

Quantitative and Qualitative Evidence from Monastic Schooling

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Abstract

This paper presents mixed-methods findings from our monastic study. The first wave, conducted in August 2025, covered 30 monastic schools across seven States and Regions and includes survey data from 305 teachers and 2,458 learners in Grade 4 ($n = 1,360$) and Grade 6 ($n = 1,188$). In January 2026, we also collected qualitative data in eight case-study schools selected from the original 30-school sample.

The survey sample is not meant to be statistically representative of the monastic education sector. Schools were purposively sampled to capture diversity in geography, exposure to crisis conditions, and student composition - including displacement status, boarding status, novice status, and first language. While none of the sampled schools had been directly affected by armed conflict in the year prior to the time of data collection, eight had experienced natural disasters and/or extreme weather events, and more than 10% of the learners in the sample reported displacement due to conflict.

Using descriptive and inferential statistics, we examine patterns in holistic student outcomes: grade-level literacy and numeracy, social and emotional learning, and wellbeing. We assess how these outcomes are associated with reported crisis conditions, including displacement and experiences of insecurity. Given the sample's mix of conflict-related displacement and disaster or extreme-weather exposure, we also explore how outcome patterns and schooling experiences vary across crisis profiles. Quantitative results are interpreted alongside qualitative insights from students, teachers, and principals, which help illuminate the lived realities of schooling amid crisis. Overall, we pay particular attention to the protective functions monastic schools may provide for those who have experienced conflict or crisis, including how they sustain access, quality, and continuity of education under conditions of uncertainty.