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Neighbourhood Libraries and Educational Belonging among Syrian Refugee Adolescents in Amman

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Abstract

Small neighbourhood libraries may provide educational continuity for refugee adolescents whose schooling has been interrupted. This study examines how Syrian young people use three community libraries in Amman alongside formal and nonformal education. Researchers observed activities over seven months, interviewed 42 adolescents and 18 caregivers, and collected learning diaries from 24 regular participants. Thematic analysis compared experiences by school attendance, gender, and length of residence in the neighbourhood. Libraries supported homework completion, access to Arabic reading materials, and relationships with adults who could explain school procedures. Adolescents outside formal school valued opportunities to describe themselves as learners without being defined solely by interrupted enrolment. Girls' participation depended strongly on perceived safety and the timing of activities. The findings identify educational belonging as an outcome that extends beyond attendance or test performance. Participants were recruited through libraries, so the study cannot describe adolescents who avoided these spaces. Community education support should combine accessible study resources with predictable opening hours and sustained attention to young people's own learning identities.

Keywords: refugee adolescents, community libraries, educational belonging, Syrian refugees, Amman

1. Introduction

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2. Methods

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