

NEWS & EVENTS

MAY 2023



RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Vancouver, Canada
Atyrau, Kazakhstan (Hybrid)

February 13-17, 2023



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

SSHRC CRSH
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines

A Look back at REACH Symposium (Feb 2023)

The first REACH x Canada x Jordan x Kazakhstan symposium occurred between Feb 13th and Feb 17, 2023. REACH: Pathways project experts, scholars, and researchers gathered in Vancouver, Canada (and virtually from Atyrau, Kazakhstan) to discuss critical topics related to the experiences of forcibly displaced or relocated children with dis/abilities. Presentations, lectures, and facilitated discussions were aimed at exchanging ideas and knowledge on this topic that is vital to the research being conducted in the three location sites.

This visit also brought participant scholars to visit local Canadian schools and community support sites. These sites were in Burnaby, New Westminister, and Mission district schools. These visits allowed participants to observe displaced children with dis/abilities firsthand, and gather insightful information concerning systems, processes and philosophies that drive Canada's approach to inclusive education. After such visits, facilitated discussions then supported the chance for participants to share their thoughts, perspectives, and insights on what they observed during their site visits.

Overall, the symposium provided a great opportunity for scholars and experts to collaborate, learn with and from one another, and generate new ideas and knowledge relevant to better supporting displaced children with dis/abilities in all our contexts. The visits also provided a platform for networking and building relationships across different disciplines, cultures, countries, and academic generations of students.

Next, our colleagues from Kazakhstan will be visiting Canada beginning April 26 and will be on location in Vancouver through May 3, 2023. While we missed being together as one large group due to visa delays, this 'Part II' of the symposium agenda will round out our activities as we visit local Canadian education sites, participate in facilitated group discussions, and engage in writing to ready research for publication together.



Detailed Report of the symposium

The REACH Symposium was held in Vancouver, Canada, from February 14 to 17, 2023. The symposium brought together professionals from Canada, Jordan, and Kazakhstan (virtually) to discuss and share experiences on the project. This report provides a summary of the symposium's activities.

Day 1: Monday, February 13, 2023

The group gathered informally in the evening to meet and greet. Introductions were made briefly (Kazakhstan via pre-recorded video) and coffee/tea was served.

Day 2: Tuesday, February 14, 2023

The Official Welcome breakfast was catered, and attendees were welcomed by Robert. Inna and Ching introduced the RQ2 Focus Group Organization. Small groups were formed according to country/location of RQ1 research. Each group had a facilitator, co-facilitator, technical support, participants, and an observer. The groups discussed their RQ1 research experiences. Later, three RQ1 research updates were provided. There was a presentation updating research progress at the Kazakhstan site, followed by a catered lunch provided by Tayybeh. After lunch, site research updates were provided by the Jordan and Canada RQ1 teams.

Day 3: February 15, 2023

On Wednesday, the attendees included Susan, Robert, Samson, Fred, Reem, Ali, Alhanouf, Chelsea, and Aia. The day started with a site visit to StrongStart in Mission, BC. The attendees then had lunch catered

in the Research Hub at Simon Fraser University (Burnaby Campus), where they were welcomed by Lucy, Associate Dean of graduate studies in Education at Simon Fraser University. After lunch, the attendees had a discussion on international lessons learned facilitated by Ching.

Day 4: February 16, 2023

On day four, attendees visited another site on the agenda, MOSAIC located at New Westminister Secondary School where they met with Rick and Maniya (leaders from New Westminister Schools and MOSAIC). The attendees were given a tour of the Welcome Centre and the Wellness Centre, after which they were briefed on MOSAIC and the inclusive education system at New Westminister Secondary School. The group had lunch on their own and then attended the Arts Based Research Workshop led by Susan and Ching in the afternoon where they discussed strategies for creating, analyzing and disseminating arts-based research.

Day 4: February 17, 2023

On the final day of the symposium, the group visited a Community School located in Burnaby, the RQ1 site in Canada. The visitors met with school leadership and got the chance to observe how inclusive education is being practiced in a classroom setting. After the site visit, the attendees had lunch on their own and then had a group discussion on gathering final thoughts for the next step recommendations.

Our first REACH Symposium was a great success, with attendees from Canada, Jordan, and US exchanging ideas and experiences in person both formally and informally. The symposium provided attendees with a platform to engage in site visits, workshops, and group discussions centered around inclusive education for forcibly displaced children with dis/abilities. The attendees had the opportunity to observe different sites in the Canadian context and engage in discussions concerning the dissemination of research and gathered collective thoughts/recommendations as we move forward in our collective research.

Blog Post (by Nia)s

What is currently happening in girl's schools across Iran?

Schoolgirls across Iran have defiantly removed their headscarves, stomped on pictures of the supreme leader, and chanted for freedom. Their actions have produced some of the most iconic images from the country's anti-government uprising. Now, the state is coming for them. More than 7,000 schoolgirls have been deliberately attacked with poison gas in classrooms across Iran to stop them from going to school (IranianKnows, 2023). Iranian schoolgirls began falling ill in what some government officials have characterized as attacks. Since then, the episodes have spread to over 200 schools, including college dormitories, in 27 of Iran's 31 provinces, according to local news outlets and Human rights groups. The Islamic Regime continues to chemically poison the Iranian school girls and spread terror in the society. Two innocent children have been reported dead (IRNA, 2023). This is a biological slaughter of innocent students, and the world MUST act immediately.

Resource: <https://linktr.ee/iranianknows>

