

Youth Pedagogy in the Liminality of Displacement

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Abstract

This paper draws on ongoing ethnographic research to explore how Myanmar youths in Thailand engage with (in)formal tertiary education as a site of pedagogy under conditions of prolonged displacement. Since 2021, many young people in the Thailand-Myanmar borderlands have experienced interrupted schooling, uncertain accreditation pathways, and institutional invisibility. These circumstances generate what may be understood as educational liminality—an in-between condition in which conventional trajectories of learning are suspended. Within this liminal context, youths emerge not merely as passive recipients of aid but as active participants in reworking educational practice. Through dialogical engagements across community classrooms, learning hubs, and digital spaces, they blur distinctions between teacher and student, formal and informal knowledge, and institutional and community hierarchies. Informal education initiatives, including language learning and digital knowledge-sharing, function not simply as adaptive responses to exclusion but as collective efforts to negotiate shared aspirations. Inspired by Freirean understandings of education as praxis, the paper approaches these practices as everyday pedagogies of action and reflection. By centering displaced youths' engagements with learning, it contributes to anthropological debates on liminality and knowledge-making, suggesting that informal education can serve as a modest yet meaningful space of social transformation.