protracted emergency will be explored, providing evidence from schools in Jerusalem to illustrate how well-being, inclusion, and educational resilience are experienced and constructed in everyday practice.

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Chapter 4

Personalised Learning for Inclusive Education in Emergency Contexts: Pedagogical Pathways for Participation

Maisa' Issa Khalil Abu-Nimah

1. Introduction: Personalised Learning for Inclusive Education

This Chapter presents personalised learning as both a pedagogical philosophy and a practical framework that enables educators to respond to student diversity through flexible, student-centred approaches. Personalised learning recognises that students differ in their experiences, strengths, interests, readiness levels, and support needs, particularly in contexts affected by crisis and disruption. Within this framework, differentiated instruction serves as an important pedagogical strategy through which teachers can adapt content, learning processes, assessment opportunities, and learning environments to facilitate meaningful participation and engagement for all students. This Chapter also examines the systemic and contextual challenges associated with implementing personalised learning in emergency contexts. By grounding these discussions in the realities of crisis-affected educational settings, particularly within the Palestinian context, this Chapter demonstrates how personalised learning can contribute to educational justice by ensuring that learning remains accessible, inclusive, responsive, and empowering, even under conditions of profound adversity.

In emergency contexts, traditional standardised approaches to teaching often fail to address the diverse and evolving needs of students. Personalised learning offers an alternative framework that prioritises flexibility, participation, student well-being, and responsiveness to individual circumstances. By creating multiple pathways for engagement and learning, personalised approaches support students'

right to education while fostering inclusion, resilience, and a sense of belonging during times of uncertainty.

This Chapter lays the groundwork for a deeper investigation of personalisation as a key dimension of education, which will be explored in greater detail through the collaborative research presented in the following pages of this book. Through an examination of personalised learning, differentiated instruction, and the lived reality of education provision in Palestine during emergency, this Chapter explores how educators can sustain meaningful learning opportunities for all students, regardless of background, ability, or circumstance. By framing personalisation within this body of scholarship, this Chapter lays the groundwork for a deeper investigation of personalisation, as presented in the collaborative research illustrated in the second section of the book.

2. Differentiated Instruction as an Inclusive Pedagogical Strategy

Personalised learning recognises that students differ in their experiences, interests, readiness levels, cultural backgrounds, aspirations, learning preferences, and socio-emotional needs. As a student-centred approach, it seeks to create flexible pathways that enable students to actively participate in their own learning while fostering agency, engagement, well-being, and academic growth (Bray & McClaskey, 2015; Hargreaves, 2005). Rooted in constructivist theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1978), personalised learning views student diversity not as a challenge to be overcome but as a valuable resource that informs educational planning and decision-making. Rather than relying on standardised approaches, personalised learning emphasises responsiveness and the student's voice, choice, and meaningful participation, particularly in contexts characterised by diversity, uncertainty, and educational disruption.

Within this broader framework, differentiated instruction represents one of the most widely recognised pedagogical strategies for operationalising personalised learning in classroom practice (Tomlinson, 1999, 2017). Differentiation enables teachers to adapt instruction in response to students' varying readiness levels, interests, prior knowledge, learning profiles, and support needs (Eikeland & Ohna, 2022). By proactively responding to individual differences, differentiated instruction supports inclusive education principles and aligns with equity-oriented pedagogical approaches that advocate multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression (D'Intino & Wang, 2021).

Differentiation is a pedagogical approach deeply rooted in the recognition that

students vary in readiness, interests, prior knowledge, learning profiles, and socio-emotional needs. Drawing on constructivist theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1978), differentiation positions student diversity as a foundational resource for instructional design. It represents a shift from standardised, one-size-fits-all teaching to responsive, student-centred pedagogy, where instruction is continuously adapted to optimise learning opportunities for all students (Eikeland & Ohna, 2022; Tomlinson, 1999, 2017). Through its responsiveness to individual student needs, differentiation serves as a practical mechanism for enacting inclusive education principles while supporting equity-oriented approaches that provide diverse opportunities for engagement, representation, and expression (D’Intino & Wang, 2021).

Conceptually, differentiation encompasses both structural and instructional dimensions. Structural differentiation refers to system-level arrangements such as ability grouping, tracking, or streaming, historically justified by the premise that homogeneous groups allow better alignment of instruction with student readiness levels (Eikeland & Ohna, 2022; Merritt, 2023). However, longitudinal research demonstrates that rigid structural differentiation often perpetuates educational inequities, privileging students who already have access to resources while marginalising those at risk of exclusion (Oakes, 2005; Slavin, 1987, 1990). In contrast, instructional differentiation occurs within heterogeneous classrooms and emphasises adaptive teaching practices, grounded in formative assessment and continuous monitoring of students’ learning trajectories (Tomlinson, 1999, 2017). This distinction highlights that differentiation is a classroom tactic and a philosophy of teaching that foregrounds equity and student-centred decision-making.

Tomlinson (1999, 2017) identifies 4 interrelated dimensions through which differentiation can be enacted. Content differentiation involves varying what students learn and the resources through which they access knowledge, including adjusting text complexity, offering alternative conceptual representations, and using multimodal materials. This is consistent with cognitive load theory, which suggests that appropriately scaffolded materials support deeper understanding and prevent overload (Eikeland & Ohna, 2022). Process differentiation addresses how students engage with content, promoting diverse instructional strategies such as cooperative learning, inquiry-based exploration, hands-on experimentation, and scaffolded practice. By accommodating different learning pathways, process differentiation fosters student agency and metacognitive growth (Tomlinson, 2017). Product differentiation emphasises varied means of demonstrating understanding and aligning assessment with students’ strengths while maintaining

shared learning goals. Finally, learning environment differentiation cultivates an emotionally safe, flexible, and inclusive classroom climate, recognising that socio-emotional support and belonging are prerequisites for meaningful cognitive engagement (Blossing et al., 2014).

Figure 1 illustrates how differentiation can be implemented in classroom practice through 4 interrelated dimensions: content, process, product, and learning environment.



Figure 1. Differentiated Instruction in Emergency-affected Classrooms

While initially associated with gifted education, differentiation has evolved as a central principle of inclusive education, particularly in classrooms characterised by structural vulnerability, interrupted schooling, or resource constraints (D’Intino & Wang, 2021; Tomlinson, 2017). In these contexts, differentiation functions as a mechanism for educational justice, providing multiple pathways to learning without lowering expectations or segregating students. This approach aligns with rights-based and justice-oriented educational frameworks, demonstrating that equitable instructional design can counteract systemic exclusion (Benhammada & Meguellati, 2022).

Differentiation represents a dynamic, theoretically grounded, and equity-focused framework that functions across multiple levels of the education system. Its pedagogical significance lies in supporting responsive, inclusive, and just learning environments, particularly in contexts where standardised instructional models fail to address student diversity (D’Intino & Wang, 2021; Tomlinson, 1999, 2017). Beyond classroom settings, differentiation requires systemic integration, encompassing curriculum flexibility, assessment policy, institutional support, and

continuing professional development for educators (D’Intino & Wang, 2021; Tomlinson, 2017). From this viewpoint, differentiation transcends being merely a classroom technique and should be understood as a systemic principle that extends across curriculum design, assessment policy, institutional structures, and teacher professional development (D’Intino & Wang, 2021; Tomlinson, 2017).

In emergency and crisis-affected contexts, where student diversity is intensified by displacement, trauma, and unequal access, this systemic perspective ensures that differentiation operates as both a moral and practical principle. It allows educators to respond ethically to students’ needs, fostering inclusion and maintaining high expectations while adapting instruction to context-specific challenges (Eikeland & Ohna, 2022; Tomlinson, 2017).

3. Personalised Learning and Differentiation as Relational Pathways in Emergency Education

As highlighted in the previous Chapters that addressed the right to education and well-being, schools operating in crisis contexts are called upon to ensure meaningful participation, emotional safety, and continuity of learning pathways. In this respect, inclusive education in emergency contexts cannot be reduced to merely ensuring continuity of access to schooling or the reproduction of standardised instructional practices. Sustaining meaningful educational opportunities requires attention to participation, belonging, and learning continuity, even under conditions of disruption and uncertainty (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). As we will address in the second section of this book, the results of our research clearly indicate that inclusion is defined primarily by meaningful participation, emotional safety, and sustained engagement in learning. This understanding resonates strongly with differentiation as a framework that positions learning, well-being, and inclusion not as parallel or competing goals but as mutually constitutive processes (Eikeland & Ohna, 2022; Tomlinson, 2017). Differentiation, in this sense, operates simultaneously as a pedagogical, ethical, and psychosocial practice – one that enables teachers to respond holistically to students’ academic, emotional, and social needs in crisis-affected environments. This perspective also aligns closely with the principles of personalised learning, which emphasise the importance of recognising students as individuals with diverse strengths, experiences, interests, aspirations, and support needs (Bray & McClaskey, 2015; Hargreaves, 2005). In emergency contexts, personalised learning extends beyond academic adaptation to encompass student well-being, agency, and meaningful participation. Rather

than viewing students as passive recipients of instruction, personalised approaches seek to create flexible pathways through which they can engage with learning in ways that reflect their circumstances and capacities.

In the Palestinian context, the interplay between personalised learning and differentiated instruction becomes even more evident. Within the Including Jerusalem Project, the educational practices observed demonstrate that the very possibility of learning often depends on a school's capacity to negotiate, on a daily basis, the conditions necessary for access, continuity, and safety. The literature analysed in this Chapter anticipates our findings: namely, that in emergency-affected classrooms, personalised learning and differentiated instruction are far more than optional or supplemental educational approaches. Personalised learning provides the overarching framework through which educators can respond to student diversity, while differentiated instruction offers practical pathways for adapting teaching, learning, and assessment to students' varied needs, experiences, and circumstances.

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Chapter 5

Accessibility and Barriers to Inclusion in Contexts of Fragility: The Palestinian Experience of Perseverance and Hope

Maisa' Issa Khalil Abu-Nimah

1. Introduction: Understanding the Challenges of Protracted Crises

The Palestinian context presents significant problems within the prevailing education in emergencies (EiE) framework. Most of the literature assumes that the emergency is temporary – whether it is the result of natural disaster, a war that ends, or displacement that is resolved (Burde et al., 2017; Sinclair, 2002). For example, the INEE Minimum Standards framework (Qahir & Kirk, 2007), while comprehensive, is primarily designed for contexts where normalcy can be restored within a foreseeable timeframe. But what happens when the emergency lasts for several decades? When emergency conditions become the norm, what do we do? According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2010, p. 4), countries in protracted crisis are characterised by ‘long-lasting or recurring crises, both natural and human-induced, and limited capacity to respond’, often resulting from ‘armed conflict and natural disasters, often in combination with weak governance or public administration, scarce resources, unsustainable livelihoods systems and breakdown of local institutions’. The Palestinian situation clearly fits this definition. For decades, Palestinians have lived in a state of chronic instability, with restrictions on movement, limited access to resources, repeated security threats, and intermittent destruction of infrastructure.

The difference between prolonged crises and temporary crises is the cumulative impact of each type, as illustrated in Figure 1. A temporary crisis allows school systems to ‘pause’ and then ‘resume’ with subsequent compensatory ef-

forts. In contrast, cumulative educational gaps caused by repeated interruptions from a prolonged crisis make it difficult (perhaps impossible) for students to regain what they have lost (Burde et al., 2017). In addition, students lose not only educational content but also educational continuity, where each interruption breaks the thread of learning, making return more difficult, and erodes trust in the educational system, as schools are repeatedly closed. In this context, hope for the future diminishes, as education is associated with an implicit promise of a better future, which is then threatened by prolonged crisis. Any sense of childhood normalcy is eroded when accessing education becomes a daily challenge rather than a given right.

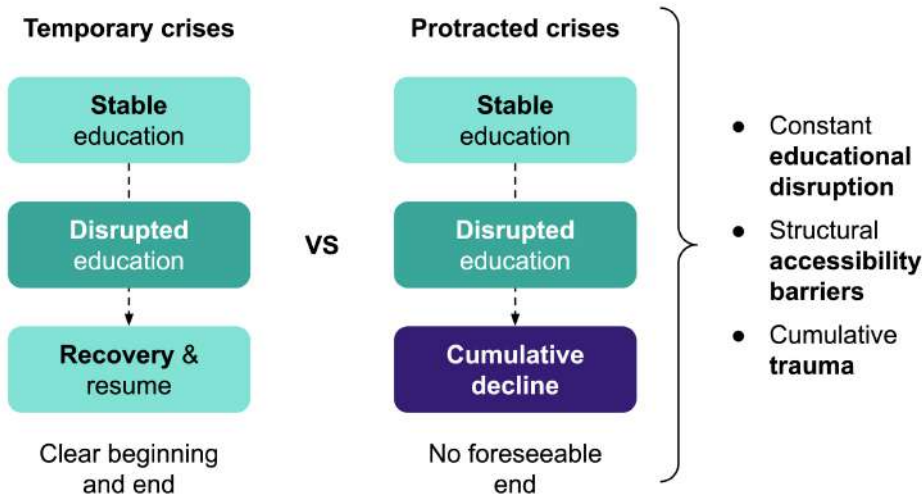


Figure 1. Comparison Between Temporary and Protracted Crises

In this sense, the intersectionality of fragility in crisis contexts makes inclusive education particularly complex and challenging. Children with disabilities in a crisis context face not only the challenges of disability but also those posed by the crisis, leading to compounded, interwoven difficulties (Humanity & Inclusion, 2025). For example, a child using a wheelchair in peacetime needs an accessible building; however, in times of crisis, accessible buildings may be destroyed. A child with an intellectual disability requires specialised support, but in a crisis there are no specialised teachers available because they have either died as a result of the crisis or are unable to reach their workplaces. A child with a sen-

sory disability needs special equipment, but in a crisis such equipment may be either lost or destroyed.

For decades, Palestinians have been continuously exposed to violent traumatic events, significantly impacting their psychological well-being (Bdier et al., 2025). Ongoing cumulative trauma continues to have an effect on the lives of Palestinians, especially on children. In such a context, each day has the potential to be perceived as a new traumatic event, because of a raid, an arrest, a demolition, or loss of life. The community does not envision there being a 'safe' period for recovery and so feels stuck in a constant state of alert. This impacts learning in several ways. Trauma can affect memory, concentration, and the ability to process new information (Perry & Szalavitz, 2007); chronic anxiety, fear, and despair make it difficult for students to participate in school activities; and trauma responses can cause students to display a variety of negative behaviours (e.g. irritability, aggression, and withdrawal) in the classroom setting. Lastly, it is also important to acknowledge the existential impact of protracted crisis, which is characterised by a loss of meaning and a feeling of absurdity: why learn if there is no future?

2. The Question of Accessibility in the Palestinian Context

Palestine's 2015 Inclusive Education Policy (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2015) represented an ambitious commitment to ensure that all children have access to quality education. However, the Palestinian Ministry encountered significant difficulties from the outset: limited resources, generalist teacher preparation, and inaccessible infrastructure. Then came successive crises: the COVID-19 pandemic and repeated security escalations, leading up to the present-day crisis, which has made the implementation of the 2015 Inclusive Education Policy remarkably difficult. Although inclusive education requires support from the school itself, it also requires an extensive support system that includes specialised support, family involvement, and community participation. As a result of the ongoing crisis in Palestine, this network is deteriorating. Local services, schools, and medical centres are closing or reducing service to part-time hours, while families who are living in a state of psychological distress for the safety of their children lack the energy to participate in education, and the local community is losing social cohesion.

The implementation of inclusive education in the Occupied Palestinian Territory results from the interaction of structural, political, economic, and socio-

cultural barriers. Rather than reflecting isolated shortcomings of the education system, these barriers are embedded within a protracted emergency characterised by military occupation, territorial fragmentation, economic instability, and institutional constraints, all of which undermine the realisation of the right to inclusive education (Al-Masri, 2021; MacKenzie et al., 2023).

One of the most widely documented barriers concerns the deterioration of educational infrastructure (Al-Masri, 2021; World Bank, 2016). Reports produced by international organisations describe a chronic shortage of school buildings, overcrowded classrooms, double-shift schooling, and inadequate educational facilities, particularly in East Jerusalem, Area C and the Gaza Strip (Education Cluster, 2020; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2020; UNICEF, 2018). Restrictions on urban planning, limitations on school construction, and recurrent damage to educational infrastructure have significantly reduced the capacity of schools to provide learning environments that are physically accessible to students. These structural limitations disproportionately affect students with disabilities, whose participation is further constrained by the absence of accessible buildings, adapted learning environments, and appropriate educational resources (Al-Masri, 2021; World Bank, 2016).

A second body of literature highlights barriers related to mobility and physical access to education (Al-Masri, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2019; OCHA, 2020). Checkpoints, road closures, the Wall, permit regimes, and restrictions on freedom of movement generate persistent disruptions to school attendance, continuity of learning, and access to specialised educational services. These restrictions affect not only students but also teachers, rehabilitation professionals, and support personnel, reducing the continuity of educational provision and limiting opportunities for multidisciplinary collaboration that are essential for inclusive education (Al-Masri, 2021; MacKenzie et al., 2023). The literature indicates that mobility restrictions can structurally compromise opportunities for equality, participation, and learning (MacKenzie et al., 2023).

The literature further documents significant barriers related to professional capacity. Several studies report that many teachers are insufficiently prepared to deliver inclusive education and disability-specific educational strategies (Al-Masri, 2021; Jaradat, 2014; Rodriguez & Dieker, 2018), and continuous professional development opportunities remain unevenly distributed. These limitations are exacerbated by the chronic pressures associated with teaching in contexts of protracted conflict, where educators operate under conditions of instability, resource scarcity, and repeated exposure to traumatic events (Al-Masri, 2021; MacKenzie et al., 2023).

Social and economic inequalities constitute another major dimension (UNICEF, 2018; World Bank, 2016). High levels of poverty, unemployment, and economic insecurity increase direct and indirect costs associated with schooling, including transportation, assistive devices, rehabilitation services, and educational materials (World Bank, 2016). These burdens are particularly pronounced for the families of children with disabilities, who often experience cumulative disadvantages resulting from disability-related expenses and reduced access to specialised services.

Alongside structural and economic constraints, researchers consistently identify socio-cultural barriers as significant obstacles to inclusive education. Studies conducted in both the West Bank and Gaza describe persistent disability-related stigma, discriminatory attitudes, and limited public awareness regarding the educational rights of persons with disabilities (Al-Masri, 2021; Jaradat, 2014; MacKenzie et al., 2023). These attitudes influence expectations of children's educational potential, contribute to social exclusion, and may discourage families from seeking educational services or advocating for inclusive schooling.

Lastly, another recurring theme concerns the limited availability of specialised educational resources. Numerous studies report shortages of assistive technologies, adapted curricula, accessible learning materials, specialised transportation, and rehabilitation services (Al-Masri, 2021; World Bank, 2016).

Overall, the literature suggests that barriers to inclusive education in Palestine should not be interpreted as isolated educational challenges but as interconnected manifestations of broader structural inequalities generated by prolonged conflict, occupation, and institutional fragility. Educational exclusion emerges from the cumulative interaction between physical inaccessibility, mobility restrictions, insufficient professional capacity, fragmented governance, socio-economic vulnerability, and persistent social stigma.

3. Overcoming Barriers: Research Perspectives for Inclusion

As outlined in the previous section, studies consistently identify structural, political, psychosocial, and institutional barriers as major obstacles to inclusive education in the Palestinian context. While this provides a comprehensive understanding of the systemic challenges, less attention has been devoted to exploring how these barriers are experienced by the different actors involved in everyday school life. Against this backdrop, lived experience is not anecdotal data that is to be set aside in favour of aggregated data. Rather, it unfolds the depth

and complexity of the Palestinian context, allowing researchers to collect perspectives that encompass processes of awareness, active citizenship, and advocacy.

In this direction, the following section will address and deepen insight into the lived experience of teachers, students, and parents as core witnesses to the Palestinian experience of protracted crisis. Educators encounter the challenges of this crisis in every overcrowded lesson, every unanswered request for resources, and every journey to and from school across checkpoints that were never designed to be part of a school day. What they ask for, implicitly, is to be heard – not as statistics, but as professionals whose expertise has been forged under conditions that most educational frameworks were never designed to account for. Students simply ask to learn without fear, to sit without discomfort, and to envision a future that is physically attainable. None of these ‘wants’ are unreasonable; they are the starting point of all meaningful education models. Lastly, parents and caregivers experience a unique kind of grief in the gap between what they would like to provide for their children and what they are able to provide due to circumstances. This gap is not a measure of their love or values – it represents the shape of a structural crisis as it reaches into the most intimate parts of family life.

The voices that will be presented in the following Chapters speak to patterns of unmet needs and systemic neglect, but they are also the voices of resilience, hope, and human endurance.

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Section II

The Field Research

Chapter 6

Research Premises and Aims

*Tommaso Santilli, Nihad Majeed Abu Irmeleh,
Maisa' Issa Khalil Abu-Nimah, Shaima' Abdalkareem Ali, Ilaria D'Angelo,
Sawsan Victor Istephan, Buad Khales, Arianna Taddei*

1. Foreword

This section discusses the field research carried out within the Including Jerusalem Project. As outlined in the Introduction to this volume, and as evident from the contributions presented in the previous sections, the inter-university collaboration that gave rise to the Project takes place within a territorial context characterised by the intersection of multiple geographical, political, and cultural barriers, which have a profound impact on the well-being and Quality of Life (Giaconi, 2015; Schalock & Verdugo Alonso, 2002, 2006) of local communities.

The Occupied Palestinian Territory, comprising the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, is marked by profound political and administrative fragmentation that significantly influences the social, relational, and educational dynamics of the resident population (Abu-Nimah et al., 2025; Pacetti et al., 2024; Taddei et al., 2025; Taddei & Pacetti, 2018). These divisions have created a systemic separation that restricts freedom of movement, limits access to essential services, and affects the daily lives and social cohesion of Palestinian communities, shaping a constantly evolving geography of barriers (MacKenzie et al., 2020; Moghli, 2024). In this context, implementing inclusive education involves a closer examination of the material and immaterial factors that influence opportunities for participation and the Quality of Life of affected communities (Giaconi & Del Bianco, 2025). As outlined in the previous Chapters, physical barriers and political restrictions directly impact access to education and the continuity of educational pathways. In particular, mobility restrictions – e.g. checkpoints, roadblocks, and separation in-

frastructure – not only hinder daily school commutes but also undermine the construction and maintenance of stable and cohesive educational communities (MacKenzie et al., 2020; Miaari & Lee, 2024; Samman, 2020).

Exacerbating these difficulties is the impact of the ongoing Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which further destabilises the education system and undermines its ability to ensure continuity and security. Frequent disruptions to teaching, together with organisational and interpersonal difficulties, affect teaching quality, learning processes, and relationship stability between students, teachers, and families. Schools thus find themselves operating under intense structural and social pressures, and are called upon to extend their functions beyond mere teaching to address social and community care amid instability (OECD, 2024; Pacetti et al., 2024).

As highlighted in Chapter 2, the right to education must be interpreted as a fundamental human right. This is realised through 4 closely interlinked dimensions: availability of educational services, accessibility, quality of learning experience, and the education system's adaptive capacity in response to students' needs and contextual challenges (Tomaševski, 2001). From this perspective, an inclusive approach to teaching and education represents a paradigm through which these dimensions can be effectively pursued, promoting the removal of barriers to participation, the valorisation of diversity, and the transformation of school cultures, policies, and practices (Ainscow, 2020; UNESCO, 2005). Indeed, such a pedagogical approach makes it possible to translate the principle of equity into flexible teaching practices, allowing for the recognition of and response to discontinuities in students' educational pathways, varying resource availability, and challenging socio-emotional circumstances. As Khaless highlights (see Chapter 1 of this volume), inclusive education takes on a profoundly transformative role, acting as a tool to safeguard the right to education and rebuild safe learning environments in conditions of prolonged emergency. This involves deliberate efforts to enhance the relational and community-based aspects of the school, with a view to supporting the well-being and participation of community members. From this perspective, the empowerment of teachers, students, and families is a guiding principle by which schools can develop resilience and continue to fulfil their educational mandate despite constraints imposed by the context. For this to be possible, however, the right to education must be viewed not as an abstract principle, but as a fundamental human right that must be effectively implemented even in the most vulnerable contexts, guiding the design of education systems that are genuinely accessible, equitable, and capable of meeting students' needs.

2. Research Objectives and Research Questions

In light of the above, the inter-university collaborative research conducted within the framework of the Including Jerusalem Project, carried out by the University of Macerata in partnership with Al-Quds University, was designed to investigate existing pedagogical practices and the ways in which schools, families, and local communities collaborate to sustain inclusive education in contexts affected by protracted conflict.

The aim is not merely to describe the effects of the crisis on educational processes, but to understand how schools, teachers, families, and local communities strive to preserve continuity of learning, while fostering participation and inclusion, despite the profound constraints imposed by the context. In doing so, the study seeks to identify the relational, pedagogical, and organisational resources that enable educational systems to remain responsive to students' needs, even under conditions of protracted adversity. By examining both enabling factors and persistent barriers, the Project aims to generate evidence capable of informing context-sensitive educational policies and practices. Ultimately, the findings are intended to support the development of highly contextualised and transformative educational processes responsive to specific local educational settings, fostering equity, active citizenship, social cohesion, and social justice while strengthening inclusive educational pathways for all students (INEE, 2010, 2018; Taddei, 2010, 2021).

To this end, as discussed in the following chapter, the study adopts a participatory approach aimed at recognising and valuing the practices, knowledge, and resources developed by educational communities. These are understood as essential foundations for informing the design of transformative educational processes that are deeply contextualised and responsive to the specific characteristics of local settings, while promoting equity, active citizenship, and social justice (Taddei, 2010; Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies, 2018; Taddei, 2021).

Consistent with these objectives, the study adopts the Palestinian educational ecosystem as its unit of analysis and considers the institutional, pedagogical, and community dimensions that collectively shape school life. The research design encompasses multiple educational stakeholders – including school principals, general education teachers, specialist education teachers, students of varying educational levels and socio-cultural backgrounds, and their families – recognising that each contributes to inclusive educational practice. The sampling strategy was designed to capture the diversity of educational experience across participating

schools, ensuring variation in educational pathways, the inclusion of students with diverse educational needs, and a balanced gender distribution.

The study was designed around a set of research questions that reflect the main theoretical dimensions discussed throughout this volume. Building on a collaborative research process, the Italian and Palestinian research teams jointly identified the following research questions:

- RQ1: *What are the practices realised by the community in emergency situations to guarantee equal learning opportunities?*
- RQ2: *What does the right to education mean in these situations?*
- RQ3: *What does inclusion mean in these situations?*
- RQ4: *How is well-being addressed in these situations?*
- RQ5: *Which competences are strategic for teachers in emergency situations?*

Collectively, these research questions investigate relevant dimensions underpinning inclusive education in emergency contexts. Specifically, they examine the following: educational practices adopted by school communities; meanings attributed to the right to education, inclusion, and well-being; and professional competences considered essential for teachers working in contexts characterised by protracted conflict and disruption to education. This design follows a progressive analytical logic, moving from identifying practices implemented by key stakeholders to exploring their perspectives, interpretations, and understandings of the study's core themes. Finally, the inquiry focuses on identifying the strategic competences and resources necessary to support teachers and schools to respond effectively to the challenges of education provision in emergency contexts and to foster inclusive and resilient educational systems.

Building on these premises and research objectives, the following Chapters present the study's methodological framework, the research instruments employed, the data analysis procedures, and the discussion of the obtained findings.

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Chapter 7

Research Methodology

*Ilaria D'Angelo, Maisa' Issa Khalil Abu-Nimah, Shaima' Abdalkareem Ali,
Sawsan Victor Istephan, Buad Khales, Tommaso Santilli, Arianna Taddei,
Nihad Majeed Abu Irmeleh*

1. Research Approach

The research employs a participatory approach (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995) within a mixed-methods study design (Creswell, 2021). The choice of this methodological framework is consistent with the Project's objectives, as described in previous Chapters, and serves the research process, as will be explored in greater detail in this Chapter.

From this perspective, the individuals and groups involved are regarded as active protagonists and agents of change, capable of critically reflecting on their own circumstances and of devising solutions and perspectives aimed at increasing participation in various areas of life (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). The participatory approach is premised on a recognition of the situated knowledge and lived experiences of the participants as key resources in the research processes within the intervention context (Del Bianco et al., 2024; Giaconi et al., 2024; Sarmiento-Pelayo, 2015; Shogren & Raley, 2022). The participatory approach values the priorities, processes, and perspectives expressed by stakeholders (May, 2024), enabling the generation of situated and meaningful knowledge that is useful both for understanding the phenomenon under investigation and for defining strategies and interventions aimed at producing transformative and generative actions (Del Bianco et al., 2024; Giaconi & Del Bianco, 2025; Giaconi et al., 2024; Israel et al., 2010; Shogren & Raley, 2022). Consequently, the participatory approach is particularly well-suited to investigating inequalities and forms of exclusion, as it creates a safe and empowering space where communities can identify key issues

and devise solutions, thereby enhancing the effectiveness, sustainability, and appropriateness of interventions, as well as their quality and social impact (Afifi et al., 2020; Ellis et al., 2007; Giaconi et al., 2024; Lykes, 2013).

In line with these guidelines, the Including Jerusalem Project was developed by adopting, in particular, a co-design approach, understood here as a ‘process of joint inquiry and imagination’ aimed at ‘jointly bringing about positive change’ (Steen, 2013, pp. 27–28). As will be explored in greater detail in the following sections, the co-design activities within the Including Jerusalem Project involved researchers and doctoral students from the University of Macerata (Italy) and Al-Quds University (Palestine), and thus occurred within a framework of international cooperation. The co-design activities also occurred within a framework of research capacity building (Biesta et al., 2011; Rees et al., 2007), thereby fostering active participation and shared responsibility for the Project during all research stages. This has enabled a generative dialogue to be established amongst researchers, which has fostered processes of professional empowerment and advocacy (Del Bianco, 2019; May, 2024). This research approach values project-based dialogue as a fundamental resource in the development of innovative solutions that are better suited to meet the needs of the context (Giaconi & Del Bianco, 2025; Giaconi et al., 2019; Sarmiento-Pelayo, 2015). In light of this, the following sections will present the research design in detail, along with its structure across the various operational phases.

2. Research Design and Phases

The research design of the Including Jerusalem Project was structured in accordance with the specific epistemological and methodological framework that characterises the Project.

Within this framework, the adoption of a mixed-methods design is consistent with the participatory and co-design approaches outlined above. The integration of qualitative and quantitative tools allows for a more comprehensive and appropriate response to the complexity of the context under investigation, providing an analysis that is capable both of highlighting the interpretative depth of lived experiences and of identifying recurring and quantifiable trends or patterns (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Fetter et al., 2013). This research design is particularly well-suited to contexts characterised by vulnerability and inequalities, where the complexity of the phenomena under investigation requires methods capable of providing an understanding that is as comprehensive, situated

and action-oriented as possible. More specifically, the research design is structured as a progressive and interconnected framework, divided into 3 main macro-phases that reflect the participatory and co-designed nature of the study (Figure 1). Taken together, these phases constitute an iterative and participatory research process, the structure and respective stages of which will be explored in greater detail in the following sub-sections.



Figure 1. Research Timeline

2.1 Phase 1

As elaborated previously by Abu-Nimah et al. (2025), the team from the University of Macerata organised a collaborative workshop, involving researchers and doctoral students from Al-Quds University, aimed at methodological alignment and the joint development of the research framework. The collaborative workshop aimed to identify and share the epistemological and methodological frameworks necessary to define the research objectives, stages of fieldwork, and data collection tools.

In this initial phase, the research team from the University of Macerata and Al-Quds University validated the research questions that would subsequently guide the field study, focusing on the key dimensions of education, inclusion, and well-being in emergency contexts. As outlined in the previous Chapter, the research questions aimed to investigate the practices adopted by communities to ensure equal educational opportunities during crises; the definition of the right to education in such contexts; how the concept of inclusion is understood; the strategies used to address well-being; and the skills considered essential for teachers working in emergencies.

Secondly, the methodological framework of the research and the related operational stages of data collection and analysis were defined. The decision to adopt a mixed-methods design was made with 4 doctoral students from Al-Quds University, who were also members of the research team involved in fieldwork and responsible for data collection.

The collaborative workshop activities also enabled the research team to define

the research participant sample based on the various target groups already identified by the Project. As outlined in the previous Chapter, this study focuses on the Palestinian school environment as a whole, encompassing the institutional, pedagogical, and community dimensions of education within crisis contexts. To this end, the research involved Palestinian school leaders; core teaching staff; specialist teachers; students of diverse academic levels, genders, and social backgrounds; and their families, who represent a critical dimension for understanding the broader educational ecosystem. Selection criteria were designed to ensure balanced representation, including variability in academic achievement, inclusion of children with diverse needs, and equitable gender representation.

In particular, the selection of schools participating in the field research represented a crucial stage in the co-design and methodological planning process. This process required successive adjustments in response to government restrictions progressively introduced in relation to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, making it necessary to adapt the sampling strategies and operational procedures. The outcome of this process led to the definition of a final sample comprising a total of 20 schools – 15 state schools and 5 private schools – with 20 school representatives identified (1 for each school). Specifically, the 20 schools are located in the Jerusalem Governorate, comprising 15 public schools affiliated with the Palestinian Ministry of Education and the Islamic Waqf, and 5 private schools. Of the public schools, 12 were situated inside the Wall, distributed across Beit Hanina, Nabi Samuel, Sur Baher, Wadi al-Joz, and Sharafat, while 3 schools were located outside the Wall in al-Ram and al-‘Eizariya. The private school sample included 4 schools located inside the Wall (3 in Beit Hanina and 1 in Ras al-Amud) and 1 school outside the Wall (in al-Ram). The study participants – comprising teachers, students, and families – belong to the schools selected for the research sample. The specific participant selection criteria for each target group will be presented in the following Chapter.

Based on an assessment of the research sample and the feasibility of the operational procedures within the context of the study, a methodological strategy was defined aimed at simultaneously ensuring the feasibility of field research activities, stakeholder participation, and the production of meaningful, high-quality data.

Subsequently, the survey instruments were developed based on the definition of indicators capable of specifying the Project’s objectives, as illustrated in Table 1. This process will be examined in greater detail in the next Chapter, which is dedicated to the presentation of the survey instruments.

The combined use of several data collection tools for each target group made it possible to gather both comparable information on educational and family cir-

cumstances, and qualitative insights into the experiences, needs, and strategies adopted to support inclusive educational and teaching pathways in a context characterised by vulnerability and instability.

Table 1. Research Tools

Target Group	Research Tools
School leadership and teachers	Focus group (conducted via Zoom); and questionnaire (via Google Forms)
Students	Mixed tool including questionnaire, interview questions, and drawing activities.
Students' families	Semi-structured interview (conducted via Zoom); and questionnaire (via Google Forms)

2.1.1 Collaborative Workshop

The collaborative workshop was a central part of the Project's methodology, providing a shared space to generate knowledge, reflect together, and jointly design the research process. The workshop was not an isolated consultation event or a technical team meeting. Instead, it was embedded within a broader participatory research framework that recognised the value of the different forms of expertise researchers and doctoral students brought to the Project.

From the earliest stages of the Project, the activities carried out during the workshop represented key milestones in the development of the research design, providing an important forum for dialogue that enabled collective reflection aimed at negotiating shared meanings and fostering alignment between the two research teams. Rather than relying on predefined research frameworks, the workshop was designed so that research objectives, methodological choices, and data collection strategies developed gradually through group discussion and critical reflection. The meetings arranged within the workshop provided opportunities to examine existing assumptions, discuss contextual challenges, and identify shared research priorities. Within this framework, the workshop helped ensure the contextual relevance of the study by keeping it closely connected to the experiences of Palestinian schools and communities, while maintaining coherence with the most widely recognised international theoretical frameworks on inclusive education.

The collaborative workshop consisted of 4 online sessions, each lasting 3 hours,

for a total of 12 hours. Table 2 outlines its structure and main topics, while Figure 2 illustrates a sample of the workshop slides.

Table 2. Collaborative Workshop Structure and Contents

Session	Title	Topic
Day 1 17 February 2025	Research design, process and team building	General presentation and introduction, to start establishing meaningful connections and envision a common perspective on the Project.
Day 2 18 February 2025	Data collection: methods and tools (Part 1)	Focus on methodological aspects (approaches and data collection tools) to collectively reflect upon the most suitable approaches and tools for the research. Drafting of the research tools.
Day 3 19 February 2025	Data collection: methods and tools (Part 2)	Focus on methodological aspects (approaches and data collection tools) to collectively reflect upon the most suitable approaches and tools for the research. Drafting of the research tools.
Day 4 24 February 2025	Data analysis: methods and tools	Focus on methodological aspects (approaches and data analysis tools) to collectively reflect upon the most suitable approaches and tools for the research.
	Debriefing, feedback and next steps	Closing on the workshop, briefing on the state of the work, collection of feedback and planning of future steps.

From a methodological perspective, the workshop functioned as a research capacity-building opportunity (Rees et al., 2007; Biesta et al., 2011), helping to build the professional expertise, resources, and conditions needed to carry out the research in a collaborative and participatory manner. Continuous interaction between the Italian and Palestinian partners promoted an intercultural dialogue that enriched the research process and supported the co-construction of situated knowledge. Through collective reflection, the research team was able to critically examine its own assumptions, negotiate shared meanings, and jointly identify solutions to emerging challenges. In this sense, the workshop contributed not only to knowledge generation but also to strengthening both research teams’ sense of ownership of the Project (Schön, 2017).




Workshop Day 1

Research Design, Process and Team Building




Workshop Day 2

Data collection: methods and tools (I)




Workshop Day 3

Data collection: methods and tools (II)




Workshop Day 4

Data Analysis: methods and tools Debriefing, feedback and next steps

Introducing ourselves



A map of possible tools



Choosing the tools, sample and timing:

Please answer from 2021 data's perspective

	Students	Teachers	Families
Semi-structured interview	Yes Number: XX		Yes Number: XX
Focus Groups		Yes Number: XX	
Questionnaire	Yes Number: XX	Yes Number: XX	Yes Number: XX
Direct observation / Audiovisual	Yes (according to teachers) Number: XX		

Working across the targets

Key trajectories:

- Allowing for **triangulation** (e.g., comparing and integrating different perspectives on same topics)
- Detecting **specificities** (e.g., operating the right adaptations and solutions for each target)
- Maintaining the **bigger picture** (e.g., structuring tools for complementarity)



Figure 2. Sample of Slides From the Workshop

The use of digital workshop notebooks was significantly helpful in this process. The digital notebooks were developed using Google Slides and employed as both reflective and documentation tools throughout the entire workshop series. Each team member was provided with a personal copy of the notebook, which was used to record observations, add virtual sticky notes, insert comments, and document the co-design process. These notebooks enabled participants to capture the most meaningful insights emerging during the workshop sessions, as well as the professional and personal reflections that developed following the co-design activities. Beyond their documentation function, the notebooks constituted a valuable qualitative data source, enabling the entire research team to reconstruct the evolution of ideas, identify recurring themes, and monitor the progressive refinement of methodological decisions. In this sense, the workshop notebooks document moments of negotiation, uncertainty, and reinterpretation, thereby providing a richer understanding of the collaborative processes through which the research design was co-developed. Figure 3 illustrates an extract from the workshop notebook of a member of the research team.

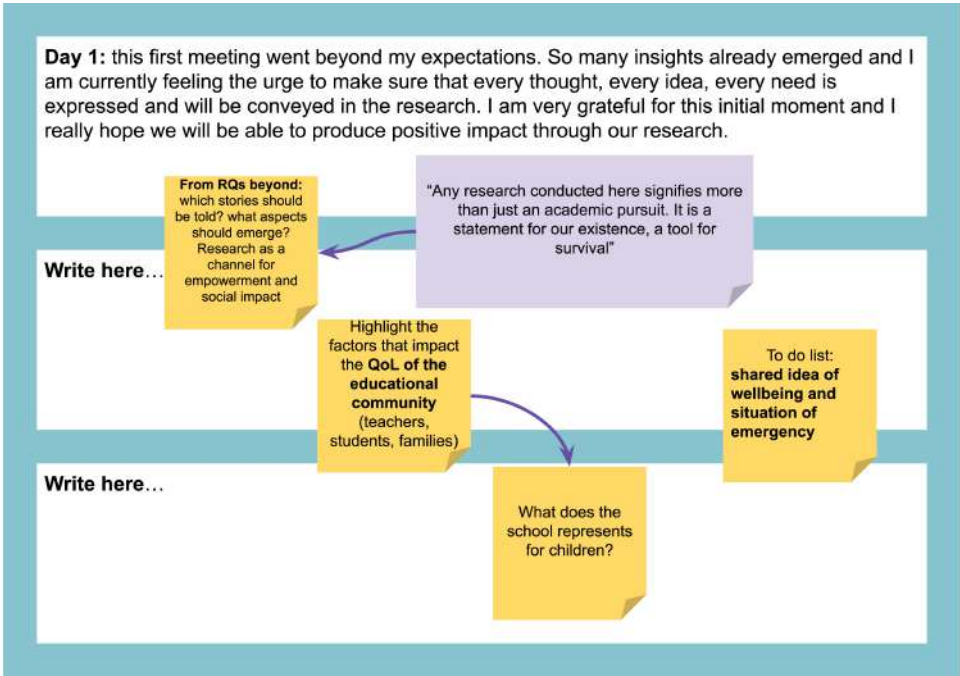


Figure 3. Workshop Notebook Extract

2.2 Phase 2

The second phase of the research was devoted to conducting fieldwork and collecting data in line with the methodological framework defined during the workshop. Four doctoral students from Al-Quds University were actively involved in coordinating the data collection activities, taking responsibility for specific work units. Each doctoral student was assigned 5 of the schools in the sample, with the task of supervising the entire data collection process, predominantly remotely. The allocation of schools took place, where possible, by taking into account the researchers' local origins and any existing professional relationships with certain schools, in order to facilitate travel, communication and the coordination of activities as much as possible. This approach proved particularly important in light of the restrictions on mobility imposed by the conflict, which made it necessary to rely entirely on remote working methods.

As previously mentioned, a Project Liaison Officer was appointed for each school. This person acted as a liaison between the research team and the school community, taking charge of distributing the resources intended for teachers and students. Teachers completed the questionnaires independently and assisted in carrying out the data collection activities with students, in accordance with the guidelines previously shared with the research team. At the same time, the doctoral students liaised with families and collected data relating to the extra-curricular dimension, encouraging the participation of families interested in taking part in the research. This organisational approach made it possible to integrate the school perspective with that of the family, ensuring, as discussed below, a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of educational practices and the conditions for inclusion and well-being within the research context.

The doctoral students were also responsible for archiving and organising the data produced within their own work unit, ensuring compliance with the agreed procedures for data management and contributing to the creation of a database for subsequent stages of analysis.

2.3 Phase 3

The mixed-methods design adopted for this study required the integration of qualitative and quantitative data to develop a comprehensive understanding of educational processes, inclusive practices, and well-being within the investigated context. More specifically, the study employed a Convergent Parallel Design

(Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Accordingly, quantitative and qualitative data were initially analysed separately and subsequently integrated during the final interpretative phase through a triangulation strategy (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023; Fetters et al., 2013).

The quantitative analysis focused on describing the characteristics of the sample and exploring the main patterns emerging from the questionnaire data. To this end, descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted to identify frequencies, distributions, and recurring patterns that helped contextualise and support the qualitative findings (Siedlecki, 2020).

In contrast, the qualitative analysis focused on identifying the meanings that participants attributed to their experiences in relation to the study's main research topics. To this end, Thematic Analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017) was employed to identify meaning units, recurring themes, and emerging conceptual categories. This process enabled the organisation and synthesis of large volumes of qualitative data into progressively more refined interpretative categories, providing deeper insights into the underlying assumptions, practices, and lived experiences reported by participants.

The integration of the different data sources represented the final stage of the research design and was carried out through triangulation procedures. Consistent with the Convergent Parallel Design, this phase involved the systematic comparison of findings derived from the qualitative and quantitative analyses in order to identify areas of convergence, divergence, and complementarity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Fetters et al., 2013). The entire analytical process was conducted collaboratively by the research team through ongoing discussion and the joint validation of findings. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9, this integrative process enabled the perspectives of the different stakeholder groups – school leaders, teachers, students, and families – to be brought together, combining evidence from a range of research methods. This strengthened both the robustness and the interpretative credibility of the overall findings. Consistent with the participatory orientation of the study, the purpose was not simply to describe the phenomenon under investigation but to develop shared interpretations capable of informing recommendations and strategies to enhance educational and inclusive practices in crisis-affected contexts.

3. Field Research: Between Challenges and Opportunities

The field research represented a crucial stage in testing the methodological and participatory choices developed during the co-design process, requiring continuous adaptation to the characteristics of the research context, characterised by instability, logistical constraints, and restrictions on mobility. Within this framework, the validation of the research instruments, the organisation of coordination meetings, and the implementation of data collection required ongoing adjustments to ensure both feasibility and methodological rigour.

Among the main operational challenges was the limited possibility of conducting face-to-face activities, which led the research team to organise several meetings and interview sessions via Zoom. Although this reduced opportunities for direct interaction and engagement, it enabled continuity of the research process under changing contextual conditions. Similarly, reaching the selected schools required careful logistical planning. Particular attention was given to the fact that many participating schools were located in areas on the outskirts of Jerusalem that required researchers to obtain special access permits. To mitigate these constraints, interviews with teachers, families, and school principals were conducted online while the research team simultaneously finalised the development and contextual validation of the research instruments.

At the same time, the fieldwork highlighted a number of enabling factors that supported the implementation of the study. The collaboration among members of the Italian and Palestinian research teams facilitated the sharing of expertise and the joint resolution of emerging issues. The research process was further supported by careful attention to ethical and organisational aspects, including informed consent procedures, confidentiality safeguards, and respectful engagement with teachers, families, school leaders, and other stakeholders. The adoption of online communication tools and shared digital environments not only addressed practical constraints, but also facilitated continuous coordination, monitoring, and documentation of Project activities.

More broadly, the field experience represented an opportunity for reciprocal learning and methodological development. In particular, the intercultural dialogue between the Italian and Palestinian research teams fostered an iterative and participatory process through which theoretical principles were continuously discussed and interpreted in relation to the local context (Steen, 2013; Taddei et al., 2025).

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Chapter 8

Research Tools

Shaima' Abdalkareem Ali, Sawsan Victor Istephan, Nihad Majeed Abu Irmeleh, Maisa' Issa Khalil Abu-Nimah, Arianna Taddei, Ilaria D'Angelo, Buad Khales, Tommaso Santilli, Fatin Jubeh

1. Research Tools Overview

The research tools were developed in line with the mixed-methods approach adopted in the study, as outlined in Chapter 7. This approach guided the design of an integrated system of tools – comprising structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and expressive activities – which were devised for parents, students, and teachers. The development of the tools was guided by a shared theoretical framework, informed by 3 complementary theoretical sources.

The first is the *Palestinian Inclusive Education Policy*, drawn up by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE), which interprets inclusive education as a transformative process applicable to the entire education system, aimed at ensuring access, participation, and educational success for all students, through flexible learning environments that are responsive to the needs of every student (MOEHE, 2015). The second reference is the *Minimum Standards for Education*, drawn up by the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), which defines education provision in emergencies as a fundamental right, emphasising the role of education in ensuring continuity of learning, physical and psychosocial protection, and resilience during crises (INEE, 2010, 2018). The third source is the framework developed by the *Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning* (CASEL), which identifies social and emotional learning as an essential element in fostering personal, interpersonal, and ethical skills that contribute to well-being and engagement at school (CASEL, 2013).

This conceptual framework guided the development of the entire data collection phase. Whilst the type of instrument that was used varied according to participant type and specific data collection method, all instruments were designed to explore the main aspects of inclusive education in emergency contexts. These aspects were organised into 5 key dimensions, which had been previously determined during the collaborative research workshops: *Empowerment*, *Right to Education*, *Inclusion*, *Well-being*, and *Teacher Strategies*. Each dimension was designed to capture the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers, whilst ensuring comparability of results. The international research team progressively defined and refined the structure, content, and wording of the items, whilst consistently referring back to the research objectives and the relevant theoretical constructs. The entire process of developing the research instruments – from defining the research questions to constructing the items and disseminating the data collection tools – is summarised below in Figure 1.

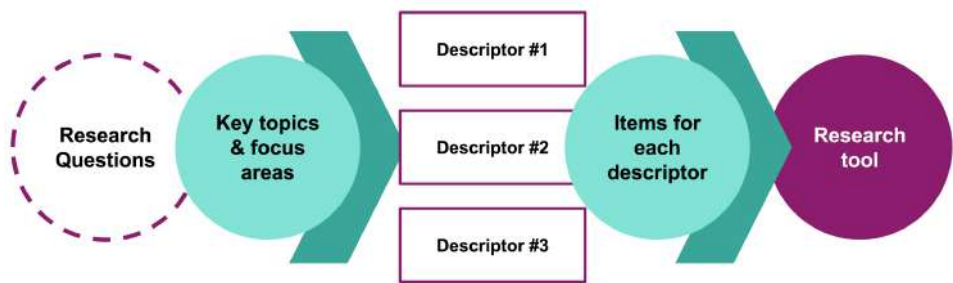


Figure 1. Research Instrument Development Process

Particular attention was paid to the accessibility and consistency of the tools, maintaining methodological alignment while adapting for participant ages, administration methods, and the specific educational context. Simultaneously, the research team engaged in ongoing consultation with MOEHE, to verify that the instruments were congruent with the priorities of the national education system and to define the operational procedures for data collection.

The validity and reliability of the data collection framework were ensured through a systematic process of review and refinement. Following an initial development phase, all instruments were submitted to experts in inclusive education, pedagogy, research methodology, and curriculum and instruction, who evaluated them for structure, clarity, consistency with study objectives, and cultural appropriateness for the Palestinian context. Each expert consulted holds the

rank of Full Professor in their respective field, has published research on inclusive education or education more broadly, and agreed to serve as an expert evaluator of the instruments. Their assessment and feedback subsequently led to revisions of the instruments, which were further refined through a second validation round following consultation with the MOEHE. This iterative process of design, critical review, and refinement helped to strengthen the validity of instrument content, the reliability of the data collection procedures, the methodological rigour of the survey, and the overall quality of the data collected.

All instruments were administered in accordance with agreed procedures, designed to ensure compliance with ethical research principles and the protection of participants, and subject to informed consent. Prior to data collection, participants were informed of the aims of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, and participants were informed that the data would be used exclusively for scientific purposes. For the student instruments, interviews were conducted and recorded only where consent had been obtained from a parent or legal guardian.

2. Tools

The research tools developed for the 3 groups of participants involved in the study – teachers, students (male and female), and parents – are presented below. For each group, every data collection tool used will be described, along with its structure, purpose, and specific characteristics in relation to the research objectives.

2.1 Teacher Tools

To ascertain the views of teachers in Grades 1 to 4 of primary schools in the Jerusalem Governorate, a structured questionnaire and focus groups were used, comprising a qualitative–quantitative approach. Both tools were designed to explore teacher perceptions and practices of inclusive education in emergencies, focusing on equal learning opportunities, the right to education, student well-being, and strategies for ensuring continuity of learning in crisis contexts. Both tools included an introductory section dedicated to collecting key personal and professional details of participants (see Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic Information

Years of Experience	< 5 years; 5–10 years; > 10 years
Qualification	Diploma; Bachelor degree; Masters; Doctorate (PhD)
Discipline	Math; Science; Classroom teacher; Arabic Language; English Language; Social sciences
Age	< 30 years old; 30–45 years old; > 45 years old
Gender	Male; Female

2.1.1 Questionnaire

The reliability of the quantitative instrument was assessed by calculating Cronbach’s coefficient of internal consistency, which yielded a value of $\alpha = 0.908$, indicating a high overall reliability of the instrument. The questionnaire consists of 25 items, to which teachers responded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from ‘Strongly Disagree (1)’ to ‘Strongly Agree (5)’. A three-level interpretation scale was used to categorise respondents’ mean scores: Low (1.00–2.33), Moderate (2.34–3.66), and High (3.67–5.00).

The items were organised into 5 dimensions. The first dimension, *Empowerment*, explores teachers’ approaches to teaching in emergency situations, the professional and community support teachers receive, difficulties encountered in ensuring equal learning opportunities, and student engagement. The second dimension, *Right to Education*, analyses strategies to ensure the continuity of the right to education, taking into account access to teaching materials, technology use, resource availability, and monitoring of student absenteeism. The third dimension, *Inclusion*, examines resource availability, school administrative support, family collaboration, professional development opportunities, and teachers’ capacity to address student needs. The fourth dimension, *Well-being*, considers the school’s role in promoting student well-being in emergency situations, with particular attention given to resource availability, psychological and social support, family collaboration, and the suitability of school premises. The final dimension, *Teacher Strategies*, examines the teaching methodologies adopted by teachers, with reference to the use of digital technologies, differentiated instruction, activity organisation, and the design of interventions aimed at encouraging student participation, particularly in emergency contexts. Table 2 shows the final questionnaire.

Table 2. Teacher Questionnaire

Aspects	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Empowerment					
I apply different methods of teaching that consider the difficulty of the situation for my students.					
I receive professional training support for teaching during emergencies.					
I receive community support (e.g. from parents, school administration) for teaching during emergencies.					
I face difficulties in offering equal learning opportunities for students during emergencies.					
I observe positive engagement from my students when trying to maintain continuity of learning during emergencies.					
Right to Education					
I provide equal educational opportunities for all students during crises.					
I encounter challenges in ensuring all students have access to educational materials during crises.					
I use technology to improve student access to education during crises.					
I use various resources to continue providing education during crises.					
I follow up with students who have dropped out due to emergency circumstances that affected their right to education.					
Inclusion					
I evaluate the availability of educational resources as being sufficient to support effective and inclusive teaching based on their applicability to all students' needs.					

I evaluate the school administration's support in creating an inclusive and conducive learning environment for all students.					
I find my collaboration with parents effective in supporting the learning and inclusion of all students.					
I find the professional development programmes helpful in enhancing my teaching skills to support diverse student needs.					
I evaluate my ability to meet the needs of all students, including those with learning difficulties, as an essential part of fostering an inclusive classroom.					
Well-being					
I believe that the resources and training provided by the school contribute to facilitating inclusive learning for students with diverse needs during emergencies.					
I can apply inclusive teaching practices catered to students with diverse learning needs.					
I think that the school provides psychological and social support programmes for students impacted by emergencies.					
I think that the partnership between the school and families maintains continuity of inclusive education during emergencies.					
I think that the school has the proper facilities to support continuing education in times of emergency.					
Strategies					
I apply digital learning strategies to support my teaching during emergencies.					
I use various tools and strategies to ensure continuous education in any emergency situation.					

I use structured strategies to ensure students can easily access the educational materials I provide.					
I use differentiated instructional strategies to support effective student learning during emergencies.					
I implement new and innovative instructional strategies to differentiate learning and to ensure all students remain engaged in education during crises.					

2.1.2 Focus Group

Focus group discussions were conducted using a semi-structured approach, so as to encourage dialogue amongst participants and to allow for the emergence of shared reflection, critical issues, and strategies developed through professional experience. The selection process for participants was designed to represent the various professional roles found in primary schools. The sample therefore included headteachers, resource room teachers, social workers, and core subject teachers at primary level. Sessions were scheduled in consultation with schools, lasted approximately 50-60 minutes each, and involved 5-6 participants per session. Due to lockdowns and limited access to school premises, all discussions were conducted online via Zoom, which enabled data collection to continue whilst ensuring participant safety.

The discussion guide comprises 6 open-ended questions (see Table 3), designed to steer discussions without restricting spontaneity and to encourage in-depth exploration of teachers' professional experiences. The questions correspond to six areas. The first concerns the teaching strategies used to maintain continuity of education in emergencies. The second addresses how support is provided to vulnerable students. The third explores teachers' experience of inclusive education. The fourth examines the main challenges in safeguarding the right to education of students most at risk of exclusion. The fifth considers the role of teachers in fostering emotional and social development. The sixth addresses the adjustments teachers make to their skills, methods, and strategies to encourage student participation during crises.

Table 3. Focus Groups

What are the main strategies you use to ensure the continuity of education during emergency situations?
How do you support students experiencing conditions of vulnerability (e.g. poverty, disability, or other forms of disadvantage)?
What has been your experience with inclusive education (e.g. inclusion of students with disabilities or other special educational needs)?
What are the main challenges you encounter in providing education to marginalised or vulnerable students?
How do teachers support students' social and emotional development in the school context?
How have you adapted your teaching skills, strategies, and methods to engage students during emergency learning situations?

2.2 Student Tools

In line with the study’s objectives, the research team sought to explore the perspectives of students aged 6–10 years attending Grades 1 to 4 in primary schools across the Jerusalem Governorate. Given the developmental characteristics of this age group, and following a review of the relevant literature (Reynolds & Johnson, 2011; Virole & Ricadat, 2022), the team developed an integrated mixed-methods research instrument comprising 3 complementary components that engaged different modes of expression: a pictorial closed-ended questionnaire, a semi-structured interview, and a drawing activity.

2.2.1 Questionnaire

The reliability of the pictorial questionnaire was assessed by examining its internal consistency using Cronbach’s alpha. Across the 17 items, the instrument achieved a coefficient of 0.964, indicating excellent internal consistency and confirming its suitability for data collection. To ensure accessibility and ease of use for all students, the questionnaire employed a three-point response scale based on facial expressions (emoticons), comprising the following options: disagree (😞), neutral (😐), and agree (😄). For the calculation of means and standard deviations, the emoticon-based response scale was converted into a three-point Likert scale. Mean scores were subsequently interpreted according to 3 levels: Low (1.00 to < 1.67), Moderate (1.67 to < 2.34), and High (2.34 to 3.00).

The first section of the questionnaire collected participants’ demographic in-

formation. The second section comprised 17 closed-ended items organised into 5 dimensions. The *Empowerment* dimension explored students' perceptions of being enabled to play an active role in their own learning through the relational, emotional, material, and participatory resources available within the school environment. The *Right to Education* dimension addressed students' opportunities to access education, express their opinions freely, and learn on an equal basis with their peers. The *Inclusion* dimension examined the quality of school environment and the extent to which teaching practices supported the participation and learning of all students. The *Well-being* dimension focused on students' perceptions of safety and their psychological and emotional well-being within school. Finally, the *Teacher Strategies* dimension explored the continuity of learning during emergency situations and students' perceptions of the individual support, care, and attention provided by their teachers.

From a procedural perspective, the questionnaire was administered in small-group sessions, involving a maximum of 5 students to ensure appropriate support throughout the completion process, which typically required between 10 and 20 minutes. At the beginning of each session, participants were welcomed in a friendly and reassuring manner, and the purpose of the questionnaire was explained using age-appropriate language. Each questionnaire item was then read aloud slowly to ensure that all students fully understood its meaning. To promote a positive and comfortable atmosphere, participants were reassured that their responses would remain confidential and that there were no right or wrong answers. Table 4 presents the questionnaire.

Table 4. Questionnaire for Students

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION			
1. Age			
2. Gender	 		
3. Grade	Grade 1 Grade 2 Grade 3 Grade 4		
4. Place of residence	 Camp  Village  City  Bedouin area		
Aspects		Agree	Neutral Disagree

Empowerment			
My teacher helps me when I need support with learning.			
I feel safe at my school.			
I use many resources that help me learn (e.g. books, pencils, board, papers, colours, games, and a computer).			
I join my classmates in playing educational games and doing various activities for learning.			
Right to Education			
When there are problems, I am able to go to school and keep learning.			
When I raise my hand to share my opinion, I can speak without fear.			
I learn the same way as my friends in class.			
Inclusion			
The school provides a supportive learning environment.			
The teacher explains the lessons clearly.			
I take part in activities that encourage me to learn.			
At my school, the teacher treats me with respect.			
My school has toys, books, and tools that help everyone learn.			
Well-being			
I feel happy when my teacher helps me in class.			
My opinion is important in class.			
The teacher cares about me.			
Strategies			
My teacher helps me if I don't understand the lesson.			
I can learn from home during emergencies.			

2.2.2 Semi-structured Interview

The semi-structured interviews constituted the first qualitative component of the research instrument developed for students. As previously described, the interviews were conducted individually and recorded at participating schools, fol-

lowing informed consent from each student’s parent or legal guardian. All interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed for data analysis. As shown in Table 5, the interview protocol consisted of 3 guiding questions designed to explore students’ perceptions of safety at school, their experiences of the school environment, and their perspectives and aspirations for their schooling experience.

Table 5. Semi-Structured Interview

What makes you feel safe at school?
Tell me about your classroom: what do you like and don’t like?
How do you wish your school would be?

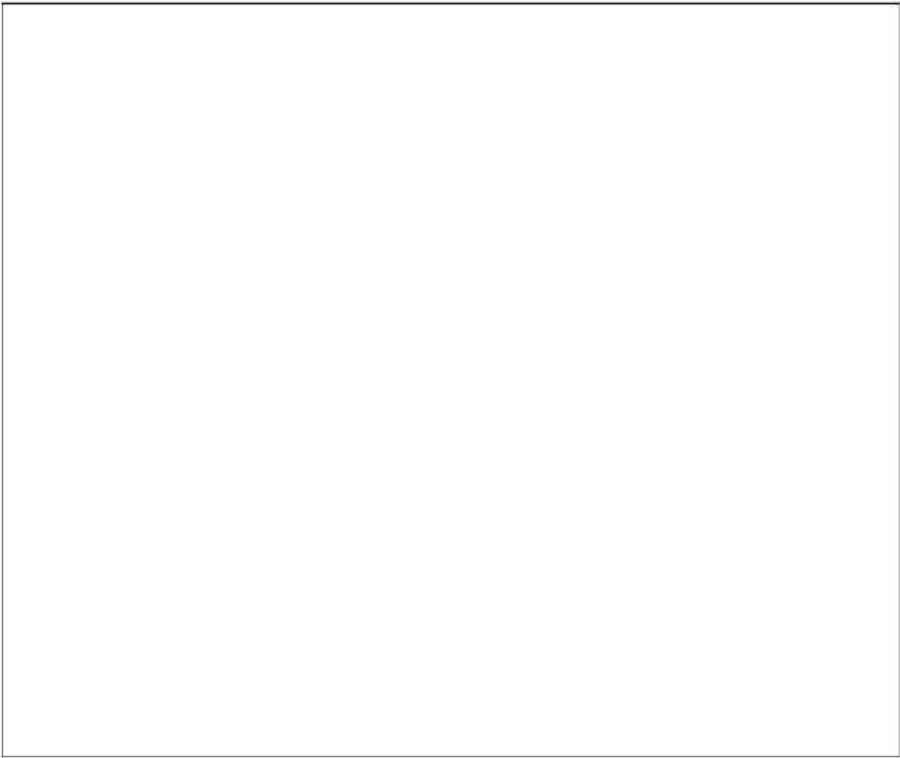
2.2.3 Drawing activity

The second and final qualitative component of the instrument developed for students consisted of an individual drawing activity conducted at the end of the semi-structured interview. The activity lasted approximately 15 minutes, with additional time provided when needed. The combined administration of the semi-structured interview and the drawing task required approximately 30–40 minutes in total.

The drawing activity provided the children with an opportunity to represent their school through a mode of communication aligned with their expressive abilities. Specifically, the drawing activity invited participants to use basic materials – including paper, pencils, markers, and coloured pencils – to draw an imaginary school they hoped and wished for. Upon completing the drawing, each was invited to describe and explain their work, thereby complementing the visual representation with a personal narrative. Taken together, the drawings constituted visual maps of the children’s perceptions, lived experiences, and aspirations, making it possible to capture dimensions of their school experience that would have been difficult to access through verbal data alone. Figure 2 presents the worksheet provided to participants for the drawing activity.

Drawing activity
Draw your school

ارسم مدرستك



 **Thank You for Your Participation!** 
 **شكراً لمشاركتكم الرائعة** 

Figure 2. Draw Your School

2.3 Parent Tools

The parent survey explored parents’ perceptions of how inclusive education is implemented in schools during emergencies. It examined five areas. The first concerns the perceived accessibility, equity, and inclusiveness of educational settings. The second addresses the quality of support provided to students. The third explores parents’ experiences and expectations of inclusive education. The fourth considers their satisfaction with the services received. The fifth examines the influence of selected socio-demographic variables on these perceptions.

From a procedural perspective, participant selection was carried out in collaboration with school principals to ensure a purposeful and diverse sample. In single-sex schools, the sample included 3 parents of typically developing students and 3 parents of students with learning difficulties or disabilities. In coeducational schools, the sample comprised 2 parents of male students, 2 parents of female students, and 2 parents of students with learning difficulties, resulting in a total of 6 parents recruited from each school. To provide a holistic and ecological understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, the research design combined semi-structured interviews with a questionnaire.

2.3.1 Questionnaire

As with the questionnaire administered to teachers, the reliability of the parents' questionnaire was assessed by examining its internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. The resulting coefficient of 0.963 across the 24 items indicates a high level of internal consistency, confirming the instrument's reliability and suitability for data collection.

As shown in Table 6, the first section of the questionnaire collects participants' demographic information, while the second section comprises 24 items rated by parents on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). A three-level interpretation scale was employed to categorise respondents' mean scores: Low (1.00–2.33), Moderate (2.34–3.66), and High (3.67–5.00).

The questionnaire items were organised into 5 key dimensions. The first dimension, *Empowerment*, refers to support from the local community, access to educational resources, and parental participation in initiatives and mutual support networks during emergencies. The second dimension, the *Right to Education*, concerns the adequacy of educational opportunities, legal protections, and support provided by educational institutions and the wider community. The third dimension, *Inclusion*, relates to the inclusiveness of educational provision, school–family communication, the effectiveness of support for students with special educational needs, and parental involvement. The fourth dimension, *Well-being*, encompasses the adequacy of activities and resources, teachers' preparedness to address students' psychological and emotional needs, and parental involvement in decision-making processes. The final dimension, *Teacher Strategies*, refers to emotional support provided to students, communication with parents, teachers' ability to reduce stress and anxiety in the classroom, and the availability of psychological and professional support resources.

Table 6. Parents' Questionnaire

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION					
1. Gender	☐ Male ☐ Female				
2. Age Group	☐ < 25 years ☐ 25–34 years ☐ 35–44 years ☐ > 45				
3. Educational Qualification	☐ High School ☐ Diploma Degree ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's Degree ☐ Doctorate				
4. Place of Residence	☐ Village ☐ City ☐ Refugee Camp ☐ Bedouin Community				
5. Number of family members living in the same house					
6. Does your child/do any of your children have learning difficulties? (Please answer 'Yes' or 'No'. If your answer is 'Yes', please indicate how many of your children are affected.)	☐ Yes Number of children (- -) ☐ No				
Aspects	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Empowerment					
1. I receive support from the local community to facilitate my child's learning during emergencies.					
2. I access educational resources including books, digital devices, and worksheets, for my child during emergencies.					
3. I participate in community initiatives (e.g. volunteer tutoring groups) to enhance my child's learning during emergencies.					
4. I collaborate with other parents to form educational support groups for our children during emergencies.					

Right to Education					
5. I think my child is receiving suitable educational opportunities during crises.					
6. I think my child has access to crucial educational resources (e.g. books, digital devices, and the internet) during crises.					
7. I believe that current school laws protect my child's right to education in times of crisis.					
8. I receive support from educational or community institutions (e.g. the Directorate of Education or community education centres) to help safeguard my child's sustained education.					
9. I feel that teachers and school administration are making appropriate efforts to support children's education during crises, in line with the instructions and guidance shared with educational staff.					
Inclusion					
10. I observe that the quality of education my child receives at school is inclusive and supportive of diverse learning needs.					
11. I observe that communication between myself and the school administration and teachers is open, respectful, and focused on addressing the needs of all students.					
12. I think that the level of support provided by the school for students with diverse needs is effective in ensuring equal opportunities for all learners.					
13. I am involved in school activities and contribute to the inclusive educational process for all students.					
14. I think that the school is attentive to parents' feedback and suggestions.					

Well-being					
15. The learning activities and resources provided by the school in the current situation support my child's learning effectively.					
16. The school offers adequate support to promote inclusive learning for all students.					
17. Teachers are adequately prepared to address the psychological and emotional needs of their students.					
18. The school actively engages parents in decision-making and provides support strategies for students during crises.					
19. My child has access to learning materials (e.g. textbooks, worksheets, smart board, etc.) and technologies that facilitate effective education.					
Teacher Strategies					
20. Teachers support students emotionally during times of crisis (e.g. by listening to them, showing empathy, or helping them feel safe and understood).					
21. Teachers communicate effectively with parents to follow up on their children's feelings, behaviour, and learning progress. (This includes checking if the child feels emotionally supported, safe, and is doing well at school.)					
22. What the teacher does in class helps make students feel less stressed or anxious.					
23. Teachers need more training in psychological support strategies during crises.					
24. The school community provides psychological resources to help children cope with changes.					

2.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews were conducted individually online via Zoom and were organised into 2 phases, as illustrated in Table 7. The first phase collected demographic information; the second comprised 5 open-ended questions designed to encourage parents to reflect on a range of topics. The first sought recommendations for teachers on maintaining educational continuity during a crisis. The second explored parental strategies for supporting children facing social challenges. The third addressed parents' satisfaction with the extracurricular activities provided by the school. The fourth considered how parents support their children's emotional expression and their development of meaningful social relationships. The fifth asked what social and emotional support is offered to parents themselves. Throughout the interviews, parents were invited to elaborate on their responses by drawing on their own experiences.

Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Having received the participants' informed consent, all interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed using systematic procedures to ensure completeness, accuracy, and methodological rigour in the collection and analysis of the data. The following Chapter presents the findings obtained through the administration of the research instruments across the 3 target groups.

Table 7. Semi-structured Interview

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	
1	<i>Age:</i> ☐ < 25 years ☐ 25–34 years ☐ 35–44 years ☐ > 45years
2	<i>Gender:</i> ☐ Male ☐ Female
3	<i>Optional:</i> <i>Description of family (number of members, location of house)</i>
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	
1	What advice would you like to give to teachers to help them improve education in emergency situations?
2	How could you support your children when they face social challenges? If your children encounter social challenges, such as isolation or difficulty integrating with peers, what measures do you implement to support them? Kindly share an example from your own experience.

3	Are you satisfied with extracurricular activities in the school? If 'yes', why?; if 'no', why not?
4	How can the family support the child in expressing their emotions and building positive relationships with others?
5	What kind of socio-emotional support do you receive? Can you provide an example? (When? Was it enough?)

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Chapter 9

Results

*Sawsan Victor Istephan, Buad Khales, Nihad Majeed Abu Irmeleh,
Shaima' Abdalkareem Ali, Ilaria D'Angelo, Tommaso Santilli,
Arianna Taddei, Fatin Jubeh, Maisa' Issa Khalil Abu-Nimah*

1. Results Overview

This chapter presents the results of the study, organised according to the 3 groups of participants involved in the research: teachers, students, and families. In line with a mixed-methods research design, the quantitative and qualitative results are presented separately for each group, and subsequently read in an integrated and complementary manner. This approach supports a broad and detailed understanding of inclusive education practices in emergency contexts, drawing on both quantitative trends and qualitative interpretive depth, in line with the mixed methods research design chosen for this study. The evidence gathered from the 3 participating groups was triangulated to generate an integrated and comprehensive interpretation of the phenomena under investigation. A dedicated discussion of the results is presented in Chapter 10.

The results from the 'Teachers' group are presented in 2 parts: quantitative findings from the questionnaire, covering the dimensions of *Empowerment, Right to Education, Inclusion, Well-being, and Teacher Strategies*; and qualitative findings from the focus groups, covering teachers' professional experiences, the strategies they adopted, and the main challenges they encountered in promoting inclusion during emergencies.

The section on students reports findings from the questionnaire administered to primary school students, supplemented by qualitative data drawn from semi-structured interviews and the analysis of expressive drawings. This triangulated approach enables exploration of children's perspectives on safety, belonging, par-

ticipation and the quality of the school environment during periods of emergency.

Finally, the section on families synthesises results obtained from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, examining school–family collaboration, the support strategies adopted, the difficulties encountered, and parents’ expectations of the education system.

Overall, the integrated quantitative and qualitative data provide a detailed picture of the opportunities, practices, and challenges characterising inclusive education in emergency contexts within the Jerusalem Governorate, highlighting both convergences and differences across various stakeholders perspectives.

2. Results from Teachers

The total number of teachers employed in public schools was 276, comprising 258 female teachers and 6 male teachers. Private schools employed a total of 198 teachers, including 190 females and 8 males. Teachers represented a range of academic specialisations, including classroom teaching, science and mathematics, Arabic, English, social studies, and arts. For the quantitative phase, questionnaires were distributed to all teachers working in the participating schools. As shown in Table 1, a total of 100 questionnaires were returned and considered valid for quantitative statistical analysis.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistical Findings of the Respondents’ Demographics

Demographics		Frequency	Percent
Years of experience	< 5 years	22	22.0
	5–10	21	21.0
	> 10 years	57	57.0
Educational Qualification	Diploma Degree	4	4.0
	Bachelor’s Degree	72	72.0
	Master’s Degree	21	21.0
	Doctorate	3	3.0

Discipline	Math	9	9.0
	Science	12	12.0
	Classroom teacher	38	38.0
	Arabic Language	21	21.0
	English Language	14	14.0
	Social Sciences	6	6.0
Age	Under 30 years old	15	15.0
	30–45 years old	51	51.0
	Above 45 years old	34	34.0
Sum	100		

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the respondents' demographic characteristics ($N = 100$). The findings indicated that the majority of participants (57%) had more than 10 years of teaching experience, reflecting a predominantly experienced sample. In terms of educational qualifications, most respondents held a bachelor's degree (72%), while fewer possessed a master's (21%) or doctoral degree (3%). Regarding discipline, classroom teachers represented the largest proportion (38%), followed by Arabic language (21%) and English language teachers (14%). With respect to age, over half of the respondents (51%) were between 30 and 45 years old, suggesting that most participants were in their mid-career stage. No statistically significant gender differences emerged across any of the questionnaire dimensions (all $p > .05$). Overall, the sample comprises a well-qualified and experienced group of educators from varied teaching disciplines.

For the qualitative phase, participants were purposefully selected from among the teachers and school staff who participated in the quantitative phase, based on their professional roles and relevance to inclusive education practices. Seventeen focus group discussions were conducted. The focus groups included school principals, Arabic language teachers, mathematics teachers, religious education teachers, English language teachers, social counsellors, and resource room teachers, ensuring representation of diverse educational roles within the school system.

2.1 Quantitative Results

A descriptive statistical analysis was carried out to further examine teachers' perceptions using questionnaire data. Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) were calculated for each item. A 3-level interpretation scale was employed to categorise respondents' mean scores: Low (1.00–2.33), Moderate (2.34–3.66), and High (3.67–5.00). Table 2 presents the descriptive statistical results across the key dimensions of inclusive education during emergencies, as identified in the questionnaire.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistical Findings of the Respondents' Evaluation on Empowerment, Right to Education, Inclusion, Well-being, and Teacher Strategies

Aspect/Item	Mean	SD	Degree
<i>Empowerment</i>			
1. Diversifying teaching methods contributes to effectively responding to emergencies that students may encounter.	4.28	.56	High
2. Professional training is viewed as a facilitating factor in enhancing teaching capacity during times of emergency.	3.85	.59	High
3. Maintaining the continuity of learning during emergencies contributes to positively enhancing student engagement.	3.73	.73	High
4. Community support such as that provided by parents and school administration is considered an essential element of education in emergency situations.	3.70	.81	High
5. The difficulty of providing equal educational opportunities for students during emergencies is one of the key challenges associated with crisis conditions.	3.50	.82	Moderate
Sum	3.81	.40	High
<i>Right to Education</i>			
6. The use of technology contributes to improving students' access to education during emergencies.	4.17	.58	High
7. Making effective use of available resources serves as a supporting factor in maintaining the continuity of education during emergencies.	4.09	.51	High
8. Providing equal educational opportunities for all students during emergencies is regarded as a fundamental element in supporting education.	3.93	.65	High
9. Reaching out to students who have become disconnected due to emergency conditions is an important step in safeguarding their continued right to education.	3.94	.70	High

10. The difficulty of ensuring that all students have access to learning materials during emergencies is one of the common challenges in such circumstances.	3.66	.84	Moderate
Sum	3.95	.41	High
<i>Inclusion</i>			
11. Effective collaboration with parents contributes to ensuring the inclusion of all students.	4.23	.56	High
12. Professional development programmes enhance the instructional skills necessary to support students' diverse needs.	4.17	.56	High
13. Administrative support is a fundamental factor in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.	4.02	.60	High
14. Providing educational resources to support inclusive and effective education is an important element in meeting all students' needs.	3.88	.62	High
15. Addressing the needs of all learners, including the inclusion of students with learning difficulties, is considered essential to advancing inclusive education.	3.86	.66	High
Sum	4.03	.42	High
<i>Well-being</i>			
16. Providing resources and training helps facilitate inclusive learning for children with diverse needs during emergencies.	4.06	.64	High
17. Partnerships between schools and families are an important factor in sustaining inclusive education during emergencies.	4.06	.64	High
18. Inclusive educational practices that address the needs of learners with diverse educational requirements are considered a fundamental component of supporting learning.	3.83	.71	High
19. Psychosocial support programmes are viewed as an important element in assisting students affected by emergency situations.	3.75	.70	High
20. Appropriate school facilities are among the supporting factors that help maintain the continuity of education in times of emergency.	3.72	.77	High
Sum	3.88	.49	High
<i>Teacher Strategies</i>			
21. Diversifying tools and strategies is an important element in ensuring the continuity of education in any emergency.	4.02	.49	High
22. New and innovative instructional strategies help diversify learning and ensure that all students remain engaged during educational emergencies.	3.97	.55	High

23. Differentiated instructional strategies are viewed as an effective means of supporting student learning during emergencies.	3.96	.51	High
24. Structured strategies serve as a facilitating factor in enabling students to easily access learning materials.	3.91	.49	High
25. The use of digital learning strategies contributes to supporting education during emergency situations.	3.72	.68	High
Sum	3.91	.45	High
Overall Mean	3.92	.36	High

As presented in Table 2, the overall mean score across all dimensions was 3.92 ($SD = 0.36$), indicating a high level of agreement and suggesting generally positive teacher perceptions of inclusive education practices during emergency conditions. Across the 5 examined dimensions, all domains achieved high mean scores. The *Inclusion* dimension recorded the highest overall mean ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.42$). Likewise, the *Right to Education* dimension received a high evaluation ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.41$), followed by the *Teacher Strategies* dimension ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.45$). The *Well-being* dimension also attained a high overall mean ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.49$). Finally, the *Empowerment* dimension recorded the lowest mean among the 5 domains ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.40$), although it remained within the high evaluation range.

Inferential statistical analyses were conducted to examine whether teachers' perceptions of inclusive education during emergencies differed according to years of teaching experience, educational qualification, and teaching discipline.

With regard to years of experience, descriptive statistics suggested minor variation across groups, with teachers having fewer than 5 years of experience generally reporting slightly more positive perceptions in several domains. However, one-way ANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences across any of the questionnaire dimensions (all $p > .05$), indicating that teachers' perceptions were broadly consistent regardless of professional experience.

Similarly, although descriptive analyses showed some variation according to educational qualification, particularly with diploma and doctoral holders reporting marginally higher scores on selected dimensions, these differences were not statistically significant. ANOVA results confirmed that educational qualification was not associated with significant differences in *Empowerment*, *Right to Education*, *Inclusion*, *Well-being*, *Teacher Strategies*, or the overall score (all $p > .05$).

Finally, slight differences in mean scores were observed across teaching disciplines, with English language and social science teachers tending to report somewhat more positive perceptions on some dimensions than teachers from other subject areas. Nevertheless, ANOVA findings indicated no statistically significant differences across disciplines for any of the study variables (all $p > .05$), suggesting that teachers shared similar perceptions of inclusive education during emergencies irrespective of their disciplinary background.

2.2 Qualitative Results

A total of 17 focus group discussions were conducted, with each group comprising 5 to 6 participants, including school principals, resource room teachers, social workers, and core subject teachers at the basic education level. The insights generated through the focus group discussions reveal deeply embedded understandings of inclusion shaped by the unique sociopolitical and educational realities of Jerusalem. What follows reflects the key patterns that emerged from participants' accounts, capturing the core dimensions of how inclusion is enacted, negotiated, and sustained in times of crisis.

Theme 1. Digital Pedagogical Adaptation and Learning Continuity

Participants described a wide range of digital strategies adopted to ensure educational continuity during emergencies. Teachers reported creating electronic worksheets, short instructional videos, and audio recordings to support students when face-to-face teaching was disrupted. As one participant explained: 'Sometimes we send audio recordings of lessons so students can follow along when direct communication is not possible. Several teachers also adopted flipped classroom approaches, providing introductory digital materials before lessons and reserving face-to-face time for discussion and practical application.

Online platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom emerged as essential tools for organising virtual lessons and maintaining interaction with students. In parallel, schools increasingly relied on messaging applications such as WhatsApp and Messenger to facilitate rapid communication with families, distribute learning materials, and monitor students' progress. Technology was also integrated into teaching through interactive resources, including videos, smart boards, augmented reality applications, and, in some cases, artificial intelligence-based tools, which participants perceived as enhancing engagement and motivation, particularly among students with diverse learning needs.

Theme 2. Adaptive and Inclusive Teaching Practices

Teachers emphasised the importance of flexible instructional approaches capable of responding to students' heterogeneous needs during emergencies. Child-centred methodologies – including active learning, simulation, gamification, and play-based activities – were widely used to sustain participation and facilitate understanding.

Inclusive practices also involved the use of multi-sensory resources, visual and auditory supports, differentiated instruction, and individualised learning plans. Collaboration between classroom teachers and resource-room staff was considered fundamental to ensuring appropriate educational responses for students requiring additional support. Participants consistently framed inclusion as the creation of welcoming learning environments that recognise diversity and promote equal participation for all learners.

Theme 3. Holistic Student Support through School–Family Collaboration

Beyond academic instruction, participants highlighted the importance of integrated systems addressing students' educational, psychological, social, and financial needs. Schools reported providing scholarships, fee exemptions, individualised interventions, psychosocial support sessions, and referrals to specialised services where necessary.

Strong collaboration with families emerged as a recurring strategy. Parents actively supported home-based activities, participated in curriculum-related projects, and collaborated with teachers in implementing individualised interventions. Teachers described continuous communication with families as essential for monitoring student well-being and ensuring continuity between home and school environments.

Theme 4. Promoting Social and Emotional Well-being

The development of students' emotional and social competences was identified as a core educational priority, particularly in emergency contexts. Participants described using drama, theatre, verbal expression, play, and social-emotional learning activities to strengthen communication skills, emotional regulation, self-confidence, and peer relationships. Psychological support was considered a shared responsibility among teachers, counsellors, and external professionals. Individual counselling sessions, structured psychosocial programmes, and safe classroom environments were viewed as essential mechanisms for helping students cope with stress and adversity while fostering resilience and positive relationships.

Theme 5. Emergency Preparedness and Organisational Readiness

Participants stressed the need for comprehensive emergency preparedness plans extending beyond educational continuity to include psychological support, safety procedures, and crisis management. Teachers advocated systematic training for both staff and students on emergency response protocols, evacuation procedures, and basic life skills. Several respondents also emphasised the importance of maintaining calm during crises and preparing schools in advance through clearly defined emergency programmes capable of ensuring coordinated and effective responses to unexpected events.

Theme 6. Multilevel Barriers to Inclusive Education

Despite the numerous inclusive practices described, participants identified significant barriers operating at multiple levels. Teacher-related challenges included large class sizes, shortages of specialised personnel, and the need to provide repeated individualised explanations despite limited time. Student-related challenges concerned diverse learning needs and the psychosocial consequences of adverse family circumstances.

Schools also reported insufficient financial resources, limited access to technological equipment, and inadequate institutional support. Finally, several participants highlighted difficulties in collaborating with families, particularly when parents were hard to reach or reluctant to acknowledge their children's learning difficulties or disabilities. Collectively, these findings portray inclusion during emergencies as a complex process shaped by interacting pedagogical, organisational, socioeconomic, and relational constraints. In the following paragraph, the data from the qualitative and quantitative sections will be presented side by side to provide a comprehensive overview of the findings.

2.3 Descriptive Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

In line with the mixed-methods design, this section synthesises the quantitative and qualitative results, presenting the main quantitative findings alongside the corresponding qualitative evidence.

With regard to *Empowerment*, the quantitative data showed mean values in the upper range ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.39$), indicating a generally positive assessment of practices aimed at strengthening students' active participation in emergency contexts. Consistent with these results, the qualitative evidence showed that teachers described strategies aimed at supporting student participation through the as-

signment of flexible tasks, the promotion of active participation in learning processes, and a greater degree of personalisation of activities, including through the use of digital tools.

With regard to *Right to Education*, the quantitative analysis showed a high average score ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.34$), placing it amongst the highest values among the dimensions considered. In the focus groups, this dimension was highlighted through descriptions of practices aimed at ensuring educational continuity even in emergency situations, through the use of digital platforms and by maintaining contact with vulnerable students via alternatives to face-to-face teaching.

With regard to *Inclusion*, which had the highest mean value ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.31$), the qualitative data revealed a range of practices relating to the adaptation of teaching materials, the differentiation of activities and the creation of accessible learning environments. Teachers also described the use of collaborative approaches and compensatory tools as recurring elements in the management of emergency situations.

With regard to *Well-being*, the quantitative data indicated a high average score ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.37$). Consistent with this, participants' accounts highlighted practices aimed at providing socio-emotional support to students, including providing opportunities for listening, emotional regulation activities, and strategies designed to maintain peer and teacher connection when physical attendance at school was suspended or reduced.

With regard to *Teacher Strategies*, the quantitative results showed a high mean score ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.35$). The qualitative evidence described the adoption of flexible methodologies, the integration of digital tools into lesson planning, and the reorganisation of subject content into formats better suited to different learning contexts. Finally, regarding *Empowerment* – already mentioned in the general overview – the qualitative data highlighted organisational and collaborative elements that supported teachers' work, including coordination amongst colleagues, resource sharing, and the readjustment of assessment practices in response to the emergency.

3. Results from Students

The student sample consisted of 214 participants, of whom 116 were male and 98 were female. In terms of distribution by school year, 38 students were in Year 1, 52 in Year 2, 59 in Year 3, and 65 in Year 4. With regard to place of residence, 122 students lived in towns, 85 came from villages, and 7 lived in refugee camps.

3.1 Quantitative Results

Descriptive statistical analysis was used by calculating the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the sample participants' responses to the questionnaire items. The study adopted a 3-point Likert scale to interpret the arithmetic means, where rating levels were classified into 3 categories: low (from 1.00 to less than 1.67), medium (from 1.67 to less than 2.34), and high (from 2.34 to 3.00). The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3, which illustrates the reality of blended learning in emergency situations across its 4 dimensions: *Empowerment*, *Right to Education*, *Well-being*, and *Teacher Strategies*.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistical Findings of the Respondents' Evaluation on Empowerment, Right to Education, Well-being, and Teacher Strategies

Aspect/Item	Mean	SD	Degree
Empowerment			
1. I participate in activities that encourage me to learn.	2.20	.90	Average
2. My opinion matters in class.	2.19	.85	Average
3. I learn just like my classmates.	2.18	.90	Average
4. I participate with my classmates in educational games and various learning activities.	2.14	.91	Average
5. When I raise my hand to speak, I can express my opinion without fear.	2.06	.92	Average
Total (Empowerment and Inclusion)	2.15	.73	Average
Right to Education			
6. I use many resources that help me learn (e.g. books, pens, the blackboard, paper, colours, games, and the computer).	2.17	.85	Average
7. My school has educational games, books, and tools that help everyone learn.	2.17	.92	Average
8. When there are problems, I can go to school and continue learning.	2.12	.86	Average
9. I can learn from home in an emergency.	2.08	.90	Average
Total (Right to Education)	2.14	.68	Average
Well-being			
10. The school provides a supportive learning environment.	2.21	.94	Average
11. I am happy when the teacher helps me in class.	2.16	.92	Average

12. At my school, the teacher treats me with respect.	2.15	.90	Average
13. I feel safe at my school.	2.12	.89	Average
Total (Well-being)	2.16	.80	Average
Teacher Strategies			
14. My teacher helps me when I need help with my studies.	2.24	.90	Average
15. The teachers explain the lessons clearly.	2.21	.86	Average
16. The teacher cares about me.	2.10	.92	Average
17. The teacher helps me if I don't understand the lesson.	2.09	.90	Average
Total (Teacher Strategies)	2.16	.78	Average
Total for All Items	2.15	.71	Average

As presented in Table 3, the overall mean score across all items was 2.15 ($SD = 0.71$), indicating an average level of students' perceptions of inclusive education in emergency situations. Across the 4 examined dimensions, all domains achieved average mean scores. The *Well-being* and *Teacher Strategies* dimensions recorded the highest overall means (both $M = 2.16$, $SD = 0.80$ and 0.78 , respectively). Similarly, the *Empowerment* dimension attained an average evaluation ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 0.73$). The *Right to Education* dimension recorded the lowest overall mean ($M = 2.14$, $SD = 0.68$), although it also remained within the average evaluation range. At the item level, the highest mean was observed for 'My teacher helps me when I need help with my studies' ($M = 2.24$, $SD = 0.90$), followed by 'The school provides a supportive learning environment' ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 0.94$) and 'The teachers explain the lessons clearly' ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 0.86$). Conversely, the lowest-rated items were 'When I raise my hand to speak, I can express my opinion without fear' ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 0.92$) and 'I can learn from home in an emergency' ($M = 2.08$, $SD = 0.90$).

Inferential statistical analyses were conducted to examine whether students' perceptions of inclusive education in emergency situations differed according to gender, grade level, and place of residence. No statistically significant gender differences emerged ($p > .05$), indicating that male and female students reported comparable evaluations of their educational experiences during emergencies. Similarly, although minor variations in descriptive statistics were observed across grade levels, ANOVA results revealed no statistically significant differences ($p > .05$), suggesting that students shared broadly similar perceptions regardless of age or

school year. Finally, no statistically significant differences were found according to place of residence ($p > .05$). Despite slight variations in mean scores across students living in cities, villages, and camps, these differences were not statistically reliable, indicating that perceptions of inclusive education during emergencies were largely consistent across residential contexts.

3.2 Qualitative Results

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews revealed how students perceive and experience inclusive education in emergency situations through their own voices and everyday experiences. Responses to the 3 guiding questions – focusing on feelings of safety, perceptions of the school environment, and aspirations for their school – were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), resulting in 3 overarching themes that capture students' priorities, concerns, and expectations.

Theme 1. School Safety as Physical Protection and Emotional Security

Students consistently associated feeling safe at school with both physical protection and the quality of interpersonal relationships. Rather than describing safety as a positive emotional state, many defined it through the absence of danger or fear. As one child explained: 'The school is safe; no one can enter it'. Another stated: 'Yes, I feel safe, and I don't feel afraid'. These statements suggest that perceptions of safety are closely tied to protection from external threats rather than taken-for-granted conditions. At the same time, children emphasised that safety also depends on the social climate within the school. Several expressed the wish for a school 'without beatings or fights', indicating that peer violence undermines their sense of well-being. Similarly, one participant reported being afraid of the principal 'when he shouts', revealing that interactions with adults can also influence children's perceptions of psychological safety. One said: 'I love it when the teacher hugs me'. Another said: 'I feel comfortable when I'm studying'. This last remark is worth deeper consideration, as it points to learning itself as a source of psychological safety, not just the result of it. Taken together, these accounts portray school safety as a multidimensional construct encompassing physical security, emotional reassurance, and respectful relationships with both peers and educators.

Theme 2. Experiences of the School Environment: Belonging, Participation, and Everyday Challenges

When reflecting on their daily school experiences, students highlighted the importance of participation, recognition, and supportive relationships, while also

describing situations that generated feelings of exclusion. One child shared, 'When I raise my hand, the teacher chooses another student; and she doesn't write my name on the list of participants even though I was participating', illustrating how limited opportunities for classroom participation can undermine students' sense of belonging. Others expressed a desire for more active roles in the learning process, stating, 'I want the teacher to let the student explain the lesson', thereby advocating for greater agency and voice within classroom activities. Conversely, other accounts suggested that educational relationships may at times reinforce exclusion or unequal treatment, highlighting the importance of inclusive pedagogical practices that ensure all students feel seen, heard, and valued. Overall, the narratives indicate that inclusive education is experienced not only through access to learning but also through everyday interactions that foster participation, belonging, and positive social relationships.

Theme 3. Aspirations for a More Inclusive and Child-Friendly School

Students' aspirations extended well beyond access to academic instruction, revealing a holistic understanding of what constitutes a meaningful and inclusive educational experience. Recreational opportunities emerged as a recurring concern, with one student lamenting, 'when we have PE class, they take it away from us', reflecting frustration over the loss of opportunities for play and physical activity. Participants also called for more engaging and participatory teaching approaches. One student requested 'more resources when the teacher explains', suggesting a desire for richer and more interactive learning experiences. Several students explicitly addressed issues of fairness and assessment. Their comments included requests such as 'let studying be interesting and the tests easy' and 'let exams take everyone's level into account', highlighting expectations for educational practices that recognise individual differences and reduce unnecessary barriers to success. Collectively, these statements demonstrate that students conceive of inclusive education as encompassing equitable assessment, engaging pedagogy, meaningful participation, and access to recreational and developmental opportunities alongside academic learning.

Expressive Drawing

The expressive drawing activity titled 'Draw your School' provided a complementary perspective on students' lived experiences of inclusive education during emergencies. Their interpretation was informed by the complementary frameworks of Burns (1987), who emphasises the symbolic meaning of visual representations, Cox (2005), who conceptualises children's drawings as reflections of

their cognitive understanding and lived experiences, and Malchiodi (1998), who highlights their value as indicators of emotional expression and psychosocial functioning. Rather than serving as diagnostic tools, the drawings were interpreted alongside the interview data to provide a richer understanding of students' perceptions and aspirations.

One of the most recurrent features was the depiction of the school as a house-like structure, typically characterised by a triangular roof, windows, and a front door. From Burns' symbolic perspective, this representation suggests that the students perceived their school as a place of protection and emotional containment. Cox's developmental framework further indicates that children tend to depict environments that are familiar and personally meaningful rather than architecturally accurate, while Malchiodi's perspective suggests that transforming the school into a home-like image reflects an emotional investment in the educational environment and a desire for stability within contexts of uncertainty.

The widespread absence of playgrounds, trees, flowers, or recreational elements was equally meaningful. Burns' framework interprets such omissions as indicative of the relative emotional salience of different environmental features, suggesting that safety and structure may currently outweigh leisure in the students' representations. From Cox's viewpoint, these omissions likely mirror the students' everyday experiences rather than idealised fantasies, revealing environments where opportunities for play and exploration are limited. Consistent with Malchiodi's interpretative approach, the visual minimalism may also reflect restricted opportunities for positive emotional expression, reinforcing interview findings in which students repeatedly expressed a desire for larger playgrounds, sports, and enjoyable school activities.

Another notable pattern was the limited use of colour and the predominance of monochromatic pencil drawings. While Burns associates restrained visual expression with simplified symbolic representations under stressful conditions, Cox argues that drawing style should be interpreted in relation to developmental and contextual factors rather than artistic ability alone. From Malchiodi's perspective, the restricted colour palette may reflect reduced emotional expressiveness or adaptive responses to prolonged exposure to stressful environments, although such interpretations should remain cautious and contextualised rather than diagnostic.

Conversely, drawings containing hearts, flowers, smiling faces, or anthropomorphic school buildings suggest strong emotional attachment to school. Burns would interpret these symbols as manifestations of affection and perceived security; Cox views them as evidence of children's tendency to attribute personal meaning and social qualities to significant environments; and Malchiodi considers

them indicators of positive emotional engagement and a sense of belonging within the educational setting.

Finally, the occasional inclusion of weapons, armed figures, or conflict-related imagery should be interpreted within the broader sociocultural context rather than as evidence of aggressive tendencies. Burns' symbolic framework suggests that such elements externalise salient aspects of children's lived realities; Cox's perspective emphasises that children frequently represent what they observe and experience in their surrounding environments; and Malchiodi highlights that artistic expression often provides a safe medium through which stressful experiences and emotions can be communicated when they are difficult to verbalise. Considered together, these frameworks indicate that the drawings primarily reflect the students' attempts to make sense of their everyday environment while simultaneously expressing aspirations for safety, normality, and inclusive educational experiences.

3.3 Descriptive Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

In order to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the evidence gathered, this section presents the quantitative and qualitative results together, describing the correlations between the questionnaire findings and the evidence from the interviews and drawings.

With regard to *Empowerment*, the quantitative data showed mean values in the middle range ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 0.73$), indicating a moderately positive perception of the opportunities for participation and involvement offered by schools during emergency situations. Consistent with these results, the qualitative evidence suggested that students attached particular importance to being listened to, to active participation in learning activities, and to feeling valued within the classroom environment. The drawings confirm this through the frequent depiction of school as a significant place of belonging and connection.

With regard to *Right to Education*, the quantitative analysis showed the lowest average score among those recorded ($M = 2.14$, $SD = 0.68$), whilst still falling within the average rating range. The qualitative evidence described school as an essential setting for ensuring learning continuity during emergencies, highlighting the value of being able to continue attending school and maintaining learning despite the associated difficulties.

With regard to *Well-being*, the quantitative results showed an average score of $M = 2.16$ ($SD = 0.80$). Consistent with this, the students' narratives described well-being as closely linked to their perception of physical and emotional safety,

the quality of their relationships with teachers and classmates, and the opportunity to experience school as a welcoming and protective environment. The drawings also reflected this, frequently depicting school as a familiar space characterised by symbolic elements associated with serenity, protection, and belonging.

With regard to *Teacher Strategies*, the quantitative findings yielded a mean score of $M = 2.16$ ($SD = 0.78$). The qualitative evidence identified teachers as central to students' school experiences, highlighting the importance of individual support, responsiveness to student needs, and teaching approaches that promote greater participation. Simultaneously, students expressed expectation for more engaging learning activities, a wider range of educational resources, and assessment practices that are more responsive to individual differences. Overall, the quantitative and qualitative findings presented a broadly consistent picture of students' school experiences in emergencies.

4. Results from Parents

The participating families live in diverse areas of the Jerusalem Governorate, both inside and outside the Wall. Families residing inside the Wall were mainly distributed across the neighbourhoods Wadi al-Joz, Silwan, Shu fat, Ras al-Amud, and Sheikh Jarrah, while those living outside the Wall were primarily located in al-Ram and al-'Eizariya. These areas differ in terms of access to education, social, and support services, exposing families to varying educational opportunities and constraints. The study population consisted of households of primary school students (Grades 1–4) enrolled in both public and private schools in the Jerusalem Governorate: a total of 374 parents completed the survey.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistical Findings of the Respondents' Demographics

Demographics		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	26	7.0
	Female	348	93.0
Educational Qualification	High School	138	36.9
	Diploma Degree	65	17.4
	Bachelor's Degree	132	35.3
	Master's Degree	31	8.3
	Doctorate	8	2.1

Place of Residence	Village	152	40.6
	City	212	56.7
	Refugee Camp	10	2.7
Number of family members living in the same household	2.00	4	1.1
	3.00	11	2.9
	4.00	48	12.8
	5.00	106	28.3
	6.00	92	24.6
	7.00	62	16.6
	8.00	31	8.3
	9.00	11	2.9
	10.00	9	2.4
Does your child/do any of your children have learning difficulties?	Yes	63	16.8
	No	311	83.2
Sum	374		

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistical findings of the respondents' demographics ($N = 374$). The majority of participants were female (93.0%), while only 7.0% were male. Regarding educational qualifications, most respondents held a high school diploma (36.9%) or a bachelor's degree (35.3%), followed by diploma degrees (17.4%), master's degrees (8.3%), and a small proportion held doctorates (2.1%). In terms of place of residence, more than half of the respondents lived in cities (56.7%), with 40.6% in villages, and a minority (2.7%) in refugee camps. Household size varied, with most families comprising 5 (28.3%) or 6 members (24.6%), while smaller households of 2–4 members and larger households of 7–10 members were less frequent. Regarding children with learning difficulties, 16.8% of families reported at least 1 affected child. Of these, most had only 1 child with difficulties (68.3%), followed by 2 children (23.8%); very few families (7.9%) had 3 or more, for a total of 63 families.

For the qualitative data, participants were purposefully selected in collaboration with school principals to ensure diverse representation. The sample included parents of students from single-gender and coeducational schools, with and without learning difficulties, totalling 6 parents from each school.

4.1 Quantitative Results

First, a quantitative descriptive analysis was conducted on the questionnaire data. Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) were calculated for each item, and parents' evaluations were interpreted using a 3-level scale: Low (1.00–2.33), Moderate (2.34–3.66), and High (3.67–5.00). Table 5 presents these results, offering an overall picture of parents' evaluations across the key dimensions of inclusive education in emergencies identified by the questionnaire.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistical Findings of the Respondents' Evaluation on Empowerment, Right to Education, Inclusion, Well-being, and Teacher Strategies

Aspect/Item	Mean	SD	Degree
<i>Empowerment</i>			
1. Parental involvement is seen as an effective way to form educational support groups for children during emergencies.	4.10	.75	High
2. Provision of educational resources (e.g. books, digital devices, and worksheets) is crucial for supporting student learning in emergencies.	3.86	.95	High
3. Community support facilitates student learning during emergencies.	3.79	.90	High
4. Community initiatives, such as volunteer teaching groups, are supportive of enhancing student learning during emergencies.	3.78	.92	High
Sum	3.88	.71	High
<i>Right to Education</i>			
5. Teachers and school administrators make appropriate efforts to support student education during crises, in accordance with guidelines for educational staff.	4.12	.74	High
6. Children have access to appropriate educational opportunities during emergencies.	3.81	.92	High
7. Children have access to essential educational resources (e.g. books, digital devices, and the internet) during emergencies.	3.77	.89	High
8. Existing laws contribute to protecting students' right to education during emergencies.	3.61	.97	Moderate
9. Support from educational or community institutions is important to ensure the continuity of student education.	3.59	.94	Moderate
Sum	3.78	.72	High

<i>Inclusion</i>			
10. Communication between parents, school administrators, and teachers is perceived as open, respectful, and focused on meeting the needs of all students.	4.03	.80	High
11. The school responds positively to parental feedback and opinions.	4.00	.78	High
12. The quality of education provided to students is inclusive and supports diverse learning needs.	3.91	.87	High
13. Parental involvement in school activities is a supportive element of the inclusive educational process for all students.	3.90	.78	High
14. The level of support provided to students with diverse needs contributes to ensuring equal opportunities for all learners.	3.69	.86	High
Sum	3.91	.68	High
<i>Well-being</i>			
15. The school provides educational activities and materials to effectively support student learning during emergencies.	3.93	.76	High
16. The school provides adequate support to promote inclusive education for all students.	3.92	.78	High
17. Children have access to educational materials and technologies that contribute to effective learning.	3.86	.819	High
18. Teachers' willingness to address students' psychological and emotional needs is considered essential to supporting them.	3.85	.86	High
19. The school is actively engaged with parents in decision-making and provides support for students during emergencies.	3.81	.88	High
Sum	3.88	.71	High
<i>Teacher Strategies</i>			
20. Teachers' classroom practices foster student well-being and reduce stress and anxiety.	3.94	.79	High
21. Children benefit from emotional support provided by teachers (e.g. listening and empathy) during crises.	3.93	.77	High
22. Effective communication between teachers and parents is crucial for monitoring students' feelings, behaviour, and academic progress.	3.89	.85	High
23. Additional training in psychosocial support strategies during emergencies is essential for teachers.	3.84	.86	High
24. The school provides effective psychosocial resources to the community to help students cope with changes.	3.68	.88	High
Sum	3.86	.65	High
Overall Mean	3.86	.62	High

As presented in Table 5, the overall mean score for all items is 3.86 ($SD = 0.62$), which falls within the high evaluation level. Across the 5 study dimensions, all domains achieve high mean scores. The *Inclusion* dimension records the highest overall mean ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.68$). Similarly, the dimensions of *Empowerment* ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.71$) and *Well-being* ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.71$) received high evaluation. The *Right to Education* dimension also attained a high overall mean ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.72$). However, 2 items, relating to the role of existing laws and institutional support, were rated moderately. Finally, the *Teacher Strategies* dimension achieved a high mean score ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.65$).

Inferential statistical analyses were conducted to identify any statistically significant differences across the aforementioned demographic variables at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

No statistically significant gender differences emerged across any of the questionnaire dimensions (all $p > .05$), indicating that parent evaluation of inclusive education during emergencies was consistent across male and female respondents.

In relation to educational qualification, descriptive statistics suggested lower ratings among participants holding bachelor's and master's degrees compared to those with high school or diploma qualifications. ANOVA confirmed statistically significant differences across all dimensions (all $p < .001$). Post hoc analyses indicated that respondents holding high school and diploma qualifications generally reported more positive evaluations than those holding bachelor's or master's degrees. No statistically significant differences were observed for participants involving doctorate degrees, although the results warrant cautious interpretation given the small sample size.

With reference to place of residence, although minor variations in mean scores were observed across villages, cities, and refugee camps, ANOVA results revealed no statistically significant differences in any study dimension (all $p > .05$). These findings suggested that parent perceptions were largely consistent regardless of place of residence.

In relation to family size, Kruskal–Wallis analysis showed no significant differences according to family size for *Empowerment*, *Right to Education*, *Flexibility and Adaptation*, *Well-being*, or the overall average (all $p > .05$). A significant difference emerged only for *Teacher Strategies* ($H = 16.310$, $p = .038$). However, none of the pairwise comparisons remained significant after Bonferroni correction, suggesting that family size does not appear to produce statistically reliable differences.

Finally, no statistically significant differences emerged between parents of children with or without learning difficulties across any questionnaire dimension (all

$p > .05$), although the difference for *Teacher Strategies* approached statistical significance ($p = .061$) and parents of children with learning difficulties assigned slightly higher scores in all domains.

4.2 Qualitative Results

The thematic analysis of parents' responses from the semi-structured interviews revealed a complex picture of perceptions of inclusive education during emergencies in Jerusalem Governorate schools. These perceptions are organised according to 7 main themes: continuity of education and safety; material and organisational constraints; quality of school support and academic interventions; teacher personality, commitment, and relationship with students; school–family partnerships and communication; positive parenting and partnership with students; and psychological and social support systems.

Theme 1: Continuity of Education and Safety

The first theme concerns continuity of education and safety, both shaped directly by the disruptions of the emergency context that participants experienced. Parents shared their experiences of severe anxiety regarding their children's education during crises. One parent stated: 'Education should never stop. Educational continuity must be provided for all students regardless of the current situation'. Other parents expressed the following concerns: 'I don't feel safe leaving my house' and 'When we discuss the safety of students, it is also true for all teachers,; it is also dangerous for them to be going back to school'. In relation to the lack of co-ordinated emergency planning, a father shared his frustration with not receiving information about an emergency programme designed specifically for parents and educators. Additionally, a mother stated her opinion simply: 'Emergency education isn't working. This generation has been challenged by many emergencies'.

According to parents' accounts, the challenges of a remote-education-based response to the emergency extend beyond the technological level, revealing deep-rooted pedagogical and social issues. For example, one influencing factor appears to be the widening gap in financial resources and digital access: many families disclosed that they cannot afford to purchase the requisite devices for distance learning for each family member, so remote education represents a privilege rather than a right. On the other hand, parents reported benefiting from remote education tools provided by teachers (e.g. asynchronous digital resources and pre-

recorded instructional videos). One mother commented: ‘As a parent, I am not a teacher and cannot explain things the same way the teacher would. The teacher’s recorded lessons were good for me as a parent’. Most parents support the idea of reducing students’ academic workload, establishing emergency preparedness plans, and adopting a range of teaching methods to ensure educational continuity during crises. However, parents still emphasise challenges in remote education, especially in providing suitable remote learning environments: ‘The child needs a focused environment for online education, which requires their mother’s supervision’.

Educational continuity also reshapes the roles of family members. Many mothers shared that they would feel burdened trying to fill the role of teacher while managing their households and domestic responsibilities, as their children are required to participate in overlapping Zoom calls. One mother explained: ‘As a mother, I am stuck teaching at home, yet I can’t open Zoom with one of my children; sometimes, the timing isn’t consistent and you cannot get clear explanations regarding recorded and periodic lessons’. This directly impacts parents who do not understand what is required of them or how to locate assignments and lessons.

Data also highlighted engagement problems during emergency remote learning. One father commented: ‘When using Microsoft Teams during an emergency, interaction is often limited, and my child is disengaged unless the teacher actively involves him’. He added, ‘I observe that they do not pay attention to one another. They perform better when using both video and audio’, suggesting that visual and audio contact increases a sense of proximity.

Theme 2: Material and Organisational Constraints

Parents are realistic about the evident challenges. One commented that ‘The school is in a tough position; any time a group of people donates or organises any events, the school accepts’, indicating a dependence on outside funding sources. One administrator stated that there were ‘No books for kindergarten yet from the ministry; they are still in the ministry’, clearly indicating bureaucratic issues impacting early years operations.

Theme 3: Quality of School Support and Academic Intervention

Parents’ accounts assessed how well schools adapted educational practices for students with specific needs. One parent described how teachers supported their child’s desire to become a class monitor by assigning him into a scouting group, which increased his motivation. They explained that their child progressed from avoiding social activities to becoming a leader who participates in school broad-

casts. In this direction, as highlighted in the previous section, school counsellors were considered to play an important role in monitoring and supporting at-risk students through preventive interventions.

Positive reinforcement emerged as another effective strategy for increasing students' confidence and engagement, according to parents. One parent highlighted the encouraging feedback their child received on schoolwork: 'You are a champion'. Teachers were appreciated for providing support beyond traditional classroom instruction. As one parent stated: 'This year, he [the student] has completely transformed, and I am so proud of the work the teachers have done'. Conversely, some parents expressed concerns regarding the development of foundational academic skills during the early grades: 'Teachers should focus on the basics of letters and writing'.

Despite the examples given of effective individualised support, the analysis revealed significant disparities in the availability and quality of support services across schools. One parent shared the following: 'My son has been diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). He attended a local boys' school for 1 year and 6 months, where he received support from a specialist who conducted an assessment for diagnosis; revealed concentration difficulties, and so the teacher provided him with an individualised learning plan, which greatly aided his success'. She continued: 'After he completed his treatment, he returned to a regular school. He has received continued encouragement from the teachers, was able to participate in the school's broadcasts, and now is also a member of the school's sports team'.

However, such experiences appear to be exceptions rather than the norm. Of her child's teachers, another parent revealed, '[They] did not communicate with me – they hold only one meeting per year and no courses for mothers; they just call when there's a problem with my son', indicating reactive rather proactive engagement. Participants described how this disparity creates equity issues in accessing services, leading to marginalisation.

Theme 4: Teacher Personality, Commitment, and Relationship with Students

Parents consistently identified teacher attributes as a key factor influencing educational success. One parent explained: 'It is important for a teacher to be patient; the teacher has to control the class, especially during remote sessions where they are connected via computers'. That same respondent emphasised: 'Teachers have to show their commitment through seriousness, and parents have to encourage their children to commit themselves to learning'. Parents also highlighted examples of effective remote teaching practices: 'The students benefited from

remote sessions; the way the teacher conducted remote sessions demonstrated there was commitment between student and teacher'. Participants described teacher – student relationships as extending beyond academics. Teachers were reported to support students on multiple levels, such as helping them obtain school uniforms, demonstrating patience with challenging behaviours, and creating a welcoming and engaging learning environment. Positive interpersonal relationships appear to have contributed significantly to student well-being and sense of belonging. These accounts suggest that teacher commitment and professionalism play a fundamental role in sustaining student engagement, particularly during periods of educational disruption.

Parents particularly valued teachers' efforts in supporting students who may be subject to exclusion or discrimination. One participant shared: 'My son wears glasses; the teacher tells the class not to make fun of my son'. Examples were given of teachers addressing individual differences through inclusive educational practices: 'the teacher normalised differences in student performance, so that each student was able to accept differences'. Such approaches help students develop positive self-perception, promote peer acceptance, and foster inclusive classroom environments in which diversity is recognised and respected.

Theme 5: School–Family Partnerships and Communication

Parents highlighted the importance of a strong school–family partnership in supporting children's social and emotional development. Families contribute to creating a supportive educational environment by visiting their child's school, maintaining regular contact with teachers, and actively participating in school life. One parent suggested, 'Have his classmates come to the house with the teacher, so that they can establish better relationships', emphasising the value of extending social connections beyond the school setting. Another parent stated, 'I have substituted for the teacher in the class when he was not present, and my son felt so happy to see me in his school', demonstrating how schools are becoming more open to parental participation in educational activities. Parents also highlighted how schools and families frequently work together to address students' educational needs. One parent shared: 'I spoke with the principal and told him I wanted to help my son who has tremendous difficulties in reading'. In response, the school connected the child with a resource teacher who provided targeted support, encouragement, and reassurance to both the student and the parent. Schools also organised meetings where parents could discuss educational activities and experiences. Such examples demonstrate how partnerships between schools and families can strengthen students' well-being in emergency contexts. Parents

also appreciated regular communication regarding their children's progress: 'When a problem occurs, they communicate with me as a parent, and they call me for meetings to observe how my child is doing'. Participants affirmed how school counsellors maintained ongoing contact with families and, when necessary, referred them to external psychological services. Following intervention, counsellors continued to monitor progress and provide feedback.

Beyond supporting students, schools recognised the importance of addressing parents' well-being – particularly that of mothers – offering them psychological and social support programmes. Parents described these actions as rooted in the understanding that their own emotional well-being directly affects their children. One parent shared an example of a support group activity: 'Each mother shares what their name means, by who they are named, what they would like to be named, and how they are affected by their names. We enjoy discussing our shared experiences'. These structured meetings, often organised weekly in collaboration with local associations, provided opportunities for emotional expression, peer support, and community belonging. The collaborative relationships established between families and schools contributed to high levels of trust and satisfaction. In this sense, parents proved to completely trust school staff with their children. One participant commented: 'We have complete trust in the teachers and know that they care for our children'. Another parent who works in the school cafeteria said, 'This year's teachers are wonderful'. These parents recognised how mutual trust plays an integral role in building successful school–family partnerships.

Parents also highlighted the importance of balancing support with accountability within school administration. One participant stated: 'In order to create relationships with students' families, it is critical to hold both the parent and the principal accountable'. This perspective suggests that productive school–family relationships are built on a foundation of shared responsibilities and clear expectations. On the other hand, despite describing generally positive experiences, some parents reported limitations in formal communication processes. One participant observed: 'There is no official meeting until the start of the school year, when we get information about the school's policies'. Although informal visits were described as often being possible, access to information frequently depended on parents' availability and initiative. As a result, families with less time or fewer opportunities for informal visits tended to experience reduced access to school-related information, highlighting an area for potential improvement.

Theme 6: Positive Parenting and Partnership with Children

Interview data also provides evidence of pedagogically aware parents who are developing democratic partnership models with their children. In this sense, parents viewed themselves as older, wiser peer rather than authoritarian figures, asking their children what they think about their decisions rather than issuing commands. Parents reported that, during the emergency, they sought to support their children's autonomy and encourage them to express their thoughts and feelings freely. To achieve this, they stated how they engaged in everyday practices such as open conversations about feelings, encouraged recreational and social activities (e.g. play dates), and provided opportunities to take on responsibilities (e.g. class jobs and group projects). This reflects parents' efforts to create supportive and safe environments for their children despite challenging circumstances. Activities such as journalling about hopes and aspirations, holiday plans, and hobbies were perceived as valuable coping strategies. They also valued drawing as a medium for working through emotional experiences.

However, the harsh reality often prevents parents from achieving these educational objectives. One mother illustrated: 'As a mother, I have a hard time encouraging my oldest son to express his feelings. He is very shy. I try to bring him too many educational books, get him to write about what is bothering him, or give them to his father, try to play together and share their toys. Sometimes we go to the park, but it is no longer safe for him to go out, and we have to walk on the street'.

Theme 7: Psychological and Social Support Systems

In interviews, many parents whose children have experienced family crises due to their fathers' incarceration echoed similar sentiments about how their children were feeling. One parent shared of their child: 'His psyche resembles that of a blind person due to his father being in prison, indicating the depths of their child's pain and mental suffering. Addressing this pain required substantial collaborative intervention by the school and family: 'I talked to the school and worked with the guidance counsellor. I visited the school often'. The support of the counsellor, who 'met with my child and with me to provide support', evidences a collaborative approach in support of both student and family. Another parent stated, 'My son was so happy that I was at the school', emphasising the importance of effective school-family partnership when addressing significant mental health issues.

Parents demonstrated a keen awareness of the effect of family crises on their child's psychological state. As one parent recalled, 'In the fourth grade, he resented his younger sister for having better grades than him', illustrating how intra-family

mental health challenges can directly affect a child's academic performance. Another mother emphasised: 'Teachers need to be aware of what is going on in the child's life and should ease the educational process to some degree'. The mother also offered to 'provide remote education to reduce the number of tasks the student has to complete while still receiving a complete education', demonstrating that flexibility during emergencies could allow teachers to address the mental health needs of their students. The mother continued her praise: 'The school has not let us down on anything; they provided excellent service to my son. They motivated him and encouraged him, thank God'.

Beyond addressing psychological distress, parents highlighted the importance of fostering students' active participation within the school community as a form of social support. Many participants expressed desire for schools to adopt democratic approaches that help students feel valued and included. One mother stated: 'The assistant principal asks her opinion and she gives it; and the principal does the same by consulting her for plans for activities and celebrations'. By consulting students on school activities and decisions, schools ensure that each student has a voice in matters that affect them while simultaneously promoting civic participation skills that support active citizenship and belonging.

4.3 Descriptive Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

This section integrates the quantitative and qualitative findings, bringing together the main questionnaire results with the themes identified in the interviews. With regard to *Empowerment*, the quantitative findings revealed a high mean score ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.71$), indicating generally positive perceptions of family and community involvement in supporting education during emergencies. Consistent with these findings, the qualitative data showed that parents described practices that promote students' active participation, foster school–family collaboration, and engage the wider educational community in supporting students.

Regarding *Right to Education*, the quantitative analysis yielded a high mean score ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.72$), although somewhat more moderate ratings were observed for items relating to legislative frameworks and institutional support. The qualitative findings echoed these results, with parents highlighting the importance of ensuring educational continuity during emergencies, the challenges associated with remote learning, unequal access to educational resources, and the need for effective educational planning during crisis.

Flexibility and Educational Adaptation recorded the highest mean score among

all dimensions examined ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.68$). The qualitative findings described practices involving adapted educational pathways, school–family communication, personalised educational interventions, and differentiated responses tailored to student needs. Parents also referred to schools’ ability to adapt organisational and teaching practices to promote student participation, even during emergencies.

With regard to *Well-being*, the quantitative findings indicated a high mean score ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.71$). Consistent with these results, the qualitative narratives emphasised psychological and emotional support for students and families, school counselling services, initiatives to support parents, and the development of educational relationships that foster safety, belonging, and resilience during emergencies.

Finally, for *Teacher Strategies*, the quantitative findings showed a high mean score ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.65$). The qualitative evidence described teachers actively providing emotional support, adapting teaching activities, fostering inclusive relationships, and maintaining ongoing communication with families. Participants also consistently highlighted teacher professionalism, empathy, and school–family collaboration as key features of the educational practices implemented during emergencies.

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Chapter 10

Discussion

*Maisa' Issa Khalil Abu-Nimah, Nihad Majeed Abu Irmeleh, Fatin Jubeh,
Shaima' Abdalkareem Ali, Ilaria D'Angelo, Sawsan Victor Istephan,
Buad Khales, Tommaso Santilli, Arianna Taddei*

1. Foreword

This chapter presents an integrated discussion of the findings emerging from the research through the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative evidence drawn from the perspectives of the groups involved in the study. In line with the mixed-methods design and Convergent Parallel Design adopted (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; see Part II, Chapters 2 and 5), the discussion relates the findings to the study's 5 research questions to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Triangulation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023; Fetters et al., 2013) enables comparison of different perspectives of the same phenomenon. Here, it highlights convergences, divergences, and complementarities across the evidence gathered through the various research instruments administered to teachers, students, and parents. This process moves beyond a narrow, group-specific interpretation of the findings to provide a more in-depth understanding of the dynamics characterising inclusive education in emergency contexts. The discussion is organised into 6 sections. The first 5 sections address the respective research questions (see Part II, Chapter 6), while the final section provides an integrated discussion of the study's main findings.

2. Community Initiatives Aimed at Ensuring Equal Learning Opportunities During Emergencies

Triangulating the findings emerging from the first research question – ‘*What practices are realised by the community to guarantee equal learning opportunities in emergency situations?*’ – suggests that empowerment is one of the main processes through which the community seeks to promote educational equity. This finding aligns with the Education in Emergencies perspective that learning continuity depends not just on access to schooling, but also on the school ecosystem’s capacity (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Rahman, 2025) to foster active student participation and engagement (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies [INEE], 2024).

Empowerment, as a relational and societal construct, therefore requires contexts that enable authentic participation through the collective contribution of schools, parents, and communities. The entire ecosystem is called upon to create the conditions that foster student agency and the development of meaningful educational experiences (Epstein, 2018; Teklemariam et al., 2026).

Based on these premises, a first point of convergence concerns one of the main strategies adopted to ensure equal opportunities: the establishment of a stable school–family partnership that supports the continuity of student learning. Beyond a simple exchange of information, school–family collaboration is described by both teachers and parents as an essential condition for continuously monitoring student needs, adapting teaching practices, and preventing disruptions to instruction activities. Teachers reported that dialogue with parents offers them valuable insight for adapting teaching methods and resources to individual learners’ needs, while parents described their own active participation in planning instructional interventions – through jointly identifying support strategies and, in some cases, direct involvement in school activities.

This form of cooperation is widely recognised in the literature as a key factor in strengthening the school community’s capacity to respond to student needs during emergencies. It promotes student engagement and reduces the risk that temporary difficulties will produce new inequalities (Christenson, 2003; Epstein et al., 2019). Neither teachers nor parents describe these practices as exceptional interventions; rather, they regard them as an integral part of their everyday collaboration. This suggests that the quality of the school–family relationship itself is one of the main factors underpinning the resilience of learning processes in crisis contexts, consistent with previous research (Epstein, 2018; Goodall, 2020).

A second point of convergence concerns the recognition, by both teachers and

parents, of empowerment practices that extend beyond the strictly educational domain. These include psychological support, financial assistance, specialised counselling, socio-psychological programmes for parents, and collaboration with local organisations. Together, these findings confirm that ensuring equal opportunities in emergency situations requires a systemic response involving the entire school ecosystem (Abu Irmeleh et al., 2026; Epstein, 2018; Khaled et al., 2026). Indeed, highly unstable contexts generate needs that affect not only students but also teachers and parents. Addressing these challenges therefore requires integrated responses capable of simultaneously supporting the educational, emotional, relational, and social dimensions of all members of the school community (Teklemariam et al., 2026).

While the adults' perspectives show consistency, the students' viewpoints introduce an interesting element of discontinuity. Indeed, although teachers and parents assigned high ratings to empowerment practices in the questionnaires ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.39$ and $M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.71$, respectively), students reported only moderate ratings, with a mean score of 2.15 ($SD = 0.73$). This discrepancy emerged consistently across both the quantitative and qualitative evidence, suggesting that the adoption of participatory practices does not automatically translate into opportunities for student involvement. Student interviews indicated that being listened to and involved in decisions concerning school life is an essential condition for feeling fully recognised within the educational process. In this regard, the account of a student who describes not being selected by the teacher despite volunteering is particularly revealing, as it illustrates how inequalities may also arise through everyday interactions.

Furthermore, students express a desire to participate more actively in classroom activities and contribute to school life. Their accounts suggest that equal opportunities are not limited to attending school, but also encompass the possibility of playing an active role in teaching and learning. In this context, access to education is a necessary but insufficient condition: genuine participation requires that students contribute to the construction of knowledge, express their views, and have their role within the school community recognised. This interpretation aligns with the construct of student agency (Mameli et al., 2023; OECD, 2019a, 2019b; Reeve & Tseng, 2011), highlighting that empowerment promotes learning not only when students receive support, but above all when they are recognised as competent contributors to knowledge-building. Taken together, these findings suggest that teachers and parents tend to interpret empowerment primarily as the community's capacity to provide support and services, while students associate it above all with the opportunity to be heard and to have their contributions recognised.

3. The Right to Education in Emergency Situations

Triangulating the findings related to the second research question – ‘*What does the right to education mean in these situations?*’ – highlights how the different groups in the study understand the right to education differently. As in the previous section, a discrepancy emerged between the high quantitative ratings assigned by teachers ($M = 3.95$; $SD = 0.34$) and parents ($M = 3.78$; $SD = 0.72$), and the more moderate ratings reported by students ($M = 2.14$; $SD = 0.68$). For the latter, this was the lowest-rated dimension across the entire questionnaire.

From a qualitative perspective, Tomaševski’s (2006) 4-A scheme provides a particularly useful lens through which to interpret this discrepancy. The adults’ accounts reflect a conception of the right to education primarily associated with the dimensions of availability and accessibility, emphasising the school system’s capacity to ensure continuity of education even under emergency conditions. By contrast, students’ accounts place greater emphasis on the dimensions of acceptability and adaptability. For them, the right to education extends beyond the possibility of continuing to attend school and encompasses the quality of their everyday educational experience. This includes opportunities to participate actively in school life, engage in play and recreational activities, be listened to and assessed fairly, build positive relationships with teachers and classmates, and fully develop their personalities.

Despite these differing perspectives, continuity of education emerges as a shared concern across all participant groups, albeit in different ways. In this regard, the analysis of student drawings is particularly revealing. The recurring depiction of school as a stable building, symbolically comparable to a home, suggests that students perceive it as a place of protection and stability in a context marked by uncertainty. This symbolic representation highlights the role of the school in sustaining access to education and in providing routine and a sense of normality and existential continuity, thereby offering students a secure point of reference during emergencies (INEE, 2024).

Maintaining stable educational pathways is also a priority for both parents and teachers. However, achieving this is not always possible in practice. From the teachers’ perspective, considerable efforts have been made to differentiate instruction and ensure continuity of learning through video lessons, audio recordings, digital platforms, augmented reality tools, and, in some cases, artificial intelligence applications. At the same time, while recognising the value of these efforts, parents emphasise the fragility of the conditions on which their effectiveness depends. They highlight organisational challenges related to emergency management, eco-

conomic and demographic inequalities, communication difficulties, and the teaching responsibilities placed on parents.

These reflections point to another area of convergence between teachers and parents: the central role of technology in safeguarding the right to education. However, even in this respect, their perspectives diverge regarding the conditions that determine its effective use. Teachers describe digital technologies as a practical means of safeguarding students' right to education by ensuring continuity of learning, maintaining communication with parents, and supporting differentiated instruction. Parents, in turn, acknowledge the value of these technologies while drawing attention to the limitations imposed by the social inequalities that characterise crisis contexts such as Palestine.

In particular, distance schooling is described as being shaped by unequal access to financial resources and digital devices, the quality of internet connections, the need to create home environments conducive to learning, and the organisational responsibilities placed on parents. Against this background, the findings highlight that technology, although an indispensable resource, may itself become a source of inequality unless supported by appropriate policies (Avdiel & Blau, 2025; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1960, 2016; United Nations, 2015; Veletsianos & Houlden, 2019).

Another area of convergence concerns the role of the school–family partnership. Teachers place a high value on communication with parents, considering it essential for monitoring student well-being and ensuring continuity between school and home. Parents likewise recognise the importance of this relationship but describe a more complex reality, shaped by the challenges associated with distance teaching. In particular, the interviews reveal difficulties in interpreting assignments, scheduling conflicts between online classes, and unclear expectations regarding the respective responsibilities of teachers and parents. Consequently, cooperation between the two is necessary but, on its own, insufficient: it requires shared organisational models, clear procedures, and advance planning for emergencies.

Within this framework, institutional support also emerges as a crucial factor. Ensuring the right to education during emergencies requires the development of coordinated policies and preparedness strategies capable of supporting schools in responding effectively to crisis situations (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [CESCR], 1999). Parents' accounts, however, point to insufficient regulatory and organisational support, reflected in the absence of structured emergency plans and shared operational guidelines. Their perspectives reinforce the view that the quality of the educational response depends not only on the com-

mitment of individual schools, but also on the availability of coordinated public policies and effective governance.

4. Inclusion in Emergency Situations

Triangulating the findings on the third research question – ‘*What does inclusion mean in these situations?*’ – yields a conception of inclusion consistent with the main theoretical paradigms: not merely a guarantee of access to education, but a dynamic, multidimensional process ensuring equity, dignity, participation, and respect for all students’ needs (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; UNESCO, 1990, 2012).

However, this understanding must be read against the critical conditions of the Palestinian social and educational context, where the principles of inclusive education face significant barriers to effective implementation. Here, inclusion is not simply a matter of meeting regulatory requirements; rather, it takes shape as an ongoing process of pedagogical mediation, through which educators respond to organisational, relational, socioeconomic, and institutional constraints that limit its full realisation (Dryden-Peterson, 2016).

From this perspective, personalisation plays a central role: it is the pedagogical means through which the gap between students’ right to education (United Nations General Assembly [UNGA], 1989) and its practical realisation can be bridged, in a context where continuity and quality of learning are severely compromised. Teachers and parents’ perspectives showed that positive perceptions of inclusion are closely linked to differentiated instructional strategies, accessible learning environments, a sustained school–family partnership, and continuity of educational provision.

The high scores reported by teachers on the *Inclusion* dimension of the questionnaire ($M = 4.03$; $SD = 0.31$) were corroborated by their qualitative evidence. They described the use of multisensory resources and compensatory tools alongside active and collaborative approaches designed to promote student engagement. They also referred to the use of digital technologies to sustain learning continuity and maintain communication with parents when face-to-face teaching was suspended. This perspective is echoed by parents, who assigned the highest mean score in the entire questionnaire to the dimension of flexibility and instructional adaptation ($M = 3.91$; $SD = 0.68$).

Their accounts reinforce a conception of inclusion realised through adapting curriculum content, instructional strategies, and learning objectives, alongside multiple means of engagement, representation, action and expression, and assess-

ment (CAST, 2024; Kohout-Diaz, 2023; Meyer et al., 2014). It follows that adapting the curriculum to contextual conditions and to the profound inequalities of Palestinian students' educational experiences cannot be reduced to a purely methodological competence on the part of teachers. Rather, it should be understood as a shared ethical responsibility of schools, parents, and the wider community – one aimed at safeguarding the well-being, dignity, participation, and right to education of all learners. Furthermore, adults' accounts reflect a conception of inclusion that extends beyond a purely organisational and instructional view of education. Instead, it emerges as a daily practice of resilience, taking shape through relationships that support students' emotional and psychological development (UNESCO, 2020).

Thus, the pedagogical principle of care emerges as the foundation of the educational relationship (Bondi & Tavanti, 2025). In the Palestinian school context, this principle is realised through the establishment of appropriate expectations for learning outcomes and through attention to students' emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It is further reflected in teachers' willingness to assume responsibilities towards students and parents that sometimes extend beyond their formal professional duties. For school systems operating under crisis conditions, investing in personalisation and the educational relationship represents a moral, professional, and systemic strategy for promoting social justice (Nussbaum, 2011).

An integrated analysis of the findings nevertheless reveals a discrepancy between adults' perceptions and those of students, whose ratings for *Empowerment* and *Inclusion* are considerably more moderate ($M = 2.15$; $SD = 0.73$). Although students recognise school as a safe and relationally meaningful environment, their accounts reveal experiences of marginalisation arising from inaccessible and overcrowded settings, together with limited opportunities to express themselves, be heard, and have their aspirations recognised. They also emphasise the need for schools to provide play and recreation spaces, engaging teaching approaches, and assessment practices that are more equitable and responsive to individual differences. Furthermore, consistent with previous research (Bakhshi et al., 2018; Kett & van Ommeren, 2009), greater forms of exclusion are reported by students with disabilities. Their accounts describe receiving less attention from teachers, having fewer opportunities for social interaction, and lacking access to specialised services capable of supporting shared responsibility among schools, parents, and the wider community.

A final area of convergence concerns the challenges to inclusion identified by all stakeholder groups involved in the study. These are described as a combination of systemic, organisational, pedagogical, and relational barriers. For example,

teachers' accounts highlight a shortage of specialised support teachers for students with disabilities; inaccessible and overcrowded school facilities; limited financial, technological, and time resources; and an inadequate institutional response to these challenges. Taken together, these conditions place teachers under considerable emotional and professional strain, intensified by having to cope simultaneously with their own experiences of precariousness as well as those of their students. This condition, which resembles the phenomenon of vicarious trauma (Figley, 1995), may contribute to the development of burnout, which is characterised by emotional exhaustion, a reduced sense of professional efficacy, and a progressive decline in occupational well-being (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Parents, for their part, report disparities in the availability and quality of support services across schools, together with the absence of emergency plans and unequal access to financial resources and digital devices. They also describe the substantial responsibilities associated with distance teaching, as well as forms of parental involvement that are often reactive rather than proactive.

5. Well-being in Emergency Situations

Triangulating the findings related to the research question – ‘*How is well-being addressed in these situations?*’ – revealed a shared understanding of well-being as an essential condition for ensuring effective educational processes in emergency contexts (Burde et al., 2015). Consistent with the international literature identifying well-being as a prerequisite for learning, participation, and personal development (Soutter, O’Steen & Gilmore, 2014; Tobia et al., 2019; UNGA, 1989), it is not interpreted merely as the absence of psychological distress (Ben-Arieh et al., 2014; Dodge et al., 2012). Rather, well-being is understood as a multidimensional, situated construct that emerges from the dynamic interplay of organisational conditions, teaching practices, and individuals’ lived experiences. In the Palestinian context, it depends on schools’ capacity to manage the uncertainty associated with potential emergencies, mitigate disruptions to education, and provide students with a minimum level of educational and emotional stability. Overall, the quantitative findings indicated high levels of perceived school well-being among both teachers ($M = 3.88$; $SD = 0.49$) and parents ($M = 3.88$; $SD = 0.71$). Students also reported positive perceptions of safety, belonging, and support, although their ratings were more moderate than those of adults ($M = 2.16$; $SD = 0.80$).

All stakeholder groups agreed that well-being is a pedagogical responsibility requiring the practical implementation of the principles of inclusive education

and differentiated instruction, grounded in an understanding of students' psychological, emotional, and relational needs. In this regard, teachers described the use of individual psychological counselling, expressive and play-based activities, adapted learning objectives, and inclusive assessment practices to help students manage stress. They also referred to the development of programmes aimed at promoting emotional regulation, a sense of self-efficacy, and positive relationships both among peers and between students and teachers.

As discussed earlier, student drawings portrayed school as an emotionally reassuring and protective environment in the face of external threats. Safety and connection emerge as key qualities of the educational experience in Palestinian schools. At the same time, other dimensions of school well-being – engagement in learning activities, opportunities for expression and participation, and feeling heard and recognised – appear less well-developed (Hossain et al., 2022). A further point of convergence concerns understanding well-being as a shared experience that extends beyond individual students to include parents as integral members of the school community. This perspective reflects a conception of well-being not as an individual emotional state but as a relational condition grounded in trust and mutual respect – among adults, and between adults and students – a condition essential for both learning and educational development (Allen et al., 2018).

From this perspective, the decision of some schools to involve parents in psychological and social support programmes, support groups, and initiatives designed to help them process the emotional consequences of the conflict assumes particular significance. These practices can be understood not as ancillary forms of support directed at parents but as components of a broader pedagogical approach aimed at strengthening shared responsibility and the school–family partnership.

In fact, parents and teachers constitute a mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) in which conditions can be created to promote student well-being, participation, and learning in emergency contexts (Burde et al., 2015; Pirchio et al., 2013; Powell et al., 2010). Promoting communication between parents and teachers supports instructional planning that is more responsive to students' needs. It also represents an important pedagogical resource for enhancing the well-being of both teachers and parents while reducing feelings of isolation and social detachment, particularly during periods of distance teaching. In this way, the school–family partnership functions as a key mechanism for strengthening the resilience of the entire school ecosystem during emergencies.

6. Teachers' Strategic Skills During Emergencies

The fifth and final research question asks, '*Which competences are strategic for teachers in emergency situations?*' The triangulated findings show that teachers and parents share a common understanding of the strategic competences teachers should draw upon in such situations. Student accounts, in turn, offer a complementary perspective on how these competences are enacted in everyday practice. This difference is reflected first and foremost in the quantitative findings: teachers and parents assigned high ratings ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.35$ and $M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.65$, respectively), whereas students reported more moderate ratings ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 0.78$). This discrepancy suggests that practices considered effective by adults are not necessarily experienced by students as adequate forms of support. However, this does not call into question teachers' professional competence. Rather, it highlights the need to evaluate the effectiveness of these practices in terms of their capacity to make educational support genuinely accessible and meaningful for students, particularly in situations of greater vulnerability (Noddings, 2013; Subban et al., 2022).

The first strategic competence identified by participants is pedagogical flexibility (Eikeland & Ohna, 2022; OECD, 2024; Tomlinson, 2017), which teachers describe as the capacity to continuously redesign instruction by modifying curriculum content, adapting assessment practices, adopting active and inclusive approaches, and integrating digital technologies. Despite the challenges parents report, technology is viewed not merely as technical support for distance teaching, but as a resource expanding opportunities to adapt teaching to different contexts and learners' needs. Parents reinforce this view, emphasising teachers' capacity to modify learning activities and teaching approaches and to tailor educational interventions to individual learners. Together, these perspectives suggest that, in emergency situations, teaching competence should not be understood as mastery of predefined methodologies, but rather as the professional capacity to continuously adapt learning environments, tools, and strategies in order to ensure continuity of education.

A second recurring theme is competence in building educational partnerships and managing relationships with colleagues and parents. Consistent with the ecosystemic conception of teaching professionalism (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Rahman, 2025), both teachers and parents identify school–family cooperation as an essential condition for promoting student well-being.

A third area of convergence is emotional regulation (Mordini et al., 2013; Sutton, 2004). Both groups of adults recognise that, in crisis situations, teachers are

required to fulfil responsibilities that extend beyond their instructional role. In this regard, teachers emphasise the need to promote student social and emotional well-being, collaborate with counsellors and external professionals, remain calm during emergencies, and help prepare the entire school community to respond effectively to crises. Parents, for their part, place greater value on qualities such as empathy, patience, willingness to listen, and capacity to provide emotional support. They also highlight the importance of fostering student motivation, confidence, and self-esteem through positive feedback and recognition of individual achievements.

Taken together, these findings reinforce the view that adopting an educational leadership approach can foster resilience across the school community, even under conditions of severe emergency (Istifan et al., 2026; Madali ska-Michalak & Flores, 2025) – an approach characterised by its capacity to provide relational security and mitigate uncertainty throughout the school community. Compared with the competences identified by adults, students' accounts once again offer a particularly valuable interpretive perspective. Unlike teachers and parents, students do not explicitly describe which competences teachers should or should not possess. Instead, they highlight their importance indirectly, through situations where these competences are not fully enacted. Their calls for greater individual support, more engaging teaching approaches, and increased opportunities for participation echo the same competences adults identify: pedagogical flexibility, relational competence, and responsiveness to learners' needs. Rather than outlining an alternative model of teaching professionalism, student accounts show how these competences play out in everyday practice.

7. Integrated Discussion of the Results

A comprehensive analysis of the 5 research questions highlights certain interpretive patterns common to the entire study. The triangulated evidence from teachers, parents, and students shows that the results form complementary perspectives on the same phenomena, rather than 3 separate sets of evidence. A first common element concerns the systematic difference between the ratings adults and students gave in the questionnaire: across all dimensions, parents and teachers assigned high scores, while students gave moderate ratings. Even for *Well-being* – the one dimension where students' rating was high – their score was still lower than that of adults.

This recurring pattern suggests the difference reflects not individual aspects

of the school experience, but a different way of interpreting its quality. While teachers and parents tend to evaluate the *availability* of strategies the school has implemented, and the education system's ability to maintain continuity even under critical conditions, students focus on the *quality* of their daily school and interpersonal experiences. The qualitative findings help explain this discrepancy: students' accounts did not question the value of schooling or their teachers' commitment, but rather consistently pointed to a need for greater participation, recognition, and consideration. At the same time, the triangulation highlights several important areas of convergence across the participant groups. Chief among these is the relationship between teachers and parents, which emerges as one of the principal resources sustaining students' education during emergencies. The findings show that the school–family partnership extends well beyond communication between adults, taking the form of a genuine educational partnership built on shared responsibilities, goals, and strategies that promote students' learning and well-being.

Overall, the findings suggest that the resilience of the school ecosystem depends, to a considerable extent, on building a community in which schools and parents act as complementary partners. At the same time, the analysis identifies several critical challenges, most clearly raised by parents: distance teaching and digital technologies are recognised as valuable resources, but also expose existing inequalities – including unequal access to digital devices, the financial resources required to obtain them, and the digital literacy needed to use them effectively. The triangulated findings therefore confirm that technology is fundamental to sustaining continuity of education during emergencies, though its effectiveness depends not only on the availability of digital tools but also on the education system's capacity to ensure their equitable and sustainable use. This is a challenge even for school systems with greater stability and affluence, but it becomes considerably more complex in prolonged emergency contexts such as Palestine, where multidimensional vulnerability and poverty further constrain educational opportunities.

Pedagogical flexibility stands out as another recurring element across the dimensions examined, emerging as one of the main factors contributing to school resilience. Indeed, teachers' capacity for differentiated instruction – adapting methodologies, tools, organisation, and interpersonal approaches – supports continuity of education, personalisation of interventions, responsiveness to unforeseen events, the creation of inclusive environments, and the management of emotional dynamics. The research reinforces the understanding that, in highly unstable contexts, the defining feature of teaching professionalism lies not in ap-

plying standardised inclusive procedures, but in adapting instructional practices to the evolving needs of students and the conditions of the context.

At the same time, this finding challenges the view of pedagogical flexibility as a teacher's individual responsibility alone; emergency situations also place school staff under significant emotional, organisational, and personal pressure. In such circumstances, the capacity to adapt one's professional practice depends on community and institutional support provided to teachers. Pedagogical flexibility, therefore, cannot be viewed as a skill exercised independently of teachers' working and living conditions, but rather as a process that develops and is sustained only when adequate levels of well-being, organisational support, and professional recognition are present. Investing in school resilience means supporting not only students but also teachers, so that they can continue to fulfil their roles with balance and continuity even in the most critical situations.

Alongside these aspects, a systemic limitation also becomes clearly apparent: teachers and parents share the perception that institutional support does not always match the complexity of their life contexts. Their requests centre on greater resource availability, shared protocols for managing emergencies, more coordinated operational guidelines, and proactive planning to support schools' work. This finding highlights that educational resilience cannot be entrusted solely to individual teachers' professionalism and their collaboration with parents, but requires structured policies and organisational frameworks that support the efforts of school communities.

Finally, regardless of differences in participants' perceptions, the triangulated evidence clearly reaffirms the school's role as a point of reference in emergency situations. While teachers and parents value its capacity to ensure continuity of education, students recognise it first and foremost as a place of belonging, connection, and everyday life. This synthesis is expressed most vividly in the students' drawings, which – despite simple landscapes, a limited colour palette, and occasional conflict-related elements – consistently depict the school as a stable, home-like building. It is in this image that the triangulated analysis of responses to the 5 research questions reveals its most profound insight: in emergency situations, the school's resilience lies not solely in keeping learning pathways active, but above all in its continued capacity to represent, in students' eyes, a liveable place – a home offering protection, belonging, and hope, even when their world loses stability.

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Closing Remarks

*Buad Khales, Nihad Majeed Abu Irmeleh, Maisa' Issa Khalil Abu-Nimah,
Shaima' Abdalkareem Ali, Ilaria D'Angelo, Sawsan Victor Istephan,
Tommaso Santilli, Arianna Taddei*

1. Methodological Limitations of the Research

The study presented in this volume was conceived as a participatory pedagogical inquiry aimed at understanding how educational communities develop inclusive and participatory processes and protect the right to education in a context of protracted emergency. This methodological approach, consistent with a transformative perspective on educational research, is at once one of the study's principal strengths and one of its inherent limitations.

The first critical issue concerns the research context itself: political instability, territorial fragmentation, and constantly changing conditions of school access, all of which worsened during the data collection phase. The dynamic nature of the emergency required methodological adaptations, making it impossible to ensure fully consistent data collection conditions across time and space. As such, the gathered data provide a snapshot of a constantly evolving context, in which educational conditions change rapidly according to geopolitical developments. The conflict situation also prevented the Palestinian researchers from reaching the participating schools due to restrictions on freedom of movement, while the Italian research team from the University of Macerata was unable to carry out the on-site missions originally planned due to security concerns. Consequently, most of the research activities were conducted remotely, without the detail that field visits and face-to-face exchanges with the various stakeholders would have supplied and that would have allowed researchers to assess the contextual landscape.

A second limitation is the contextual nature of the sample. The schools in-

volved were all partners in the *Including Jerusalem* Project and are therefore deeply embedded in, and reflective of, the specific social, cultural, and institutional realities of East Jerusalem and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Consequently, the findings are not statistically representative of the Palestinian education system as a whole, nor are they generalisable to other emergency settings. Rather, the value of this study lies in generating contextually grounded knowledge that contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexity of inclusive processes within a specific educational ecosystem.

A further consideration concerns the participatory nature of the research. The collaboration between Palestinian and Italian researchers constituted a valuable epistemological resource, fostering ongoing exchange across different cultural, professional, and scientific perspectives. However, as in any participatory study, the interpretation of the data stems from co-constructed meaning-making, which reduces the risk of ethnocentric interpretations but does not entirely eliminate the influence of different interpretive standpoints.

Finally, the adoption of a mixed methods research design enabled the integration of quantitative and qualitative data, providing a nuanced understanding of educational practices, representations of inclusion, and the experiences of the various groups of participants. This methodological choice was not, however, aimed at identifying causal relationships or evaluating the effectiveness of specific educational interventions. Rather, it sought to deepen understanding of the processes through which school communities develop everyday practices of participation and resilience.

2. Implications for Pedagogy and International Cooperation

Beyond the empirical findings, this research offers some broader reflections on the role of pedagogy in protracted emergency contexts. A first implication concerns moving beyond a limited notion of inclusion as access to schooling or provision of compensatory measures. The Palestinian experience demonstrates that inclusive education is, first and foremost, a process of building educational communities capable of fostering participation, a sense of belonging, well-being, and Quality of Life, even under conditions of heightened vulnerability. From this perspective, schools emerge not only as places of learning but also as relational spaces where trust, educational continuity, and hope can be rebuilt. Inclusion thus acquires a profoundly ethical and political dimension, geared towards the protection of human rights, the promotion of social justice, and the enhancement of re-

sources already existing within communities. A second implication concerns the significance of international cooperation.

The study's findings suggest that cooperation should not be understood solely as the transfer of expertise or the implementation of externally developed educational models. Rather, it can serve as an epistemological framework grounded in dialogue among different forms of knowledge, the promotion of local expertise, and the collaborative production of research. In this regard, universities, schools, institutions, and local communities become co-producers of scientific knowledge, contributing to the development of educational models that are more responsive to the contexts and cultures in which they are implemented. The research also highlights the need to strengthen teacher training in the interpersonal, reflective, and emotional competences required for teaching in emergency settings, alongside pedagogical and instructional knowledge. The ability to create inclusive learning environments, promote well-being, and foster the resilience of educational communities is now an essential component of the teaching profession.

3. Prospects for Future Research

The reflections set out in this volume point towards several avenues for future exploration. A first priority is the need to carry out longitudinal studies capable of examining how inclusive processes evolve over time and how educational communities progressively adapt their strategies for inclusion and resilience in response to prolonged crises. At the same time, comparative research across different emergency settings (including armed conflicts, forced displacement, natural disasters, and public health emergencies) would help to identify both the common elements and the context-specific characteristics that shape inclusive educational processes. Further research could also explore in greater depth teachers' professional competences, school leadership practices, and the contribution of families and local community networks to the development of inclusive educational communities. Particular attention should also be paid to the adoption of an intersectional perspective (Crenshaw, 1989; De Vita & Romano, 2025; Taddei, 2020) capable of analysing how gender, disability, socio-economic status, cultural background, and migration status interact in shaping educational vulnerabilities and opportunities for participation. Finally, this study highlights the need to strengthen international networks of pedagogical research on inclusive education in emergency contexts. The complexity of contemporary challenges makes it increasingly necessary to promote collaborative frameworks – involving universities,

educational institutions, international organisations, and local communities – aimed at understanding these phenomena and transforming educational practices and public policies by generating shared knowledge. From this perspective, the present volume does not seek to offer universally applicable models. Rather, it aims to bring the Palestinian experience into the international debate on inclusive education in emergency contexts. In doing so, the specific nature of the context under investigation becomes a valuable resource for rethinking inclusion as a process of educational justice, while reaffirming the role of pedagogical research as a tool for critical interpretation and social transformation.

4. Epistemological Reflections: Towards a Pedagogy of Situated Knowledge and Dialogical Research

The study generated a number of epistemological reflections that are particularly relevant to the advancement of inclusive education in emergency contexts. A first consideration concerns the relationship between theory and context. The analysis carried out confirms that inclusive education cannot be interpreted through prescriptive models; instead, it requires pedagogical planning that is deeply rooted in the specific characteristics of educational contexts. In situations of protracted emergency, the political, cultural, social, and relational conditions continuously redefine needs, resources, and opportunities for participation. Consequently, educational responses cannot be standardised but must remain dynamic, context-responsive, and personalised. Within this framework, personalisation extends beyond adapting teaching strategies to the individual needs of students. Rather, it encompasses the entire process of developing educational responses. It involves the ability to engage critically with the complexity of specific contexts, recognise the resources available within local communities, and design interventions that emerge through dialogue with those involved, rather than through the application of models developed elsewhere. This perspective is grounded in the paradigm of situated knowledge (Clarke, 2005; Fosket, 2015), according to which academic work does not seek to produce abstract and decontextualised truths, but rather to construct interpretations that are firmly rooted in the historical, cultural, and relational conditions in which they emerge. In emergency contexts, this approach becomes even more significant, as it enables the complexity of educational experiences to be recognised while avoiding reductive interpretations of vulnerability.

A second reflection concerns the process through which scientific knowledge is generated in the context of international cooperation. The research experience

confirms that collaboration between researchers from different cultural backgrounds represents not merely an organisational choice but a genuine epistemological framework. The shared development of data collection tools, the collegial discussion of interpretations, and the comparison of different perspectives were key factors in developing a more nuanced understanding of the educational phenomena observed. The adoption of a dialogic approach sought to address 2 complementary epistemological risks. On the one hand, there was the threat of the researchers identifying too closely with the participants in the study, which might have exacerbated subjectivity to the extent of obscuring the necessary critical reflection required by scientific research. Conversely, there was a risk of relying on external interpretive categories too far removed from the context, based on educational models developed within different cultural systems and unconsciously guided by a perspective of pedagogical colonialism (Leonardo et al., 2023; Patel, 2016; Pirbhai-Illich et al., 2017). In this second instance, the danger lies in interpreting local educational practices exclusively through normative and socio-cultural parameters developed in other contexts, thereby implicitly attributing a universal character to models that are, in fact, historically and culturally situated. The collaboration between Palestinian and Italian universities here represented a concrete attempt to overcome both these pitfalls by promoting an interpretive process based on epistemic reciprocity. None of the parties involved assumed the exclusive role of knowledge producer, and the various pedagogical traditions became participants in a dialogue aimed at the co-construction of meaning. Pedagogical research in emergency contexts is called upon to develop an epistemological paradigm based on reflexivity, reciprocity, and the recognition of the plurality of knowledge (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018; Finlay, 2002; Schön, 1993). From this perspective, the quality of research does not depend solely on the methodological rigour of the tools employed. It also rests on the ability to continually question the interpretive categories used, to explicitly state the researchers' positionalities and epistemological biases, and to produce shared knowledge through processes that combine scientific rigour, cultural sensitivity, and ethical responsibility.

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Authors' Notes

Voices from the Palestinian Research Team

This volume emerged from a process of research and reflection that gradually reshaped our understanding of inclusive education in the Palestinian context. What initially developed as an inquiry into educational policies, practices, and experiences increasingly demonstrated that inclusion cannot be examined independently of the broader conditions that structure the everyday lives of schools, teachers, students, and families. Throughout the research process, it became evident that questions of access, participation, well-being, and educational equity are inseparable from the social, political, and institutional realities within which educational communities operate.

For the Al-Quds University research team, this research was both an academic and a personal process of reflection. As Palestinian researchers and educators, we were closely connected to the context we were studying, yet the research required us to look beyond what seemed familiar and listen carefully to the different experiences of teachers, students, parents, and school communities. Fieldwork showed us that these experiences could not be reduced to abstract categories. They reflected educational aspirations alongside uncertainty, psychological pressure, limited resources, overcrowding, and disrupted continuity. Lived experience therefore became not only evidence, but an important source of knowledge that required careful and responsible representation.

One of the key insights that emerged concerns the close relationship between well-being and inclusive education. Well-being cannot be understood simply as an individual psychological state; it is also shaped by relationships, school prac-

tices, and the ability of educational institutions to create continuity, meaning, and belonging under difficult conditions. Similarly, inclusion involves more than physical access to education. It requires recognising learners' circumstances, responding to their needs, and creating conditions that enable meaningful participation. The research also highlighted the educational resilience of teachers, students, and families. Flexible classroom practices, supportive teacher–student relationships, and partnerships with families helped sustain continuity and belonging. However, resilience must not be romanticised. The ability of educational communities to adapt cannot replace the structural support, resources, safety, and stability they need. Recognising resilience should never obscure unmet needs or shift institutional responsibility onto individuals. Sustainable inclusion therefore requires collective and structural responses, including supportive policies, professional and psychological support, and institutional resources.

Our collaboration within the Including Jerusalem Project further strengthened these reflections. Working across different academic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds created an important space for questioning assumptions and reconsidering concepts such as inclusion, well-being, participation, resilience, and educational rights. It reinforced our belief that the Palestinian context cannot simply be interpreted through theoretical frameworks developed elsewhere. Instead, theory and context must remain in dialogue, and local researchers and communities must play an active role in shaping research questions, interpretations, and knowledge.

Ultimately, this work does not offer a final answer but opens further questions about how inclusive education can support well-being without individualising structural responsibilities, recognise resilience without normalising adversity, and protect learners' dignity and participation in complex and uncertain circumstances. For us, inclusive education is not a fixed model but an ongoing process shaped by recognition, participation, well-being, dignity, and educational justice. The responsibility to listen to and learn from these experiences continues. This research documents how educational communities endure and adapt, while emphasising that their voices and experiences are valuable sources of knowledge that can shape academic debate, educational practice, and policy.

Voices from the Italian Research Team

This volume grew out of a series of shared questions that, over time, came to shape both our research and fieldwork: *what does it mean to speak of inclusion*

when the very context in which inclusion is pursued is marked by borders, permits, checkpoints, territorial fragmentation, and different forms of violence? Can inclusion really be the primary concern in a place where, at times, it is not even possible to physically reach a school? Where poverty, instability, and war permeate everyday life, interrupt educational journeys, fracture family relationships, and continually test the resilience of entire communities? We soon realised that these questions first had to be lived with before they could be answered, requiring us to remain within the tensions and contradictions they inevitably raised.

More than anything else, this research became an exercise in mutual listening and trust among researchers whose cultural, personal, and academic backgrounds are, at times, shared and, at others, profoundly different. This book is written from different standpoints, and it is important to acknowledge this openly. Some of us observe East Jerusalem from the outside, through the lenses (and inevitably the limitations) of a European academic perspective. Others live this reality every day, teaching and conducting research in a place that is not simply an object of study, but a space of everyday life. Working alongside researchers who have lived the complexities and challenges of the Palestinian context throughout their lives meant taking their reading of reality as our starting point, a reading that cannot be separated from their experiences as women, Palestinian citizens, and scholars working within that context. At the same time, this encounter required us to critically reflect on our own interpretations, assumptions, and representations, many of which had been shaped by a Western perspective on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, Palestinian society, and the educational and social dynamics that characterise it. Although our research questions, methodological choices, data analysis, and interpretations were continuously discussed, mediated, and negotiated, they inevitably remained informed by these two perspectives. Carrying forward the activities of the Including Jerusalem Project and writing this volume therefore meant constantly pausing to ask one another: “What does this mean to you? Does it make sense to us? How would you express it in your own words?” Much of our work over the past few years unfolded across Arabic, English, and Italian, not simply as a matter of translation, but as a genuine space for meaning making. Time and again, we found ourselves stopping to ask whether we were really talking about the same thing, and accepting that, at times, we were not.

As a research team, we experienced first-hand the instability and unpredictability of the context, restrictions on mobility, the suspension of school activities, and research timelines that continually expanded or contracted. Responding to these challenges required creativity, adaptability, and ongoing reflexivity. In contexts shaped by uncertainty, we came to understand that rigour cannot lie in the

rigid application of predetermined procedures. Instead, it resides in remaining faithful to the research questions while consciously adapting the methods and pathways needed to address them. Collaborating across distance, between different time zones, political and humanitarian contexts in constant flux, and interactions mediated almost entirely through a screen, required us to patiently build a relationship capable of withstanding moments of misunderstanding and distance. We do not take this trust for granted. It was built over time by returning, again and again, to unresolved questions, openly acknowledging the difficulties faced by each of us, and sharing a commitment to continue the project even as the circumstances became increasingly challenging and complex.

It was precisely through the processes of professional reflexivity initiated during the workshops and sustained throughout the research that we came to recognise that acknowledging one's own positionality also means questioning the often non-neutral conditions under which scientific collaboration takes shape. Although these pages formally mark the conclusion of a project, they also leave us with scientific, ethical, and human questions that remain open, together with the responsibilities they continue to entail.

With contributions from:

Nihad Majeed Abu Irmeleh, Ph.D. Candidate in Curriculum and Instruction, Al Quds University, Palestine.

Maisa' Issa Khalil Abu-Nimah, Ph.D. Candidate in Curriculum and Instruction, Al Quds University, Palestine.

Shaima' Abdalkareem Ali, Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, Al Quds University, Palestine.

Sawsan Victor Istephan, Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, Al Quds University, Palestine.

Fatin Jubeh, Ph.D. Candidate in Curriculum and Instruction, Al Quds University, Palestine.

Ilaria D'Angelo, Senior Researcher in Didactics and Special Pedagogy at the University of Macerata, Italy.

Tommaso Santilli, Researcher Fellow in Didactics and Special Pedagogy at the University of Macerata, Italy.

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Buad Khales is Full Professor in Curriculum and Early Childhood Education at Al-Quds University in the Palestinian Territory and she is Director of Child Institute. She specializes in early childhood development, reflective teaching, and teacher training programs.

Arianna Taddei is Full Professor of Didactics and Special Pedagogy at the University of San Marino. She has participated in various educational projects and research initiatives in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Her research interests include inclusive education policies and practices, intersectional approaches to the rights of women with disabilities, and inclusive teacher education.

Catia Giaconi is Vice Rector and Delegate for Knowledge Valorization and Social Impact and Full Professor of Didactics and Special Pedagogy at the University of Macerata. She is President of the Italian Society of Special Pedagogy (SIPeS) and President of the Research Center on Teaching and Learning, Inclusion, Disability, and Educational Technology (TIncTec).

La Società Formativa

Collana di studi e problemi di Pedagogia Sociale

Including Jerusalem. Educational Justice, Inclusion, and Community Resilience presents a pedagogical research and international cooperation initiative promoted by EducAid NGO, aimed at promoting inclusive educational processes in primary schools in East Jerusalem and surrounding areas within the Including Jerusalem project. The initiative seeks to advance the right to inclusive and quality education in a context of protracted emergency, fostering dialogue between research, educational communities, and context-responsive practices. The volume approaches inclusion as a pedagogical paradigm through which the relationships between rights, participation, social justice, and Quality of Life can be critically explored, recognising schools and educational communities as key settings for fostering individual and collective resilience, belonging, and opportunities for the future. Drawing on the perspectives of researchers, school leaders, teachers, students, and families, the book captures the complexity of the Palestinian experience and highlights practices, professional competences, and community resources that can sustain inclusive processes even in conditions of profound vulnerability. The volume is addressed to those working in education, international cooperation, and pedagogical research, offering a context-sensitive perspective on inclusive education in emergencies and contributing to the international debate on inclusion, educational justice, and community resilience.

