

DO-IT

“Digital cOmpetence to teach youth with mIgranT background”

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Joint



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Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the whole population around the world in many aspects. It has affected almost every sector such as health, economy, education, and business life, and caused significant damage to society. Shortly after the coronavirus outbreak, it clearly showed its effect in many areas of human life, i.e., the social, economic, and political fields.

Suspension of sports competitions, quarantine practices, travel restrictions, the closure of schools and universities, and the temporary suspension of many production activities are just some of the visible consequences of the pandemic. Due to the health emergency, governments around the world have suspended various activities by taking multiple measures. This was especially true for education. Undoubtedly, the restrictions imposed within the scope of the pandemic have mostly impacted disadvantaged groups such as young people with a migrant background. This group has faced more education risks and difficulties than ever before. This is because the education system moved from onsite to remote, making it more difficult to be accessible due to the lack of computer tools and digital competences which were needed to participate in remote classes. It is clear that controlling each pandemic impact on various sectors has failed while leading – instead - to long-term damages for students and society alike. For example, increased learning poverty is likely going to prevent the entire generation from reaching their true potential. Similarly, students who were forced to drop out due to economic and social reasons are bound to experience a significant decline in productivity and gains.

Therefore, this project aimed at finding out the degree of importance of digital competences in school and the consequences of the pandemic on the education of young people with a migrant background. Moreover, by relying on empirical research, the projects hope to gather more experience of what is happening on the ground, focusing firstly, on learning and teaching processes for young people with a migrant background, and secondly on their difficulties with digital education. According to this paper findings, for most migrant youngsters participating in classes became more difficult owing to the lack of necessary material and digital competences to use online teaching applications.

The effects and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic - highlighted in the last two years – have called for immediate action towards remote learning and for digital skills,

especially for disadvantaged people. According to our surveys and interviews, it is crucial that governments guarantee and provide all children with the minimal resources to access online learning, such as computers or other suitable device and a stable internet connection. This also means guaranteeing adequate computers, necessary tools and connection, as well as organizing special classes to learn digital competences that are adapted to the different levels of proficiency in the host country or native language.

Introduction

COVID-19, which emerged as a global disease, continues to threaten humanity psychologically, socially and economically. Compared to past pandemics, COVID-19 has quickly crossed borders and affected the whole world. Due to this feature, COVID-19 appeared not only to be a health crisis, but also a social one. This situation shows that the effects and speed of the risks, dangers and epidemics produced by modernization are enormous, regardless of a specific place but on worldwide scale.

Despite the economic developments with the COVID-19 pandemic, we experienced how the effects of health services in emergencies reached dimensions that would threaten humanity as a whole. This pandemic has been felt spiritually, physically, and socially by almost all societies while creating new awareness in all areas including health, education, income inequality, poverty, unemployment, migration, climate crisis, and access to basic human needs. In addition to being a medical phenomenon, it was a social one that affected individuals and society at many levels, causing deterioration. In some ways, it fed selfishness, reduced solidarity, caused loneliness, psychological, social as well as biological problems, information pollution, and socialized the fear of death from being an individual. Moreover, it increased the need for solidarity and strengthened the sense of common destiny. Thus, the need for an understanding based on social cohesion has become more important. In other words, the necessity of social structure, which prevents social drift and does not leave room for panic, has increased.

Education is one of the social activities that was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of it, many governments have suspended various activities by taking various measures. Various business areas such as companies, restaurants, universities, schools and transportation have postponed their activities or reduced working time. In most countries this has manifested itself as an unprecedented unemployment. In most schools, having access to digital tools to follow online classes was not possible due to the lack of knowledge of online platforms, computers, internet and the enormous cost of data that limit access and opportunity. Even students with digital availability and competences have been deprived of valuable interaction and social relationships with teachers, other education staff, and students. Alternative forms of education during the crisis remained temporary and could not replace the physical presence of students. However, lower income students, who had no computer tools

and necessary materials for online classes, have experienced many hurdles in learning in Europe since March 2020. Among this low income and less opportunity groups, young people with a migrant background are listed as those who have had difficulties to participate in online classes.

This project report that we have carried out with surveys and interviews is providing some significant insights of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of young people with a migrant background. In other words, this assignment tries to discover the impact of the pandemic on the education and activities of pupils with a migratory background. The main purpose of the study is to show how the pandemic affects these young people in their education, activities and integration. The main issue at stake is how the measures taken to prevent the spread of the virus have affected people's daily life educational practices.

This report is also significant due to its empirical nature on students digital competences, that is, it shows how and why they are important. Not to mention that it contains unique recommendations for teachers, trainers, youth workers in youth centers, migration associations, and future policies, based on the results of the surveys and interviews. The whole research and proposal can give an idea to the policymakers on how to tackle the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people with a migrant background in the long run.

Finally, this publication is additionally addressed to a different audience. The first group is represented by technical and vocational schoolteachers working where there is a considerable concentration of students of foreign origin. Another group comprehends trainers employed in centers that deal with immigrant adults. Namely, they usually are young workers that in youth centers are frequently confronted with young people of foreign origin. And last, but not least, there is the group of migrants and youth with migrant background associations which represent the long-term impact of this project.

FIRST PART

Chapter I: the DO-IT project

1.1 Project Description

The last two years of COVID-19, with its effects and consequences, have called for renewed and immediate action, especially towards disadvantaged people. In education, this is because lockdown impacts have differed greatly according to income level, undermining mostly the lower strata. The European Commission recent study on "Digital Education Action Plan, 2021-2027, Resetting education and training for digital age"¹ backs the idea that access to the learning environment, equity and inclusion are crucial and necessary.

The income-education equality is the more important when it comes to students with a migratory background. For example, according to the OECD, immigrant students are less likely to enroll in early education programs, as well as have access to quality education. As a consequence, they tend to leave school earlier, and have lower academic achievements than their native peers.² The Technical report by the Joint Research Centre (JRC), (Luxembourg, 2018)³, highlights that "Early school leavers become generally disadvantaged socially and economically in later stages in life, so that it is important to better understand the motivations for leaving school and provide adequate policy solutions".

To focus more on the pandemic period, the OECD paper "What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrants and their children?"⁴ published in late 2020 is particularly insightful. It states that "The school closures and distance learning measures put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19 put children of immigrants at a disadvantage, in several ways. Their parents tend to have fewer resources than native-born parents to help them in their homework, and 40% of native-born children of immigrants do not speak the host-country language at home. Such children are also less likely than students with native-born parents to have access to a computer and an internet connection at home or to a quiet place for study."

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/deap-communication-sept2020_en.pdf

² <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/revieweducationpolicies/#!node=41750&filter=all>

³ <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC115957>

⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policyresponses/what-is-the-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-immigrants-and-their-children-e7cbb7de/>

The Eu "Digital Education Action Plan, 2021-2027", confirms this by including it among the problems that the EU should tackle, along with "[...]support professional development for teachers; guidance on digital education; enhance Member States' efforts to improve connectivity and infrastructure, provide support to education and training institutions for the development of digital education strategies and specific measures for disadvantaged groups." Furthermore, "While Member States are responsible for the content of teaching and the organization of their education and training systems, action at EU level can contribute to the development of quality and inclusive education and training by supporting cooperation, the exchange of good practice, frameworks, research, recommendations and other tools" such as increasing "the digital impact of the Erasmus program". Generally speaking, "Digital competence should be a core skill for all educators and training staff and should be embedded in all areas of teacher professional development, including initial teacher education".

Finally, the same report admits that one of the key results of the consultation process was that while there is some indication of the wider impact of COVID-19 on education and training, it is still too early to conclude on its long-term consequences. Gathering more experience and conducting research into the lasting effects over a longer time period is therefore necessary."

In light of what has been said then the project intends:

1. To contribute to gathering more experience on what is happening on the ground, the pandemic effects on the learning and teaching process, especially of migrant youth. It will special attention to the use of digital tools as mentioned in the European Commission document.

2. To increase the skills of teachers, trainers, youth workers, associations dealing with young people with a migrant background. Yet also to raise awareness on how to deal with the effects that the pandemic has had on learning and teaching of young migrant students.

As far as the target group is concerned, while the indirect beneficiaries are young people of foreign origin, the direct ones will be represented by members of the organizations participating in the project, i.e., teachers, trainers, researchers, youth workers and associations of migrants and their children. The project is on one hand developed on a transnational level, on the other at the level of the project partner countries which allows to understand it in a comparative way. Namely, it can put in perspective the many different needs and responses to them.

1.2 Project Partners

Five partners agreed to work together in four different European countries, Belgium, Spain, Greece and Italy, in order to achieve the objectives of the DO-IT project and do research on the COVID-19 pandemic and its connection to digitalization of education and activities, especially focusing on its long run impact for young people with a migrant background.

ECEPAA: The European Centre for Economic and Policy Analysis and Affairs (ECEPAA) is a Belgian non-profit organization founded in 2011. It is specialized in the development of European Union projects in the fields of social inclusion, education, youth and migrant. The association, thanks to the use of funding from different programs, aims to contribute to the knowledge of topics related to social exclusion, the persistent difficulties of the marginalized population due to economic, cultural, class, race and gender reasons. They are aware of the fact that sharing this knowledge through a bottom-up approach can help to a better management of the above-mentioned issues. The association is organized on a voluntary basis and is governed by a board composed of three people.

Fundacion Red Incola: is a non-profit organization, built as an association in 2006, and as a Foundation in 2011. Its general board is composed of nine religious' entities, connected in a collective network to carry out a joint mission: to support the immigrant population in risk situations of exclusion, in the promotion and defense of their rights so that they can have a dignified life. As an organization they wish to contribute to this effort, offering reflections and works as an integrated response to the challenges presented by the issues of migration; They strive to improve the quality of their programs and to increase their influence in the pursuit of a more just society.

Associazione Joint: Joint is one of the biggest and most innovative Youth Association in Italy. It is the Italian member of ICYE global network, the coordinator of the Italian Network for European Volunteering (RIVE) and the coordinator of an informal network recognized by European Union counting on 232 international partners. Joint focus on providing learning opportunities to young people through international experiences such as European Solidarity Corps, International volunteering, Work Camps, local and international Training Courses, Youth Exchanges and Capacity Building Projects focusing on advocacy, active participation, intercultural learning, social entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism.

Joint was founded in December 2003 and its mission is to provide non-formal education opportunities for young people through international mobility. Association main office is in Milano where Joint can count on 8 full time and 3 part-time workers plus one ESC intern, 3 civil servants and a group of over 30 local volunteers.

Joint develops and currently manages some of the most known websites of international mobility opportunities in Italy and in Europe, reaching over 150.000 people every month through websites, social medias and newsletters. At the moment, they are coordinating 18 EVS HOs across Italy and cooperate with several local organizations and networks. This cooperation helps in fostering high local impact of mobility activities. In Milan they cooperate with the network of youth centers as they coordinate 4 of them in ESC. Since 2015 Joint sends and coordinates not-financed work camps and international volunteering activities outside E+, creating strong connections out of Europe. Since 2016 it runs an after-school centre in a disadvantage suburb of Milan for young people with migration background while since 2017 it is the Italian member of ICYE worldwide network focusing in particular on overseas long-term volunteering.

The 2nd Vocational High School of Katerini: is located in the province of Pieria in northern Greece, 70km far from Thessaloniki. Founded in 1984, the school has been located in the suburbs of the city since 2000, in a nice countryside just below Mount Olympus, the home of Greek gods, and at a distance of only 10 Km from the coastline. The school serves about 600 students aged 16 – 19 with 80 teachers and comprises four different sectors (Informatics, Healthcare & Welfare, Agriculture/Food Technology/Nutrition and Business/Economics). Also, it includes a number of specialized teaching laboratories for each department and is equipped with modern ICT infrastructure.

Association Maison d'Enfant pour la Culture et l'Education (AMECE): AMECE is a social promotion NGO based since 2000 in Turin; its activities aim to understand and address the needs of children, teenagers and young adults with migrant background, most of them originally from north African countries. The organization seeks to foster the growth and education of the new generations, starting from their extra-curricular and social education. In particular, AMECE works in order to raise awareness in migrant families about their children needs, offers targeted action in school support, promotes opportunities for discussion and intergenerational dialogue and pushes for intercultural social education in the local community.

AMECE has started a series of interventions supporting families and school administrations that aim towards the integration and socialization of all minors including those deemed “at risk”. The focus on intercultural education and migrants’ integration is carried out by offering a range of activities such as individual homework help, targeted training opportunities, cultural mediation, guidance, sport activities and linguistic support through Italian, English, French and Arabic courses. In addition, AMECE organizes intercultural events and summer camps targeting local and migrant communities, not to mention it is also a facilitator with consular services. Its activities are carried out thanks to a networking inclusive approach with public and private bodies working at a local level, with AMECE being involved in a series of roundtables and projects both in the city districts in which it operates and at a national level through CoNNGI (New Italian Generations National Coordination).

1.3 Objectives of the Project

1. The main objective of the project was to contribute to gathering more experience of what is happening on the ground, by carrying out this action research on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the learning and teaching process and the difficulties of digital education for young people with a migrant background.
2. A second objective was to develop - by means of the first one –useful skills for teachers, trainers, youth workers, associations dealing with young people with a migrant background. This will help in dealing with the impacts (positive and negative) that the pandemic has had on learning and teaching to young people of migrant origin.
3. The action research raised from the need to know what is happening on the ground in relation to the practices put in place (such the lockdown measures that have been taken by the governments) to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on not only youth with migrant background per se, but also teachers in the school system, trainers in training center, youth workers in youth center and the same migrant community.
4. Moreover, this project aimed at indicating how and in which ways general digital skills can be improved and how activities can be carried out via digital tools.

5. This project also intended to increase awareness for future policies and direct policy makers attention towards disadvantaged groups who may not have the opportunity to use digital tools for their online and hybrid education and activities.
6. Owing to the fact that there is not yet much knowledge about the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on disadvantage groups, this research project wanted to help to fulfil the gap between policies and practices on the ground and contribute to future policies regarding this issue by giving suggestions.

1.4 Expected Results

During the project several results have been achieved. To begin with, 5 types of structured closed-answer questionnaires have been produced via a methodology that is the result of joint effort of the partners, though coordinated by the applicant. The consortium also developed 5 more questionnaires for in-depth interviews. Secondly, to give the collaboration a transnational dimension, two transnational meetings were held, highlighting possible synergies and collaboration at European level. Finally, the dissemination activity during the project provided visibility to the various phases.

At the end of the project, results and finding were published online in the languages of the countries participating in the project (French, Spanish, Italian and Greek) to which English has been added in order to reach a higher diffusion of the volume. The latter and the preparation required for it has also given participants the opportunity to broaden skills and understanding of:

1. research on the existing literature related to young people of foreign origin, school dropout, digital skills needed to cope with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. the methodology of action research with particular reference to the preparation of an online questionnaire with closed answers and an in-depth interview outline, results analysis and final report.
3. raise the level of skills of teachers, trainers, youth workers, researchers and members of the migrants' association in how to respond to the effects of the pandemic on the learning and teaching to young people of foreign origin.

Chapter II: Methodology

2.1 Research Design and Methodology

In terms of methodology, the target group for the DO-IT project online publication is quite varied and it mostly includes teachers from both technical and vocational schools, where student population of foreign origin is mostly concentrated. Yet, it also targets several other groups; firstly, trainers employed in training centers who deal with native born and immigrant adults alike. Secondly, researchers, who may be interested in this publication for literature purposes. Then, groups of youth workers who are often confronted with young people of foreign origin, especially during activities in youth centers. Finally, migrant association groups and their children who represent the core and long run interests of migrants.

As far as the research and publication per se are concerned, they have several elements of novelty which they want to cover. First of all, they intend to shed light on the effects of the pandemic on learning and teaching. In fact, at the moment partners started working on it, this was still a completely new topic; in particular its long-term effects had been little explored. Then, they also highlight for the first time how these very effects do not affect students equally. Namely, that they influence more heavily just some type of pupils. Thus, it is essential to look at this phenomenon on a small scale and with greater precision. Finally, they bring into prominence the new educational setting that teachers in schools, trainers in training centers and youth workers face.

Besides the novel aspects, the action research and the digital publication also contribute to have an impact in systemic terms. That is, they try to give a knowledge contribution to what is still unexplored. From this point of view, in fact, they highlight all the critical issues that the pandemic has caused on the learning and teaching of young people of foreign origin. Moreover, they aim at implementing actions to reduce such crises in the school system as well as in training and youth centers and in the same family environment between young migrants and their parents. This is done firstly, thanks to the identification of best practices in digitalization and then through recommendations.

Due to the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the exchange and contamination of practices and strategies in this area is quite limited. Therefore, the research

and digital publication are essential to widen the consortium horizon on the variety of contexts, organizations and norms present in the field to support young people with migrant background. These elements are indeed crucial to promote the dissemination and transferability of products. For example, best practices have been drawn from partner organizations activities, from associations visited during the transnational meeting, from the main partners formal and informal networks and last but not least, from the action research itself.

However, the action research foresaw a series of activities whose design has been largely shared within the consortium since each partner was responsible for the part that belongs to it while the coordination is supervised and carried out by ECEPAA in Belgium.

The research used three types of methods to offer more clarity to the complexity of the issue:

First, an analysis of the existing literature was made. With the literature review, the research attempted to conceptualize the development of COVID-19 pandemic with a specific focus on its impact on education and activities of young people with a migrant background through a qualitative analysis. It also put effort in providing the nexus between COVID-19 pandemic and digitalisation of education and activities. It did so by reviewing books, articles, reports on COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on learning, with particular attention to those issued by governmental and non-governmental international organisations. However, despite the pandemic being here the type of emergency situation that affected education, the research questions promoted a wider understanding of the concept of emergency education. For instance, "How does learning change in an emergency context, what strategies can teachers and trainers put in place to solve the problems arising from these exceptional circumstances, how do they respond to these tensions students belonging to disadvantaged groups? etc." These questions and the resulting answers were particularly helpful for constructing a first interpretative grid that was then used for the second phase, that is, the administration of the questionnaire.

Second, project partners prepared several questionnaires to gather data from the sample and then administered them online (through Google form and/or face-to-face interviews when necessary) with a sample of teachers, trainers, youth workers, researchers and migrant associations that advocate migrants and their children. It investigated a series of topics, defined by each partner during the first months of the project. Their inputs were particularly valuable because they resulted in a questionnaire that took into account the partners' different point of views and thus is multi-faceted.

In order to collect data from above mentioned categories, a total of 535 questionnaires were collected from four different European countries, Belgium, Spain, Greece and Italy. Specifically, 66 of them were conducted on teachers of technical and vocational schools, 100 questionnaires on youth workers, 179 questionnaires on migrant associations, 70 questionnaires on researchers engaged in studies of integration policies and integration of immigrant children in the school context and, 120 questionnaires on trainers working in training centers dealing with migrants.

Third, in addition to and based on the questionnaires, 25 open-question and in-depth interviews were carried out. They served to both clarify critical issues and come up with potential solutions and good practices regarding learning and teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. 25 in-depth interviews (5 in-depth interviews for each of the sample already described above)

Chapter III: Early school leaving and theoretical framework

3.1 The general theoretical framework for education and early school leaving (ESL)

Education is an essential part of human beings' life and provides numerous socio-economic advantages. Research has demonstrated that proper education helps individuals to pursue better careers and wages, improves their capabilities of making conscious and rational choices, and allows them to develop useful non-cognitive skills, such as risk aversion attitude and patience.⁵ Therefore, it becomes highly beneficial for societies as a whole to ensure that as many people as possible receive the highest possible level of education. In particular, providing sufficient and proficient education to children and youth is of paramount importance because the capabilities and behaviors of the future adults deeply depend on their former level of instruction.

Across Europe some disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of pupils face – unfortunately - constant challenges in entering education systems. This consequently affects their possibilities to live a fruitful school experience. Among these fragile individuals, the question is particular poignant for youth with migrant background. The 2019 Eurydice Report “*Integrating Students from Migrant Backgrounds into Schools in Europe: national policies and measures*” defines students with migrant background as «newly arrived/first generation, second generation or returning migrant children and young people. Their reasons for having migrated (e.g., economic or political) may vary, as may their legal status – they may be citizens, residents, asylum seekers, refugees, unaccompanied minors or irregular migrants. Their length of stay in the host country may be short- or long-term, and they may or may not have the right to participate in the formal education system of the host country».⁶

The definition provided by the Eurydice Report is quite all-encompassing as it applies to students with multiple migrant backgrounds. This publication acknowledges the complexities

⁵ Brunello, Giorgio, De Paola, Maria, *The costs of early school leaving in Europe*, IZA Journal of Labor Policy, Vol. 3 (22), 2014, p. 1.

⁶ European Education and Culture Executive Agency, Eurydice, *Integrating students from migrant backgrounds into schools in Europe: national policies and measures*, Publications Office, 2019, p. 29, available at the following link: <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/819077>. The Eurydice report aims to support European cooperation in the area of migrant education by providing a comparative overview and analysis of the policies and measures promoted by top-level education authorities across Europe to support the integration of students from a migrant background in school.

of relying on broad definitions such as “migrant background” because there exist many possible realities related to the phenomenon of migration. An example would be useful to clarify this point. Assume that there are two children, one child is born in a European State from migrant parents and another one who instead is born in a foreign country. Both children share a migrant background, but their situations may be quite dissimilar. For instance, the child born in the EU is likely to be immediately taught the host country’s language, whereas the foreign-born one—who arrives in Europe in a second moment- may face significant linguistic barriers when settling in the new country, starting from scratch in learning the host country language.

Hence, on one side, keeping in mind that there are different migration realities is important. On the other, general talk of students with migrant background is still acceptable because this concept is applicable to many different migrant backgrounds. For this reason, and also for sake of brevity and clearness, this publication will stick to the definition provided by the Euridice Report.

According to some recent estimates, in the European Union in 2017 the proportion of immigrants under 15 years old was on average slightly below 10 %. Of course, percentages vary across the Member States, ranging from approximately 20% in Luxembourg to less than 3% in various Eastern countries.⁷ Research has shown that foreign-born students generally face much more difficulties than their native-born peers. This happens for several reasons. First, young migrants’ well-being is affected by previous traumatic experiences like persecution, war or hunger, which they usually flee from in their origin countries. Moreover, when arriving in their destination country, they go through high levels of stress due to resettlement issues, like poor housing conditions and a generalized lack of social networks. Not to mention that, as pointed out by Trasberg and Kond, sometimes the host communities develop a certain hostility towards people coming from other places - whether newcomers or long-term residents-, and this bias further complicates the creation of crucial social bonds.⁸ There are also other important barriers usually encountered by students with migrant background. These include:

- A lack of information in schools about the academic and non-academic (i.e., social, emotional, health, etc.) background of migrant children as they arrive.
- Inappropriate grade placement.

⁷ 2019 Eurodyce Report, p. 37. The data are extracted from the Eurostat Population database.

⁸ Trasberg, K., & Kond, J., *Teaching new immigrants in Estonian schools—Challenges for a support network*, Acta Pedagogica Vilnensia, Vol. 38, 2017, p. 92.

- Linguistic challenges stemming from the fact that very frequently foreign-born students are not proficient in the host country's language.
- Insufficient learning support and lack of social and emotional support.
- Poorly prepared teachers who are not trained and/or supported to teach in multicultural and multilingual classrooms.
- Insufficient -sometimes inexistent- home-school cooperation.⁹

Not all students with migrant background are affected by such barriers, as many do not grow up in complicated or disadvantaged contexts. However, the bottom line is that being a child with migrant background is usually associated with a higher probability of living in socioeconomic distress. When this is the case, the child gets exposed to the aforementioned obstacles with severe repercussions on the school life of the individual, especially in terms of integration. As a result, they may suffer from extremely negative outcomes deriving from this situation, such as bad school performances and social exclusion. These difficulties can be recognized also as the main cause of the alarming phenomenon of early school leaving (ESL), which constitutes the core issue of this publication.

3.2 The issue of early school leaving (ESL) of students with migrant background

Early school leaving (ESL) ranks among the first concerns in the field of education in Europe. Early school leaving takes place when an individual aged between 18 and 24 has attained a lower secondary education but is not engaged either in education or professional training.¹⁰ Many experts consider this a really worrying phenomenon since it is detrimental to the future lives of children both at the economic and social level. According to Brunello and De Paola, ESL implies enormous private, fiscal and social costs, both for individuals and societies. However, actually obtaining accurate quantitative estimations of these costs is hard. Yet, it is even harder for policymakers to design suitable and efficient countermeasures for ESL. Normally, each Member State develops its own policies, but they can be anything from tailored policies to instead quite broad ones - for example, modifying the minimum age for school leaving.¹¹ In EU, reducing ESL levels has been a core target for decades. The Reflection

⁹ 2019 Eurodyce Report, p. 30.

¹⁰ Brunello, G., De Paola, M., *The costs of early school leaving in Europe*, p. 1.

¹¹ Trasberg, K., & Kond, J., *Teaching new immigrants in Estonian schools—Challenges for a support network*, p. 26.

Paper *Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030*, published in 2019 by the European Commission, has confirmed that ESL average rate has steadily fallen since 2002 and maintains that the European Union was on the right pathway to achieve the “Europe 2020” headline target of keeping ESL levels below 10% across the continent.¹² Despite the positive trend, ESL is far from being eradicated. One problem is that early school dropout does not affect European students equally. The Reflection Paper acknowledges that «Young people with disabilities or *with migrant background* show significantly lower educational attainment. Early leavers and low-educated young people face particularly severe problems in the labor market».¹³

Insufficient education attainment is a serious issue for students with a migrant background. In almost all European Countries foreign-born students perform worse relative to their native-born peers in many important subjects at the primary and secondary levels. The Programme for International School Attainment (PISA) developed by the OECD provides additional validation to this argument. As reported in the PISA study of 2015, the difference in the proportion of low achievers between migrant students and native-born students is to be sure non-negligible, even when controlling for parameters such as socio-economic conditions.¹⁴ The latest PISA study, published in 2019, further confirms that students with migrant background still lag behind their native-born peers in terms of school attainments.

Poor performances and early school leaving seem to be quite correlated. In fact, the early school leaving rate is usually higher for student groups that are often associated with relatively bad school performances, such as foreign-born students. This of course does not mean that only some disadvantaged categories of students like migrant students are affected by ESL. Broadly speaking, according to Eurydice estimates the highest ESL percentages are recorded in Spain, Italy and Germany (respectively 31,9%, 30,1% and 23,1%), whilst the lowest can be found in Luxembourg (8,2%), Netherlands (6,6%) and Ireland (4%). However, evidence shows

¹² European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, *Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030: reflection paper*, Publications Office, 2019, p. 77. The paper is available at: <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2775/676251>. In 2002 ESL percentage in Europe was 17%, whereas in 2017 it dropped to 10,6%.

¹³ *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

¹⁴ OECD, PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education, PISA, OECD Publishing, 2016, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en> and PISA 2018 Results (Volume II), *Where All Students Can Succeed*, PISA, OECD Publishing, 2019, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b5fd1b8f-en>.

that migrant youth is over-represented in ESL rates across the European Union, suggesting that this specific group is particularly vulnerable to the risk of dropping school early.¹⁵

As noted, this circumstance can be explained by a number of intertwined sensitive factors which normally characterize migrant students, most of all the likely disadvantaged socioeconomic status, serious linguistic barriers and social segregation. Therefore, it is essential to tackle these issues as much as possible, and indeed there are many possible actions that can support these students, including providing proper instruction in the host language, building and maintaining relationships with migrant children's parents, channeling more resources to schools with a high concentration of migrants to allow them to employ flexible actions to meet students' needs, ensuring access to high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) and disincentivizing segregation practices linked to socio-economic factors.¹⁶ Similarly, the policy brief sponsored by the Sirius Network proposes some other interesting policies to reduce the risk of ESL for students with migrant background. The document claims that there are some desirable features of national/regional education systems that can sensibly contribute to reducing ESL among migrant youth. Some of the features most worthy of mention are:

- More comprehensive secondary education and postponed educational tracking.
- Improve language acquisition by increasing quality preschool education.
- Providing quality apprenticeship opportunities to guarantee a smoother transition to the labor market.¹⁷

Moreover, the European Union supports and finances many initiatives and projects in the field of education within the framework of the Erasmus+ program, including those related to tackling ESL. These European funds are commonly destined for schools, NGOs and youth organisations. The principal aim is to multiply best practices and practical knowledge to be adopted in order to design better policies to counter this phenomenon.

¹⁵ Nouwen, Ward, Noel Clycq, and Daniela Ulicna, *Reducing the risk that youth with a migrant background in Europe will leave school early*, Migration Policy Institute Europe and SIRIUS Policy Network on the education of children and youngsters with a migrant background, Bruxelles, 2015, p. 3.

¹⁶ Janta, Barbara and Emma Harte, Education of migrant children: Education policy responses for the inclusion of migrant children in Europe. Santa Monica, RAND Corporation, 2016, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1655.html.

¹⁷ Nouwen, Ward, Noel Clycq, and Daniela Ulicna, *Reducing the risk that youth with a migrant background in Europe will leave school early*, pp 5-6.

3.3 Conclusions

In the European Union, the current early school leaving rates are quite close to the pre-settled objective of keeping them below the 10% threshold. But owing to the fact that ESL does not affect the student population evenly, it is the most vulnerable groups of students face much higher risks of dropping out of school due to socioeconomic struggles and harsh living conditions which eventually impinge on their school performance. This is the case for many migrant students who frequently have to cope with an educational system that is either unprepared or unsupported to ensure that these pupils could feel really included in the school system. Given this circumstance, it is essential to discourage ESL as much as possible by finding suitable solutions and policies to address the roots of the problem.

Chapter IV: COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19, which was first seen in Wuhan, China in December 2019, spread all over the world in a short time and was declared as "pandemic" by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020. Starting from the beginning of 2020, the Coronavirus caused the death of hundreds of thousands of people worldwide, while damaging societies psychologically and economically. The difficult conditions brought about by the pandemic have had devastating consequences on people lives at a global level.

When it started, authorities announced new measures and chose to lockdown to decrease the spread of the virus. To be sure, many people found themselves heavily affected by these restrictive decisions. Undoubtedly, disadvantage groups such as migrants, refugees and asylum seekers suffered the pandemic the most as they faced mounting psychological risks and economic difficulties as opposed to average citizens. This was largely due to lack of opportunities and difficulties in accessing jobs, health services, education, activities and other needs.^[1] Some of the main hurdles include: access to information due to language barriers, exacerbation of financial difficulties, additional health risks, overcrowded housing, food insecurity, poor hygiene conditions, access to basic rights and services and physical barriers to accessing facilities.^[2] Thus, one can confidently say that the COVID-19 pandemic has had many negative impacts on especially on disadvantaged people.

In the following section, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and activities will be discussed.

^[1] OECD, (2021), International Migration Outlook 2021, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/29f23e9d-en>.

^[2] Ibid.

4.1 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the entire world population in many aspects. COVID-19 has affected almost every sector such as health, economy, education, and business life, and caused significant damage in society. Shortly after the outbreak of the coronavirus, it clearly showed its effect in many areas of human life in the social, economic and political fields. Suspension of sports competitions, quarantine practices, travel restrictions, the closure of schools and universities, and the temporary suspension of many production activities are just some of the visible consequences of the pandemic.

To briefly explain its impact:

Impact on health: The COVID-19 pandemic was a health crisis. Almost every country in the world decided to close schools, colleges, and universities to prevent the spread of the virus. The crisis caused policymakers to face a dilemma between closing schools in order to reduce contact among people and save lives or keeping all public and private places open to let workers continue their job and keep the economy going.^[1] Deciding to prioritize school closure over the rest was an hard decision for politicians, despite the relevance of closing schools to health safety and economy.

Economic problem: The economic shock had serious consequences for governments and households alike, hitting both the supply and demand for education.^[2] On the supply side, the economic downturn hurt to be sure schools and teachers. Financial pressures reduced the resources available to them, resulting in lower investment in education. Considering the quality of teaching online or in school, the health crisis had overall make education worse, as it affected teachers directly and indirectly through financial pressures such as salary cuts and payment delays.^[3]

Quarantine measures for COVID-19 also caused businesses to slow down and even shut down many small or medium-sized businesses. Especially, employees in the informal sector were greatly affected by this situation. As a result of the pandemic, many disadvantaged people lost their jobs; this is because they are more likely to make a living out of jobs in restaurants, construction, etc. that could not be maintained via digital platforms. Therefore, COVID-19 unemployment caused problem that families to struggle to access their basic needs such as food, clothing, hygiene materials and shelters. Yet, in many developing countries, despite heavily relying on this type of jobs, it was not possible for these people to take legal action against unfair dismissal, which severely limited their livelihood opportunities. In contrast, in developed countries such as West European countries, the governments supported these people to meet

their basic needs though they faced technical difficulties and language barriers nevertheless, especially when it comes to reaching out information regarding health care and education and activities through digital platforms. ^[4]

Disadvantaged groups of people were impacted more than the rest of the population as they had less opportunities to access health care, education and activities, which were moved from on site to online digital platforms during the health emergency. Moreover, due to the lack of financial support by the governments, underprivileged people faced difficulties to secure the necessary tools and support to continue their activities and education. However, the same goes for teachers, trainers and migrant associations who met many barriers in trying to aid these people for their education and activities.

The economic pressures created by the coronavirus crisis on different parts of society has been both short-term and long-term. In the short run, it is clear that lower income people suffered the most from the pandemic, but the same cannot be said for the long run. In fact, continuous government restrictions have and will keep affecting affect middle- and upper-income individuals alike. This is due to the extended closure of many businesses, including trade, manufacturing, service, tourism and social activities, which, on one side, has increased unemployment and on the other, has affected people savings and purchasing power, lowering demand.

To be sure, in the long-term perspective, it is important to include education as well, for failure to control the effects of the pandemic on various sectors led to long-term damages for students. The increase in learning poverty is likely going to prevent the entire generation from reaching their true potential. Students who were forced to drop out will experience a significant decline in education, having repercussion on their lifetime productivity and gains. It is precisely students from marginalized households that would need education the most, to escape poverty, which will - instead - be the first ones to be deprived of it. As a result, inequality among students will only increase, with disadvantaged youth being more inclined to end up in criminal activities and risky behaviors compared to others. Consequently, generalized social unrest among the young population is also expected to escalate. In many low- and middle-income families, the combination of a youth surplus and low expectations could perpetuate the vicious cycle of low human capital, poverty and inequality among the most disadvantaged students.

^[4] Burgess, S., & Sievertsen, H. H. (2020). Schools, skills, and learning: The impact of COVID-19 on education. CEPR Policy Portal. Retrieved from <https://voxeu.org/article/impact-covid-19-education>.

^[2] The World Bank Report Education (May 2020). The COVID-19 Pandemic: Shocks to education and policy responses. Retrieved from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/33696/148198.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>

^[3] OECD (2020), International Migration Outlook 2020, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ec98f531-en>.

^[4] Ibid.

4.2 The impact of the COVID-19 on Education

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many governments suspended selected activities by taking an array of measures. Businesses such as companies, restaurants, universities, schools and transportation postponed their activities or reduced working time, resulting in most countries in unprecedented unemployment.

The education community has been adversely affected by COVID-19, with more than 1.5 billion students and 63 million teachers worldwide being affected by the quarantine, lockdown measures and school closure.^[1] For some disadvantaged people, digital classrooms are still not accessible due to the lack of computers, internet connection, online platforms, and the enormous cost of data. Even students with digital availability, competences and knowledge felt they were missing the valuable interpersonal interaction and social relationships with teachers, other education staff and students. In fact, alternative forms of education were not able to replace the physical presence of students.^[2]

Despite closing schools was extremely effective to stop the spread of the virus, school closures have led to learning loss, increased dropout and heightened inequality. The pandemic has and will continue to inflict damage, causing long-term damage to human capital accumulation, development prospects, societal welfare and level of education.^[3]

While school closures offered a logical solution to foster social distancing within communities, prolonged closures had a disproportionately negative impact on the most vulnerable students. Not only, do they normally have fewer opportunities to learn at home due to their economic disadvantage, but also, they have specific duties and role in their households they have to fulfil. For example, the usually have younger siblings to take care of as both parents work to make ends meet.

To put it simply, access to online platform and distance learning have increasingly and dangerously been taken for granted, though there are many students who cannot afford them. It has become a commonplace^[4], that leaves out marginalized people and result in further loss of human capital with reduced economic opportunities.

The World Bank Report (WBR) has under covered the state of education before COVID-19: 258 million children and youth of primary and secondary school age worldwide were out of school; most of them were also learning very little because of the poor quality of education. In fact, the education poverty rate in low- and middle-income countries was 53% with more than half of 10-year-olds being the most disadvantaged children and youth, facing the lowest access to education, the highest dropout rate and the most learning gap.^[5]

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on education, especially in countries with low resistance to shocks such as school closures, low learning outcomes, and high dropout rates. According to this paper findings, Greece is one of these countries in Europe. While school closures offered a logical solution to foster social distancing within communities, prolonged closures tended to have a disproportionately negative impact on the most vulnerable students, i.e., young people with a migrant background. This is because - as mentioned before - students in migrant families have fewer opportunities to learn at home since both parents have to work and they normally have younger siblings in need of care. Not only, their economic inadequacies makes it hard for them to reach and adequate level of education.^[6]

This is likely going to result in further loss of human capital and reduced economic opportunities.^[7] Additionally, this will also increase student dropout rates around the world and mostly among disadvantaged groups.^[8]

When normal school teaching is interrupted, the alternative way of teaching is largely at home, out of school. Thus, this leads to question whether “learning at home can be like at school, at least to some extent,?” An initial response would be that - to some extent - the domestic environment could be socially, economically and pedagogically suitable for the school program to be sustained. Yet, this can only be possible with the use of computer and other information technology and a quiet room to follow online lessons; but also, parents support is crucial especially in pre-school education. However, there are great inequalities in this regard. Because the economic and social situations of families are not the same. The differences are seen in the amount of time devoted to teaching, in parents' non-cognitive skills,

in resources such as a kit to access the best online material, as well as the amount of information available. This human capital disparity will, in other words, cause inequality.^[10]

Out-of-school learning opportunities were searched so that students' learning would not be interrupted, within this framework. Hence, schools gradually turned into online education, with the pandemic making home-schooling almost mandatory. Home-schooling came as a huge shock not only to parents' productivity, but also to children's social life and learning, for online teaching became practiced with untested and unprecedented intensity.^[12] This situation was made more difficult by the considerable digital gap between students^[11] and by parents with a low level of education that could not be much of a support for their children. Youth migrants' parents fall mostly in this category. Based on research and surveys, youth migrants feel that they have not received enough support from their parents for their home-schooling, because they were busy with other concerns such as financial matters.

Besides disrupting education, closing schools had also an impact on their evaluation, which in turn will affect their future careers. Namely, the closure coincided with a key evaluation period, but many exams were postponed or cancelled. Thus, a potential alternative to cancelled assessments was to use 'projected grades'. Yet, Burgess & Sievertsen (2020) argue that these are often incorrect and that among high achieving students, those from disadvantaged backgrounds have lower predicted grades than those with relatively advantageous backgrounds. This sort of grading may also be difficult to do if the student does not hold necessary materials to do his/her projects for grading and it may be difficult to understand some tasks without help from parents, teachers and/or trainers. The fact that student assessments came during the school closure period meant that teachers scrambled to try and assess students remotely. This new experience, however, resulted in larger-than-normal measurement errors^[13] with lower earnings growth and potentially reduced matching efficiency for new graduates in the labor market. And this comes with a social and individual cost.^[14]

^[11] The World Bank Report Education (May 2020). The COVID-19 Pandemic: Shocks to education and policy responses. Retrieved from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/33696/148198.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>

^[12] OECD, (2021)...

^[13] The World Bank Report Education (May 2020). The COVID-19 Pandemic: Shocks to education and policy responses. Retrieved from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/33696/148198.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>

^[4] Burgess, S., & Sievertsen, H. H. (2020). Schools, skills, and learning: The impact of COVID-19 on education. CEPR Policy Portal. Retrieved from <https://voxeu.org/article/impact-covid-19-education>

^[5] World Bank Report (WBR), (2020)...

^[6] OECD, (2021)

^[7] OECD, (2020)

^[8] Ibid.

^[9] WBR, (2020).

^[10] Burgess ve Sievertsen, (2020).

^[11] Reville, P. (2020), COVID-19 school closures have turned a spotlight on inequities and other shortcomings. The Harvard Gazette National & World Affairs Time.

^[12] Burgess ve Sievertsen, (2020).

^[13] WBR, (2020).

^[14] OECD, (2020)

4.3 The impact of the COVID-19 on the activities

The COVID-19 pandemic also impacted social and physical activities of people worldwide. The coronavirus, which has become widespread with interpersonal contact, had a great impact by making it necessary to restructure people's social lives and relationships. Social relations that took place in the physical context were suspended for a while and continued through digital platforms. Protecting others health as well as each person own one became an imperative for responsibility.^[1] Being a pandemic, the coronavirus put obstacles to the smooth continuation of natural relationships because staying healthy was prioritized. Yet, despite the physical distance increasing, the sense of community was nevertheless strengthened by acting responsibly towards the others.

The lack of specific preventive or therapeutic medical interventions as well as the rapid transmission rates led to the scientific recommendation that individuals should stay at home to avoid the spread of the disease, avoiding social interactions. Restriction of movement, loss of usual routine, and reduced social and physical contact with others often led to boredom, frustration, and feelings of isolation.^[2]

In particular, the loss of regular physical activity was felt profoundly, as it is normally associated with lower risk of mortality, reduced stress and improved mental health. It could have been extremely helpful for people during the health emergency given its benefits. While studies continue to show the true impact of worldwide isolation on physical activity levels, Fitbit Inc., an American company that develops wearable physical activity trackers, shared the physical activity data of 30 million users during the quarantine process. These estimates revealed a significant decrease in the average number of steps (varying between 7% and 38%), compared to the same period last year in almost all countries in line with preliminary projections^[3]. Spain, with 38%, holds the highest reduced activities in the world.

^[1] WBR, (2020).

^[2] Karataş, Z. (2020). Social Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic, Change and Empowerment. *Journal of Social Work Research* 4(1), pp. 3-15.

^[3] Fitbit, (March 2020), The Impact Of Coronavirus On Global Activity, retrieved on 14th July 2022 from: <https://blog.fitbit.com/covid-19-global-activity/>

Chapter V: Rising importance of Digital platforms

5.1 The COVID-19 pandemic and Digitalization of Education

The outbreak of COVID-19 and lockdowns at the national level have brought distance education to the agenda as an alternative to normal learning. However, it requires adequate educational technology, the competence of which is normally put under test during moments of crisis. In this regard, there are unfortunately very few systems in the world that were and are fully prepared for this. For example, in China before the pandemic, education was nevertheless carried out online, in spite of school closures. Whereas most countries and school systems were caught less or completely unprepared for digital education during the pandemic. Among these ones, European Union member states classified as one of the most unready regions to carry out education via digital platforms.

Access to technology, high-bandwidth internet or smartphones are income related. That's why it is essential for programs to be able to quickly target those who need them the most. Moreover, in some low-capacity underserved settings, schools are often the only permanent government structure in rural villages and can serve as temporary crisis response centers. Here in these hard-to-reach areas, teachers are often the most educated peoples and thus can serve as communication campaign advocates and audience.

5.2 Access to Digital platforms

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically increased the use of digital meeting platforms. Several digital platforms, such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet, have been used to access to online learning and activities. Accessing these platforms for attending the classes and activities can be complicated and expensive for those who cannot afford to pay the subscription. The crisis led, on the one hand, to the rapid monitoring of digital adoption in countries that had already had some level of digitalisation, yet on the other hand, to the discovery of digital inequalities, particularly large in less developed economies.¹⁸

¹⁸ [\[1\]](https://digitalregulation.org/financing-universal-access-to-digital-technologies-and-services/) The World Bank, (2021), Financing universal access to digital technologies and services, Retrieved from <https://digitalregulation.org/financing-universal-access-to-digital-technologies-and-services/>

Schools have been relying on digital platforms as a means to continue classes and activities. Generally speaking, to participate to classes, students need firstly to know how to use these meeting platforms and then pay for access to exclusive content and specific features. During the pandemic having access to these online portals for learning and social endeavors became indispensable. However, there were two problems with that: firstly, economically disadvantage students who were not able to sustain the platform costs, were ruled out from class. Secondly, most students had issues in understanding these platforms functioning and were unable to connect to them due to lack of digital competences. Absence of digital knowledge limited students' access; pupils without computers and necessary technological tools were prevented from adequate learning compared to their peers. Normally the formers are those on the lower income side who come from migrant families and cannot afford the cost of digital education. Thus, online learning activities during the COVID-19 pandemic should have provided multimedia technology opportunities according to students' backgrounds.

Students' satisfaction of digital platforms and desire for online learning is largely dependent on their ability to use digital tools and access an adequate internet network. In other words, learning digital competences become critical to enjoy and make use of educational online platforms.

5.3 Activities via Digital platforms

Starting March 2020, strict stay-at-home orders were imposed by EU Member States. As a result, all organized activities and sports were suspended, and recreation facilities were temporarily closed. People were allowed to maintain their physical activities only to some extent while any other indoor social activities such as meetings, labs, and workshops were halted. This was particularly felt by young people who use these moments for social and educational purposes. In fact, despite the EU easing some restriction due to low COVID-19 cases, indoor social activities held by schools, non-governmental organizations, and universities continued to face severe restrictions.¹⁹

Organisations have used digital platforms, i.e., Moodle, YouTube, Facebook and other applications, to maintain social and physical activities during the pandemic. Young people, with

¹⁹ Parker, K., & al. (2021), "*The Use of Digital Platforms for Adults' and Adolescents' Physical Activity During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Our Life at Home): Survey Study*", Journal of Medical Internet Research.

enough financial availability to bear the cost of technology and with enough digital competence, had the opportunity to follow through this new normality. Contrarily, disadvantaged students found it hard to maintain his/her social activities.²⁰

According to our survey and interview results (in the second part of this publication), young people with a migrant background were among these vulnerable pupils who could not afford the necessary technological tools while also lacking digital competencies to adapt to the emergency situation.

5.4 The inequality of Education and Activities via Digital Platforms

COVID-19 lockdowns highlighted the social problem of digital inequality at home, due to the fast digitalization of teaching at various level. Although the use of Internet and computer has increased all over the world with the pandemic, the number of people who have difficulties in accessing technology is also wide. According to a statement made by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2020), half of the students worldwide still do not have access to a computer and necessary materials for online education and activities.²¹

Measures taken in education, like home-based lessons, virtual summits, online conversations or mobile phone applications made a large part of the world dependent on internet. Yet, this addiction has also deepened digital injustice²² for internet access is still lower in developing and underdeveloped countries, thus widening the digital divide. In the past, geographical conditions, financial opportunities, socioeconomic and socio-cultural differences threatened equality of opportunity in education. However, nowadays, it is the digital divide that is likely to create a similar problem. With this concept is expressed the differences between technology ownership, access and use competences.²³

The digital divide is not a problem that can be solved by merely providing tools such as computers, telephones and televisions to students, because it is a phenomenon closely related

²⁰ Parker, K., & al. (2021), “*The Use of Digital Platforms for Adults’ and Adolescents’ Physical Activity During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Our Life at Home): Survey Study*”, Journal of Medical Internet Research.

²¹ UNESCO, (April 2020), Startling digital divides in distance learning emerge.

²² Gonzalez-Betancor, S. M. et al. (2021), Digital inequality at home. The school as compensatory agent, Computers & Education ELSEVIER.

²³ Ibid.

to the quality of learning that takes place at school and at home. For this reason, efforts to bridge the digital divide should not be limited to technology ownership and internet access but should extend to the development of policies that are suitable for needs, considering learning differences.²⁴

Some argue that egalitarian and inclusive approaches should be used in the process of digitalization of education so that inequalities and learning differences arising from the digital divide do not deepen. This is because it is not simply a matter of technological equipment and access.²⁵ Namely, for a fair digital world, governments ought to ensure that citizens equal accessibility to the internet, which has become the main channel of communication for any type of activity. In turn this would grant entry to education or any other public service under equal conditions. Educational institutions can take the initiative by cooperating with other public institutions to identify any specific needs among disadvantaged and disabled individuals, with a special reference to information technology.

²⁴ Amporo, T. & Nabbuye, H. (2020). Taking distance learning ‘offline’: Lessons learned from navigating the digital divide during COVID-19. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/>. (Erişim tarihi: 07.08.2020).

²⁵ Ibid.

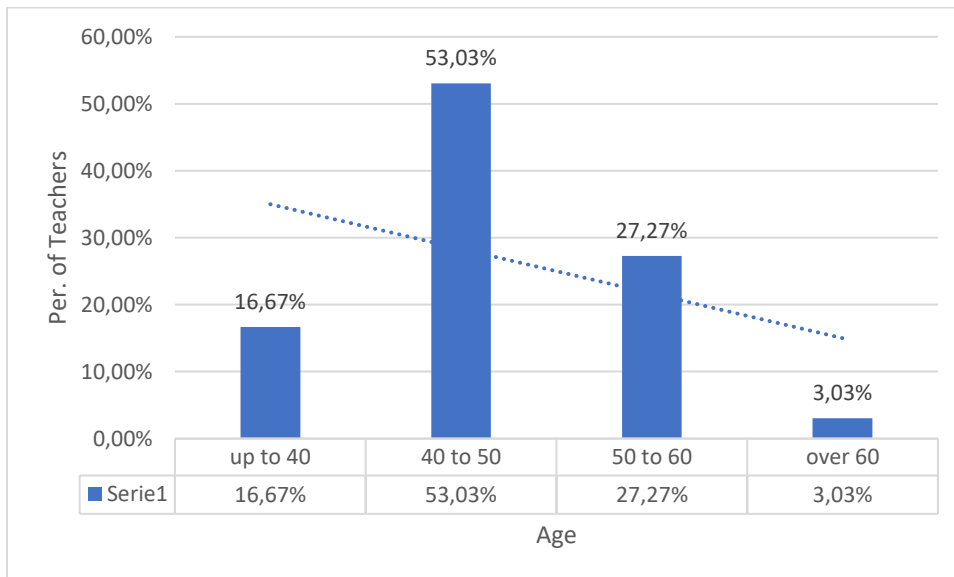
SECOND PART

Chapter VI: Results of Surveys and Interviews

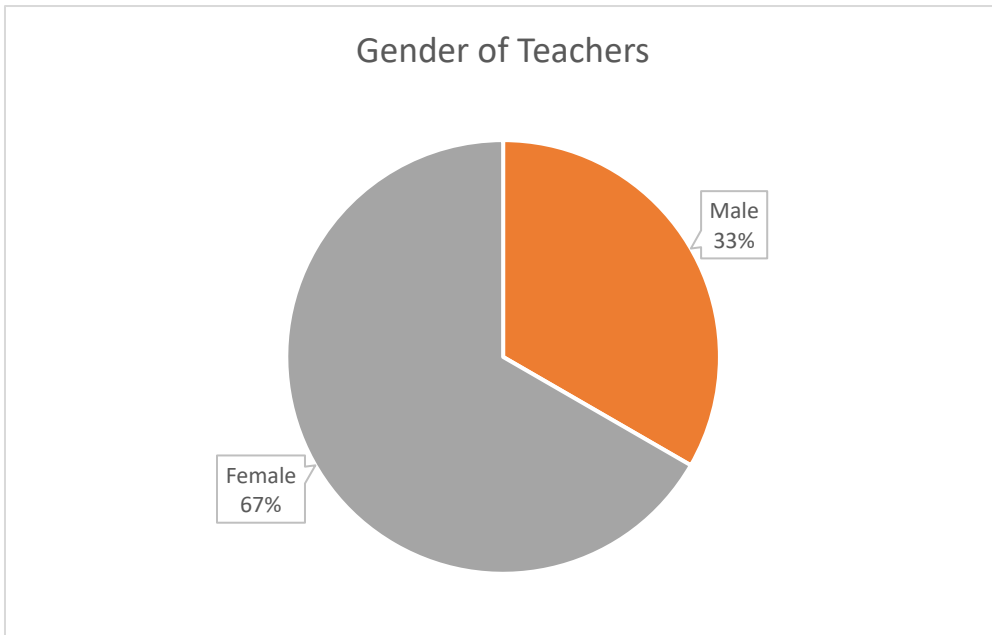
6.1 Results from Teacher's surveys and interviews

In the context of the DO-IT project, the surveys and interviews were mostly conducted by the 2nd Vocational High School of Katerini on teachers in Greece. Some participants were also from Spain, Belgium, and Italy where immigration integration departments operate and have a relatively large number of students with an immigrant background. The research showed very important findings regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of students with an immigrant background.

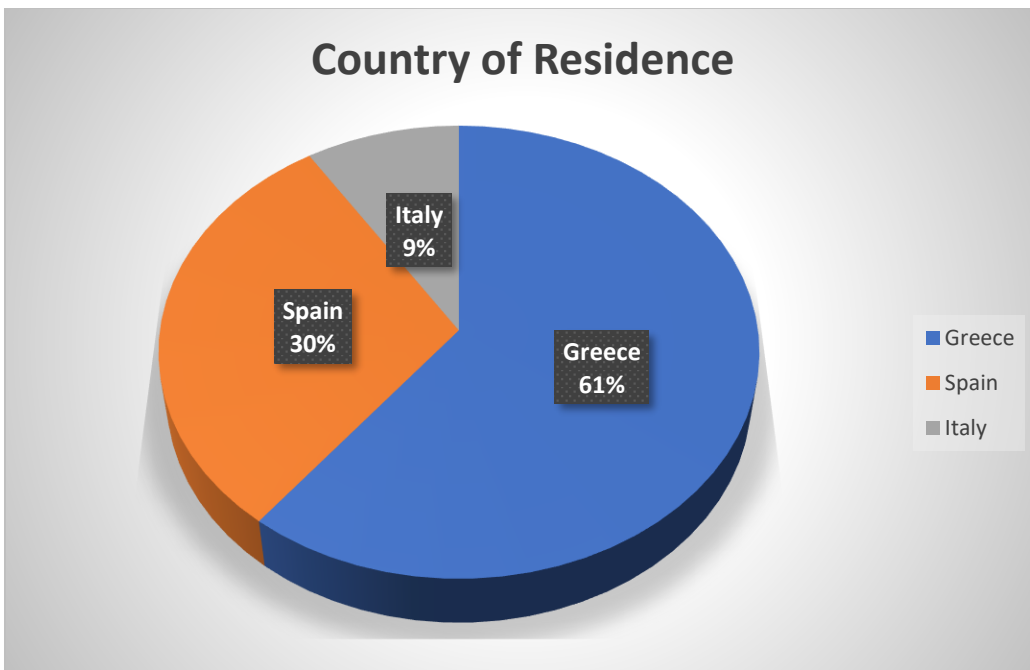
Looking at the random sample of teachers (66 observations) who participated in our research, it was observed that more than half of them (total 35 teachers – 53%) were aged from 40 to 50 years. While a large percentage of them were between 50 and 60 years old (total 18 teachers – 27%), in contrast to only two teachers who were over 60. Finally, only 16.7% of teachers were under 40.



The majority of teachers that took part were women - 67%, while 33% were men.

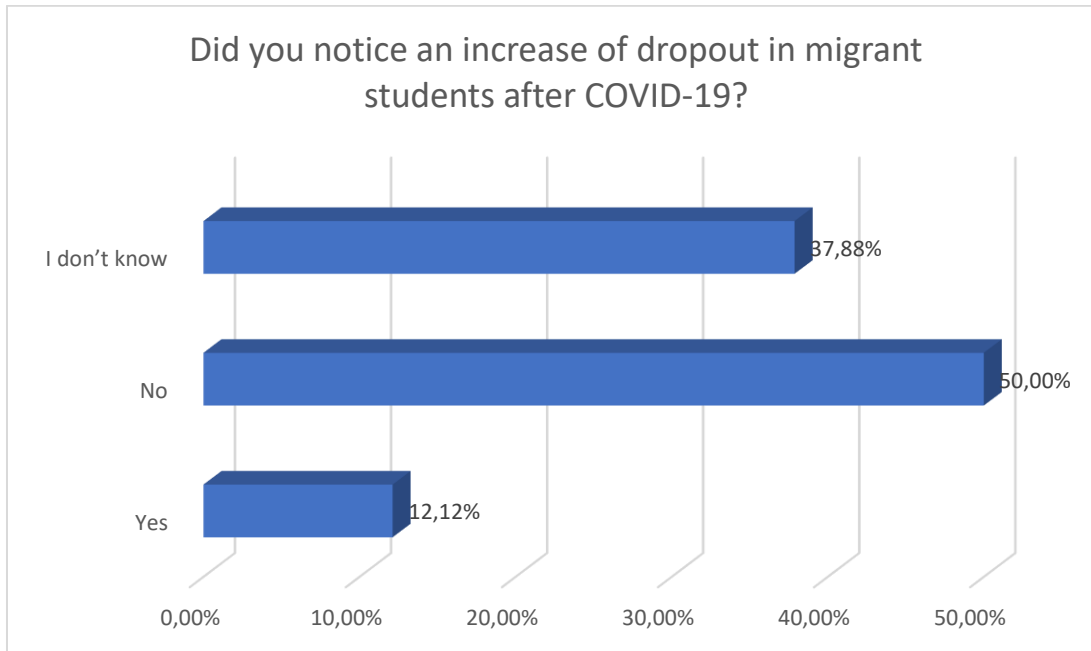


The majority of participants were from Greece (61%) but also Spain (30%) and in minor part Italy (9%).

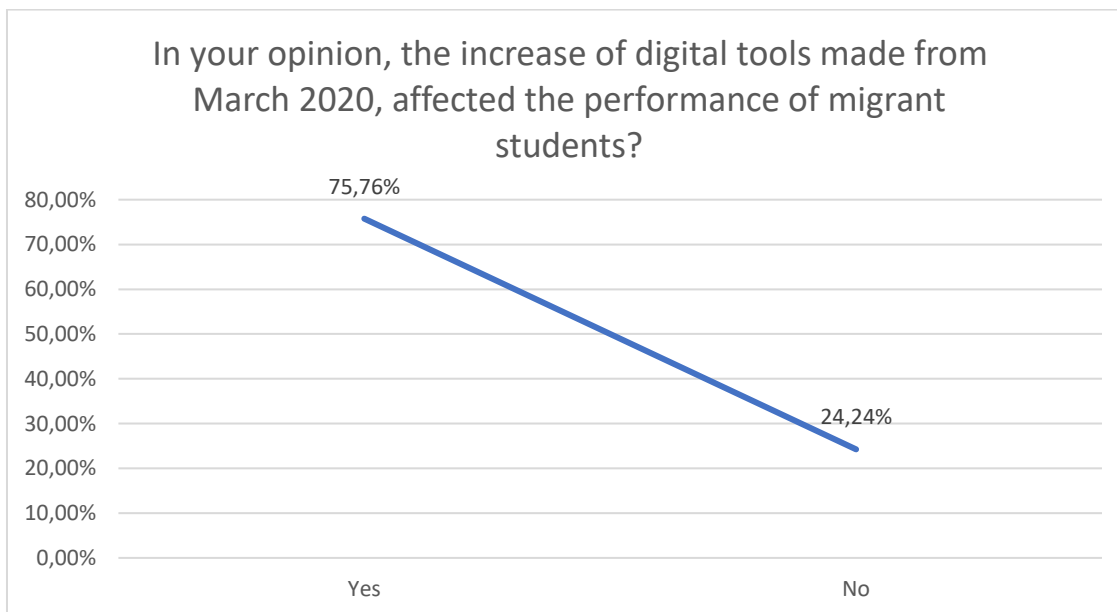


When asked if - after the COVID-19 pandemic – they noticed an increase in the percentage of students with an immigrant background who dropped out of school, half of them answered that they did not notice any increase (total number 33 – 50%). In contrast, almost 38% replied that

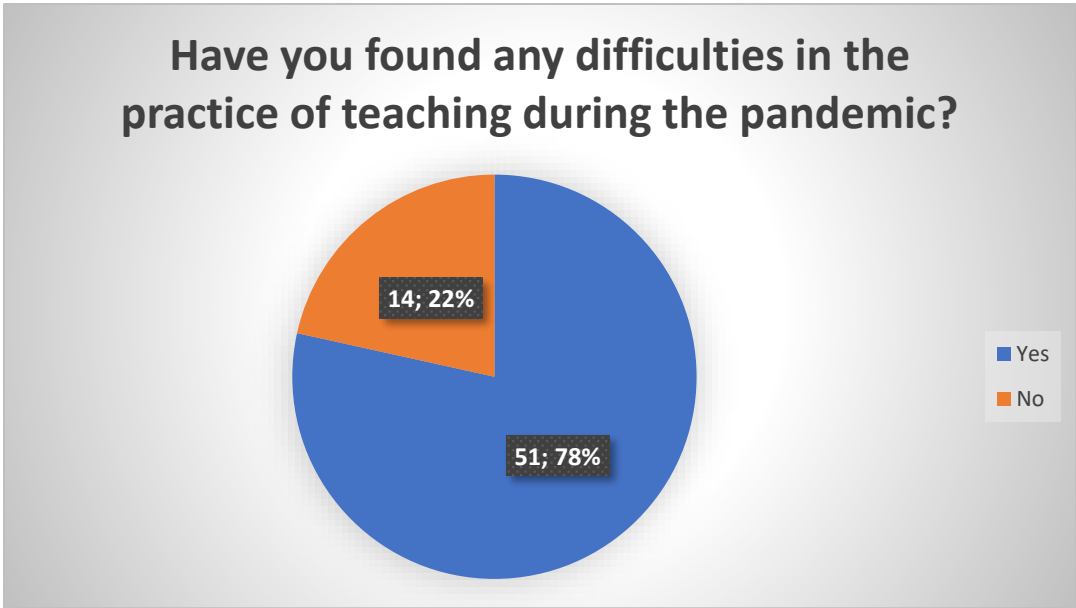
they did not know at all. Only a small percentage (12,12%) noticed a higher numbers of migrant dropouts after COVID-19.



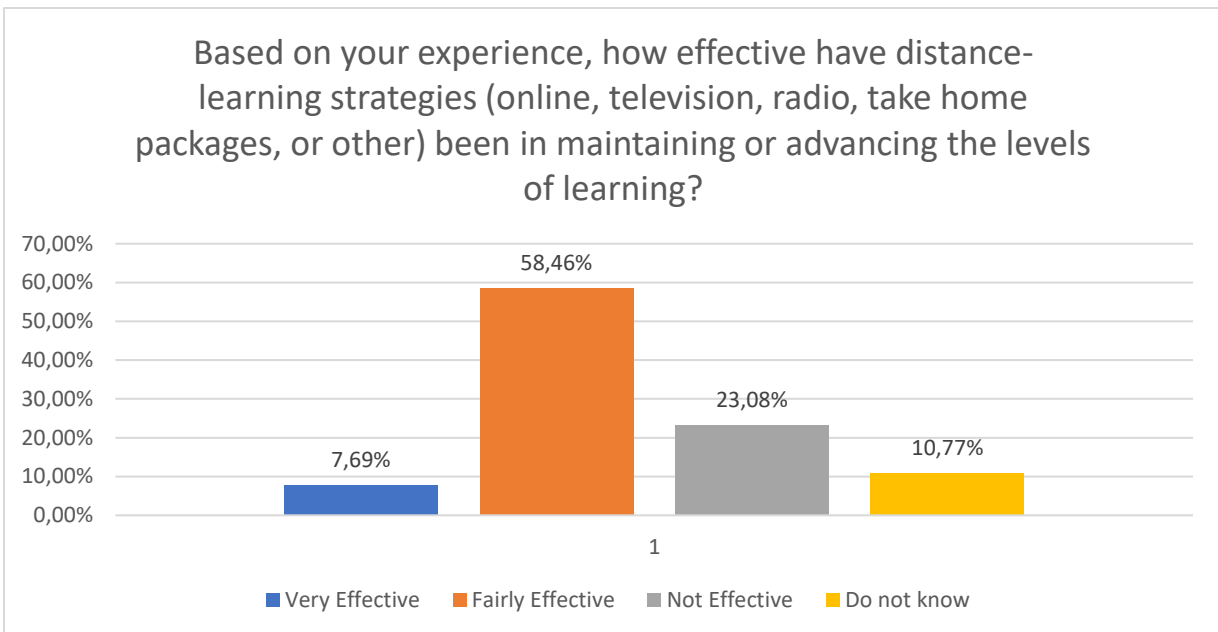
The largest percentage of teachers believe that the increase in e-learning tools during the COVID-19 pandemic affected student performance (almost 76%).



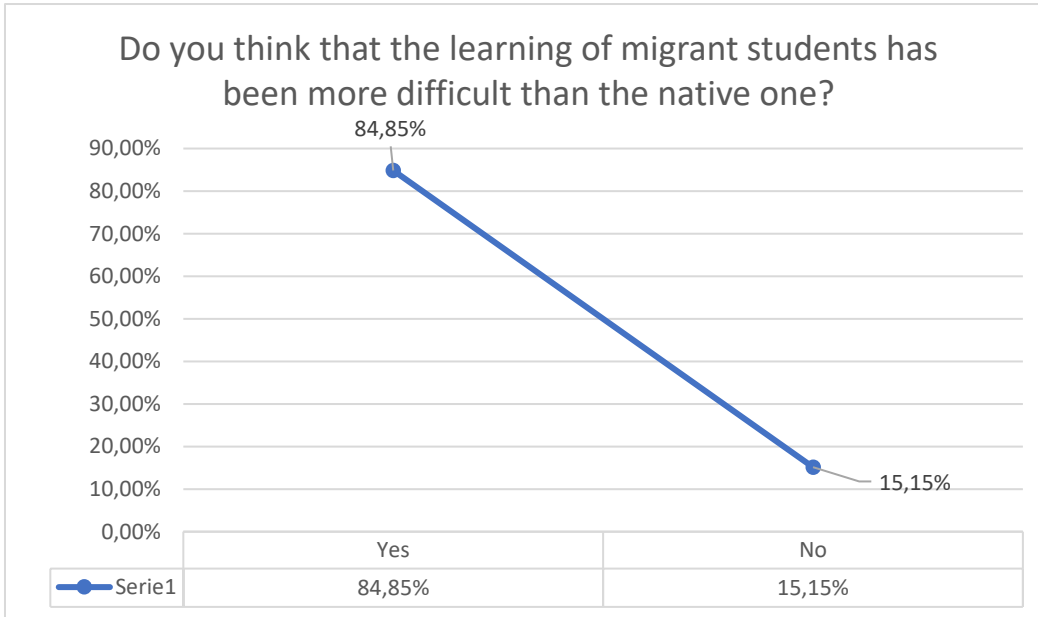
The large part of teachers (78% or 51) who participated in the survey answered that they encountered difficulties in teaching during COVID-19. When looking at data, teachers that faced these challenges came mostly from Greece (30 teachers).



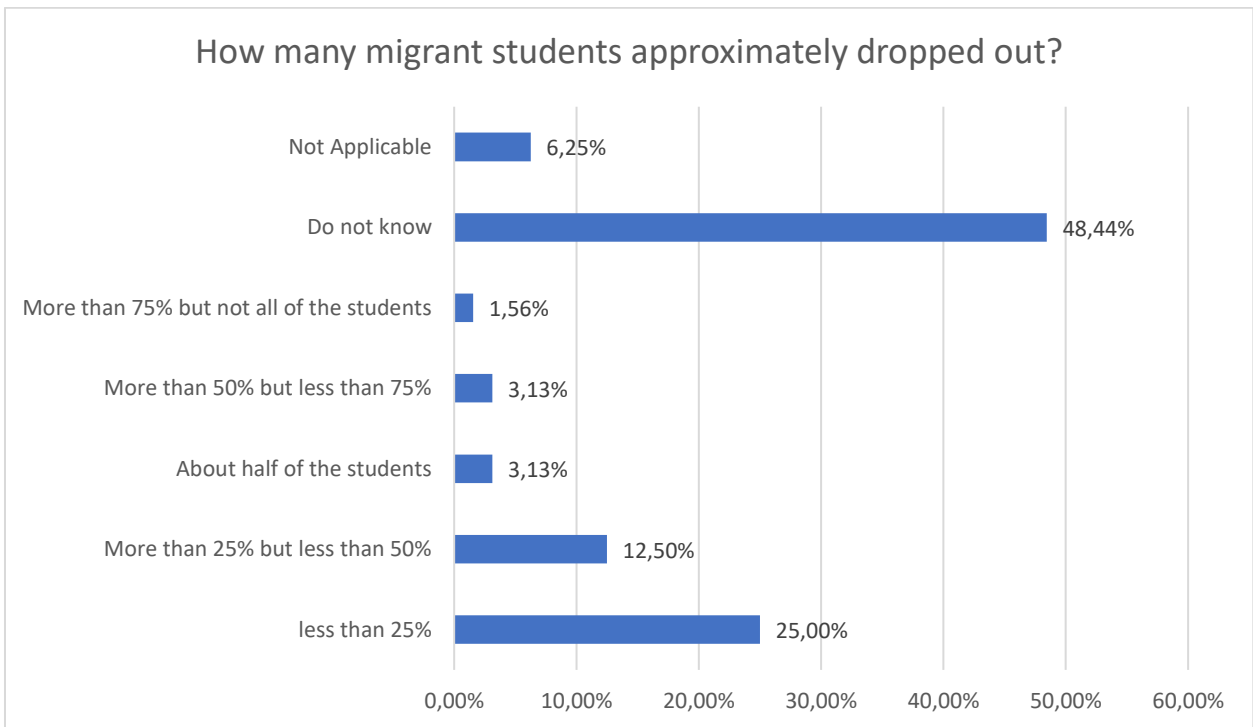
A very important finding is that the majority of teachers (58%) believe distance learning strategies used during the COVID-19 pandemic were effective enough to maintain the level of learning. Yet similarly, the percentage of teachers who think the opposite is quite high (23%).



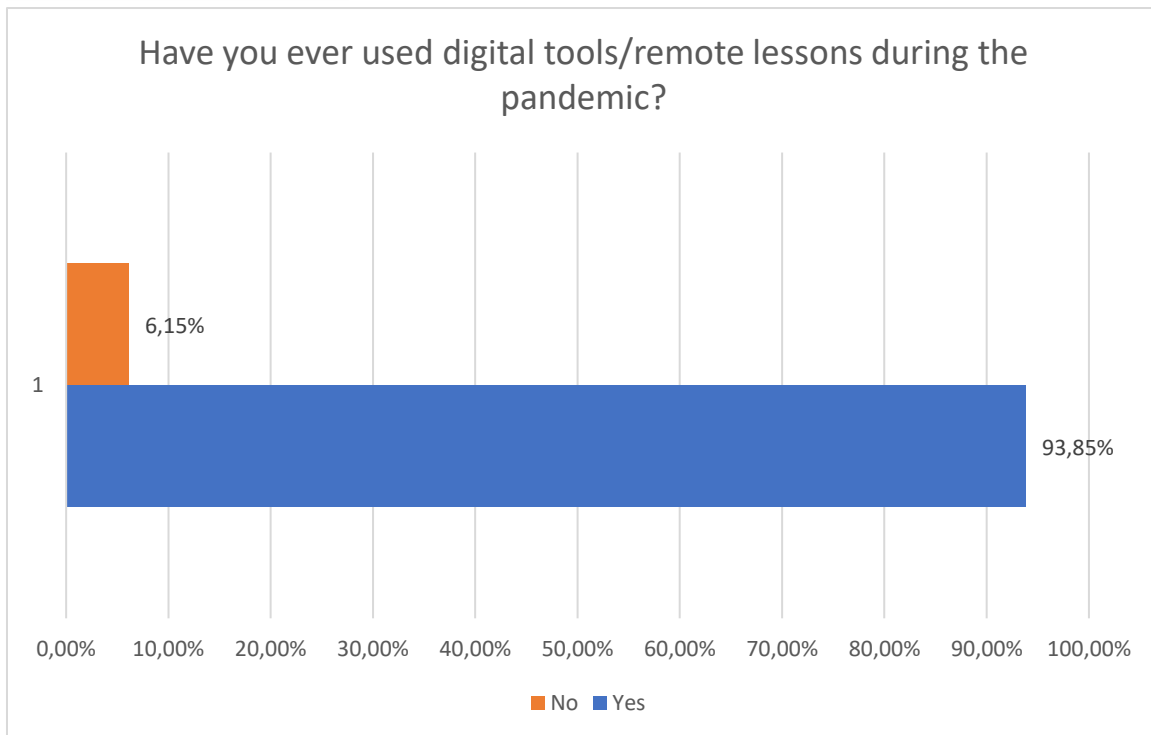
Almost 85% of teachers believe that educating students with an immigrant background is more difficult compared to local pupils. This opinion is actually shared among all the countries of the research.



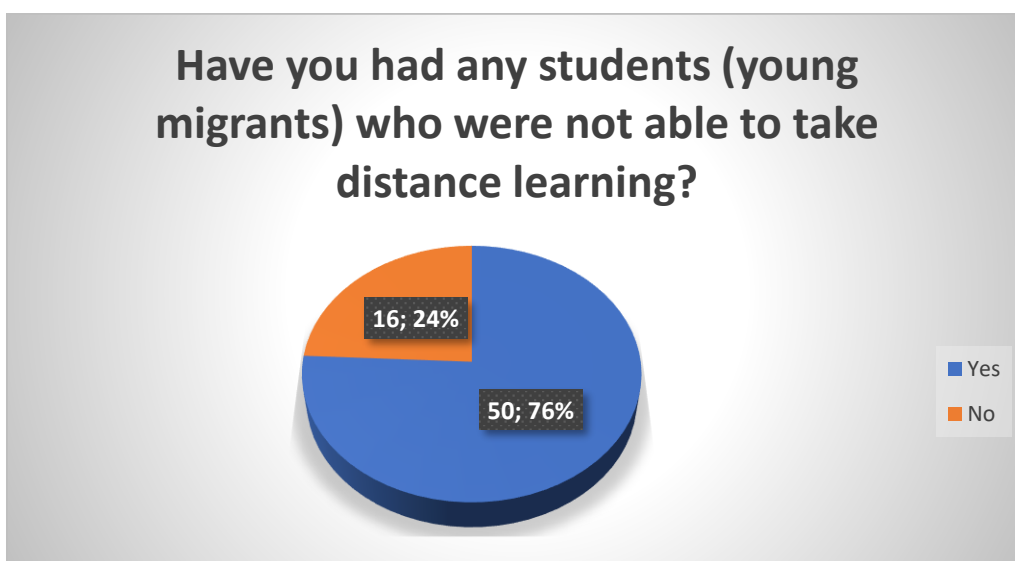
Almost half of the teachers (48.44%) do not know how many immigrant students dropped out of school due to the pandemic. While 25% of them believe that this number is less than 25%.



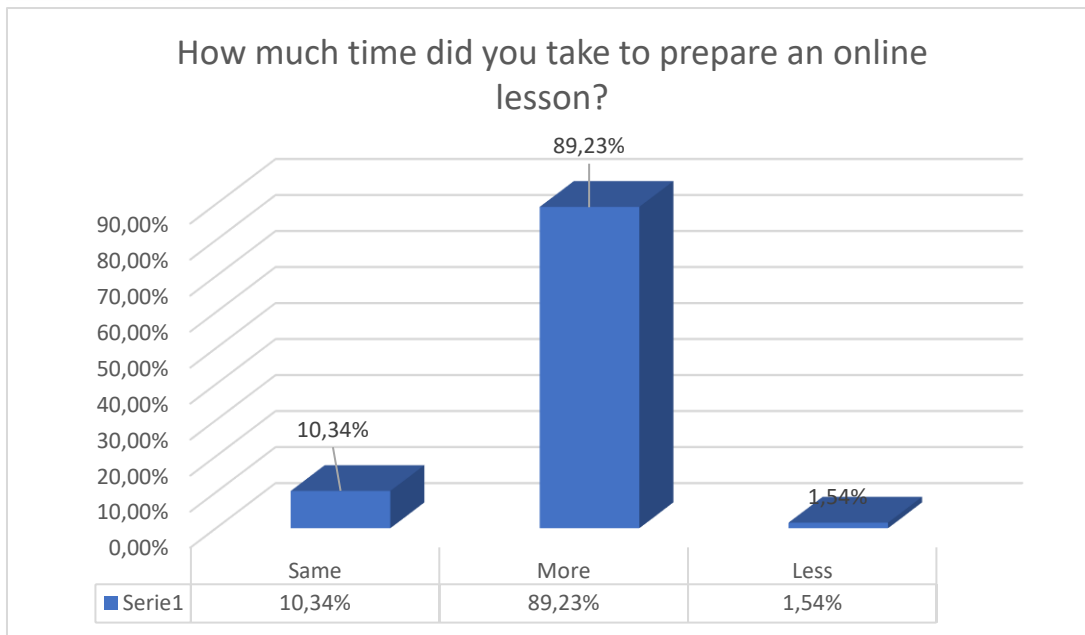
Almost all teachers (93.8%) used digital tools during the COVID-19 pandemic. Only a small percentage of them didn't use digital tools and this is something to investigate further.



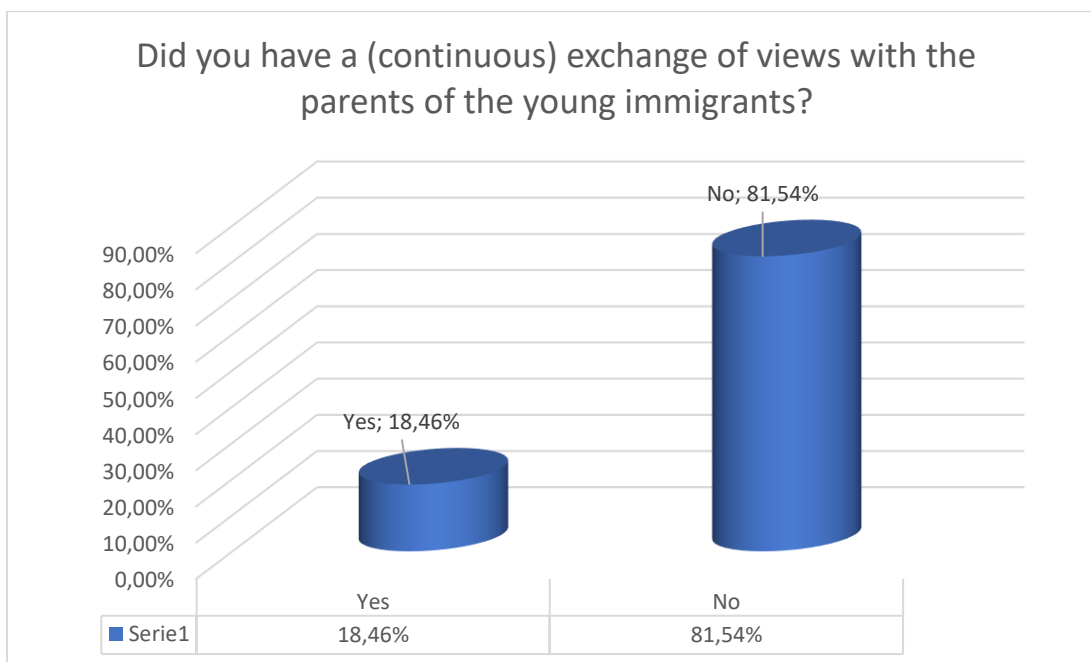
A large percentage of teachers (76% - 50 teachers) who participated in the research had immigrant students who were unable to attend classes during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Only one teacher responded that it took him/her less time to prepare his/her lesson during the pandemic. On the contrary, the majority of the teachers (89.2%) felt they needed more time to prepare their lessons and activities. Finally, 10.34% answered that they have needed the same amount of time as before.

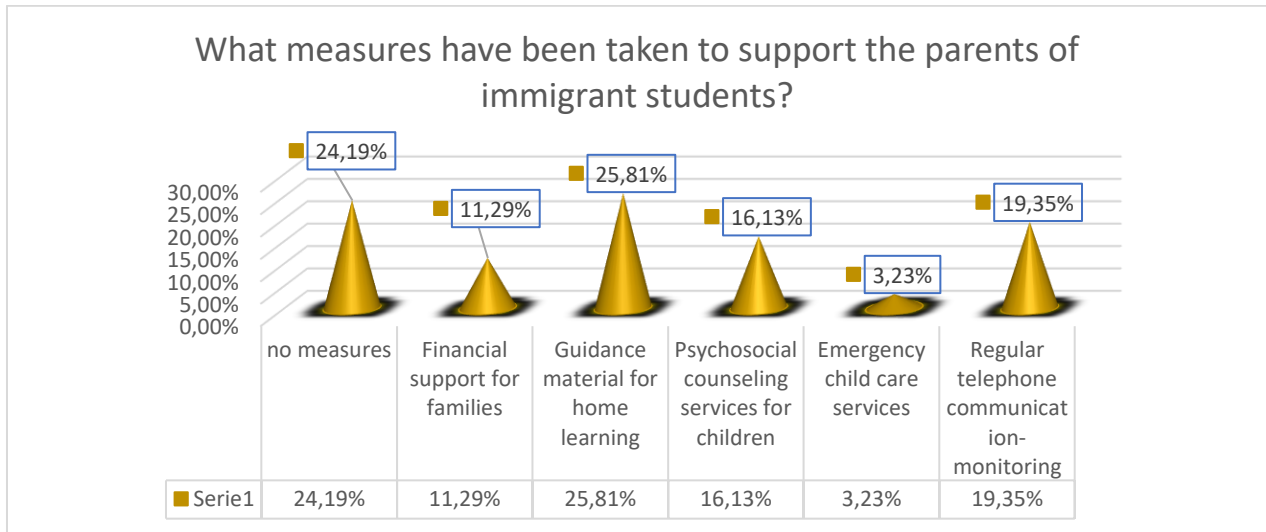


A key finding is that the majority of teachers (almost 82%) are not in frequent contact with immigrant students' parents, especially when it comes to their children progress or other issues. To be sure, this is something that must be investigated further to understand the causes and offer solutions.

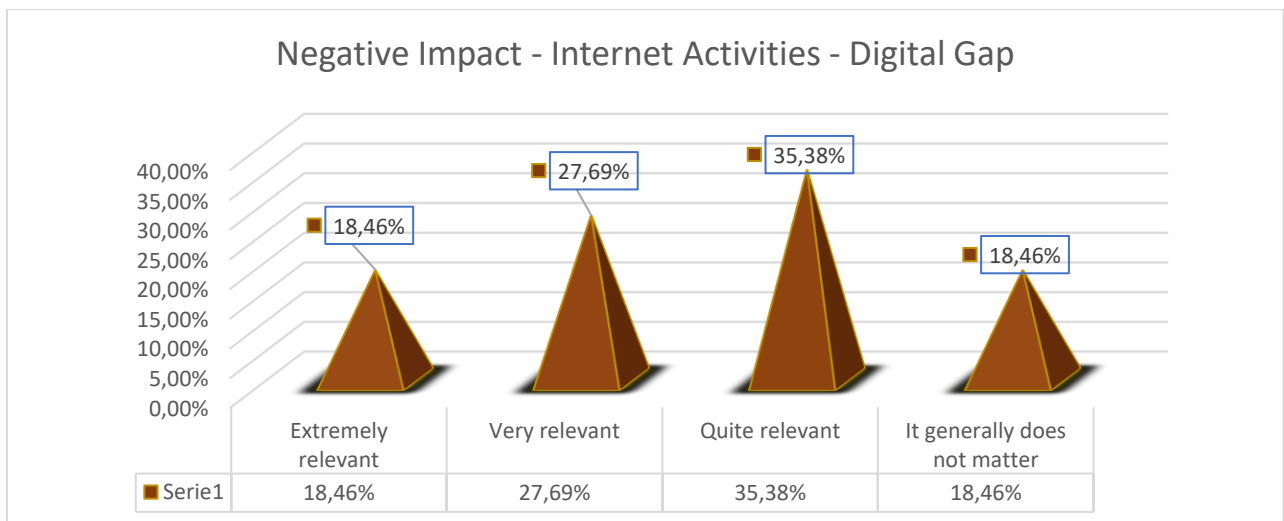


In fact, when teachers were asked "What measures have been taken to support the parents of immigrant students?", a large percentage (about 24%) answered that no actual measures were taken. In truth, a quarter of them answered that they were attentive to provide educational materials at home, while a high number of teachers emphasized how telephone communication

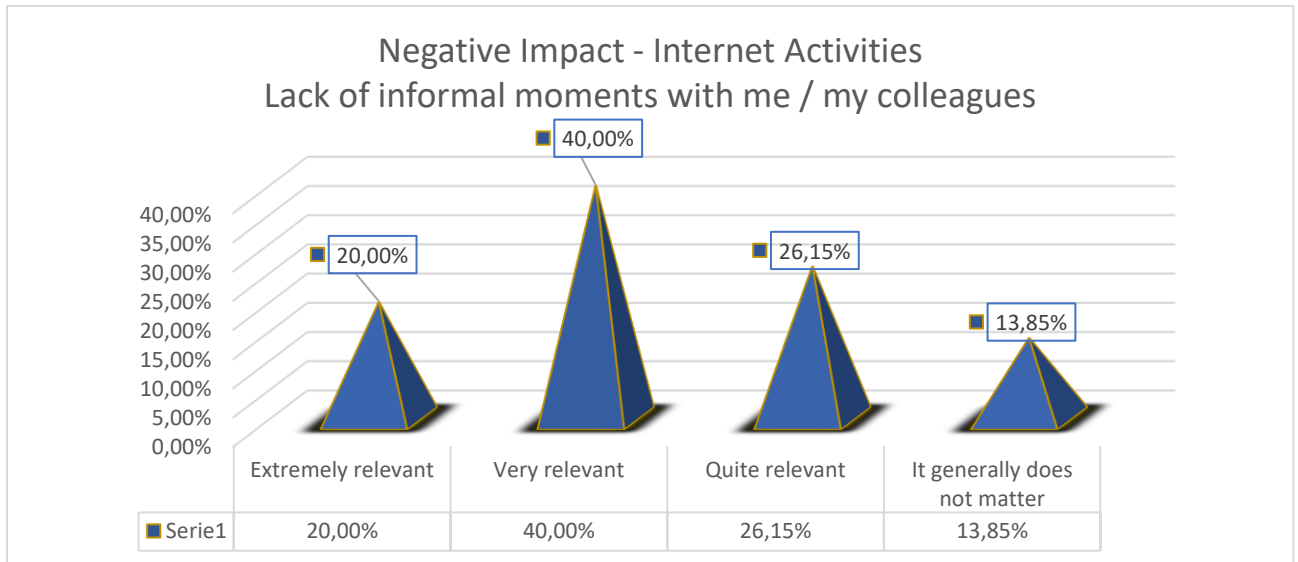
was preferred (about 19%). Finally, about 16% of the teachers answered that there has been psychological counselling services for the children.



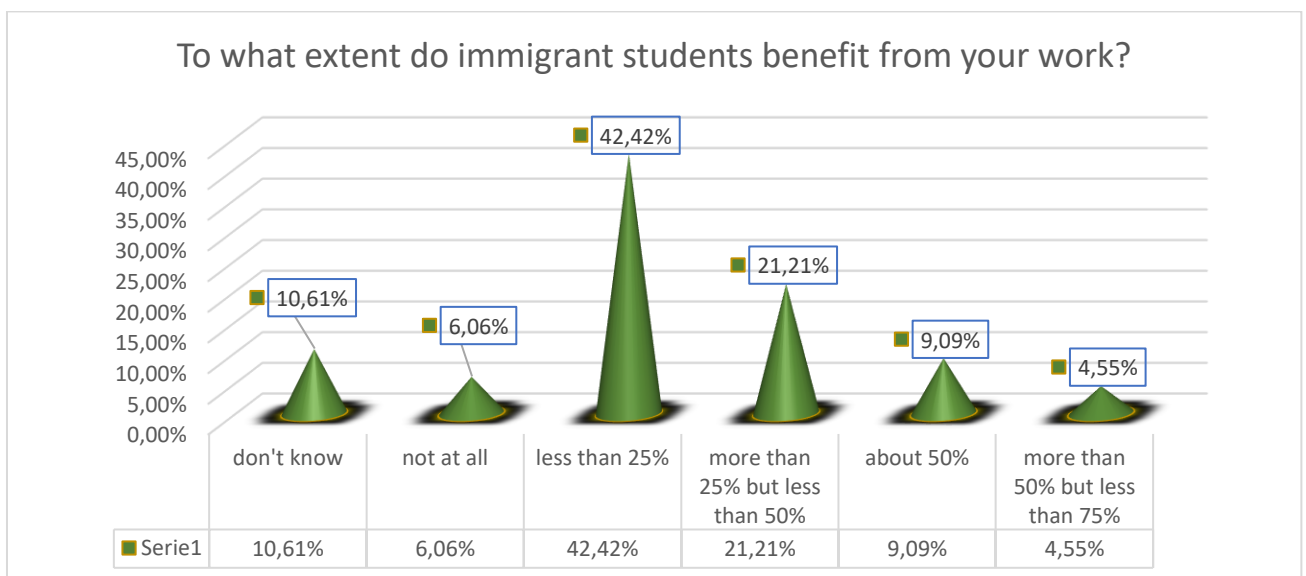
Regarding the importance of digital divide during online activities, the majority of teachers (35%) said that it is quite relevant. Instead, the percentage of those who answered that it has an extremely negative impact (18.46%) was exactly the same as that of the teachers who replied that it has no negative impact at all. The percentage (27.69%) of teachers who answered that the digital divide plays a very relevant negative role in online activities was also high.



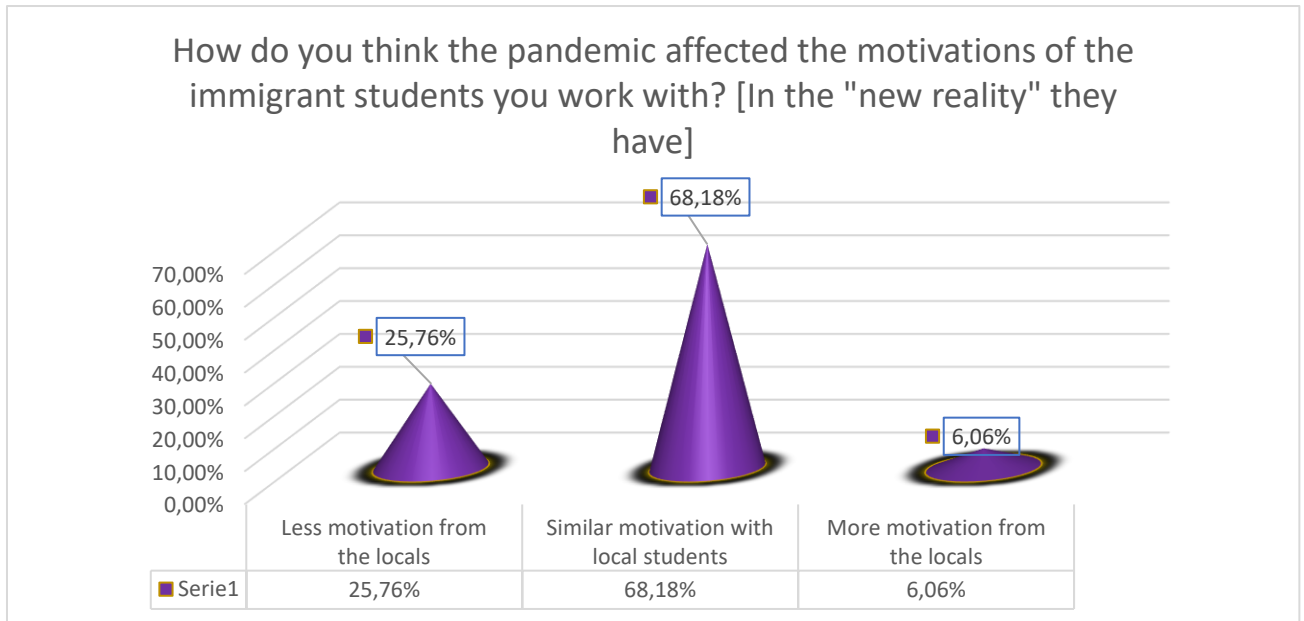
It is very relevant that 60% of teachers attach extreme importance or great importance to the absence of informal moments between immigrant students and teachers during online activities. Only 13.85% of them believe that the lack of direct communication with students does not matter. About 26% of teachers consider the lack of direct communication with the pupils to be of relative importance.



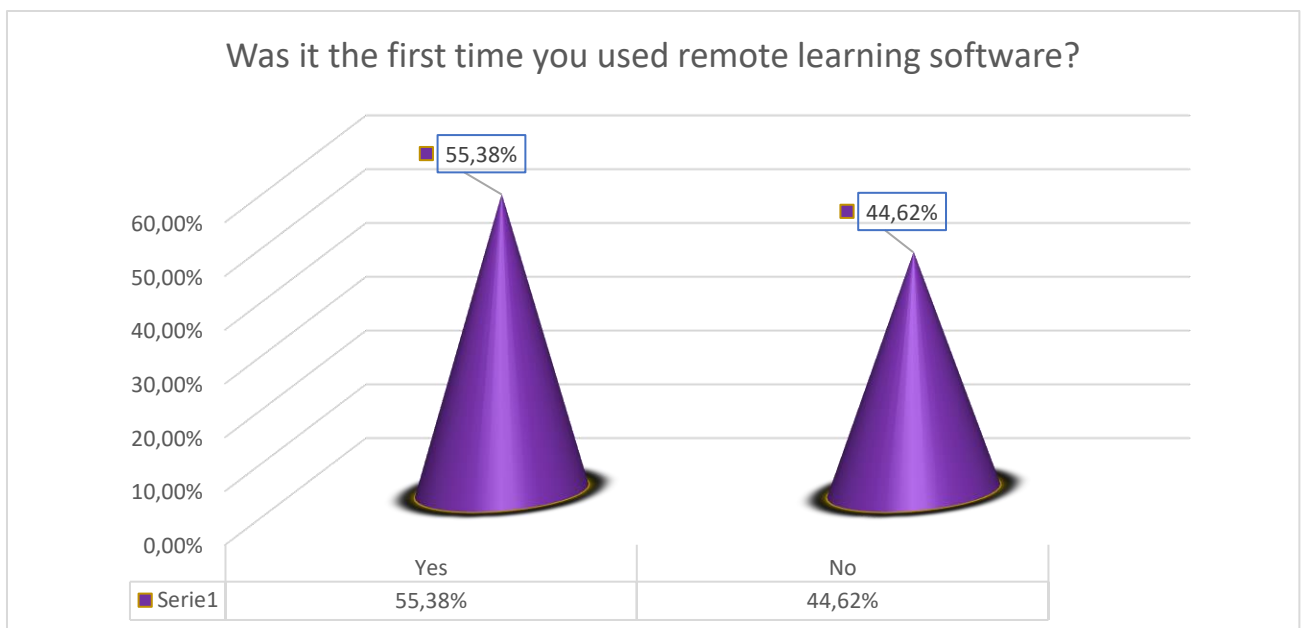
The graph below shows how 42% of the teachers reckon that “less 25%” of their migrant students benefited from their work. About one fifth (21.21%) believe that “more than 25% but less than 50%” benefited from their work and only a small percentage (4.55%) support that “more than 50% but less than 75%” did. It is also important that about 10% of the teachers responded that they did not know.



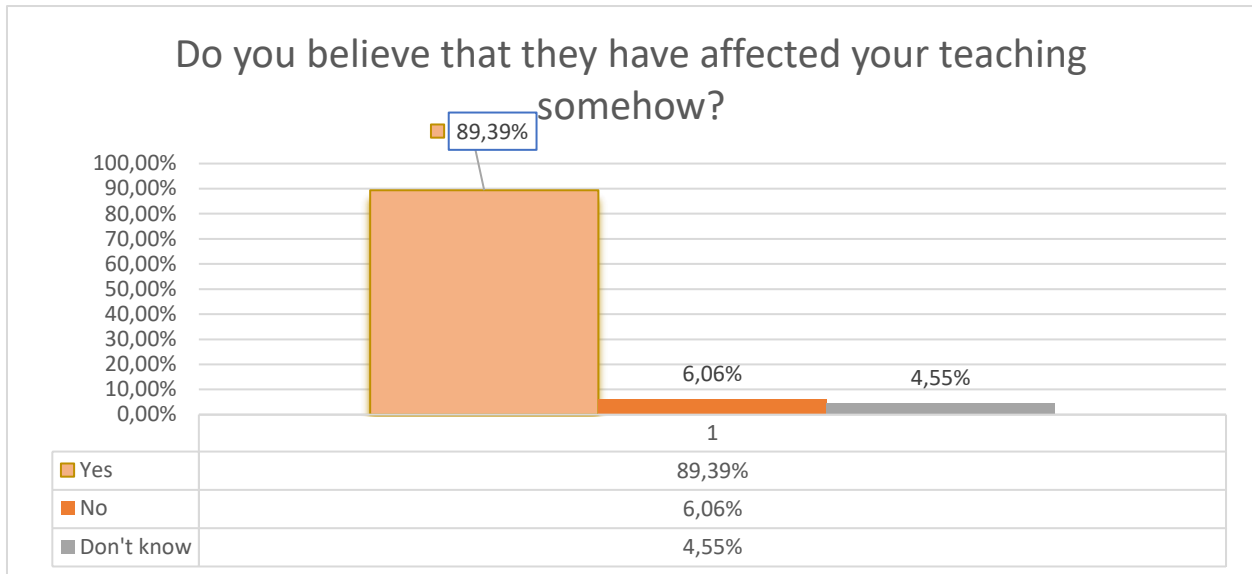
A quite interesting result is that the majority of the teachers (68.18%) found that the pandemic and its new reality affected the motivations of the migrant students and to local ones alike.. Only a small percentage (6.06%) believe that migrant students were more motivated, contrary to the one fourth of the teachers (25.76%) that think the opposite.



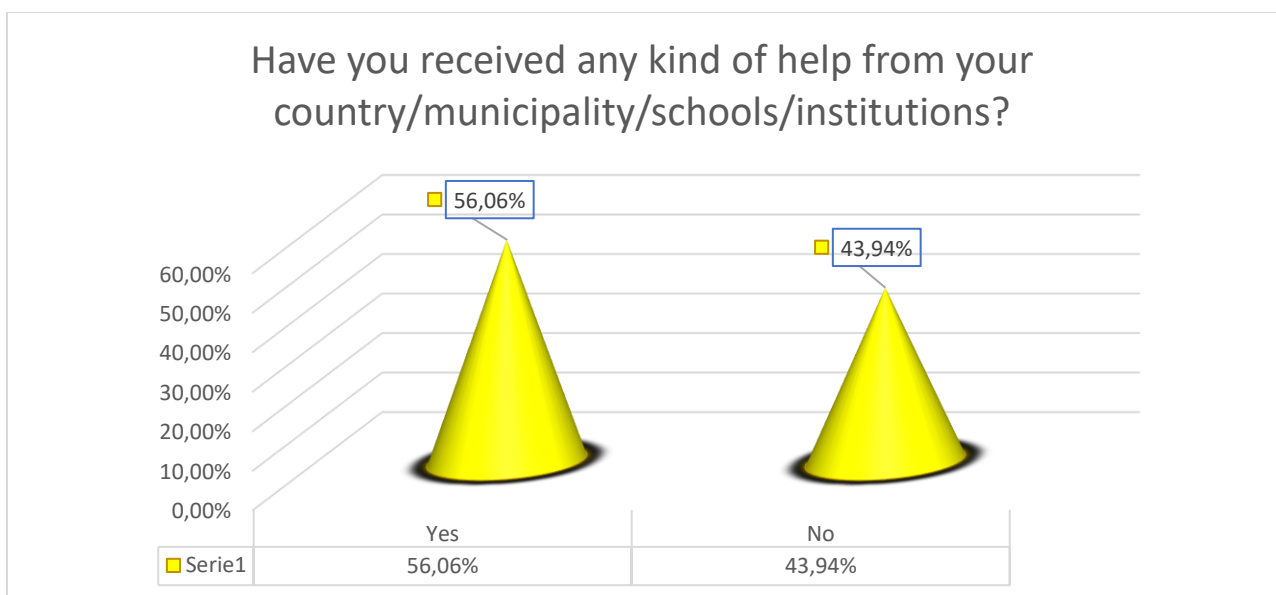
More than half of the teachers of the sample (55.38%) used remote learning software for the first time during the COVID-19 pandemic. About 45% of the teachers seem to have had some experience on e-learning platforms before.



Furthermore, when asked if e-learning affected their teaching somehow, the majority of teachers (89.39%) replied positively. Only around 6% said that the new way of learning did not affect their teaching at all.



More than the half of the teachers (56.06%) received some kind of help during the pandemic whether from the state, the municipality, the school or other institution, while almost 44% didn't receive any help at all.



A variety of training tools and software were used by the teachers during the pandemic, including Cisco Webex, Eclass, Moodle, E-me, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Kahoot, Canvas, Microsoft Office, Skype, Quizzes, Edpuzzle, etc.

The Results of the Interviews

In order to fully meet the requirements of the research, discussions and in-depth interviews with teachers were included in the project. These were conducted on ten teachers of different specialization who regularly teach students with a migrant background at a vocational high school. It should be noted that some teachers themselves had an immigrant background.

Question 1: Have the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your activities? If so, could you expand further?

According to the focus group, during the pandemic teachers fulfilled their duties under difficult and new conditions which deeply impacted their activities. Generally speaking, being forced to adapt to online teaching within little time was difficult. It limited their socialization opportunities, such as social contact with friends and family as well as events (birthday parties, celebrations, weddings), but also their activities, i.e., exercise in the gym or swimming.

As far as the educational process is concerned, it changed from interpersonal to distance-learning and remained so for a long period of time. Some students (mostly migrants and local students from poor families) had difficulties with the classes, mostly because they could not find an available computer or a mobile device to connect to. Others had to deal with problematic internet connections.

In-person education was substituted by restrictive e-learning which made lessons impersonal. School life changed and so did interactions between teachers and students while stimulating rapid innovation in the digital and distance-learning sector. Moreover, the pandemic has impacted a series of activities in both direct and indirect ways. Not only, this was aggravated by the reduction of the overall mobility that rendered socialization impossible, but also by the shift of these activities to the e-level exclusively.

The teachers faced problems in terms of logistics infrastructure and accessibility to distance education. Among others, they also complained about conflicting instructions, organization delays and lack of coordination in the implementation of remote learning. For example, there were no clear instructions given about the pedagogical approaches and methodologies that needed to be followed. The role of teachers in distance education was not clarified clearly and excessive amount of time was required for the preparation. All of the above contributed to the mental and physical exhaustion of teachers, students and their parents.

Question 2: Do you think the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the education and activities of disadvantaged people (young with migrant background) more than citizens in your country? Please explain it.

The new conditions undermined the idea that education gives equal opportunities for educational inequalities still exist and are reinforced by the digital divide. Students with immigrant parents faced some learning difficulties, as their parents had neither the financial means nor the cognitive-educational or even linguistic skills to help them. This is why most of the times, students with migrant background are characterized by insecurity, feelings of inferiority, difficult social integration and adaptation, isolation and marginalization, tendency to join gangs and a general negative attitude towards school.

Language, way of living, different traditions and other situations were already obstacles for these people; the pandemic was – therefore - an addition to the list of existing problems. Social and psychological well-being declined for everybody, yet for migrant students in precarious conditions it worsened further. There was no time for face-to-face information and education with the new tools was hard for the minority of students that had language difficulties. Not to mention that most of them could not afford the appropriate equipment as well as internet connection; this hindered the process of learning, communication and other activities. Inability to leave the house increased stress, psychological pressure and insecurities for everyone, but especially students with migratory background. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted negatively every citizen education in Greece but mainly that of disadvantaged people because the educational system was not prepared to provide them the necessary equipment for distance learning.

Also, lack of fluency in the host country language exacerbated home-schooling difficulties. This is because language barriers are the more challenging when education is online, in particular if there is no parental support. In the context of online learning, without daily contacts with peers and teachers, students with immigrant parents felt hopeless in coping with the language. Although eight out of ten teachers we interviewed do believe that students with an immigrant background certainly had more difficulty in distance learning during COVID-19, two of them reckon students responded equally positively to e-learning platforms.

Question 3: *Do you think COVID-19 hardened the work of professionals such as teacher, trainers, young workers to delivery service, such as giving education and making activities, for disadvantage people?*

All the professionals had to adapt their teaching to the new distance-learning, thus it was more complicated to achieve the same results using different tools and methods. In Greece teachers faced unprecedented situations such as unscheduled lessons and different learning tools like Google, while having to ensure appropriate materials and support to students especially those with a migrant background. The latter had indeed felt the necessity of extra help, of encouragement and psychological support. However, none these could be provided adequately through distance learning. Apparently the COVID-19 pandemic did the opposite: it caused additional problems to them as well as to those who wanted to help while making it harder to study closely this phenomenon. The ministry of education did not give many tools to the students for an easy transition from the traditional teaching to the digital one.

Question 4: *Do you think it is possible to carry on activities and education with disadvantaged people via digital platforms? Could you please explain it further.*

Though digital platforms can provide many additional assets to the educational process, they still cannot replace live teaching interaction and other educational activities. Firstly, activities that by nature take place outdoors or indoor and are team-based were impossible to replicate online. In other words, they were not digital platform friendly for the physical involvement they require.

Secondly, online education for disadvantaged groups could be possible if, and only if, young people with migrant background were supported with knowledge on digital equipment (internet, mobile phone, tablet, laptop) and help with host country language. The reason being that face-to-face teaching allows for more time and the right setting to go into details, explain, write on a board and for interactive activities. So that students can communicate better, exchange ideas, play roles and get help. But also, because in this way there is no issue of adequacy of devices. In fact, many migrant families with more than one child, have computers that are shared by everyone. This means that during COVID-19, they would be obliged to decide who would follow the class and who wouldn't.

Or else, bad connection made participation and completing exercises hard. Nevertheless, a remarkable effort was made and these students participated in distance education and attended classes as much as they could. Also, it is noteworthy that digital platforms offered some advantages such as direct personalized feedback to the student.

Question 5: *Do you think there are solutions in order to cope with the impact of COVID-19 on disadvantages people's education and activities?*

In difficult circumstances such as the COVID-19, the state or other non- governmental organizations must respond accordingly, so that these people have the support and the supplies they need for their education. Additionally, they should strive for improve their living conditions so that they can enjoy the same benefits that the rest of the citizens can. Extra effort should be put in order to fill in the educational gaps that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused to these people. Formal, and informal educational activities and tasks should be organized and online counseling courses should be provided to help these students. This is because teachers should support them somehow psychologically, while the state should guarantee free internet connection, computers and other equipment necessary for online classes.

Disadvantaged students need person-to-person interaction to learn. Eye contact, facial expressions, body language and tone of voice, work together to ensure comprehension. Furthermore, students with attention deficit disorders normally require a teacher's physical presence in order to stay focused or return to such state. Learning activities used during distance education such as puzzles, entertaining and interactive games etc. may be useful only for a short period of time. Thus, the education system needs to be reshaped, better organized and properly prepared to deal with similar situations in less time. In other words, things need to be organized immediately: from the organization of virtual meetings between students and teachers, to the sending of teaching materials for study, as well as the management of any educational television supplements and other modern tools. This allows to normalize the situation efficiently, as long as all actions are organized, coordinated and valuable time is not wasted.

Question 6: *During the period of pandemic all teachers and trainers were forced to work with distance learning. Please further analyze this situation and address the difficulties you faced.*

There have been inequalities between students, due to inefficient and unsuitable educational material, and a general lack of support in education. Teachers had to familiarize with new means of communication that could not replace live learning. Not to mention that many of these were unheard of for students.

It was really difficult for teachers to work from distance and make sure that learning outcomes stayed the same. They had to use digital platforms, technical equipment, software or other ICTs to work at distance, with the majority of them untrained to use them appropriately. Also, a number of students did not have all the necessary equipment or internet connection attend lessons properly.

Thus, difficulties were felt both on the student and teacher side. As far as the teachers are concerned, the main hurdle was the little time available for preparation resulting in significant delays. They had to overcome their technological inexperience in a very short time. Similarly, all of them had to adjust their classes to a new web-oriented environment.

Question 7: Please write in details the software you used to help you teaching in the period of the pandemic. Have you been trained to use this software? Have you been supplied with the appropriate equipment?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, as recommended by the Ministry of Education, teachers would mainly use CISCO WEBEX platform for synchronous education and ECLASS for asynchronous one based on Moodle. They were not trained for these platforms and they had to come up with digital lessons from the scratch, choosing from a variety of methods or tools that could bring better results, i.e., Zoom, Power Point, Videos from YouTube, Viber, C-map tools, Wikis, questionnaires (google forms). This made learning more engaging for students.

Many teachers with no tech and communication experience/skills faced some difficulties during the first days, especially because everything changed all of a sudden. However, in a short period of time almost all of them managed to overcome any issues they had. Many of them have asked school colleagues for help, since the State was largely absent in supplying them with the appropriate equipment.

Question 8: During the pandemic, do you think that migrant students faced more difficulties than other students in their life in general, affecting their progress in education?

Migrant students faced more difficulties than other students during the pandemic. This naturally affected progress in their education and in their lives in general. Staying in structures or in shared houses, without knowledge of the language, internet access, specific material and technical infrastructure had a dramatic impact. In some cases, the problem was that they could not find a computer or a tablet to connect to a class, hence resorting to smart phones, which are not exactly suitable devices. Others had issues of low-speed connection, making it difficult to follow classes.

To be sure, not only their educational progress but also their life was altered. Their socialization was indeed taking place at school and because of the abrupt interruption, they couldn't make new friends, but were left isolated in their homes.

Conclusions and Previous Experience

By observing the statistics and the detailed interviews of the teachers, it was possible to draw - confidently - important conclusions, which hopefully could serve as a guide for similar situations in the future.

Teachers, and students alike, had to face unprecedented conditions in the educational process during the COVID-19 pandemic. Regardless of gender, age or country, all of them seemed to have experienced similar situations and problems while continuing to perform their duties under this new situation. Almost everyone agrees that the new reality of remote learning and the use of electronic tools, training platforms and video conferencing software contributed to the normalization of the situation and certainly affected students' performance.

The learning strategies (video conferencing, television, radio, sending printed teaching materials, etc.) followed by the competent bodies seem to satisfy to a large extent the teachers, who consider that in many cases they were left alone, without guidance and help and without any previous experience dealing with similar situations. They agree that the education system was unprepared to deal immediately and systematically with the resulting emergency.

Educating immigrant students was more difficult than other students for a variety of reasons. Firstly, a large percentage of them could not attend online classes mainly due to lack of equipment or internet connection. Secondly, insufficient knowledge of the language (reading and writing) resulted in longer delay in the educational process. Finally, a general reduction of physical activities (gym, walking, social events, etc.) negatively impacted students' mental health, even the more so for immigrants, who became increasingly isolated.

An important yet worrying finding that almost half of the teachers who participated in the survey did not know how many immigrant students left school early due to this situation. This does not necessarily indicate indifference on the part of teachers as one might think when hears it. Rather, it shows lack of information and organization from the side of school units and administration as well as lack of tools and communication mechanisms between stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, administration, other staff). When lockdowns were announced overnight, school units were unprepared to deal with this new and urgent situation. Suddenly face-to-face contact and the traditional way of communication was lost.

This absence of communication channels is also evident from the teachers' answers regarding the ability to communicate and inform parents. In particular, the vast majority of teachers had no contact with those of students with an immigrant background. Or if they had, telephone communication and sending informative notes to the parents were preferred, which proved to be more of a burden to teachers' workload outside school hours.

It is important to note that most teachers had never used online learning tools or platforms before, thus were forced to adapt to the new conditions in a short period of time. To put it simply, they had not had any prior training in distance education, e-learning courses scheme and distance learning planning.

Statistics have shown how searches for e-learning information online skyrocketed. Teachers were scrambling to look for instructions to carry out their lesson, devoted endless hours to the planning of the teaching and took care of digitalizing any teaching material they already had. It is clear that the majority of teachers agreed that designing an e-learning course took up much longer time than traditional teaching while reckoning that these online tools and platforms influenced their teaching and substantially changed the way they learn.

Most of them continue to use e-learning even today, more as an addition to traditional education. The general feeling is that that teachers do not want to be unprepared for the next emergency that may come up. This sentiment has been exacerbated by the fact that almost half of them was left alone in dealing with these dire conditions. In fact, they did not receive any help (equipment, instructions, etc.) from the competent bodies, nor any online training about distance learning.

To be sure, the educational community has grown more resilient after the pandemic, becoming more organized and more prepared to deal with such situations. Yet, this does not mean that its actors should simply be complacent but rather, that further training and education on e-tools should continue and increase. Not to mention, the necessity for sustained investment in new technology, school equipment and fast communication channels.

6.2 Results from Trainer's surveys and interviews

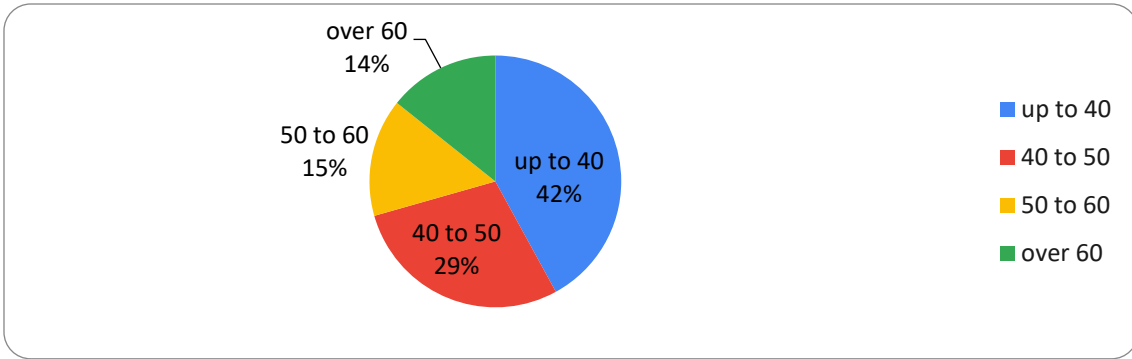
The aim of the DO-IT project was to find out the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of young people with a migrant background. Thus, it was necessary to investigate these difficulties from the point of the view of the people that specifically carry out these activities: trainers. The surveys and interviews have been conducted by the Fundacion Red Incola (Incola Network Foundation) in Spain. Some participants were also from the countries where the DO-IT partners are located: Belgium, Greece and Italy respectively. The analysis was performed on the data obtained from the trainers' survey and interviews. Overall, 120 responses were obtained.

A meeting among the project partners was essential to identify what the definition of trainer was. That is, any person that in a more or less consistent way over time, provides training through non-formal education, especially to people with a migrant background. Based on this, interviews and survey were administered volunteers in NGOs, training centers that were not formal schools, etc.

The socially vulnerable groups saw their social exclusion accentuated, due to the lack of access to internet and training on new technologies. All in all, findings show that the main barriers to social inclusion are: lack of access to new technologies, scarce training to use them, additional difficulties of schooled minors to maintain their educational performance, and finally, the need for accompaniment.

Before digging into the answers, it is critical to analyze trainers' main characteristics and composition. Firstly, there were 120 of them who answered the survey, which can be considered a significant number.

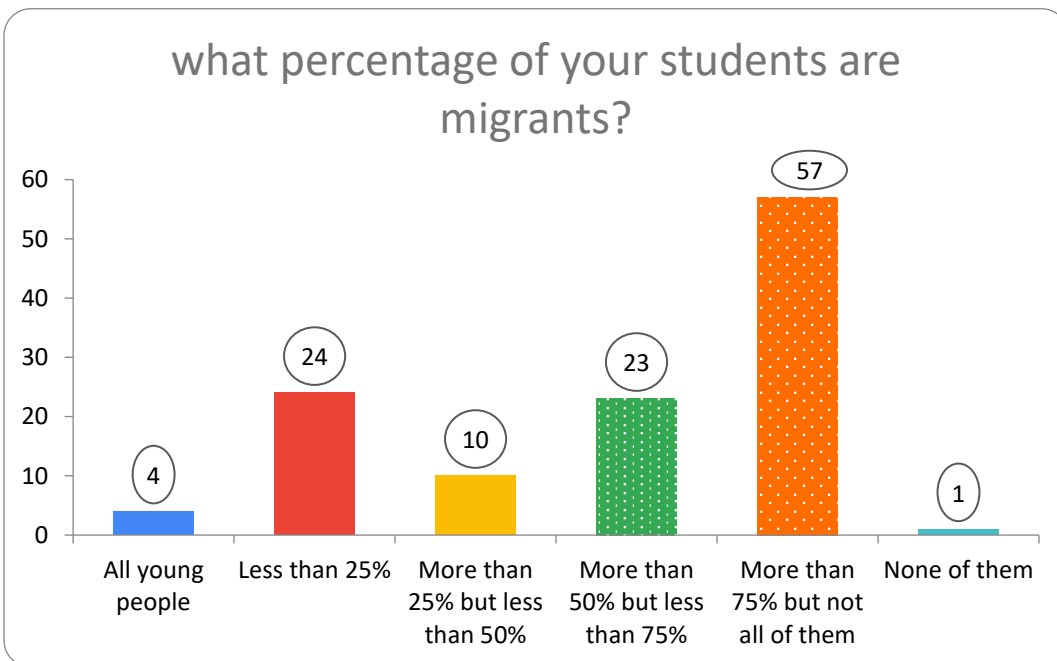
It can be observed that 70% of them are under 50 years old, that is to say, they are young or middle-aged people who, most definitely, have developed knowledge with new technologies only in recent times.



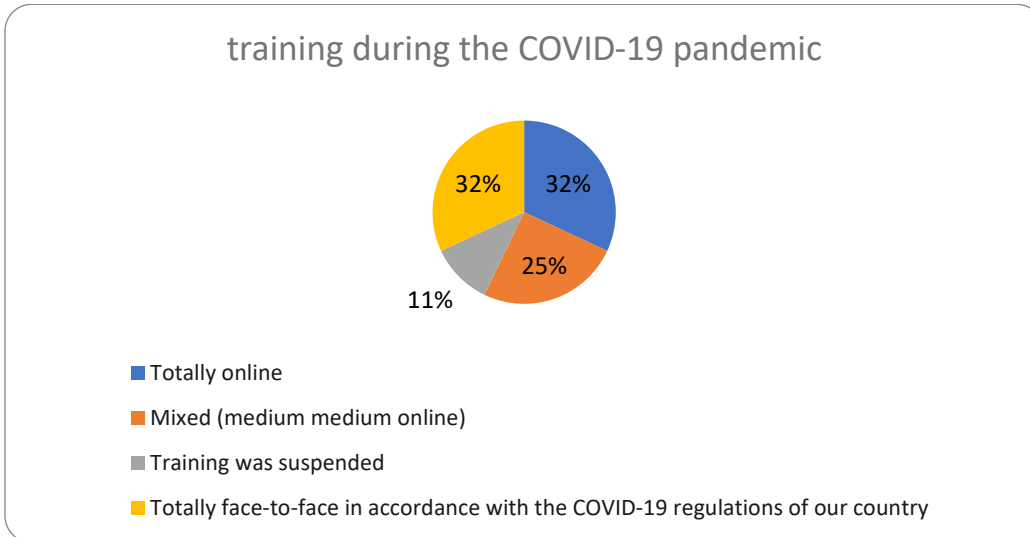
Regarding the gender of the participants, 60% of the respondents were female, 39% male, and the remaining 1% preferred not to answer this question.

As a matter of the country of residence, the 3 most represented countries in the sample were in order: Italy, Spain and Greece.

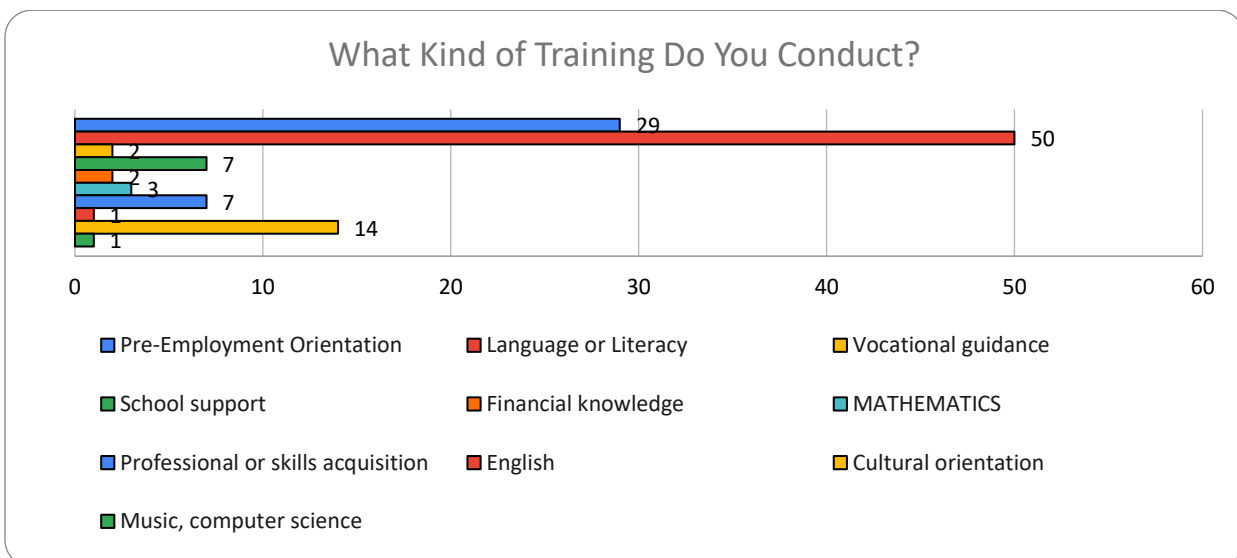
To get to know better the population that was being interviewed, participants were asked what the percentage of migrant population, they were working with, was. As illustrated in the graph with the two dotted bars, almost 70% of them work with groups in which at least half of the participants are of migrant origin.



Then when asked how they had coped with work during the pandemic period, these were the main ways in which they delivered the training.

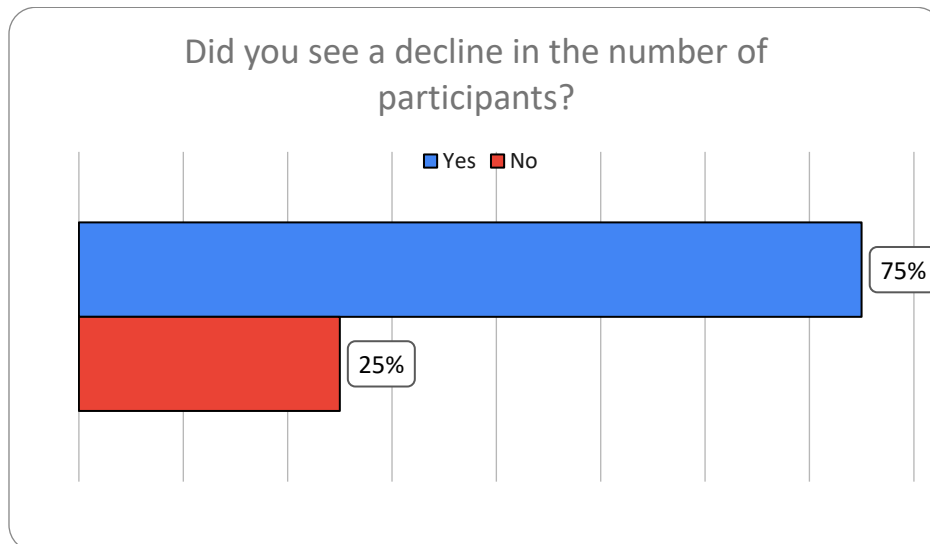


With respect to the content of the training they conducted, the graph shows that the most frequent topics were both pre-employment orientation and language learning.



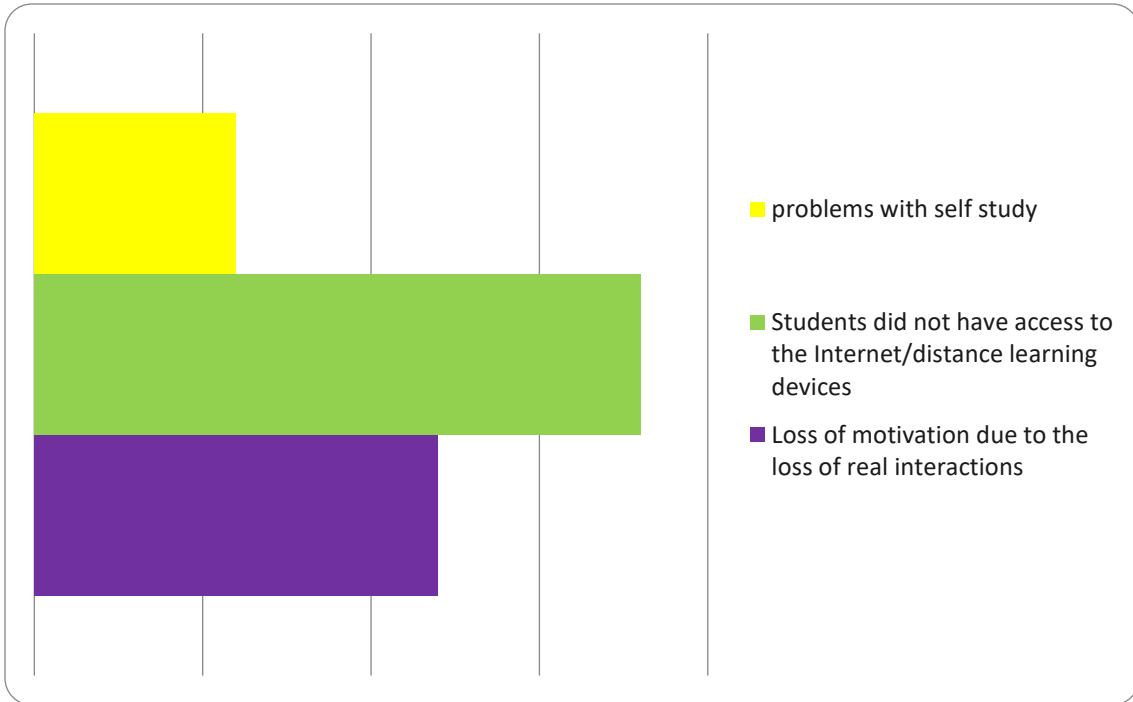
To try and ascertain the objectives of the project, participants were asked whether they had noticed a decrease in the number of participants of their training courses during the

pandemic. As a result, 75% of the respondents said they continued the courses with fewer participants. In other words that there had been a significant cutback in people who left training.

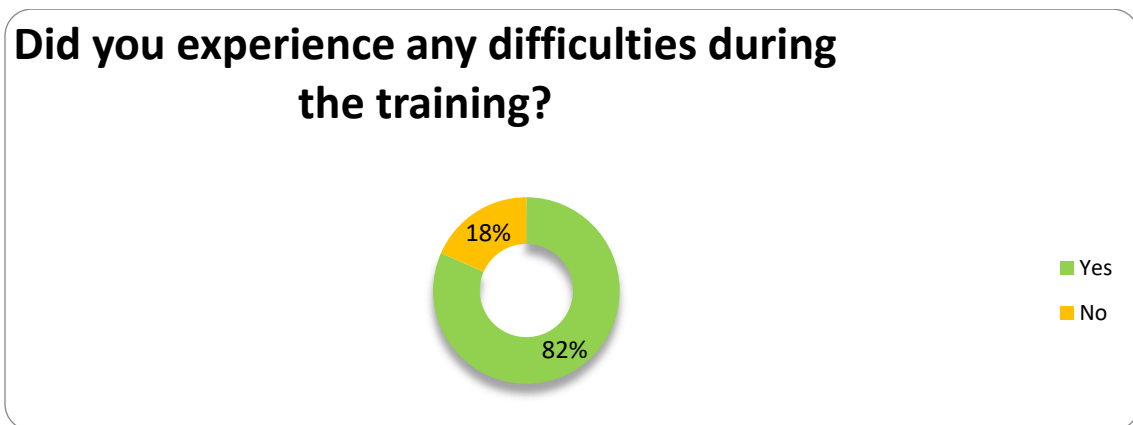


In cases where respondents had answered yes, the next thing was to try and identify the reasons why. The three recurrent ones were:

- Students did not have access to Internet/distance learning devices.
- Loss of motivation due to loss of real interactions
- Problems or difficulties with self-study

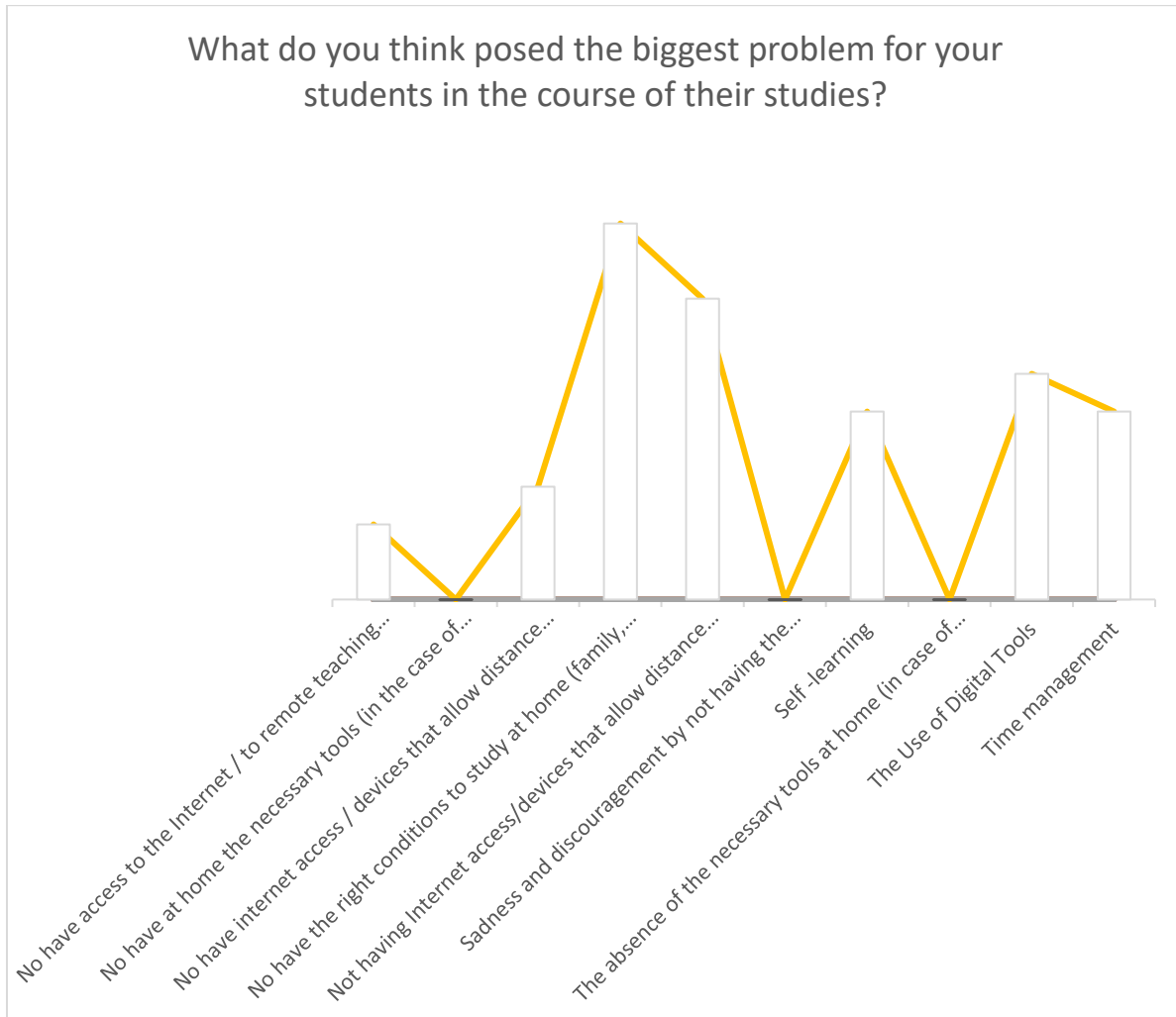


As reported below, the majority (82%) of trainers themselves admitted to having experienced serious difficulties during the training. This piece of information was reinforced by the fact that only 1 out of 5 (18%) had no difficulties in continuing with the training.

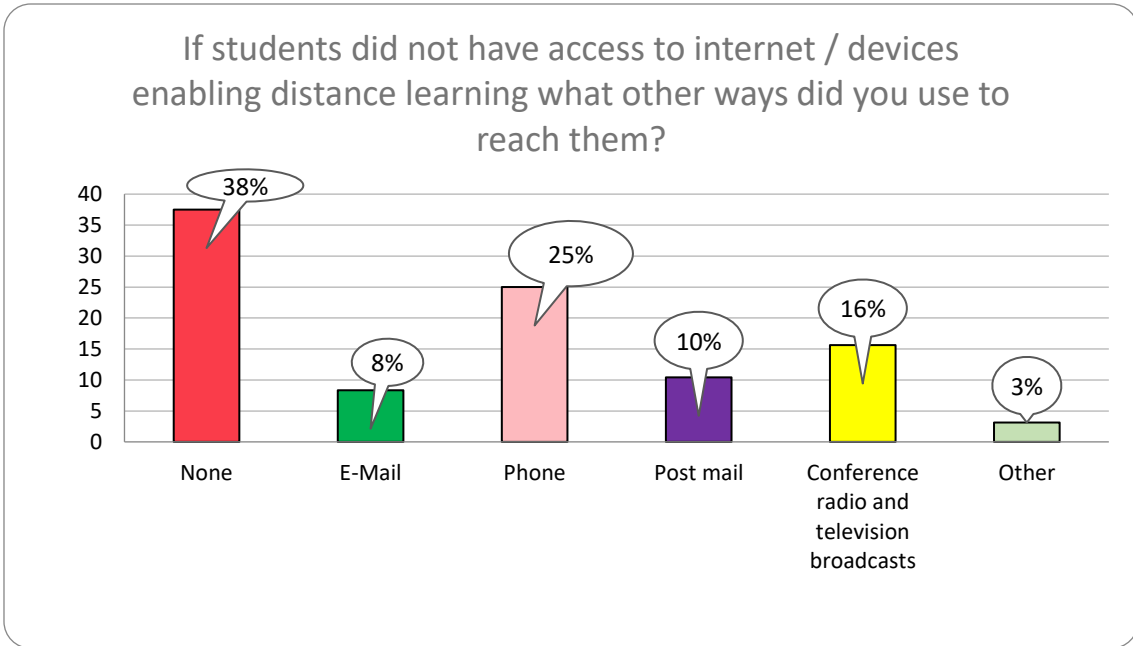


Respondents were then asked if they thought the center had ensured the safe conduct of pandemic activities. Surprisingly, only 12 respondents said YES.

To find out how the pandemic affected the main protagonists of this study, trainers were asked what, in their opinion, had been the major difficulty faced by their students. The most common answers were: not having the right conditions to study at home (family issues, economic issues, etc.) and lack of necessary tools (internet access, equipment, etc.).

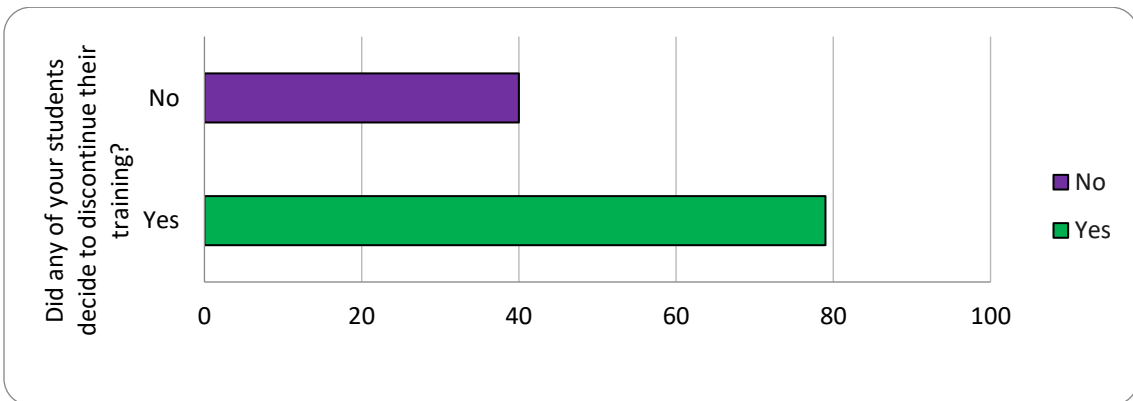


Where the lack of devices had been the main hurdle, trainers were asked what other ways they had employed to reach their trainees. It was striking to see that firstly, the majority answered unfortunately "none", and secondly, that the most often used device to reach out to them was the telephone.

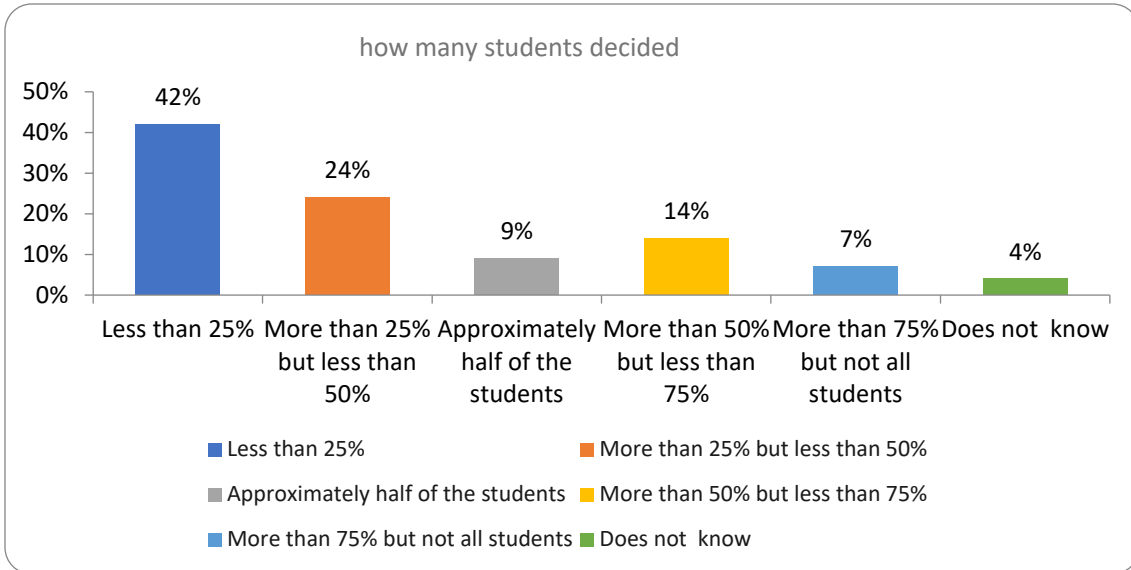


Training abandonment:

Did any of your students decide to discontinue their training?



In the affirmative cases, there had been an effort inquiry to understand approximately what percentage of students had dropped out. These were the main results:

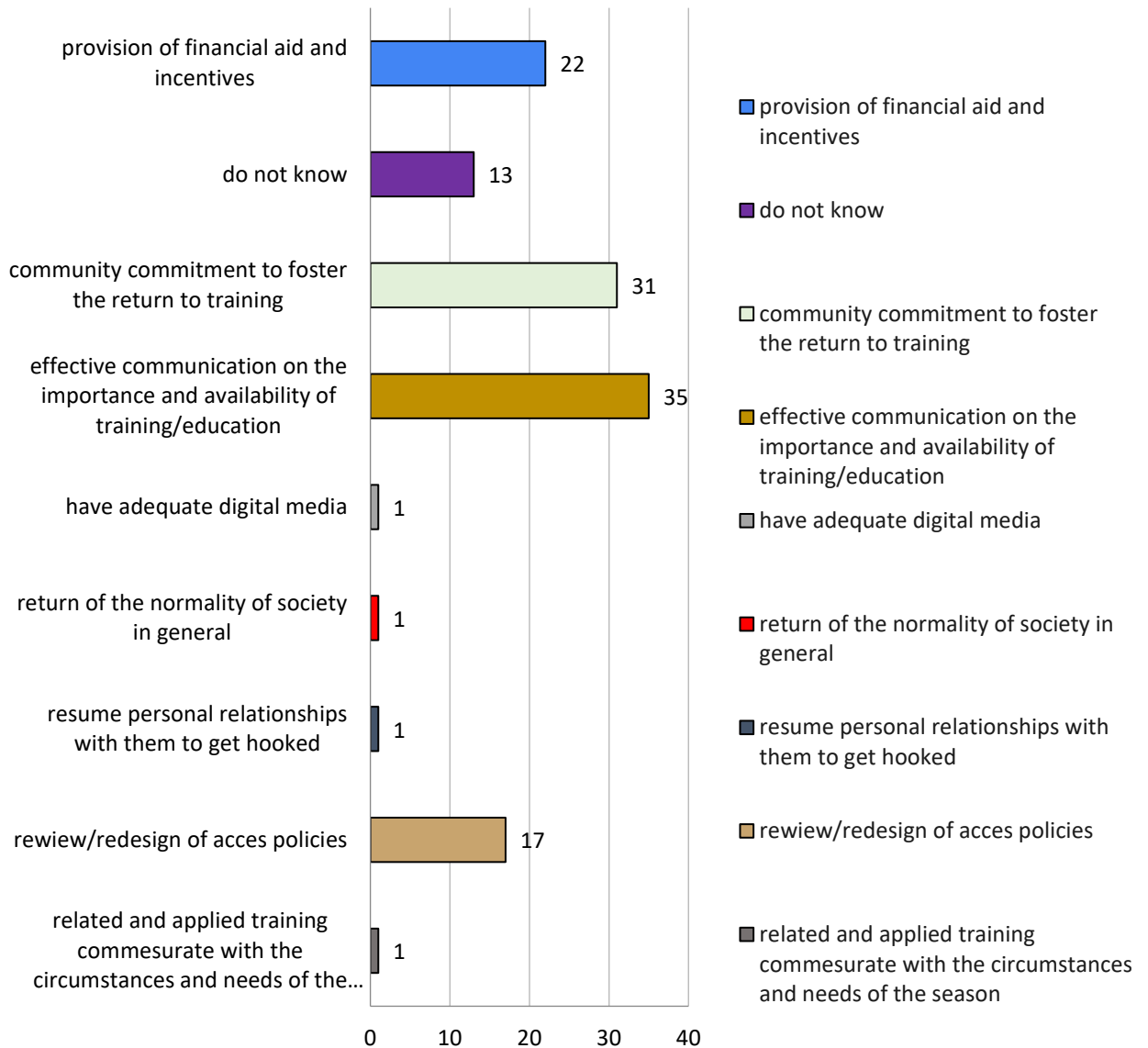


As can be seen from the graph above, the most frequent response was that less than 25% of the trainees had dropped out of the training as a result of COVID-19.

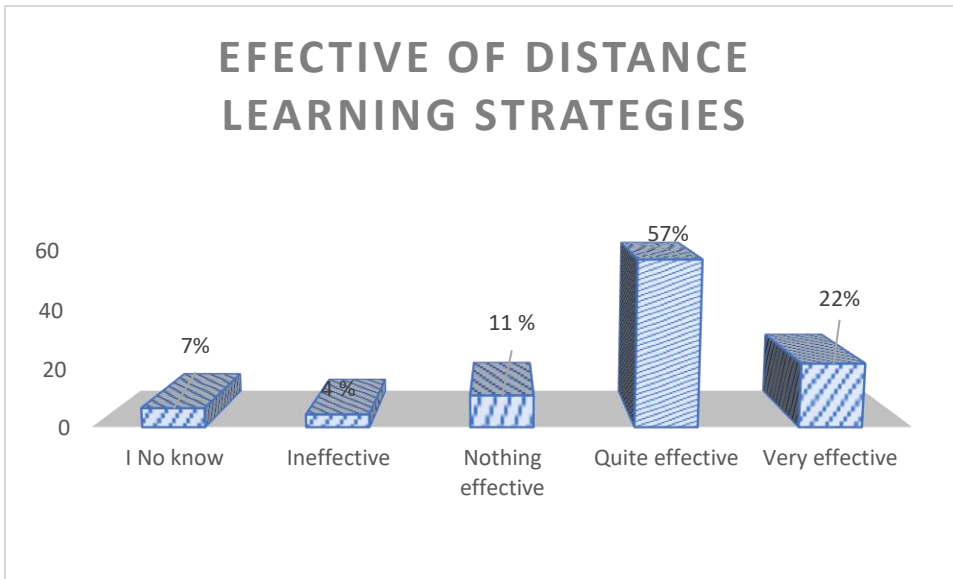
In response to the question, "What support measures do you think could have encouraged you to return to training?"

- o the granting of financial aid and incentives
- o community engagement to encourage a return to training
- o effective communication about the importance and availability of training/education

support measures that can encourage the return to training

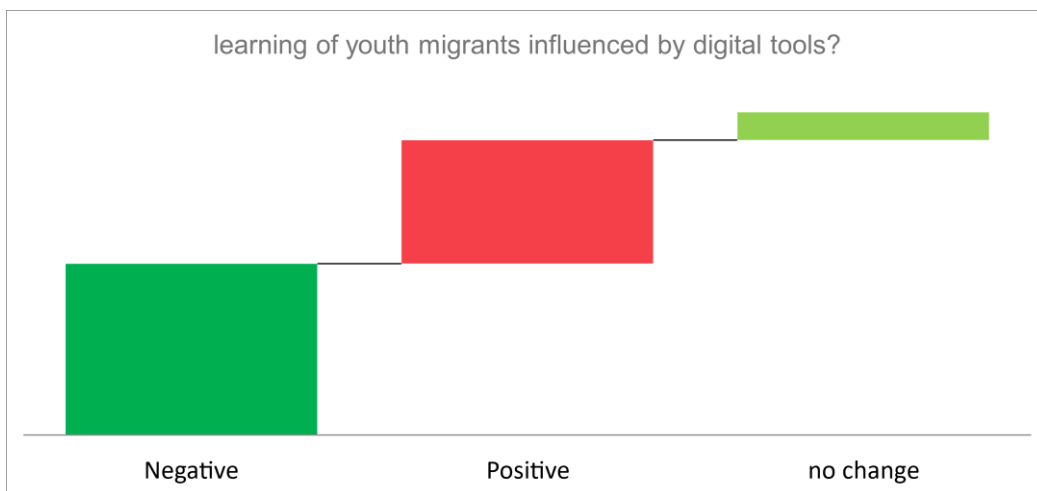


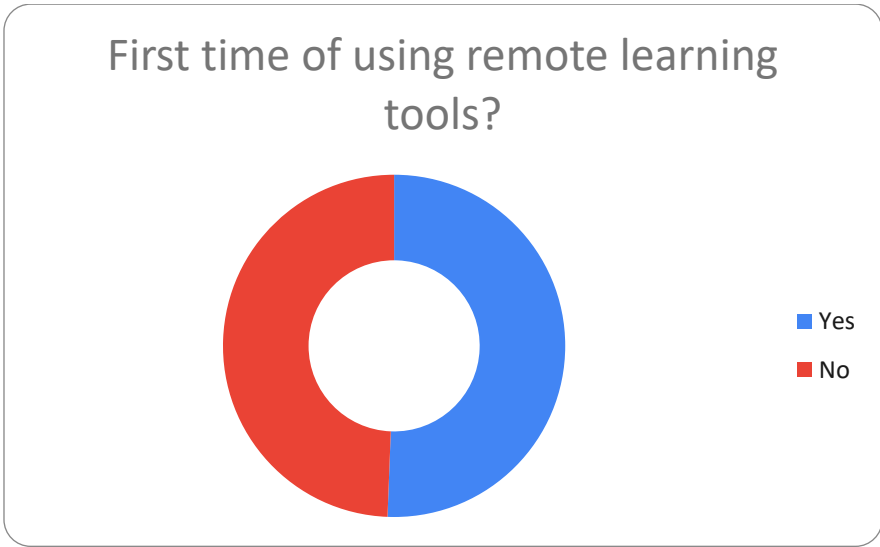
Seventy-five percent of respondents reported using digital or remote tools during the pandemic. This question can also be analyzed in more detail among the conclusions drawn from the focus group, since many of those present said they had to learn on an ad hoc basis, in order to be able to continue their training. Regarding the effectiveness of remote strategies in maintaining or improving knowledge levels, almost 8 out of 10 respondents said that they were quite or very effective, and only 1.5 out of 10 considered them not at all effective or ineffective.



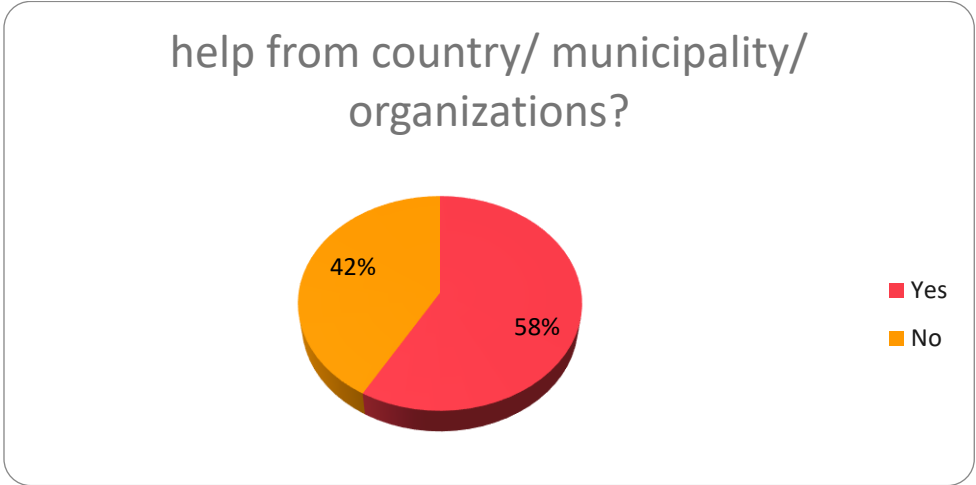
However, when trainers were asked whether they believed that trainees could achieve eventually the same level of skill as other trainees had prior to the COVID-19 pandemic opinions were mixed and less sympathetic. This led to the conclusion that though distance tools had proved effective, the value of face-to-face training for this group is important, probably due to the sum of many other factors.

Concerning the perception of respondents on whether digital tools have influenced the learning of young migrants in a positive or negative way or not, the opinions are less optimistic. More than half of them (53%) reckon that they had a negative impact on students, compared to a small 38% who say that it was positive. The remaining 9% had no clear opinion or thought that it had not changed.

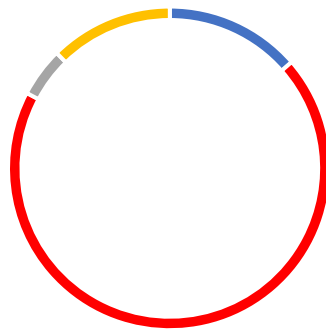




More than 50% of those interviewed stated that the pandemic was the first occasion where they were forced to use remote learning tools. While most say they have received some help from their organizations, they demand more training when it comes to actions that could be taken in the future.



In the future what Measures would Help you in the carrying out of remote lessons?



- Better Guidelines from Education Authorities
- Training / Courses on "Online" teaching
- good digital media by students and their families
- Access to better practices

The results of the interviews

1. Have the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your activities? If so, could you detail it further?

On 23 May 2022, Red Incola conducted a focus group in the framework of the DO IT project to try to obtain more detailed information than that provided by the questionnaires. Plainly, the research aim was finding out how the situation resulting from COVID-19 affected young migrants compared to local young people, especially in relation to the difficulties they had to face.

For this focus group, Red Incola worked with fourteen "trainers", who were all volunteers that engage with migrants in the educational area. Although the debate was intense, there was an interesting deal of agreement on the basic issues and almost no points of friction.

Nearly every one of them noted that the pandemic had affected young migrants in their daily lives, and above all in their extracurricular activities, which many gave up – sometimes irreversibly.

They all agreed that the impact of COVID-19 had a greater impact on the education of

migrants than on that of local citizens, for the majority of them did not have the same means (computers, tablets), nor the same house standards (overcrowding) or language knowledge. Moreover, migrant families tend to be more numerous, with parents unable to give adequate support to every child. This is true especially because, during the pandemic, many parents from disadvantaged backgrounds lost their job, adding one more concern.

The straightforward consequence of all this, can be defined as a curricular educational gap. That is, everything that they missed or not learned at that time, needs now to be made up for. But also, this inconsistent learning has influenced their choice for future studies; many now prefer to opt for basic vocational training instead of a bachelor's degree because they think it is easier and will still end up with a degree eventually.

2. Do you think that the COVID-19 pandemic made it hard for professionals, such as teachers, trainers and youth workers, to provide services, such as education and activities, to migrants in vulnerable situations?

Absolutely. During the pandemic teachers were spending many of their out of work hours helping pupils individually, by answering to calls, mails and doubts. In some cases, not only students were not familiar with the new setting, but also teachers. They were neither trained nor had the means to carry out online lectures.

The problem continued when they started blended learning, because it was not easy to organize time. Namely, they normally had to split an hour between one half of the class and the other. To be sure, having a smaller class would have helped in terms of productivity.

3. Do you think it is possible to carry out activities and education with disadvantaged people through digital platforms?

Using digital platforms for education is complicated. In fact, even when they had the electronic means to do so, youngsters tended to be more demotivated, as they did not feel the same way as with in person teaching.

4. Do you think there are solutions to address the impact of COVID-19 on the education and activities of disadvantaged people?

The first solution is to provide disadvantaged people with classrooms with computers, tablets, etc. that allow them to connect to online platforms, for many families had many children and only one computer to be shared among them. This made impossible for all of them to follow classes if they coincided.

Secondly, there is a general need for more individualized attention. Youngsters socialize more during extracurricular or support activities, such as those of Red Incola, or during class breaks.

The latter is a moment that help them to share and get to know each other. Yet, due to COVID-19 measures, 10-minutes breaks were completely missing. Similarly, the former was also restricted, leaving many young people isolated at home. In fact, these after-school activities were helpful not only for them, but also for parents to free up time and reconcile work and childcare.

One solution to this is to give youngsters incentives to make the most of their time during school support. The more personal interest they have, the more productive their time there will be. For example, if a boy needs to pass all subjects to be part of the football team, he will be more inclined to go with such an attitude that makes it possible for him to solve his doubts and questions fast.

Finally, it is important to support also older teachers with technological training. Indeed, they were not truly prepared to carry out online classes, i.e., opening a meeting, sharing a screen or dealing with connection issues, making them anxious and stressed. But also, it affected the quality of education and authority over children with easiness in cheating in exams and unrealistic grades that will affect preparation for future courses.

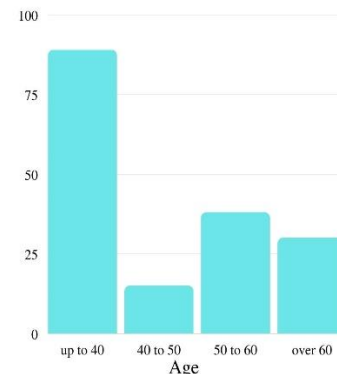
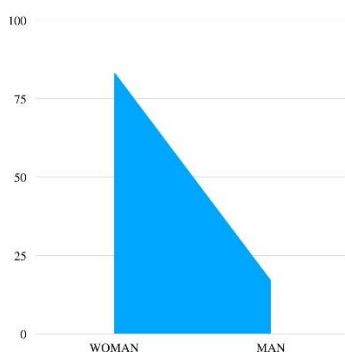
6.3 Results from Migrant Association's surveys and interviews

The surveys, in this section, are made with members of associations from Italy, Greece, Belgium and Spain. The interviews in this part are done by the Italian migration association, Association Maison d'Enfant pour la Culture et l'Education (AMECE). The results from surveys and interviews are analyzed by AMECE. The research showed very important findings regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education and activities of young people with a migrant background. In total, 179 surveys are collected from members of associations.

DEMOGRAPHY

The questionnaires show that 83% of association members are women, with an average age of 35. In the focus group addressed in Italy, it also stands out how women are penalized within organisations, being in less prestigious positions and resulting in diminished professional fulfillment. Thus, power continues to be mainly in the hands of men (7 out of 10 managers are male), while the gap narrows in highly specialized roles (54% male, 46% female) and reverses in the white-collar sector (where men drop to 40%).

As regards the motivations that bring them closer to associationism activities, the most frequently selected answers by both sexes, are 'for faith in the cause supported by the group/association', 'to make a contribution to the community, the environment', 'for religious reasons'.



WORK STATISTICS

Voluntary work during this health, economic and social emergency questioned itself. After the initial bewilderment, it tried to react and make itself available to ensure services and presence. Yet, it was not easy, for many could not keep activities going.

This include all the associations that operated and were committed to the leisure time of persons with disabilities, children, elderly people, adolescents and youth; overnight, their members found themselves without headquarters, which is the place where meetings, exchanges and programming took place. Many experienced and are still experiencing the burden of this distance, the lack of ties and belonging. That's right: belonging is one of the values that animate volunteering, like proximity and sharing.

This crisis of spaces and encounters have penalized more each one's own being more than their doing. It was the lack of choices and of planning, but also the absence of active listening to the people that needed to feel heard the most. In fact, they use these moments to talk and find a glimpse of solution to their wounds, as an 'escape' from the tragic violence they suffer at home and in other contexts. Yet, volunteering has always been able to reinvent itself and in the most difficult moments it knows how to reintroduce itself with creativity and courage.

Volunteer tasks during COVID-19

Volunteers provided basic necessities, from carrying groceries and medicines to accompanying people on social and medical transport. They were outside hospitals to ensure social distances, in the ambulance, in emporiums, solidarity markets, to prepare groceries for families in need, to ring the doorbell of a house to deliver shopping vouchers. Many of them familiarized with the digital world either by themselves or involving young family relatives to teach them. This meant that they started attending digital platforms, skype, webinars, video calls, group calls, etc., while also creating sharing groups to exchange pictures, videos, greetings, promises.

Online training used to be impractical for volunteers because it was hard to schedule courses and training at a distance, but it is becoming a valid tool now, along with e-learning platforms. Not only are they useful at work, but also during one's free time with an array of topic to choose from. Essentially, they give a chance to deepen one's knowledge with a large degree of flexibility. To be sure, it will not replace in-presence training anytime soon, yet it does make volunteering ore resilient to future risks.

In fact, many agree and are confident that things will continue to be done on digital platforms. This is because they allow to make better use of our time for work, leisure, and personal commitment, leading to an overall better life quality.

MIGRATION IN ITALY

Immigration as of 1 January 2021. Fondazione ISMU estimates that as of 1 January 2021 there are 5,756,000 foreigners present in Italy, 167,000 fewer than on the same date in 2020 (-2.8%). The decrease in the number of those present in 2020 is mostly due to regular non-resident foreigners, who drop to 224,000 units (on 1 January 2020 there were 366,000), because those registered in the registry office have decreased only marginally (5,013,000 units on 1 January 2021). In contrast, the number of irregular immigrants remains substantially unchanged from 519,000 (against 517,000 the previous year), due to the delay in the application assessments for emersion of labor (207,542[3]) according to July 2020 amnesty. Overall, foreigners represent about 10% of the population in Italy as of 1 January 2021. Here the data shows a grim picture of a declining population for the second consecutive year, due to both the drop in the number of entries and the flow of citizenship acquisitions.

Irregulars. As already mentioned, the number of irregular immigrants estimated by ISMU is stable as of 1st January 2021 (519,000). The number includes all the people who applied for emersion in 2020. The speed of processing applications was also rather slow in 2021: the most recent data indicate that as of 8 November 2021, 92,876 applications had been examined or 44.7% of them. They had a positive outcome in 83.6% of the cases with a rate of rejections of 2.4%.

In 2020 mortality increased by 23.3% among foreigners (against +17.7% among Italians). Worthy of note is the number of deaths among immigrants; although it is quite modest in absolute terms (a total of 9,323 deaths), in relative terms, it marks a 23.3% increase in mortality compared to 2018-2019. On the contrary, the same mortality variation among Italian elderly citizens was +17.7% or six percentage points less than that of the immigrant population.

Provenance. 70% of migrants come from non-EU countries. With regard to the origins of resident foreigners as of 1 January 2021, the largest national group continues to be that of Romanians (1,138,000 residents, 23% of the total number), followed by Albanians (410,000)

and Moroccans (408,000). Third-country nationals (including the United Kingdom) cover about 70% of the total (3.543 million).

New residence permits. Only 107 thousand residence permits were issued in 2020, the lowest number in the last 10 years (-40% compared to 2019). The largest decrease concerned study permits (-58.1% compared to the previous year), followed by asylum and humanitarian ones (-51.1%), family ones (-38.3%) and work ones (-8.8%). Overall, non-EU citizens with a regular residence permit in Italy decreased by about 7%, from 3,616,000 on 1 January 2020 to 3,374,000 on 1 January 2021.

Acquisitions of citizenship. As of 1 January 2020 (latest available data) there are more than 1.5 million (of which 335,000 born in Italy) 'new Italians' living in Italy, who, born foreigners, have subsequently acquired citizenship. In other words, for every 100 foreigners there are on average 29 'new citizens'. Acquisition by residency - which is 10 years of uninterrupted residence for non-EU citizens in Italy - was by far the most popular method. It should be noted that around 6 % in 2020 obtained citizenship by *ius sanguinis*, in virtue of Italian ancestry who then emigrated abroad.

Landings and entries by land without visas. There were more than 34,000 landings on the Italian coasts in 2020, about three times as many as in 2019. In 2021, these almost doubled to a total of 67,040. Upon the request of the ISMU Foundation, the Ministry of the Interior provided data that shows how 10.7% of all registered entries, 6,718 were by land without a visa between 1 January and 31 October 2021. This is however a partial figure that already exceeds the overall figure for the whole of 2020 (5,247 land entries).

Asylum applications. In 2020, there were 26,963 asylum applications, while the preliminary figure for 2021 is 56,388. This means that in 2020, for every 100 landings 79 asylum applications were made, a figure that rises to 84 in 2021. In the second half of 2021, there was a strong growth (+889%) in applications for protection from Afghans with 6,445 applications in 2021 compared to around 600 applications per year in 2019-2020. This is mainly due to airlifts from Kabul at the end of August. Thus, all in all, Afghans were the fourth nationality by number to apply for asylum in 2021 (11.4%).

Unaccompanied foreign minors.. In Italy, one of the main countries of arrival or transit for unaccompanied foreign minors (MSNA) along with Greece and Spain, on 30 November 2021 there were 11,159 MSNA (+69% compared to the same period in 2020, when there were 6,601). Out of all protection applications filed in 2020 in the EU+ - the enlarged EU made of

the 27 member countries, plus Switzerland and Norway -, about 4% came from MSNAS. As far as reception practices are concerned, it should be noted that in Italy only 3% of the MSNA were able to benefit from family fostering as an alternative to community placement. There are projects such as ISMU in partnership with FA.B! (Family-based care for children in migration) which are being financed by the European Commission that aim at spreading the practice of family-based care for minors arrived alone in 5 EU countries: Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Spain

THE WORK

Almost two years after the outbreak of COVID-19, the health emergency seems to have definitively dismantled the precarious equilibrium on which the Italian model of integration is based, revealing its problematic implications on the (in)sustainability front. The pandemic has accentuated the vulnerability of the population with a migrant background, who were already structurally disadvantaged compared to the Italian population.

Immigrants and the labor market in Italy. On the eve of the pandemic (2019), according to the labor force surveys, there were more than 4 million foreigners of active age on Italian soil. Almost 2.9 million of them were either employed or seeking employment, equaling to 11.3% of the total labor force. Instead, a year later (2020), the data taken from various institutional sources and commented on in the XXVII ISMU Report, showed that foreigners represented 10.8% of the active population. This consequently meant that their weight on the labor force dropped to 10.4% due to a decisive increase in the inactive component, more than five times higher than that of the Italian population.

More and more inactive immigrants. If in 2019 8.9% of the inactive persons of employable age were foreigners, this percentage rose to 9.9% one year later. Speculatively, the incidence on the employed fell from 10.7% in 2019 to 10.2% in 2020. Between 2019 and 2020, while the inactive Italian population grew by 3.1%, the foreign one increased by as much as 16.2%, totaling 1,364,982 of foreign inactive persons.

Activity rates, employment and unemployment. The activity rate of foreigners shows a significant decrease. This is higher among women who have lost as much as 6.5 percentage points, but also significant for men (-3%). For the first time, the activity rate of foreign women falls below that of Italian ones which was already worryingly low: 52.8% against 54.9%.

Due to the worsening of the overall economic situation, the employment rate of foreigners underwent a significant drop, from 61% in 2019 to 57.3% in 2020 (-2.2% for men, -4.9% for women). It also fell, for the first time, to a value below that of Italians (58.2%). Additionally, the unemployment rate for foreigners decreased slightly (from 13.8% in 2019 to 13.2% in 2020). Yet, this can be explained by a general increase in activity.

The effects of the pandemic on female immigrant workers. Foreign women have experienced a double reduction in the employment rate compared to male immigrants. Out of the 456,000 jobs lost between 2019 and 2020, almost a quarter can be attributed to female immigrants alone.

Immigrant entrepreneurship. The only countertrend is represented by the creation/disposals of enterprises, which see an increase of 2.3% of foreign-born owners and partners, during the pandemic (2020). Even in the first half of 2021, 'foreign' enterprises (i.e., in which the participation of foreign-born people is more than 50% overall) recorded a positive balance of 16,197 units, significantly higher than in the corresponding period of 2020 (and even in 2019, when the net increase in foreign-born enterprises was only 10,205).

Poverty increase. There was a steady worsening of poverty in 2020, affecting 29.3% of foreigners (compared to 7.5% of Italians) and 26.7% of foreign-only households (they were 24.4% in 2019). This is equal to 415,000 households, which becomes 568,000 including mixed households (i.e., those with at least one foreign member). Moreover, absolute poverty grew in 2020, especially in the North, rising from 24.6 per cent in 2019 to 28.4 per cent, though it still remains more widespread in the South (where it affects 31.9 per cent of households with only foreigners). Worthy of note is the high incidence of foreigners who are poor even though employed: 25%, five times higher than that of Italians (5.1%). This figure can be explained taking into account, on the one hand, the precarity of immigrants in the labor market and, on the other, wage levels: in 2020, the average annual wage of non-EU workers, was €12,902 or 38% lower than that of workers as a whole.

Therefore, the pandemic bottom line is that new governance of migration and inclusion processes are needed.

FOREIGN PUPILS AND THE ITALIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

The 2019/20 school year was one sui generis, marked by the national closure of schools of all levels, which lasted from 9 March to 10 September 2020, due to the pandemic. In fact,

the latter revealed the weaknesses of the school system's operational mechanisms. In truth, they had already been in place for some time, yet the health emergency amplified them, increasing the learning difficulties and inequality of most disadvantaged students further, as well as of those with special educational needs, including foreign pupils.

CNIs students in Italy. An analysis of the latest available data for the 2019/2020 school year shows how pupils with non-Italian citizenship (CNI) exceeded 870 thousand (almost 20 thousand more than the previous school year). They represent 10.3% of the total number of students enrolled in Italian schools. For the same school year, it is worth noting that 57.4% of non-Italian pupils in the education system are attending the first cycle of education. This is due to a steady increase in number of students with CNI in school (+60,000) and a continuous decrease in the Italian one.

Half of the foreign pupils are of European origin. Students with CNI come from around 200 different countries and almost half of them are of European origin, while a quarter are African and 20% Asian. Romania, Albania, Morocco and China are still the most numerous communities in schools, each one exceeding 100,000 presences by far. The 2019/20 data estimates that 65.3% of them are concentrated in the North as opposed to 22.2% and 12.5% in central and southern Italy respectively. Lombardy has always been the leading region in terms of the number of foreign pupils with over 224,000 (25.6% of the total in Italy). Indeed, the Italian province with the highest number of foreign pupils is Milan (almost 80 thousand), followed by Rome (more than 64 thousand) and Turin (almost 40 thousand).

Schools affected by migration. In 2019/20, schools that were not affected by the migration phenomenon decreased to 9,939, or 17.9% of the total number of Italian schools. On the contrary, the number of those with 30% or more pupils of immigrant origin grew (+0.4% compared to the previous school year for a total of 3,809 schools).

Italian born students. Compared to the previous year, those pupils born in Italy in 2019/20 increased by 20 thousand and reached more than 570 thousand attendances, i.e., 65.4% of pupils with non-Italian citizenship. The highest percentage of them is found among the youngest: in pre-schools, about 82 out of 100 were born in Italy.

School setbacks. School long term setback affects about 30% of pupils with CNI (compared to 9% of Italian ones). In contrast to 10 years ago, the share of foreign students who falls behind at school has diminished by more than 10%. Despite these improvements, lagging behind is still very common for non-Italians, especially in secondary schools where 56.2% of

students of immigrant origin are one or more years behind. In 2020, 32.1% of ELETs (Early Leavers from Education and Training) were foreign-born - i.e., the percentage of young people aged between 18 and 24 who do not have an upper secondary education or vocational qualification and who are not in education and training. This number is three times higher than natives', which is close to 11%. Similarly, the rate of foreign-born NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training), that is young people between 15-29 who are neither studying nor working, stands at 36% (+4.1 % compared to 2019).

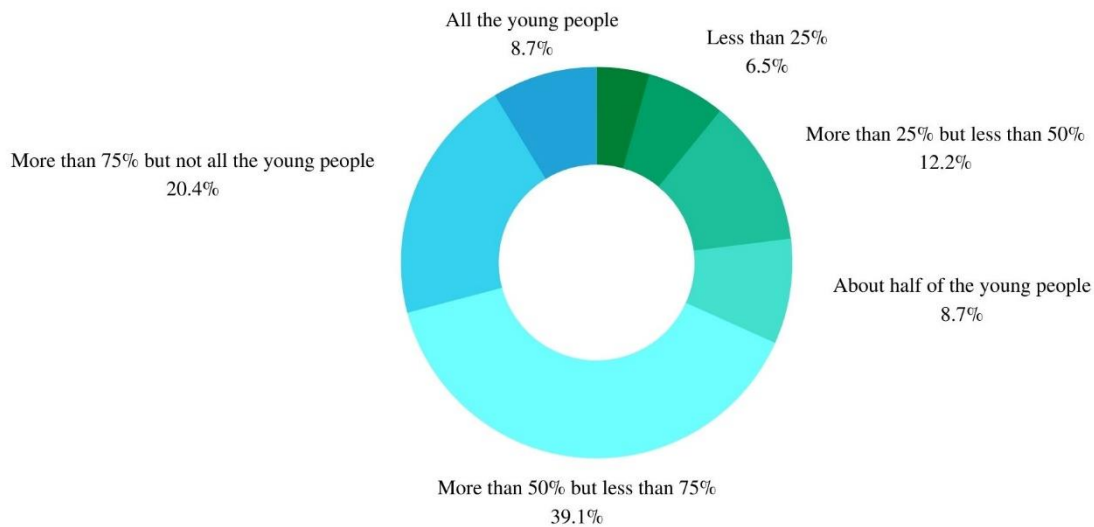
High School vs. vocational training. During the last 10 years, the presence of foreign pupils in vocational institutes has decreased (-9.8% in 10 school years) and the presence in high schools has increased almost equally (+9.3%). In the 2019/20 school year, students with a migrant background come to represent 30.9% (with 63,261 attending) of all the non-Italian enrolments in the second cycle of education and exceed, for the first time those enrolled in vocational institutes (63,117) in terms of numbers.

HEALTH

In Italy, the migrant population has been more affected than the Italian one by the COVID-19 wave. Recent studies show that migrants are at a higher risk of morbidity and mortality from the viral infection due to their living and working conditions, which makes it hard to access healthcare. Out of the confirmed COVID-19 cases between February and July 2020, 7.5% were non-Italian citizens. Moreover, this research found that COVID-19 cases among the foreign population were diagnosed about two weeks later than Italian ones (peaking at four weeks for migrants from countries with a low Human Development Index). As a result, infections among non-Italians were diagnosed later, at a more advanced stage of the disease and likely with severe symptoms. According to the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS), the delay in the diagnosis can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the difficulty in accessing local general practitioners or outpatient clinics. Secondly, any type of barriers from linguistic and administrative, to cultural and social ones; since time immemorial they hinder rapid access to health services. Finally, foreigners' higher apprehension with the risk of isolation and quarantine, blocking their work.

In which percentage young migrants are the beneficiaries of your job?

According to the questionnaire addressed to members of associations in Greece, Italy, Spain and Belgium, 70% of the people interviewed have dealt with people of foreign origin in their work.



In which percentage young migrants are the beneficiaries of your job?

The following emerged:

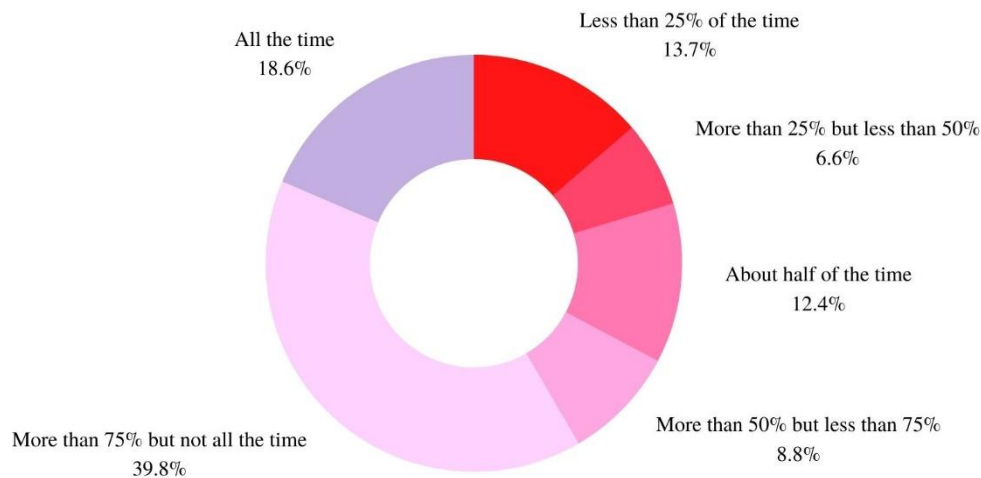
In Europe, the pandemic 'has highlighted all the criticalities and inadequacies of the European system regarding economic migration and rights'. Measures such as the closure of the Schengen area, the flights freeze and restrictions on mobility have had a very strong impact both on national economies and on migrants themselves. Above all, it appeared that - in the context of the pandemic - more than 30% of working age migrants were part of those crucial worker employed in essential services (health, care, cleaning, etc.).

In Italy, the government issued the 'Decreto Rilancio' (Decree-Law No. 34 of 19 May 2020) to provide an amnesty for immigrants working in the care, domestic and agricultural sector, so that they could have their needs met.

Yet, migrants in the agricultural sector have seen their working condition deteriorating by the COVID-19 emergency. For example, they experienced a decrease in wages despite an increase (20%) in working hours (fluctuating between 8 and 15 hours per day), because many more (+15-20%) were looking to secure an income in such uncertain times. Equally, the domestic sectors with its 850 thousand workers (mostly migrants) came under stress during the pandemic with a loss of 13 thousand jobs.

What percentage of time have you worked with people with a migration background from March 2020 to date?

According to this survey, 56% of the respondents worked with people of foreign origin for more than three quarters of their time.



What percentage of time have you worked with people with a migration background from March 2020 to date?

Members of Amece have especially engaged with migrants in many ways:

- 1) Commitment to reduce the digital divide. This means providing laptops and digital support to families most in need or online multimedia materials for students, etc.
- 2) Intervention against domestic violence, direct assistance to fragile families, and involvement of children and young people to fight educational and social isolation. Creation of a digital platform for matching needs and availability to help, i.e., for homework.
- 3) Implementation of new ways of working; creation of an online page for shared information; adoption of security measures and remote working;
- 4) Continued provision of home care for cancer patients instead of going to congested hospital facilities, where they would be at greater risk of contracting infections; activation of free psychological telephone counselling for all citizens;
- 5) Activation of special emergency projects: shopping and medicines at home, support for families and minors in difficulty, telephone support; provision of housing for people in need of isolation; activation of a family monitoring services.

How do you think the pandemic influenced people you work with?

The pandemic has prompted to think of new ways to stay in touch. To make up for the physical distance, unexplored solutions, paths and remedies were looked into. Sometimes these were just expedients, some others, more articulated and complex mechanisms to cope with a life changing health emergency.

One of the greatest impacts was felt in the work world, where timetables, rhythms and methods were completely disrupted, creating social and personal disorientation. However, it was human relations that changed above all, sometimes for good. It was if they were tried to be replaced by technological – yet fictional - interactions. Chats on web platforms, individual messaging, video calls took the place of handshakes, personal meetings and face-to-face dialogues.

The crux is that there was not much that could be done otherwise. The interruption of routines, the economic crisis and the one million job loss predictably provoked complaints and protests. This is because certain categories were more affected and penalized than other ones, leaving them unable to survive and bear the weight of restrictions.

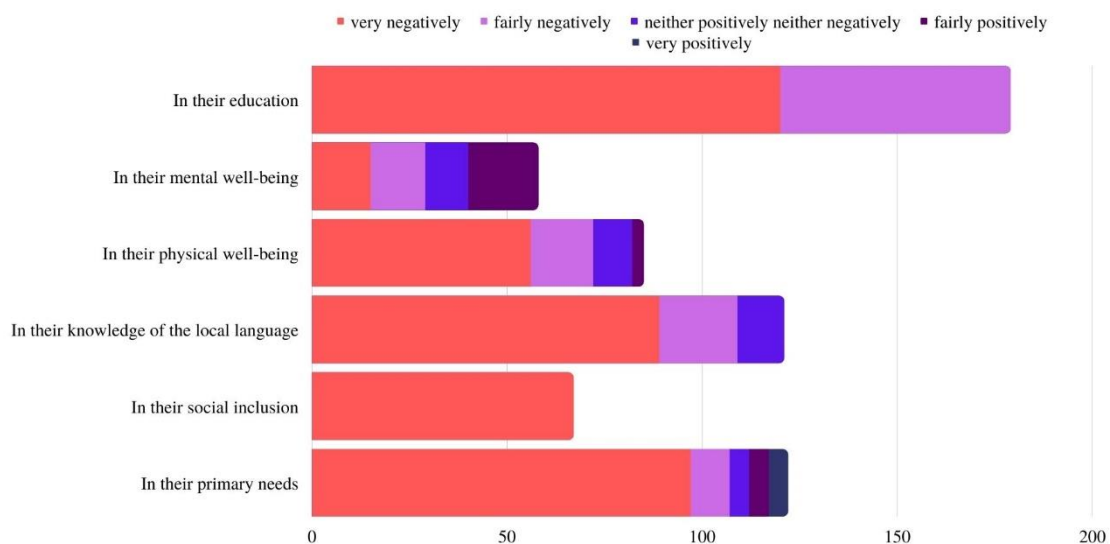
Overall, there is some hesitancy in talking about a reversal of COVID-19 habits. In fact, the change the world witnessed may be more profound than what initially thought. For instance, the face of cities shifted: only empty squares and streets with muted offices, factories and schools. And consequently, people interaction altered. There was a general of sense that the rarefaction of human presence had turned everything in a desert space. Silence had taken over speech.

Now with the health situation improving, life slowly has resumed. The need to see each other again is impetuous, no matter the purpose, utilitarian or ephemeral, necessary or superfluous. Not to mention, the overwhelming demand to communicate normally again when looking at the desolation that still haunts daily life. This is because it represents a looming danger that has not yet gone.

The truth is, that the return to normalcy is actually more difficult than expected due to the transformation of sociality and the urgency to make up for the time lost. Additionally, not only is the burden to build a new normality plagued by contradictory political and economic visions, but also it is expected to fall mainly on young people, making their path even more uncertain. This is because future as a whole seems now deceitful and fragile, a source of anguish and concern.

Lockdowns have damaged and made many victims. Especially, the survival of those activities that are the expression of culture and sociality is at stake. Beyond the employment crisis, it is the loss of vitality that has affected the materiality of these places, changing their very function (ethical, educational, civil) forever. In other words, it has undermined their spirit and raison d'être. This include theatres, museums, clubs, foundations, but also schools, working environments or any associations where knowledge is born, opinions are exchanged and relationships are built.

It is true that there is now a before and after-pandemic. The reason of watershed can be summarized by the evaporation of presence. Yet the areas and places above-mentioned can still offer ideas and projects to form and evolve; they are a valuable breeding ground for intellectual ferment, for it is only with direct confrontation and sharing that creativity can flourish.



How do you think the pandemic influenced people you work with?

Which of the elements had a generally NEGATIVE impact on the participation of people with a migration background in ONLINE ACTIVITIES?

From the data collected, the respondents stated that around 34,000 high school students risk fueling the phenomenon of dropping out of school due to prolonged absences. However, leaving school early increase the odds of labor exploitation, especially for dropouts from disadvantaged background.

distance learning: an obstacle to learning

28% of respondents said that at least **one student** has stopped attending classes altogether, since the first lockdown while the number increases to three or more when it comes to students that have not participated since. Finally, 35% of them believe that school preparation has deteriorated. Indeed, they reckon that one in four pupils has to catch up on several subjects.

38% state that distance learning was a negative experience. Generally speaking, prolonged attention span is the main difficulty since it is continuously interrupted by technical problems, such as poor internet connection or network coverage, or by inadequate room and equipment to follow classes.

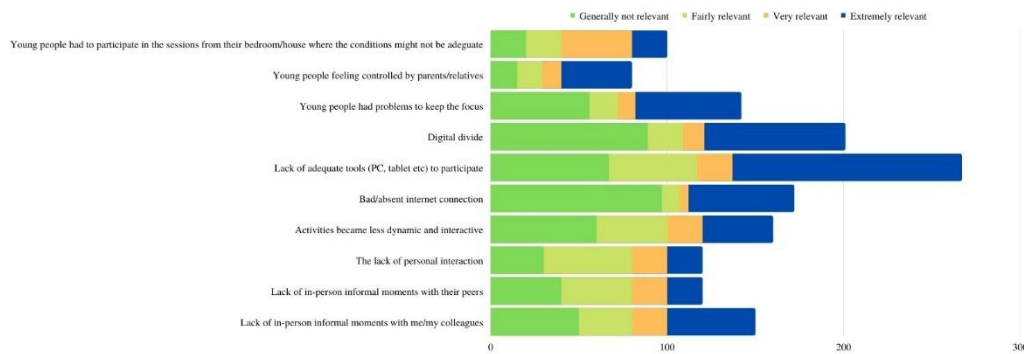
REPERCUSSIONS AT THE SOCIAL LEVEL

For 46% of teenagers the past year was 'wasted'. On one side, they were forced to live in a world of only virtual encounters, on the other, it made them re-discover the value of 'live' relationships with their peers. This is supported by 85% of those interviewed that confirm teenagers realized how important in presence interaction with friends are.

The issue of personal relationships is fundamental, especially during a fickle age such as adolescence. Not only friends, but also sentimental experience are crucial. Indeed, the latter was also widely felt as missing during the health emergency.

FEELINGS AND EXPECTATIONS OF BOYS AND GIRLS

Tiredness, uncertainty and worry are the main state of minds that girls and boys experienced during this period. On future prospective, only 26% think that "everything will go back to the way it was before" while a similar percentage believe that "they will continue to be afraid". However, there is a 43% that reckon that even with vaccines, "they will be together differently, more online".



Which of the following elements had generally a NEGATIVE impact in the participation of people with a migration background in the ONLINE ACTIVITIES?

During COVID-19 did it take more or less time to prepare an online lesson than a traditional lesson?

70% of the answers in our questionnaire reveal the difficulty found in doing online activities due mainly to the lack of familiarity with digital tools. 80% used new tools to create their activities such as Mentimeter, google meet, zoom. 90% find that these innovative methods have been effective in some cases and will continue to use them in the future.

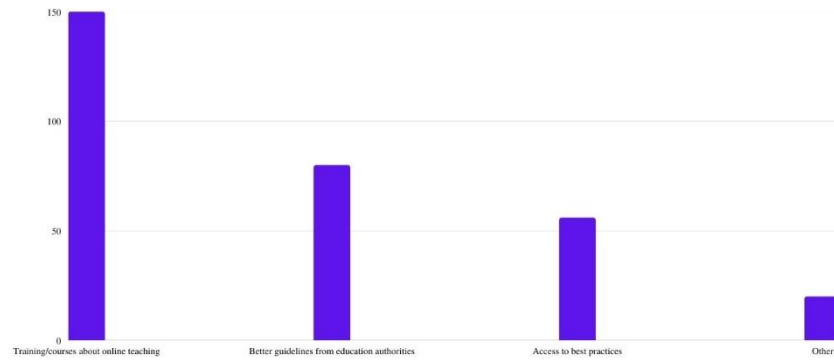
Did you receive any kind of help from your country/municipality/organization to implement distant learning activities?

The government and the municipality have implemented training and aid for teachers only. While for third sector workers, it was the large cooperatives that provided training. In the end, the institutions forgot the members of the associations.

What measures would help distance learning in the future?

In Italy, distance learning has been the subject of much discussion and has been used in the future for the greater inclusion of children with various problems and disabilities.

In fact, they are discussing a law to cut down on early school leaving among the weakest individuals by making and leaving the use of online teaching in the future as well. According to our survey, 65% of people responded that the use of digital can definitely be a great resource to be exploited to reach as many people as possible.



In the future, what measures would help you in carrying out remote lessons?

6.4 Results from Youth Worker’s surveys and interviews

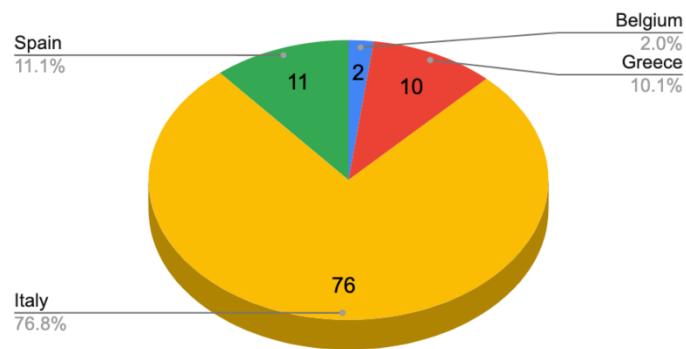
Statistical analysis of the DO-IT questionnaire for Youth Workers active with young people with a migration background.

In the context of the European project DO-IT, a survey was conducted with a questionnaire on a random sample of youth workers active in Belgium, Spain, Greece, and Italy. The research shows findings regarding the role of the pandemic in the education of young people with a migrant background.

The survey was based on exactly 100 questionnaires. For this reason, to simplify the understanding we will mention about the exact numbers of the participants rather than the percentage (%) in this part.

Nationality:

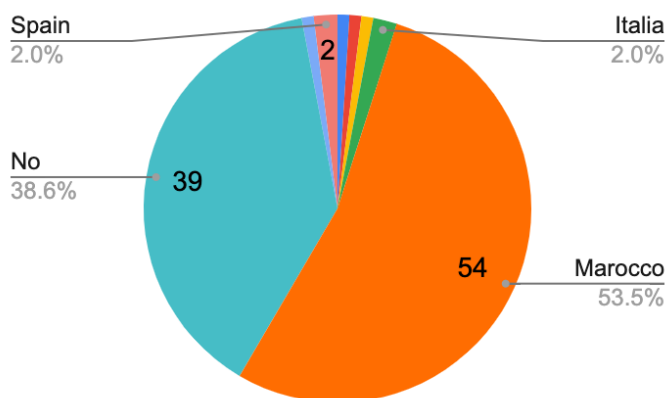
The participants are youth workers working in the countries described in the table.



Gender:

The participants are 53 females and 47 males, being quite aligned with the expected population active in this field.

Background of interviewed:

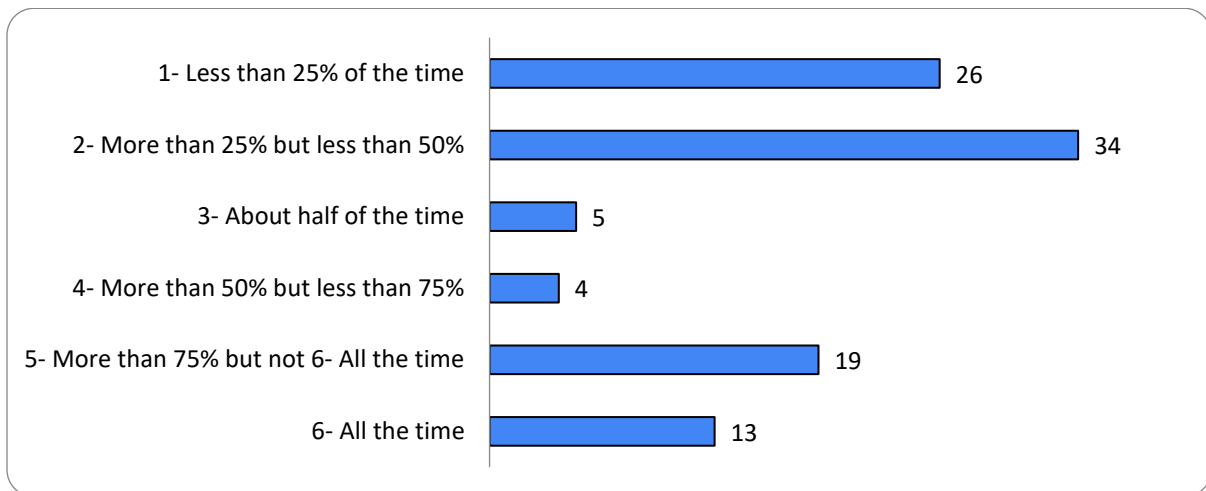


As visible the large majority of the interviewed are from Italy, and from them the large majority have a migration background, mostly from Morocco (Question “Do you have a migration background?”).

Experience of the interviewed:

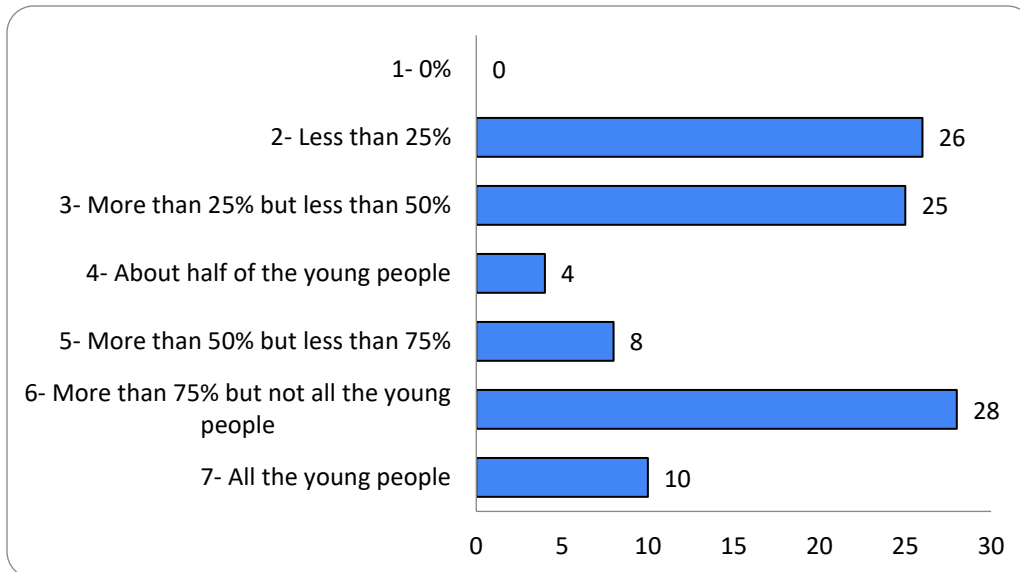
The interviewed youth workers have various experience with young people with a migration background before the pandemic period, as visible in this table:

In which percentage of time did you work with people with a migrant background from March 2020 until now?



We can observe that the population of the survey is well distributed, considering that the options 2, 3 and 4 are partly overlapping. Still, is visible a polarization between a group of youth workers working with young people with migrant background not more than 50% (60% of the total) and a 31% of youth workers working 75% or more of the time with this target group.

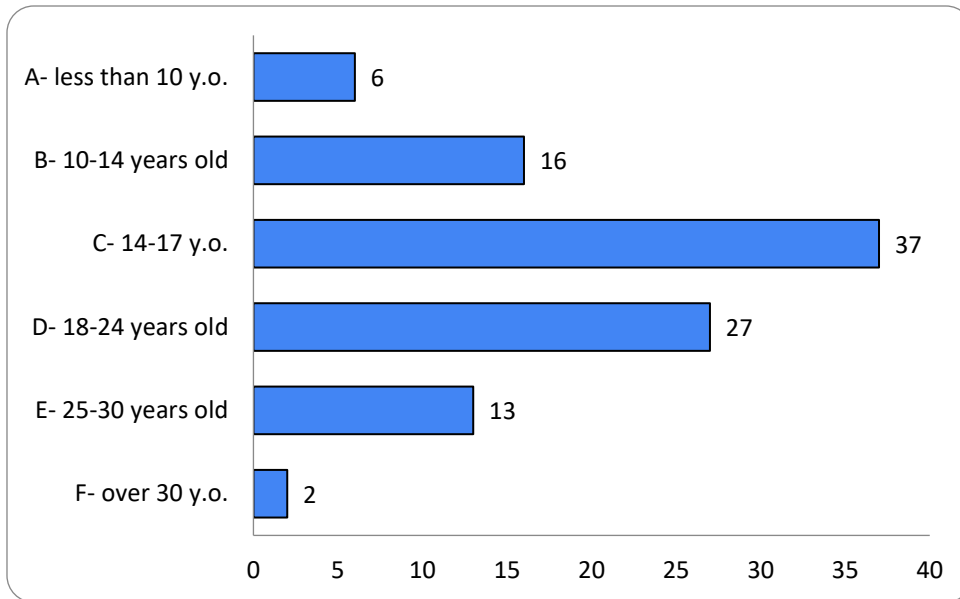
A similar polarization is visible in the following table, about the question “*In which percentage the beneficiaries of your job are young migrants?*”



All youth workers have experience with this target group, and again this experience is polarized between a majority working only partly with this target (51%) and then a large group (37%) more with more than 75% of beneficiaries with migrant background.

Age: How old is the majority of your beneficiaries?

At last, the age of the beneficiaries: as visible, the large majority (76%) mostly works with the age defined at EU level as young person, so beneficiaries between 14 and 30 years of age. Only 8% of interviewed mostly work with beneficiaries that are formally not “youth” (younger than 10 y.o. and older than 30 y.o.) while 16% of them works with beneficiaries between 10 and 14 years of age, which are considered to be either children or young people, depending on the country and on the specific context in which they are considered, also at EU level.



The influence of COVID-19 on the beneficiaries:

The following set of questions focus on the perception of youth workers in the impact of the pandemic.

How do you think the pandemic influenced young people you work with?

Below you can see the answer to the question in different fields (educational, mental, physical etc.).

	1- very negatively	2- fairly negatively	3- neither positively/negatively	4- fairly positively	5- very positively
In their education	33	58	10		
In their mental well-being	31	64	6		
In their physical well-being	10	65	23	1	2
In their knowledge of the local language	16	41	42	1	1

In their social inclusion	42	49	9		1
In their primary needs	21	50	29	1	
TOT and %	153 (25%)	327 (54%)	119 (20%)	3 (0,4%)	4 (0,6%)

As visible, the wide majority believes that the effect was negative (79%), while only in the 1% of cases there were positive effects perceived.

The aspects influenced more negatively were the education, the mental well-being, and the social inclusion, while the aspects that were considered less worsened were physical well-being, knowledge of the local language and their primary needs.

More specifically, in all the answers but the one on the local language, the main opinion was that the pandemic had a fairly negative impact on the YPMB, while for local language knowledge the main option was that the pandemic had neither positively/negatively impact. The areas more negatively inflicted by the pandemic were the social inclusion and the education and mental well-being. In the contrary, the areas that were less negatively influenced were the physical well-being, the local language and the primary needs. This seems to indicate that, more than the concrete and visible needs, the pandemic was considered to have a negative effect especially on intangible aspects of the growth of YPWMB.

This is an element that was assessed also during the **Focus group**, implemented with youth workers active in Italy: the public administrations, when tackling the pandemic emergency, focused on the physical and tangible needs of the people but, especially concerning national policies, they didn't take into account the mental well-being, and the social inclusion as much as would have been needed.

Changes caused by the pandemic:

In specific, we have analyzed the aspects that changed, with the following results:

Since March 2020, to which extent the following activities with young people with migration background have changed?

	1- very much decreased	2- fairly decreased	3- neither decreased increased	4- fairly increased	5- very increased
Mentoring activities	2	34	35	15	5
In presence work	21	51	22	3	
Online work		8	24	30	35
Dual mode (mixed programme, partly in presence, partly online)	1	10	40	32	10
TOT and %	24 (6%)	103 (27%)	121 (32%)	80 (21%)	50 (13%)

In yellow the preeminent choices.

Mentoring activities were mostly fairly decreased, but in some cases have increased. Mostly have not changed. This could relate to the fact that the large majority of the in-presence work has fairly decreased, and in 21 cases it has very much decreased. This data is not surprising but is interesting to see how it connects with mentoring activities: we could see that mentoring activities implemented in in-person setting have decreased, but organisations that started to use online and dual mode activities have maintained or increased the mentoring activities. This relates to a topic faced in the **Focus Group**: the reaction provided by the services was very jeopardized and differentiated in the Milan communities where the involved social workers were active. Some youth centers immediately adapted their schedule and activities to the new

online scenario and changed their activities to adapt to the new situation. This caused an increase of one-to-one activities and mentorship moments, and a decrease of group work moments, which are less effective through conference calls. On the contrary, other organisations didn't change their "educational offer" for young people, resulting on a strong decrease of participation and capacity to answer the emerging needs of young people. Moreover, all participants of the focus group agreed that the public institutions were unable to provide specific training and support to the youth workers to be able to manage this new scenario.

These conclusions are aligned with the fact that online work fairly increased for 30 and very increased for 35 youth workers, but there are also 24 of them who didn't change their work in the pandemic and even 8 youth workers who decreased the amount of online work done with the young people during the pandemic period. This tendency is even more evident in relation with dual mode, in which the relative majority of youth workers (40) neither decreased neither increased, while 11 of them decreased this mode of work.

The negative effects on in-presence activities:

Which of the following elements had generally a NEGATIVE impact in the participation of young people with a migration background in the IN-PRESENCE ACTIVITIES?

	1- Generally not relevant	2- Fairly relevant	3- Very relevant	4- Extremely relevant
Young people being afraid of catching COVID-19	27	45	18	3
Young people had to take care of a cared one	37	33	17	5
Loss of connection after the lockdown	8	32	34	19

Loss of motivations due to the new conditions to participate (wearing mask, personal distance etc.)	1	44	25	23
The place of the activities is not able to comply with the COVID-19 regulations	24	24	29	17
The activities with all restrictions become less attractive to them	9	27	26	30
TOT and %	42 (11%)	127 (34%)	114 (30%)	89 (24%)

In general, we can divide the questions in 2 main areas: the areas in which the pandemic had a low impact and the ones in which it had a strong negative impact.

In the 1st category are “Young people being afraid of catching COVID-19” and “Young people had to take care of a cared one”. The fear of catching COVID-19 was very or extremely relevant for 21 youth workers, less than half of the 45 who declared it as fairly relevant and less than the 27 who declared it as generally not relevant. Even more underperceived as a negative element was the to “take care of a cared one”: only 22 considered it very or extremely relevant, while the relative majority (37) considered it generally not relevant and 33 considered it fairly relevant.

On the other side the “Loss of connection after the lockdown” was considered very or extremely relevant by 53 youth workers, while 8 of them considered it generally not relevant. In this case it seems that the question depends on other variable, and we can guess are mostly related with the level of isolation suffered by the YPMB during the pandemic and their level of connection through online media, as in-person meetings were not possible.

For the case of “Loss of motivations due to the new conditions to participate (wearing mask, personal distance, etc.)” this was considered generally not relevant by only 1 youth worker, while the majority (48 people) considered very or extremely relevant, and 44 of them fairly relevant. This could suggest that the new conditions effected basically all young people,

but with a limited intensity compared with other elements such as the type of activities provided by the institutions in which the youth workers were acting. There is a different scenario with "The place of the activities is not able to comply with the COVID-19 regulations": in this case the answers are almost proportionally distributed among the 4 options. This seems to relate to the variety of spaces used by the youth workers in their in-presence activities with young people.

Finally, "The activities with all restrictions become less attractive to them" was the aspect perceived as more negatively relevant: 30 youth workers considered it extremely relevant, 26 very relevant and only 9 considered it generally not relevant. This is not surprising, because the in-presence activities in the youth became impossible for the majority of the pandemic period.

The negative effects in online activities:

Which of the following elements had generally a NEGATIVE impact in the participation of young people with a migration background in the ONLINE ACTIVITIES?

	1- Generally not relevant	2- Fairly relevant	3- Very relevant	4- Extremely relevant
Young people had to participate in the sessions from their bedroom/house where the conditions might not be adequate (family issues, financial issues, etc.)	5	21	44	19
Young people feeling controlled by parents/relatives	23	36	15	9
Young people had problems to keep the focus	0	35	34	26
Digital divide	1	34	39	19
Lack of adequate tools (PC, tablet etc.) to participate	3	20	41	32

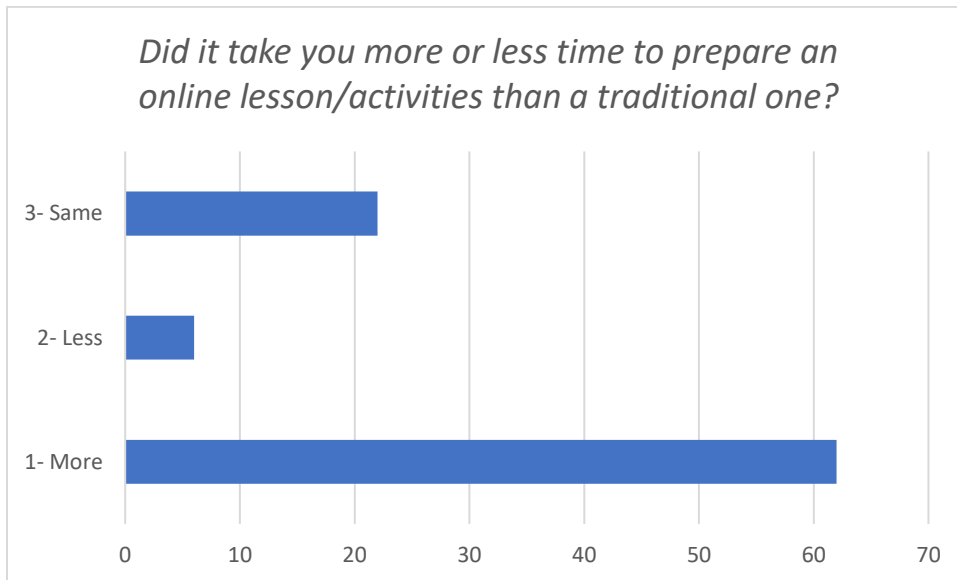
Bad/absent internet connection	17	15	36	28
Activities became less dynamic and interactive	28	47	20	6
The lack of personal interaction	3	24	40	29
Lack of in-person informal moments with their peers	1	27	30	38
Lack of in-person informal moments with me/my colleagues	4	28	25	39
TOT and %	36 (3%)	126 (5%)	115 (20%)	112 (31%)

In this table is visible that the more voted option is “Extremely relevant” showing that all elements considered were relevant. Nonetheless, there are substantial differences and answers are not homogeneous. The less considered element was “Young people feeling controlled by parents/relatives”, followed by “Activities became less dynamic and interactive”, which are the only 2 options in which the “Generally not relevant” and “Fairly relevant” were more popular than “Very relevant” and “extremely relevant”. On the other hand, all the other elements were widely considered relevant, both the ones related to practical facilities like “Young people had to participate in the sessions from their bedroom/house where the conditions might not be adequate (family issues, financial issues, etc.)”, “Lack of adequate tools (PC, tablet etc.) to participate”, and “Bad/absent internet connection”. But, as already observed in previous questions, also the human connection also in this case was considered very relevant and strongly threatened by inadequate use of online learning mode, as the following options were all considered to have a negative impact on online activities “Young people had problems to keep the focus”, “The lack of personal interaction”, “Lack of in-person informal moments with their peers”, and “Lack of in-person informal moments with me/my colleagues”.

So, differently from the previous question, in this case we can observe that technical/practical issues were considered both very relevant, indicating that practical support in this extent was also very needed by young people during pandemic period (i.e., providing devices, internet connection, etc.). In this extent, as Associazione Joint, we have experienced in the pandemic period, a strong need of digital education both in the young people and in the

parents we have involved in our youth projects. Management of distant relation is still very challenging for many people, in our experience in the Italian context.

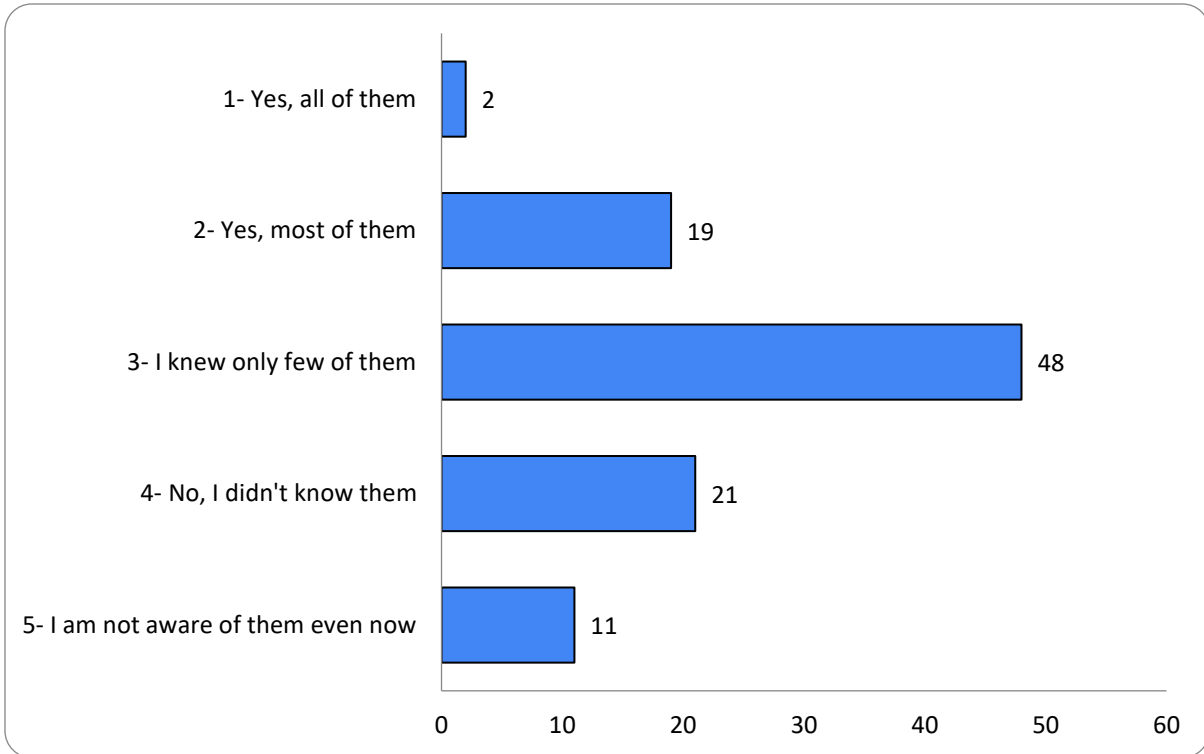
Preparation time:



As visible, most of youth workers spent more time to prepare the lessons/activities during the pandemic period. This means that, for the ones who changed their work procedure, the new context had increased the workload, instead of decreasing it. This could be caused by the change of methodology itself, and for the need of youth workers to learn new methodologies, as well as because implementing online activities in the youth field is more complex and less “spontaneous” or by other factors, but surely the external impression of having less job to be done in this news setting seems to be not real. This was also an element emerged in the **focus group**, in which the youth workers have all expressed how hard and tiring has been for them the pandemic period, especially to engage and motivate the young people.

Use of online tools:

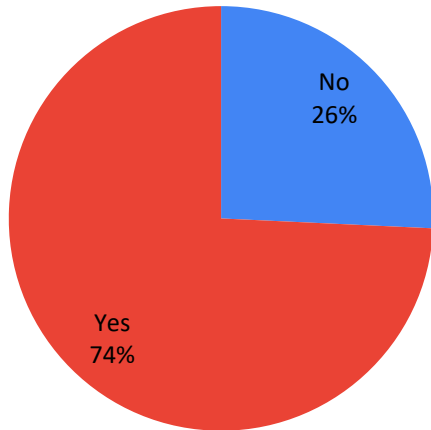
Before the pandemic, were you aware of the various tools for distant learning during the pandemic? (Moodle, platform, prepared lessons, best practices, etc.)



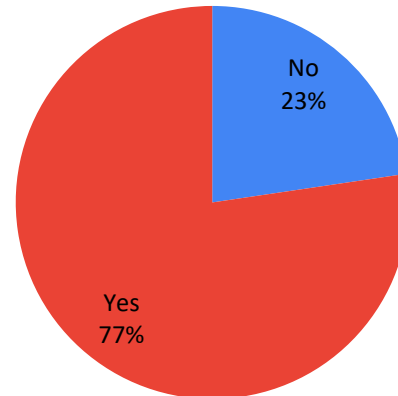
From this graph we can see that only 13 youth workers maintained the same knowledge about distant learning tools during the pandemic, while 88 of them have gained knowledge on them.

This is confirmed by the 2 tables below, regarding the usage of new methods and the will to keep using them in the future. The answer is positive in both cases for around 75% of youth workers who answered the questions (the ones for which the question was relevant, that were 100 in the 1st and 75 in the 2nd question:

Did you start using tools and methods for distant learning that you haven't used before?

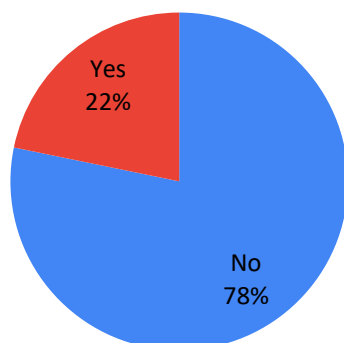


Will you continue to use online tools and methods in the future?



Institutional support:

Did you receive any kind of help from your country/municipality/organization to implement distant learning activities?



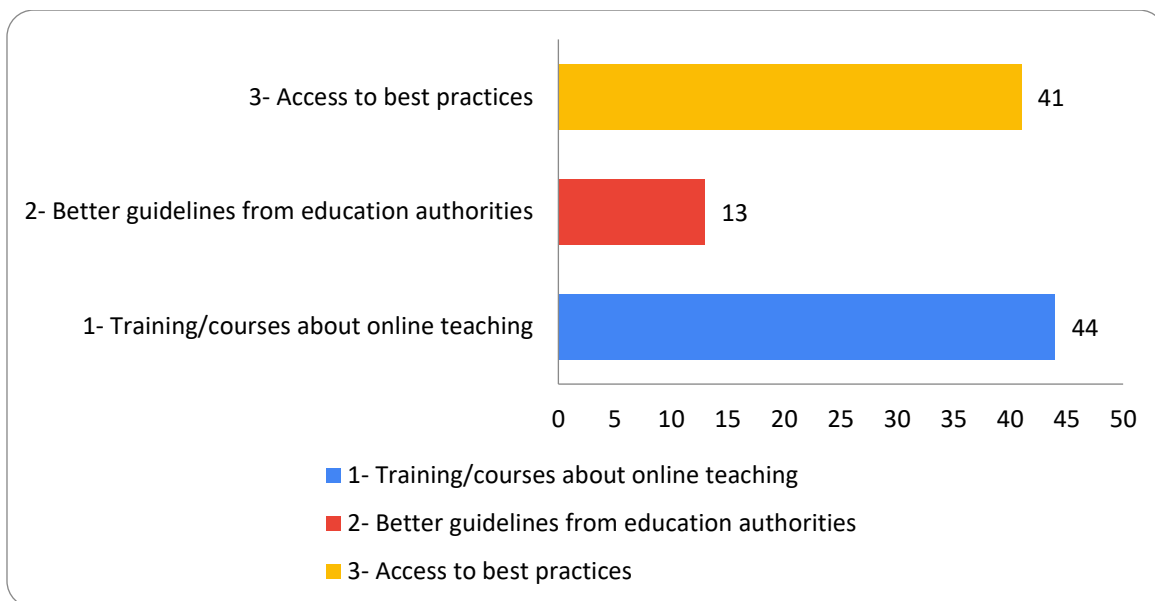
In this scenario, most of the youth workers did not perceive a concrete support in the implementation of online activities with young people by their country/municipality/organization, which is particularly relevant to understand why for example they had to invest more time on their own to prepare the activities and because the overall evaluation of the support provided to the young people during the pandemic period was not positive. This is a topic also discussed in the **focus group**, in which has been underlined that an effective intervention could have been useful especially for young people coming from families

with lower economic and cultural resources, that had very strong problems in supporting the learning process and the well-being of their children and young people. An issue assessed in this extent was that the help was given without precise and simple criteria, to all potential beneficiaries in the same amount and with the same procedure. No positive discrimination or

extra support was provided during the pandemic period to families with strong socio-economic problems, this caused a big gap in their capacity to manage the situation compared with other families in the same neighborhood. This was particularly relevant concerning the support provided at national level, while the Municipality of Milan has managed to target in a better way the aid provided, even if also in this case not enough was done to support especially the need of socializing of young people. Particularly relevant, in this extent, the fact that the youth center activates in the summer 2021 were done with masks and physical distancing when outside the youth center this type of limitations were not applied anymore (still in the Municipality of Milan) causing a decreased participation of young people in the provided activities.

In relation with the type of support that youth workers felt to need in to improve their job, they have answered as follow to this question:

In the future, what measures would help you in carrying out remote lessons?



As visible, a strong need to training was perceived, as well as the access to best practices, which is also one of the reasons why this research has been implemented. On the contrary, better guidelines from educational authorities were not as expected, showing that the lack was not felt at legislative level but on training and networking level. This element was subject of discussion in the focus group: the regular change of regulations and guidelines during the pandemic period caused stress and frustration, in families with less cultural resources, and especially in the families with migration background, that often felt very confused by the

sudden changes and the inconsistency of the regulations, that for example was imposing different regulations in the youth centers, in the schools, in the shopping malls, on public transports etc. This was also the experience of Joint with the ESC volunteers we were hosting in 2020 and 2021: we decided to send updates on the COVID-19-regulations to all volunteers every time they changed. This caused a lot of confusion, because we were sending them updates almost every week, and many volunteers were unable to follow-up with all updates.

Focus group results:

Apart from the elements already mentioned, here some interesting conclusions on the Focus Group implemented with 10 youth workers. It is important to mention that all involved youth workers work in the metropolitan area of Milan, and in 4 different services, thus having a specific point of view on the pandemic experience.

Specific aspects for which COVID-19 pandemic impacted the youth work activities:

- *During the outbreak of COVID-19 we closed our "face to face" activities for some weeks without knowing when and how we could come back to our "normal" activities and at the end we started with an online program for almost 2 months. In the last 2 years we had different moments of closure and opening, with different strategies and constraints to follow and a lot of continuous changes (open/close, restrict number, small groups, face mask, temperature controls etc.).*
- *Our youth center was completely unprepared to go online: some of us didn't even have a computer at home, nor did the young people and their families. To us it took almost 1 month to be able to provide online sessions and, after 2 months of it neither of us neither the young people wanted anymore to spend time in front of a screen.*
- *We were in a trip to Germany and Poland, and we had to come back in the middle of it because of the closure of borders, it was a pretty shocking moment for the youngsters that have always lived in a free and open Europe. After that, we decided not to travel with the kids anymore, and since 2020 we didn't do any travel abroad with them anymore, which is a pity because that was an activity they really enjoyed.*
- *The work with the families from other countries that didn't speak Italian was very difficult during all the 1st period of lock-down here in Milan. We managed very often the communication through the children, and it was hard to stay in contact. Then, during*

Spring-Summer 2020 we had some time to better organize our activities and from that moment on we were able to work much better with kids and their families.

- *The pandemic impacted our activities very much, especially the ones with more disadvantaged families with migration background. A lot of new youngsters coming to the country didn't have the opportunity to go to school, to meet peers, to start to learn the Italian language. Lots of them are also facing economic problems and didn't have the digital tools needed to follow the online didactic. After the pandemic period lots of them suffered of **social exclusion and anxiety** about staying in group contexts.*

This is a situation that also in Joint was very clear: many young people suffered of severe mental problems in 2020 and 2021: we had more than 20% of young people involved in our activities with this type of problems, including 3 young people with heavy depression. We never experienced nothing comparable.

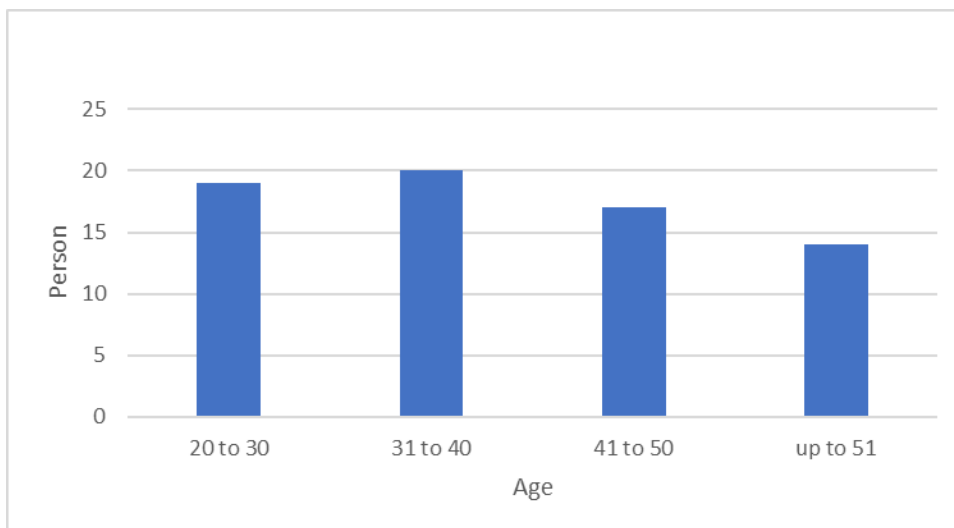
- *We had problems to work in remote and in the pandemic context because we didn't have a specific training on online didactic, methods and strategies. We had to invent new ways to communicate and to help youngsters in their school and social needs, and all this job was done with no preparation at all.*

6.5 Results from Researcher's surveys and interviews

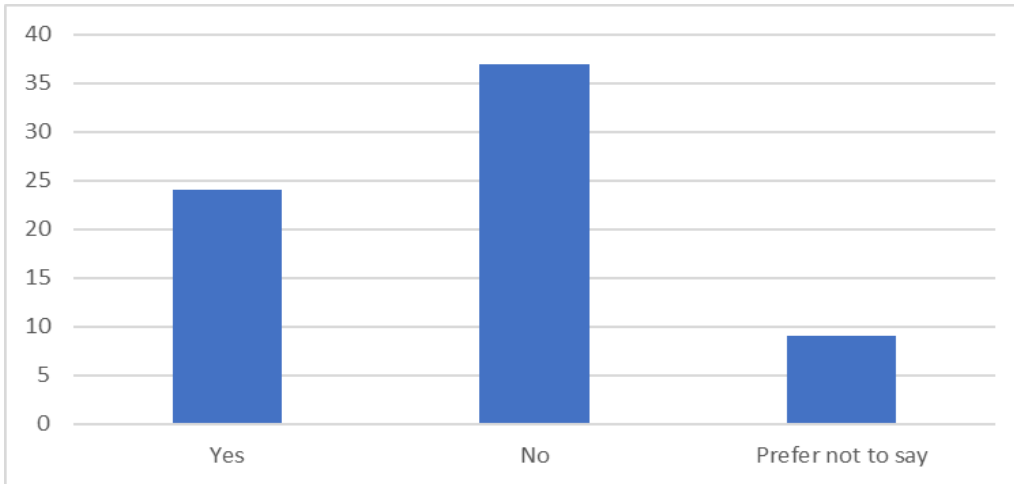
The surveys and interviews in this part are conducted by ECEPAA in Belgium. However, some participants are also from Italy, Spain and Greece. 26 questions, in total, has been asked to the researchers, who have been doing research either on migration integration and education or COVID-19 related issues, in order to gather data regarding the impact of the COVID-19 on the education of young people with a migrant background and the importance of digitalization and digital tools for the education and activities.

Additionally, the participants have been contacted based on their specialization. All participants have been working on the issues related to the COVID-19 and education or issues related to migrants' integration. The questionnaires have included 70 participants, aged from 20 to 60, who has been conducting research on the COVID-19 and the education of young people with a migrant background. Among these participants, 26 of them were male and 44 of them were female researchers (see the graphic below).

1. Age

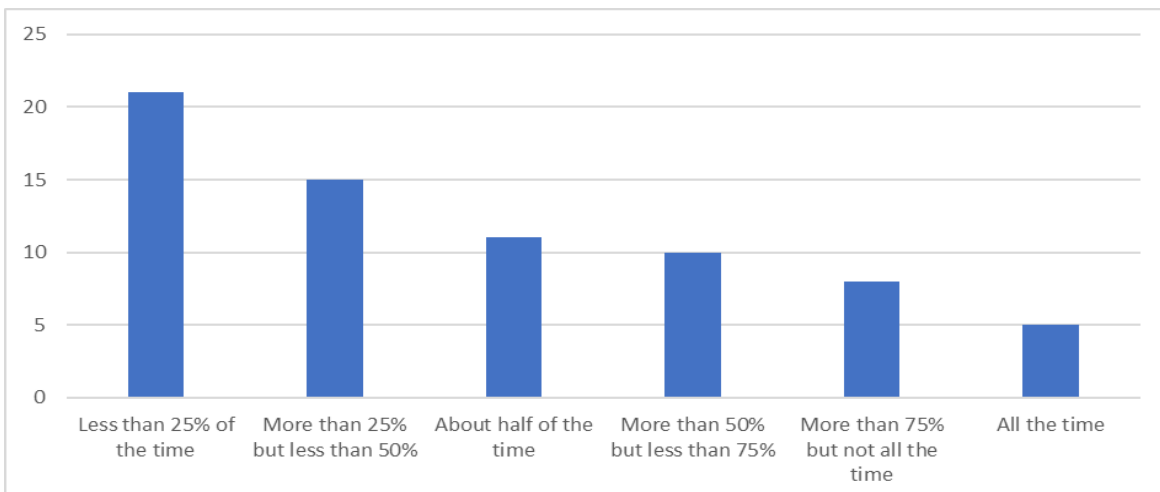


2. Do you have a migration background?



While 24 of these participants come from a migrant background, 37 of them do not have a migrant background (in this case, the participants who comes from other European countries are not regarded as migrant.) and 9 of them didn't prefer to specify it. The participants who come from a migrant background helped us to understand in practice the difficulties that young migrants faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also gives a broad understanding of their educational challenges.

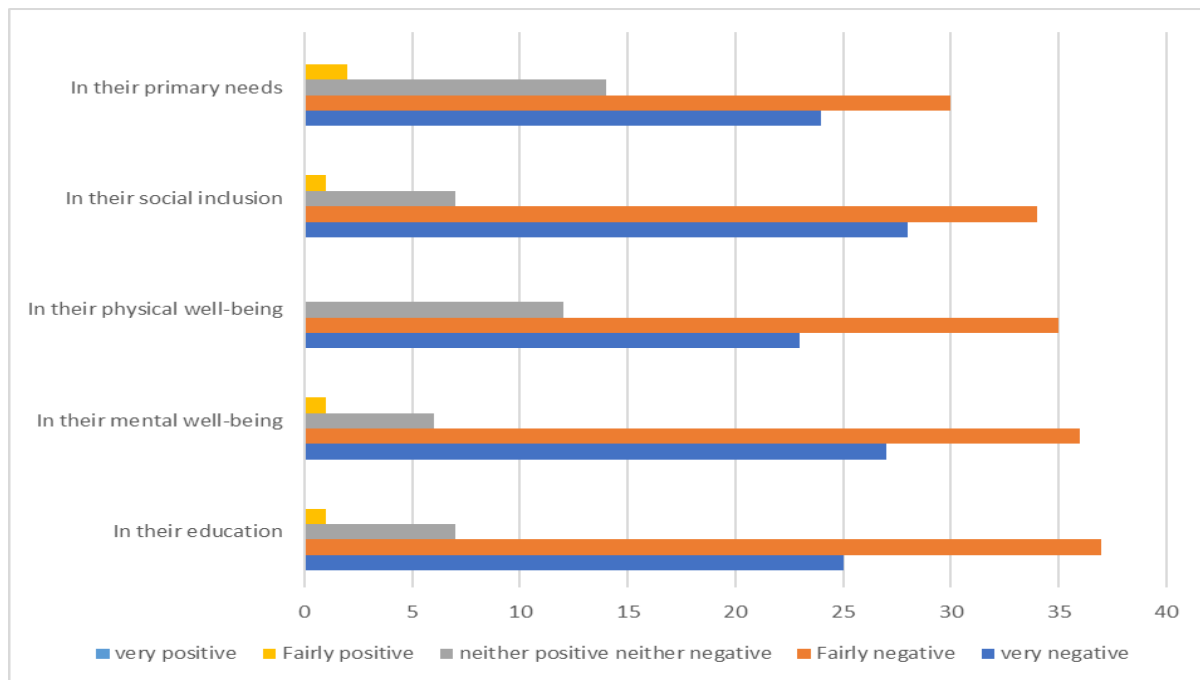
3. In which percentage of time did you work with people with a migrant background since March 2020?



However, based on the question *“In which percentage of time did you work with people with a migrant background since March 2020?”* since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic,

every participant has spent some time working with young migrants (see the graphic above). While 21 participants have worked with migrants 25% or less of the time, 32 participants have worked with migrants more 25% or more of the time.

4. How do you think the pandemic influenced young people with migrant background?

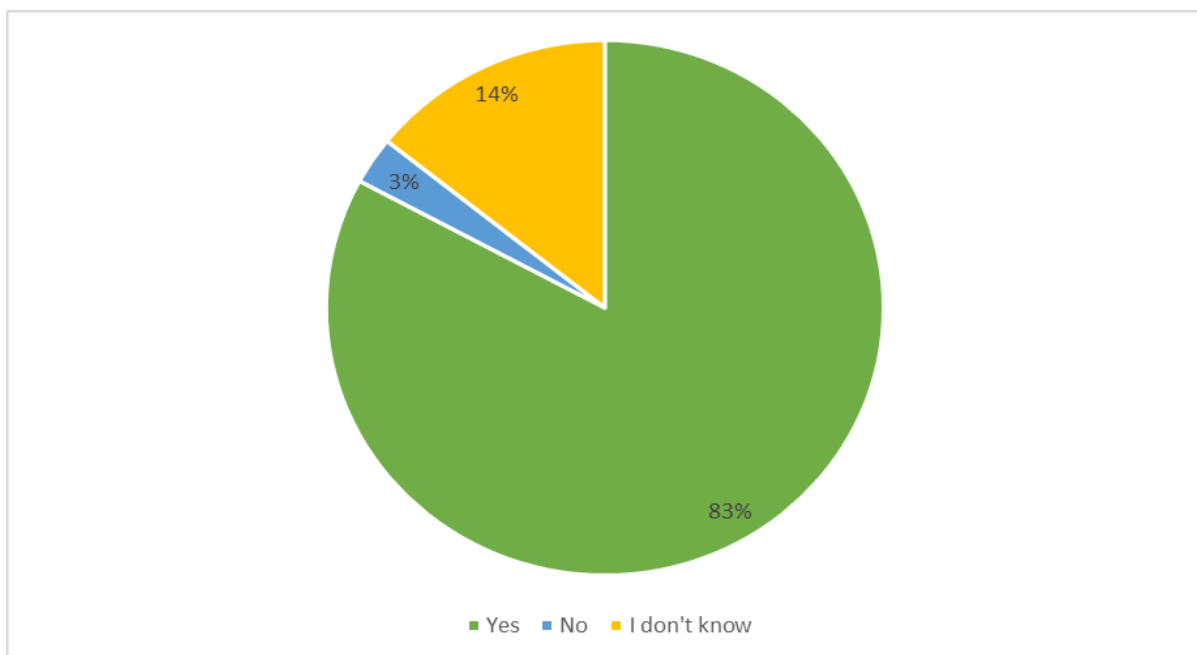


We asked to the participants the question “*How do you think the pandemic influenced young people with migrant background?*” in order to obtain the data for whether the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the physical, mental and social activities and education of young people with a migrant background or not. Most participants think the pandemic has impacted young people with migrant background in a negative way. While 30% of participants think the pandemic has impacted them in a negative way in their primary needs, 24% of participants think the pandemic was very negative for these needs. In addition, 34% of the participants pointed out that the pandemic has impacted the social inclusion of young people with migrant background in a negative way and 27% think it impacted very negatively. Over 35% of participants think that the pandemic has also impacted the young people with a migrant background on their physical and mental well-being and in their education. Over 23% of them think the pandemic has impacted their activities and education in a very negative way. However, some participants also think the pandemic has not specifically impacted on the activities and

education of young people with migrant background. This may be because the participants have not found specific reasons in their research.

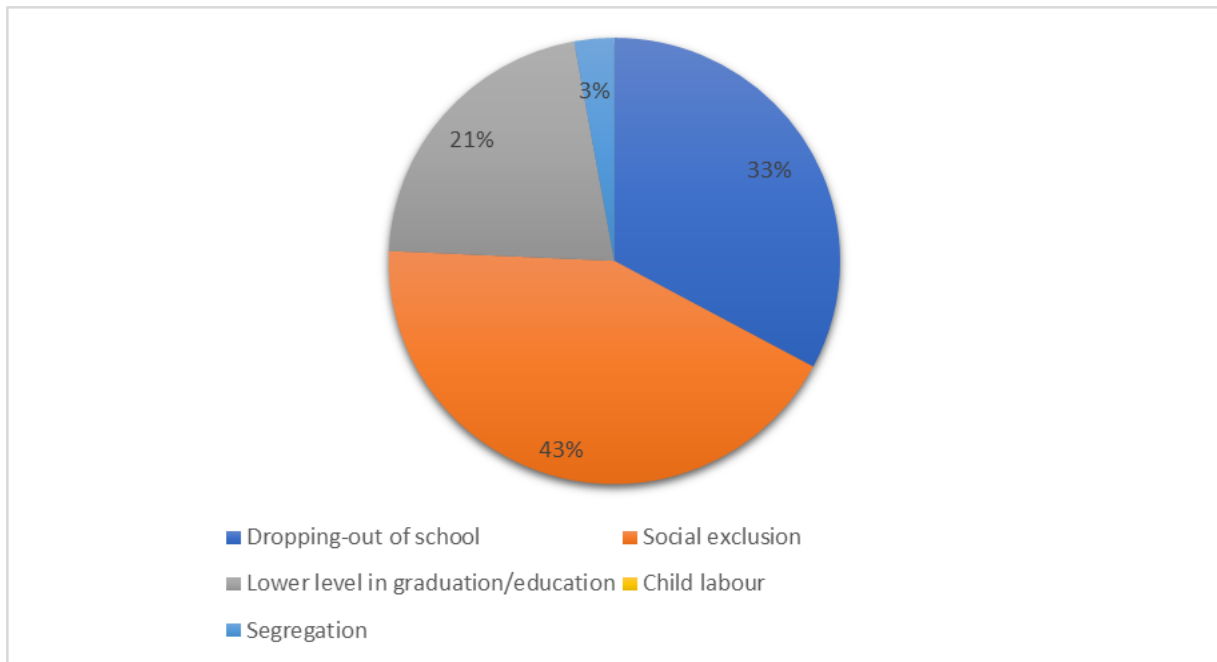
We can argue that most researchers, who participated in the survey, think the pandemic had a negative impact than positive one in this question. This answers also help us to understand the level of the problem and find some solutions.

5. Do you think that the effects of the lockdown period there will have a long-term impact, according to you or the research you have carried out?



Here then, it is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to impact all people economically and psychologically in general for a long time. As it can be seen from the answers that given by the participants in which 83% of them gives an affirmative answer. Only 3% of the participants think the pandemic impact will not last for a long time. These answers are also sort of warning to keep fighting the COVID-19.

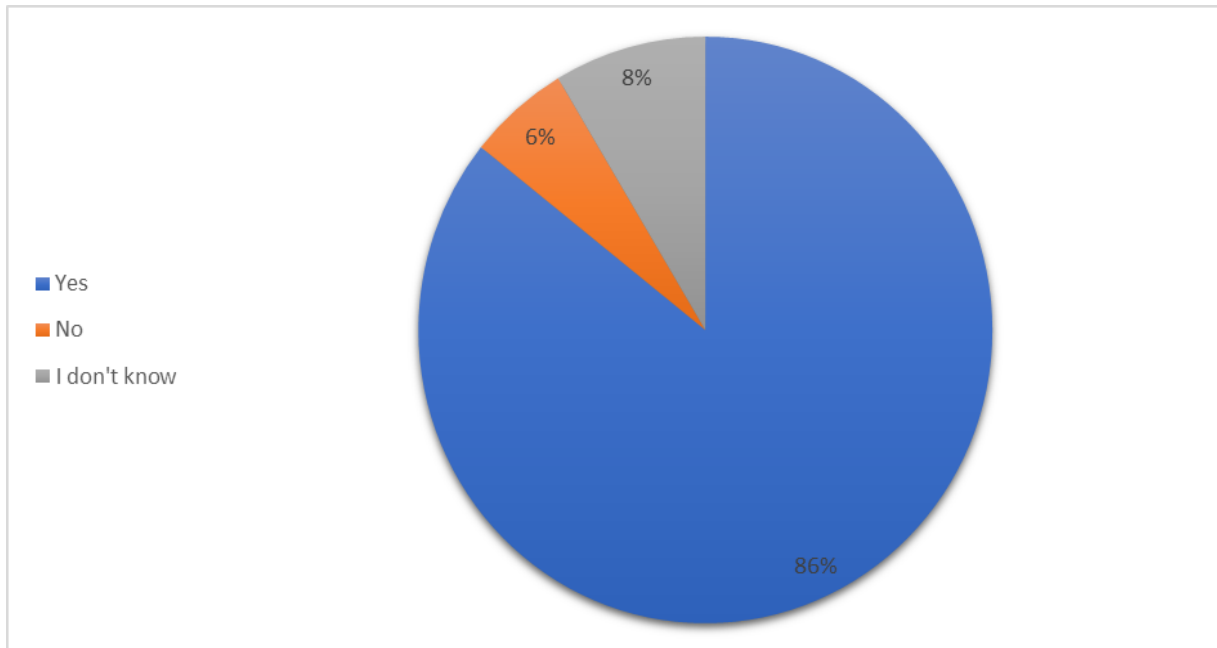
6. What kind of impacts?



This question asked to find out the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people with migrant background in the long run. The responses to the question show that the pandemic can cause several consequences: First, the young people may leave the school, as 33% of the participants answered. Second, it can result in lower level of education and graduation, as 21% of the participants also agreed on that. Third, they can face social exclusion, as 43% of the participants an affirmative answer, due to lower level of education and other social reasons. All answers are interconnected, and one can cause the other one. This situation may even lead to some level of segregation in the society.

However, this question and the answers provide us what the pandemic could bring in the long run. These are the main social issues that we need to tackle and try to find relevant solutions for them.

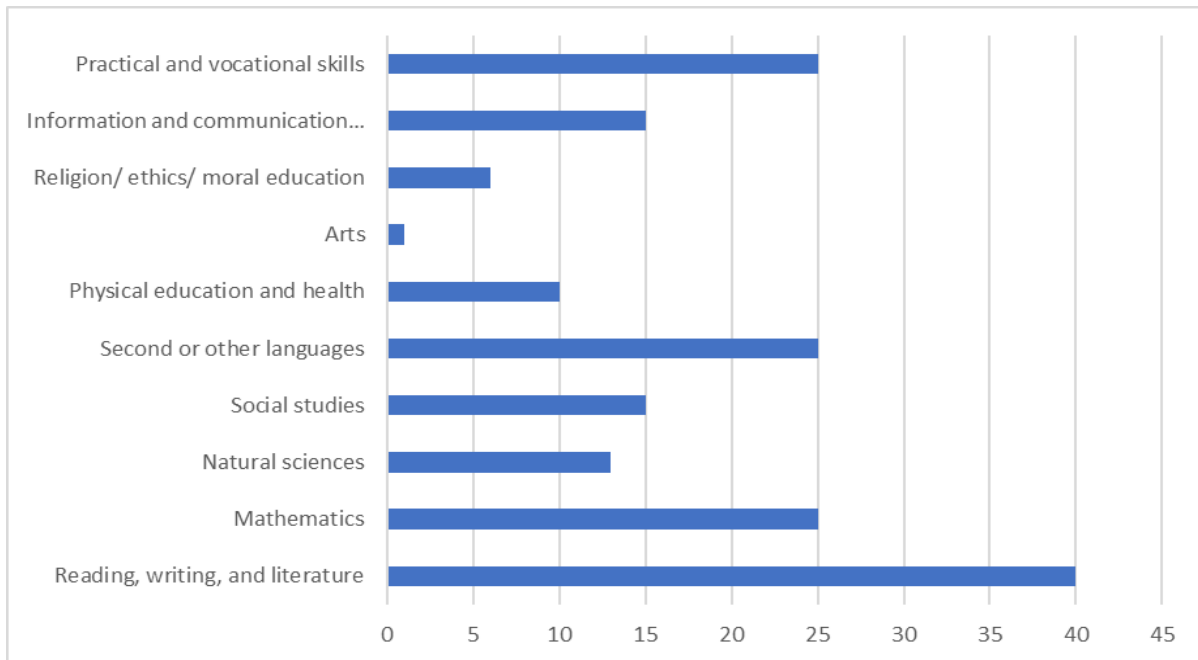
7. Do you think that young people with migrant background will have particular problems in certain specific subjects?



The graphic indicates that the problem will not only be social but also can impact some specific subjects such as developing competences, learning languages, physical and mental health. In this question “*Do you think that young people with migrant background will have particular problems in certain specific subjects?*” the participants, 86%, agree that the pandemic has impacted and will continue to impact on young people with migrant background in specific subjects in their education and activities.

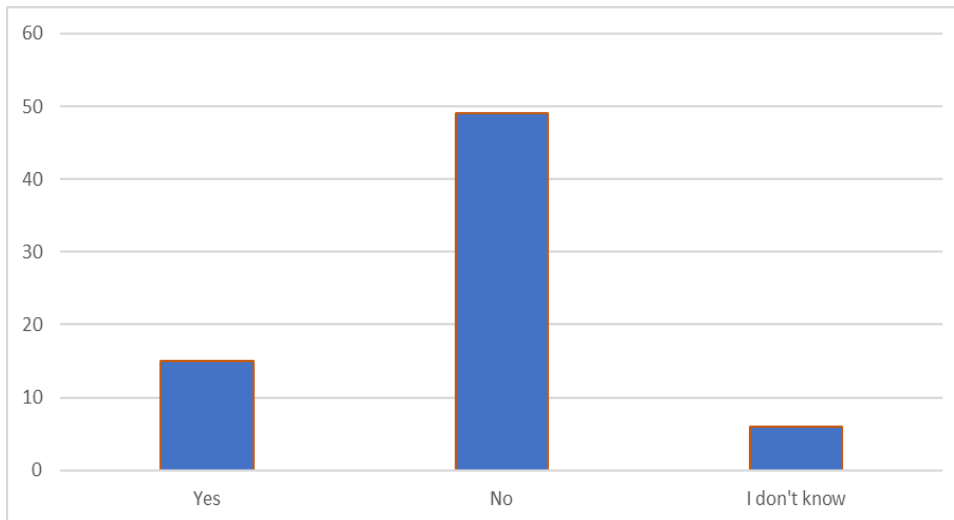
The following question is showing more details about the specific subjects that young people with migrant background can miss out.

8. If yes, can you choose one of the following subjects?



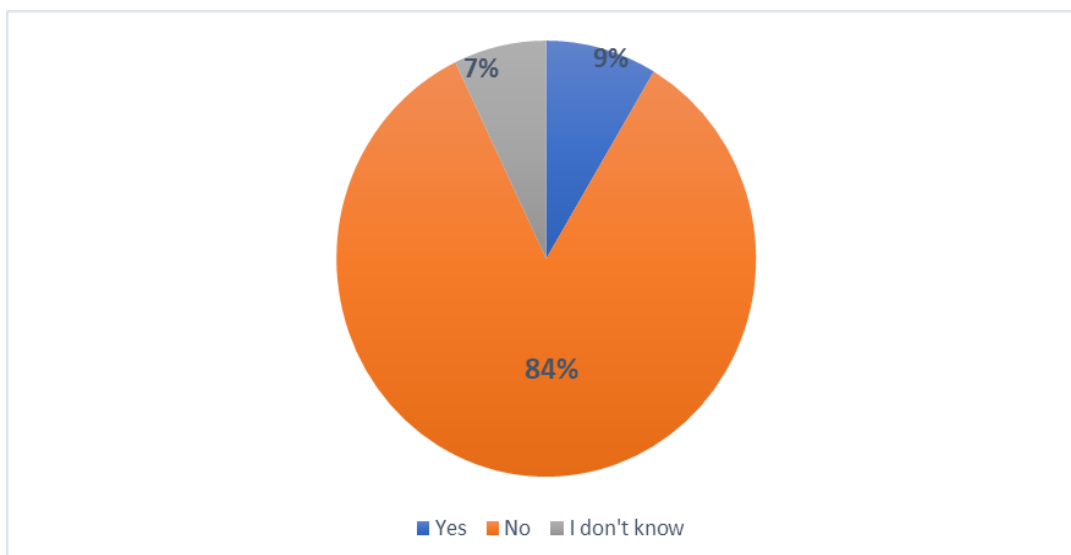
This question asked to the participants to find out specific subjects that young people with migrant background miss out as result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has been impacting these people in almost all social and educational subjects. These specific subjects include practical and vocational skill, information and communication skills, religion, ethics, moral, physical education, learning languages of host countries, social studies, reading, writing and learning literature, etc. According to the participants' answers, the pandemic mostly effected reading and writing (by 40%), learning languages (by 25%) and developing practical and vocational skill (by 25%) and social and exact science (by 15% and 25%) which are mostly taught in schools. This may be due to the closure of the schools and the difficulties of accessing digital platforms and computer tools to attend the classes online and/or as result of bad internet connection and unavailable environment at home. It may be due to the lack school preparation to teach classes online. This question is furthered in the following.

9. According to the research you have carried out, do you think schools were well prepared to handle the learning distance classes?



As mentioned in the previous question, answers given by participants indicate that one of the reasons that the students may miss out the classes and learning is that the schools are not well prepared to teach online. This may be due to the lack of teaching competences with computers via digital platforms.

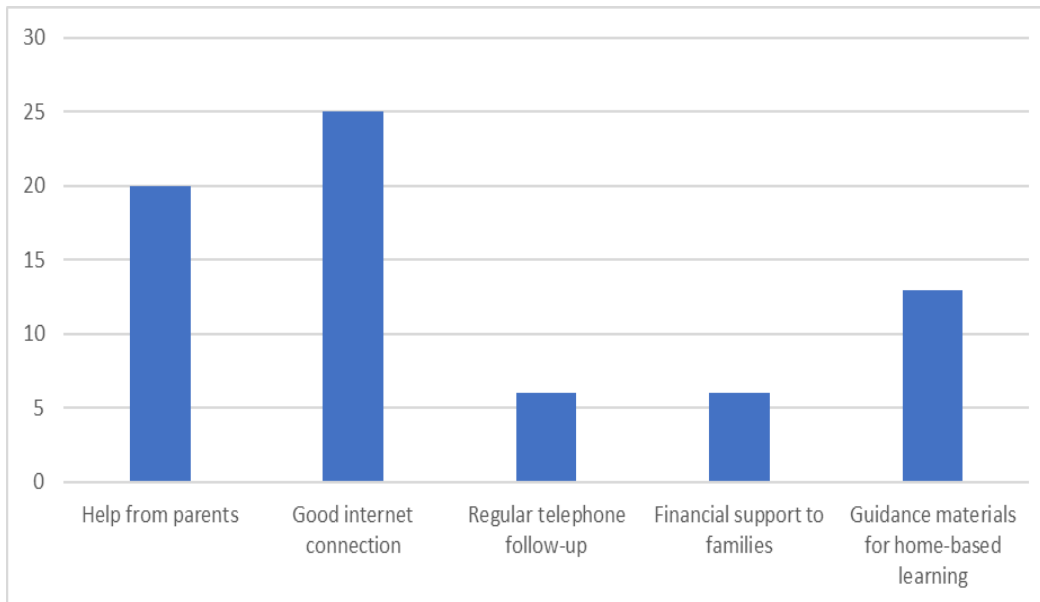
10. In your opinion, were schools enough prepared to manage the most vulnerable groups?



According to the participants, the schools were not well prepared to teach classes to most vulnerable group of students online. As it is pointed in the graphic that most participants

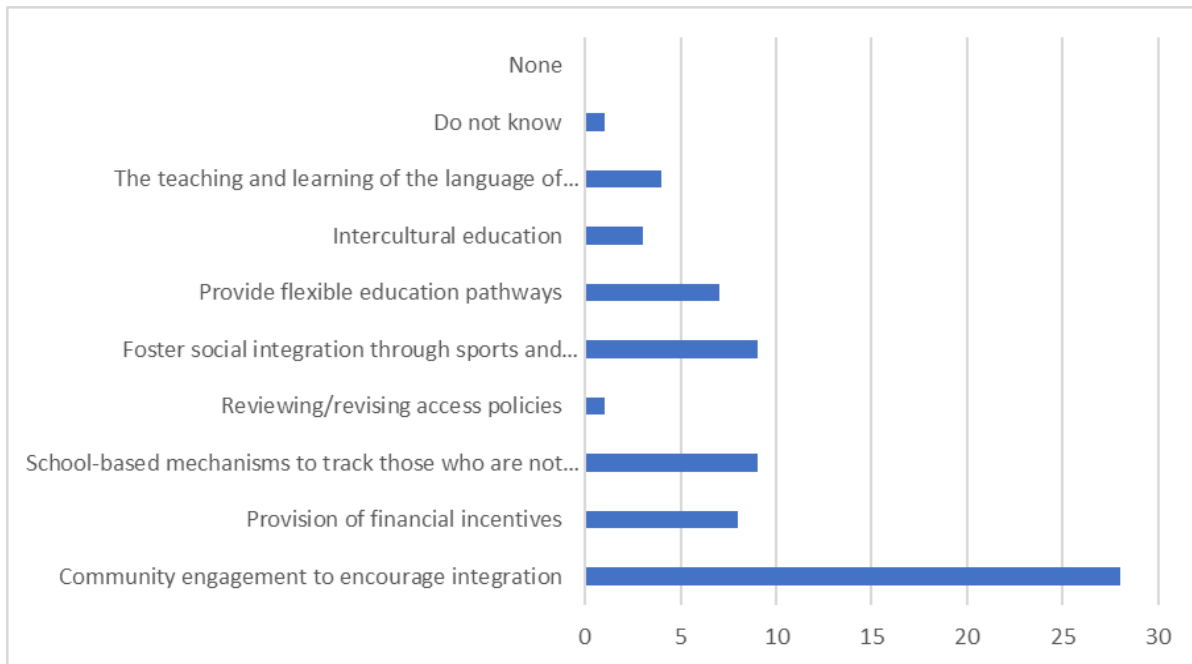
(84%) do not agree that the school were well prepared. This situation might be also because of the lack of financial issue to provide computer tools to the students in need, which is proved in the following questions.

11. What aspect do you think was crucial during the distance learning for the young people with migrant background?



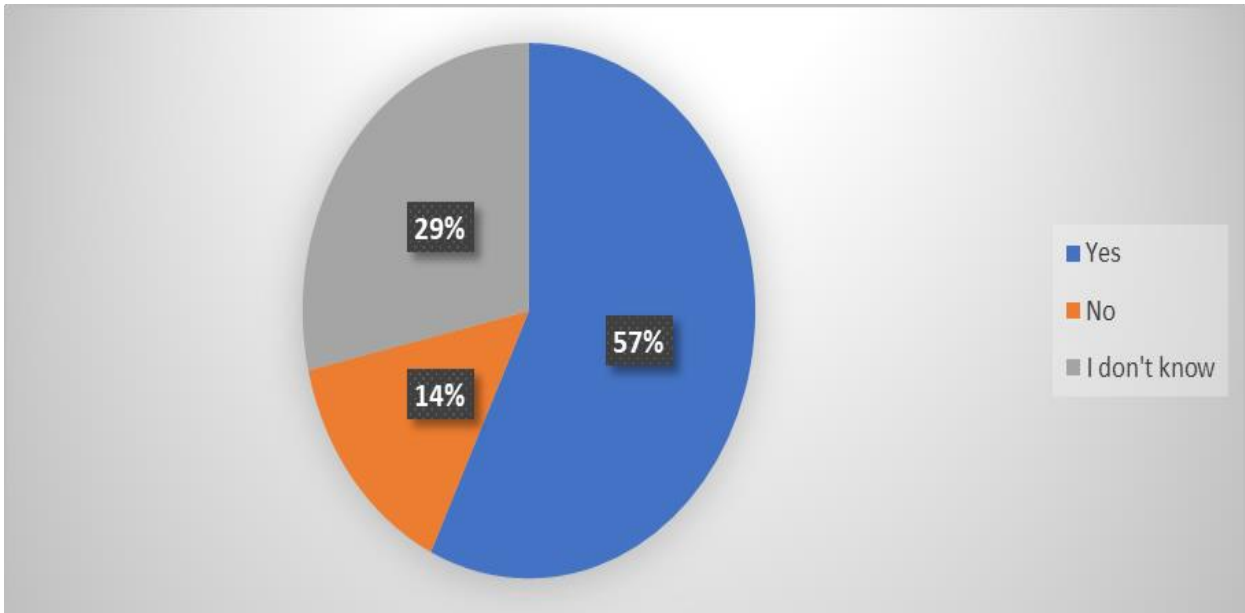
As mentioned in the question 8, 9 and 10, according to the participants, the network connection, computer materials for online learning, not enough help from parents, and financial issues are some of fundamental reasons that did not allowed students to follow classes regularly. It is clearly agreed by participants' answers in the table in which 25% of them found the internet connection, 20% of them found the help from parents and 13% found the computer materials to be crucial for online learning.

12. What sort of measures can be taken to make their integration easier/smoothen after this period?



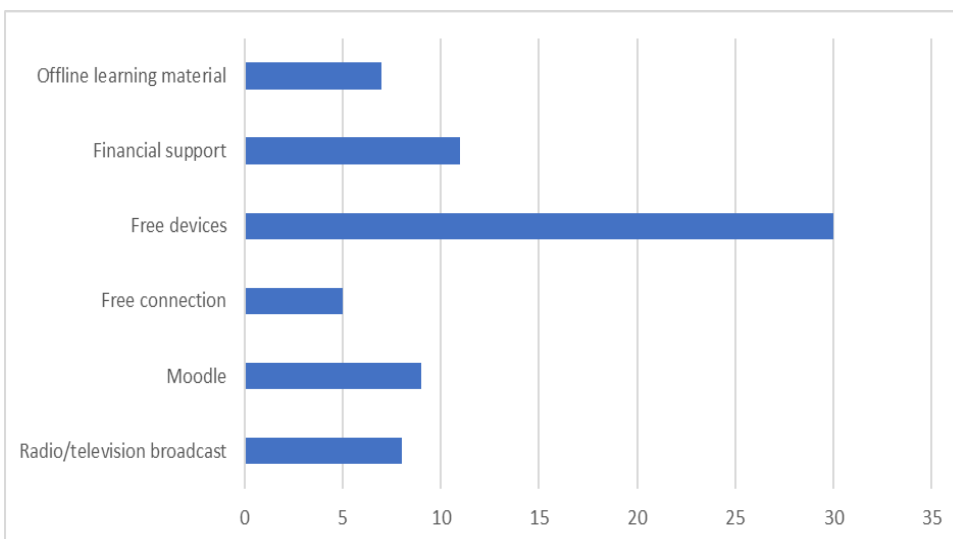
We asked the participants what sort of measures can be taken to facilitate the integration of young people with migrant background after the pandemic. The answers from the participants mostly indicated the community engagement to encourage integration by 30%, fostering social integration through sports and associations by 9% and school-based mechanisms to track those not returning to school by 9%. The answers are mostly about social inclusion of young people with migrant background. This also shows that without social integration, other measures and policies might not work out. Provide flexible education pathways and provision of financial incentives (8%) also appears to be very important.

13. Were there any measures put in place by your country to leave no one behind, during the lockdown period?



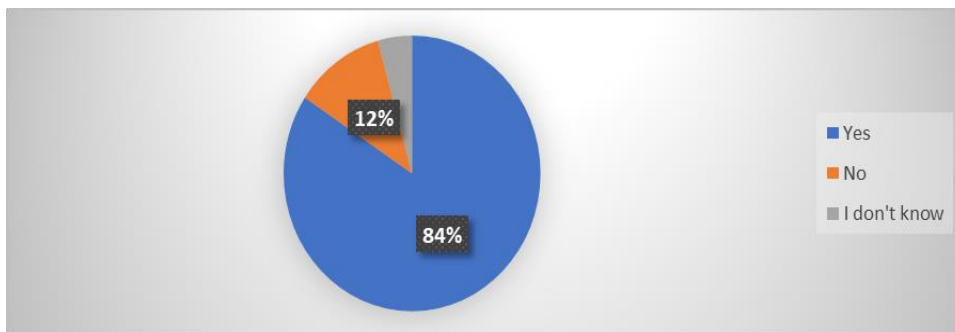
According to the participants where they live, there are some measures taken by authorities not to leave anyone in a difficult situation. While 57% of the participants think some measures are taken to handle the impact of the pandemic on young people with migrant background, however, a significant 14% among them think no measures have been taken to protect these people against the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant among of participants (29%) do not know whether some special measures have taken place or not. This is maybe because there are any news or reports that mentioning kind of special measure or no measures exist either at all.

14. If yes, can you cite one (or more than one) put in place by your country?



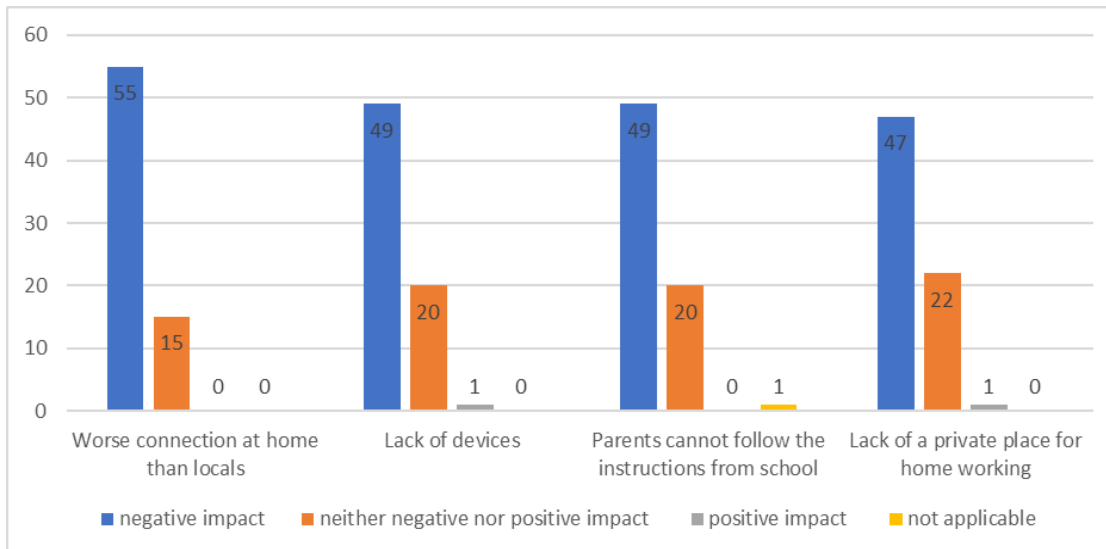
The participants, who think the authorities took some measures to handle the situation of disadvantaged people, mostly agree that the free devices such as computers and other necessary materials for class are provided and the students are financially supported.

15. Do you believe digital tools/remote lessons during the pandemic have influenced the learning of young people with migrant background?



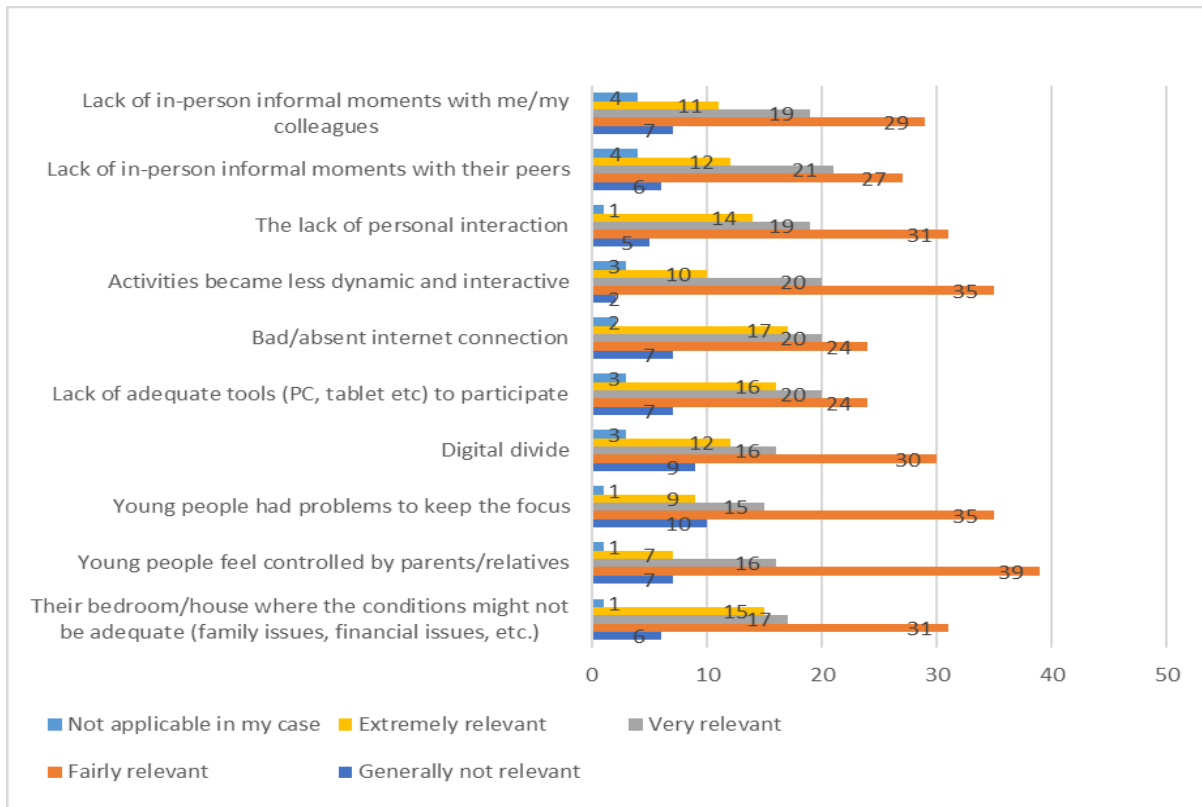
According to the participants (84%), the materials and computer tools have influenced the learning of young people with migrant background during the pandemic. This is whether the tools are provided by the schools and authorities that students had the chance to participate in online classes and activities or any tool/materials. Moreover, 14% of the participants think the materials have not had influenced their learnings, but other reasons have influenced it such as financial reasons, internet connection, and parents help at home, which are asked in the following question.

16. If yes, which of these aspects, in your opinion, have contributed?



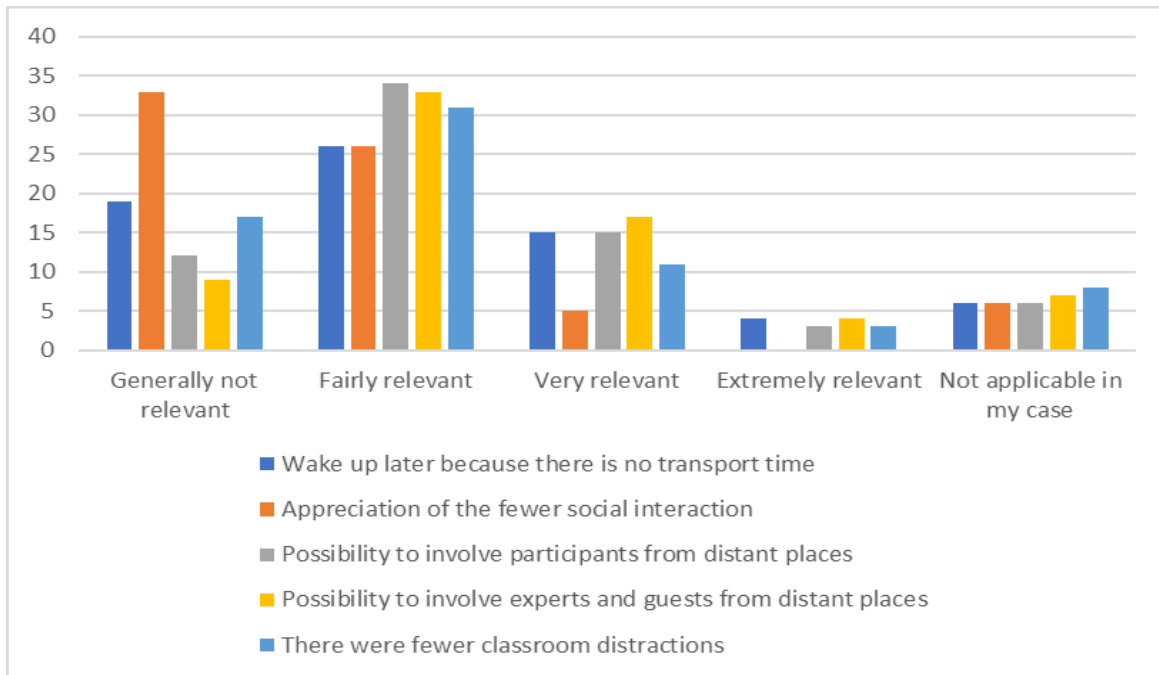
The participants, who agree that the materials and computer tools have influenced the learning for online classes (84% in the previous question), consider; the lack of devices and internet connection and lack of help from parents who usually have no knowledge about the online classes and how to follow the instructions and lack of private place for studying to be among the reasons that mostly influenced the learnings at home very negatively.

17. The elements that had an impact on the participation of young people with migrant background in online classes



This question is asked to find out more specific reasons that have impacted and been impacting the participation of the students in online classes. More specifically, it is not only the material reason which prevents these concerned young people to participate in online classes, but there are also psychological and social reasons that demotivate these young people to participate in classes. These reasons are mostly: young people feeling controlled by parents/relatives, young people have problems to keep the focus, activities became less dynamic and interactive/attractive, the lack of personal interaction, Lack of in-person informal moments with their peers, and lack of in-person informal moments with him/herself and his/her colleagues. These social and psychological reasons are mostly fairly relevant or very relevant. The percentage of all relevant reasons are shown in the graphic above.

18. The elements which had generally a positive impact in the participation of young people with a migration background in online classes?



According to the participants there are also several positive points and advantages for young people in the participation in online classes. These are mostly; waking up later because there is no time spending in the transports, appreciation of the fewer social interaction, possibility to involve participants from distant places who can't come to class, possibility to involve experts and guests from distant places, there were/are fewer classroom distractions. These reasons appear to be fairly relevant positive point in online participation.

Questions and Answers of the interviews

This part consists of five open-ended questions and the answers from the participants. The answers have been analyzed and sometimes rephrased to avoid the complexity and to make coherent between all participants' responses. We kept the original meaning of the answers given by the participants.

1. Have the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your activities? If yes, could you detail it further?

According to the people who took to the organized focus group, the COVID-19 pandemic heavily affected most of the activities that were normally carried out before the

pandemic itself. As researchers, after an initial phase of almost complete suspension of research activities, we then began to do the normal research activity through other means.

In the research activity one can potentially make a big distinction. A first activity is traditionally related to study, to consultation of material inherent to the research being done: monographs, collections, reports, analyses, surveys, etc., are read and studied in one's studies, offices or libraries. In this respect, the pandemic has not distorted the picture much: the work of the scholar is often a solitary work as well.

Instead, the pandemic heavily affected research activity involving contacts, interviews, and questionnaire administration. In this case, given travel restrictions, after the initial suspension phase, all mentioned activities were then directed towards online. Moving these activities online had advantages and disadvantages among which saving time and money to travel to interview the identified person is one of the main advantages. Online interviews, on the other hand, have certainly made it possible to reach even very distant people but have proven to be colder, detached, and too direct to the point: the absence of context, body language, and physical presence certainly constitute the most obvious disadvantages.

At the educational level, classes moved to online modality, which is not ideal for learning. There are no spaces for exchanging knowledge and teachers struggled to adapt to the technological tools that can satisfy an adequate pedagogy. Moreover, all activities had to be adapted and became remote including events such as conferences which in the beginning required a period of adaptation to new platforms.

One participant, who also have a migration background, stressed that “I have followed lessons on the screen of my computer. That means no meetings with other students (about fun or also about exams) or with teachers. The teachers explain faster with students at home. The contacts are directly more formal. The loneliness has grown in this period. The lack of real contacts, of hugs... I lived alone than I meet people outside of my home – during lessons at university, during cultural activities or at the swimming pool. At the beginning of the pandemic, all of these places were closed.”

2. Do you think the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the education and activities of disadvantages people more than citizens in your country? Please explain it.

Yes. Since the access to stable internet connection and technological devices is, in many cases, limited to disadvantaged people and since activities became remote so did their access to online activities also became more difficult. Housing structure can also affect the learning performance. This has probably resulted in an increase in the learning gap between those who have easy access to those resources and those in more vulnerable situation.

Furthermore, COVID-19 impacted the entire population. Of course, it did so selectively. Studies and reports, as well as anecdotal analysis, demonstrate the above. Broadly speaking, two major groups of people can be identified: those whose work could continue to be done online (virtually all office jobs) and those, on the other hand, who required physical presence (health care personnel, to begin with, but also those who were employed in transportation, food distribution, logistics, etc.). While the former group, after a predictable initial settling in phase, easily shifted their workload from presence to online, in the latter case it was completely impossible. The population of migrant origin is in this second group for several reasons, of which the two main ones may be low income and low educational level. And so, to come back to the question, yes, the pandemic has obviously impacted the activities of the more vulnerable and disadvantaged groups compared to citizens/natives. If you then come to schools, you can see how foreign-born students have been more adversely affected. Again, several preliminary studies have already shown how foreign-born students and students paid a greater price during the pandemic for several reasons:

1) to begin with because unlike their schoolmates' parents, theirs were forced to leave home to go to work. This meant that they were away from home and could not follow them during online classes, they were then more likely to become infected and thus sick and die. In addition,

2), foreign-born students are much more likely to live in smaller and more crowded apartments, which does not facilitate concentration in studying and following online classes. This is compounded by

3) the lack of informational tools (computers, tablets, etc.) that are often unavailable in low-income households and

4) the presence of parents socialized in other languages than that of the target country. All these elements lead us to assume that vulnerable people have been more affected by the pandemic than citizens/natives.

On the other hand, COVID-19 turned health into a class privilege, as the high cost of protective masks and medical supplies and the difficulty of acquiring them has further deepened economic inequalities. For example, an average family of 5 members, with two computers at home, faces the difficulty that not all family members will be able to perform 100% of their daily study and work activities.

3. Do you think the COVID-19 hardened the work of professionals such as teacher, trainers, young workers to delivery service, such as giving education and making activities, to disadvantaged people?

Yes, of course. As mentioned before, during the pandemic many activities were either suspended or moved online. The pandemic made life more complicated for people with low income and low educational level as people of migrant origin are. After an initial adjustment phase, strategies were then introduced to mitigate the negative effects on this type of population. Here in Belgium, a series of regulatory acts made it possible to overcome some obstacles such as, for example, the loss of jobs particularly in the restaurant sector, heavily affected by the pandemic and moreover with a high concentration of people of foreign origin. Associations and socially conscious businesses also contributed financial support (by donating older computers) so that even students without them could take classes online. However, and despite both the intervention of the government in its various federal articulations and the intervention of businesses and associations, it is a fact that the pandemic has made it very difficult if not impossible to guarantee several services such as, for example, the opening of youth, training centers and schools themselves. For some foreign-born male and female students, the school and its cafeteria often represented an opportunity to have a decent and complete meal throughout the day. With the closure of the school during the pandemic, this opportunity was effectively cancelled.

The right to education has been one of the most vulnerable rights during the pandemic caused by COVID-19, with serious consequences for learning, development and access to educational opportunities. The difficulty for teachers is to develop pedagogical tools that can be equally accessible to all. Many disadvantaged people do not have full access to the internet and do not have the technological tools to meet the challenge of not being able to attend school face-to-face. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may be more vulnerable in the sense

that they may have less academic support from parents. It is difficult to help a child in a subject that even the parent does not understand.

4. Do you think it is possible to do the activities and education with disadvantage people via digital platforms? if yes, could you please explain it further.

It is possible. But some of the limitations and obstacles mentioned earlier must be taken into consideration. Some of the obstacles and limitations can be resolved. For example, schools can strengthen teachers' skills when it comes to delivering lessons through digital platforms. As much as the school is a bureaucratic elephant, and as much as policy competencies on education here in Belgium are distributed at the language community level, which complicates federal-scale interventions, something has been done and more can be done. The same can be said about centers like Actiris or CPAS: some activities can be moved online without major problems. On others, such as crowded housing or language literacy for parents of foreign students, there is little that can be done except. It also is possible as long as they have access to the proper materials and orientation on how to use the necessary digital tools. Ideally a hybrid learning system would work better as the online distance learning could be combined with in-person guiding.

All the pupils/students need a personal computer with good net's connection. If not, the institution must be able to provide computers to all of them. They need to share a good level in a common language (speaking and writing). They need to have the habits to work with a computer. Then, the work on computer, with distance, it's clearly better than nothing with people having yet a computer and a good connection and some skills.

One important aim of school is to give same chances to all students: it reduces inequalities. It's not the case for the distance teaching. You need to have a good level of independence to read, to study, to organize you, to master digital skills and money for the computer. Then, complementary, distance teaching can be great, but not as the main route of teaching.

5. Do you think there are solutions in order to cope the impact of COVID-19 on disadvantages people's education and activities?

Furthermore, this requires real planning and allocation of public funds to support the area of education. For example, extracurricular school accompaniment programs could be implemented for disadvantaged people by teachers and trainers in the schools themselves, by dedicating additional hours per week to reinforcement of knowledge. It is also possible to organize accompaniment programs aimed at supporting students from difficult backgrounds, dealing with issues of skills development, educational reinforcement, access to the school library, creating spaces for interaction, collaboration with families for the development of extracurricular activities, and the intervention of socio-educational mediators, providing support from psychology professionals to accompany them during this period of transition. Offering online courses for teachers, focusing on the development and enhancement of digital skills in the context of virtual distance education. There is a need to implement a program of assistance in terms of training, counseling, and resourcing for teachers to work with different distance education formats, including training in competencies and methodologies for the educational use of technology and other remote teaching and learning platforms.

Support to maintain and deepen advances in methodological innovation and the implementation of alternative forms of teaching, incorporating an opening of the curriculum towards play and contextualizing the situation experienced, and in educational strategies for the acceleration and recovery of learning of students who have been most affected during the pandemic.

Tutoring programs as a complement to the standard curriculum could be an alternative to try to fill the learning gap that was deepened by the pandemic. The educational system should be more flexible and adjust to the needs of those who were more impacted by the effects of the pandemic in terms of education.

Some solutions are more easily to implement . On others we need policies of labor, housing, migrant integration, urban planning and others that make potential solutions difficult to implement, at least in the short time of incumbent governments. It should certainly be said that all European governments, and the Belgian one is no exception, have found themselves totally displaced by a pandemic phenomenon, a phenomenon of such a magnitude that it was almost impossible to plan and introduce actions from the moment of its emergence in March 2020. Slowly, even here in Belgium, it was then possible to identify solutions mentioned above, the structural capacity of which, however, will have to be demonstrated in the years to come.

Chapter VII: Recommendations

7.1 Recommendation for Teachers

According to the research findings, it can be provided a list of recommendations that will be useful throughout the educational community to be better prepared in future similar situations.

- Organization and development of communication channels between the school administration, parents, teachers and students.
- Training of teachers in new technologies and the design of e-learning.
- Modernization of school infrastructure (equipment, digitization of functions).
- System of psychological support, counseling and guidance of students, parents and teachers.
- Financial support for students and teachers for the purchase of distance education equipment and high-speed internet lines.
- Familiarize students with new technologies and educational software by increasing IT class hours to reduce the digital divide.
- Curriculum reshaping and clear guidelines for online teaching.
- Recruitment of specialized and appropriately trained staff for the education and support of immigrant students.
- Promoting good practices, disseminating results, lifelong learning and informing teachers and parents in school crisis management.
- Organization of actions for social inclusion and rapid integration of immigrant students in the school environment.

7.2 Recommendation for Migrant Associations

Based on the previous analysis, we can mention some basic instructions - recommendations that will be useful for third sector organizations and associations to be better prepared to deal with similar situations in the future.

- A census of all associations in the area with respect to their areas of competence so that they can help each other and communicate.
- Training association members in new technologies and e-learning design.
- Psychological support, counseling and guidance system for members and families.
- Financial support from administrations to help with due expenses, food, rent and devices.
- Familiarization of students with new technologies and educational software, increasing computer-based teaching hours to reduce the digital divide.
- Promotion of good practices, dissemination of results, ongoing training of members
- Creating moments of digital support and listening.
- Investing in education and training to counter both soaring unemployment and the inevitable loss of jobs generated by the decarbonization of entire parts of the national economy.
- Focus on the most important basics.
- Particularly the first language and mathematics. In these subjects, teaching should be customized with the help of a software.
- Computational thinking: Pupils learn to abstractly present precise facts in a model in order to represent them later with the help of algorithms and data (computational thinking). This ability is crucial for understanding how computers and digitized processes work.
- Computing in everyday life: Everyday applications, in particular the use of the Office package, should not be specifically taught. Computer science must be regarded as a transversal competence, which will be used and taught in various subjects.
- Supporting autonomous progress
- Support students. Teachers no longer need to possess more extensive knowledge in all subjects than pupils. The appropriate handling of digitization in teaching requires a change of mindset within the teaching staff.

- External competences: Cooperation between private companies and the school system would allow IT to be quickly integrated into education. In other words, classrooms must be opened up! A teacher should not be the only one to cover all the objectives of the curriculum.
- Don't forget general skills: Individual and social skills are necessary to enable young people to make choices throughout their lives. Furthermore, human beings are superior to computers in social and contextual matters.

7.3 Recommendation for Trainers

Based on an OECD report <https://www.oecd.org/education/lessons-for-education-from-covid-19-0a530888-en.htm> , but also on our experience as a reception and support center for migrants, since Red Incola is an Integral Center recognized as such by the regional government of Castilla y León (Spain), and in our programs we have been supporting about 5000 people per year, we can summarize in these recommendations:

Establish from the educational centers strong relationships with families, employers and the community, and involve these actors in the educational process of students. This will help education systems to link the different environments in which students learn and thus strengthen more personalized teaching-learning approaches.

In this respect, the contribution that trainers can make is very important.

The OECD recommends offering trainers training opportunities which allow them to improve their skills and knowledge, especially digital, as well as to strengthen their resilience to changing contexts. To achieve the above, the report proposes these recommendations, based on actions that some countries are already taking.

- Empower trainers to become drivers of their own training. Approaches that position teachers as drivers of their own learning develop a sense of leadership that helps strengthen their resilience. "This does not mean leaving educators to their own devices, but rather creating the conditions in which they understand their own development goals, can select from a range of relevant quality learning opportunities, and have access to the resources and support mechanisms needed to make the most of them," notes the

OECD, which also highlights the importance of assessing teacher training to take account of their needs.

- Provide educators with tools that respond to their specific needs and contexts. Education policymakers should implement more personalized approaches to teacher training, in active collaboration with educational institutions. To respond to teacher training needs, self-evaluation tools should be developed and systematized, the agency proposes.
- Encourage collaborative relationships among educators, teachers and trainers. International evidence indicates that professional learning opportunities designed around collaboration with other professionals can be particularly effective in improving teaching skills and resilience, according to the OECD.
- Attempt, where possible, to provide all staff working with working cell phones or instant messaging programs (WhatsApp) linked to practitioners' numbers. Communication by this means was the most effective during the confinement, and some of the trainers stated that they did not have the capacity to respond from their personal phones to all the requests/demands that came to them from the people they attended.
- Invest more in young people access to new technologies and software, but also in citizens in general, in the education in NNT.
- Since most of our participants come from vulnerable positions, invest more in general in Mental Health, more over after the pandemic situation, that allow students to not quiz and continue improving in their education.

7.4 Recommendation for Youth Workers

Specific proposals that were discussed and agreed during the focus group were:

- There should be a national platform for online training provided by the state, centralized, because platforms such as Zoom, or Meet are not enough and it is challenging for us and for the young people to use many different tools and systems.
- There should be more communication between schools, social services, and youth centers.
- There should be a masterplan to face pandemic situations and other similar emergencies: it is not efficient to create solutions only once the problem has arrived.

- Even in pandemic context, should be given priority to children and young people to have space and moments to socialize with peers and professionals (youth workers, teachers etc.) because face to face activities cannot be replaced by online training when the centre of the activity is the social development of youth young people.

Proposals coming from the statistical analysis and from the overall research are:

- There should be a specific focus on mental well-being of young people, providing them with structured support able to help them in this or in other emergencies.
- Use of online training methodologies can be useful only when complemented with in-person activities, especially when working with young people with less cultural resources such as the YPMB: online methods can be used in specific circumstances, but the relation must be built through in-person activities, which can be then complemented with online activities.
- A stronger cooperation among NGOs and local services working with YPMB should be foreseen. In this extent, a census of youth centers, associations, libraries, social services etc. in the area should be developed.
- Organizations should receive a specific training on online tools and methodologies, especially to train them in the creation of training modules design using online tools in dual/blended mode.
- Career guidance, psychological help and orientation in the local community should be provided to families coming from abroad or with a background of migration.
- Mapping the exact needs of YPMB should be implemented in each local community to be able to design an intervention adequate and efficient to fulfill practical needs, including internet connection and digital tools.
- Provide youth centers with technological devices, internet connection and specific training provided to the youth workers.
- Implement training activities on the use of online and computer tools in the afternoon activities: this would be important for youth workers to get used on using those tools with young people, and for young people to be trained also in informal and non-formal settings on the use of computer and ICT tools.

7.5 Recommendation for Future policies

In general, the following recommendations can be made to cope with the impact of COVID-19 on education and activities of the disadvantaged people:

- With schools closed, governments should help all children to reach at least minimal resources (a laptop or other suitable device and a stable internet connection) to access online learning. For instance, providing good materials such as computer and necessary tools and connection; organizing special classes adapted for their specific levels in language/ or in native language to learn digital skills.
- Disadvantaged students should be given access to additional one-on-one or small group classes to reduce the impact of school closures. Additional lessons that need to be provided to reduce the impact of being disadvantaged on learning may be available both online and when school restrictions are relaxed. For example, hiring specific teachers with special competences to organize these classes and organizing supports for people with specialization (like psychologist, nurses) and supports for peer-to-peer.
- It is vital to ensure that all students, equally, have access to high-quality content. Therefore, teachers should be trained to be able them to provide online content to students. Guidance and training for teachers online can help make provisioning more consistent across schools. Organizing special classes adapted for pupils with difficulties, in small group or individual.
- Make-up or support classes should be provided alongside normal classes when schools return to normal, or for children with lesser backgrounds during the summer months. Because disadvantaged students are likely to lag behind their advantaged friends in school closures.
- COVID-19 has shown how inadequate the liberal capitalist super-states are in meeting the negative effects of the pandemic, primarily on health. Therefore, countries should review their state systems by seeing how necessary and beneficial the social state understanding and practices are.
- Authorities should ensure that the internet, which has become the main channel of communication and inevitably carries over all public and social activities, is accessible to every citizen. Thus, every citizen will have the opportunity to access public services such as education under equal conditions.

- Educational institutions should take initiatives in cooperation with other public institutions to identify the access problems of disadvantaged and disabled individuals to information technologies and to meet these needs.

Conclusion

COVID-19 shook economic and social life unexpectedly and deeply affected public health both mentally and physically. Billions of people around the world have been confined to their homes and economic and social activities have come to a standstill in some sectors. Education has been one of the most impacted sectors in this case. The pandemic made home-schooling almost mandatory. With school closure and interruption of normal teaching, the one's home has become the alternative way of teaching. In order to maintain educational activities at home, students need to possess some digital materials such as computers and electronic tools as well as digital skills and competencies.

In this context, the environment at home is expected to be socially, economically, and pedagogically suitable for the school program to be sustained to some extent. In order for the child to continue his/her normal program at home through distance education, computer and other information technology should be appropriate at home, there should be a suitable quiet room for him/her to follow online lessons, and the parent should always be supportive, especially in pre-school education. It is clear that there are some difficulties in certain families to meet all these conditions. Because the economic and social situations of families are not the same, the amount of time devoted to teaching, parents' non-cognitive skills, resources (for example, not everyone will have a kit to access the best online material), as well as the amount of information, are not the same. As a result, human capital disparity causes inequality. Moreover, home-schooling has come as a huge shock not only to parents' productivity but also to children's social life and learning. Online teaching has been practiced with untested and unprecedented intensity.

Most young people with a migrant background are included in this disadvantaged category. These young people are mostly living in crowded families and are financially unable to afford a computer and electronic tools to attend online educational activities. According to the surveys and interviews we have conducted, most participants agree with this statement.

It is clear that controlling the impacts of the pandemic on various sectors lead to failure and it has led to long-term damages for both students and society. The increase in learning poverty may prevent the entire generation from reaching their true potential. Students who are forced to drop out due to economic and social reasons and experience a significant decline in the education of disadvantaged people may experience lower lifetime productivity and gains. Inequality may increase because these effects will most likely be greater for students from poor

and marginalized households such as the ones from migrant families. Children who most need education to escape poverty will be most likely to be deprived of it by the crisis. This decline in economic expectations may not only lower education and activities but also lead to an increase in criminal activities and risky behaviors among young people with a migrant background. It is stressed in the OECD report of International Migration Outlook (2020 and 2021) and the World Bank Report Education (May 2020) that in many low- and middle-income families, the combination of youthful overpopulation and low expectations could perpetuate the vicious cycle of low human capital, poverty, and inequality among the most disadvantaged in the current student body.

According to our research, young people with a migrant background have faced and might face several difficulties in their education and social activities across Europe. Many of these young people have already faced some financial difficulties in order to continue their education via online digital platforms since March 2020. The most essential difficulties are not financial, but rather point such as the adaptability of the online participation, home environment, or a quiet place for attending and listening to the classes and digital competencies. This is mostly the case for every student but not for the ones who are already familiar with digital technologies and computer skills. Many of these young with a migrant background are not familiar with digital competencies. Therefore, digital competencies have become very crucial for every student since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

T. Young people with a migrant background are often living with large families which makes it difficult for them to have a single room at home. They usually share one room with two or three members of the family. It becomes a more complex situation if all, who share the same room, need to participate in online classes. At this point, internet connection also becomes problematic when all members of the family share the need to connect to the Wi-fi at the same time. This makes, following online classes very difficult. This situation may also demotivate these students to participate to the lessons. Education in the 21st century definitely requires technology and a very good internet connection. All students need digital technology to learn outside of school. In this context, what schools, youth and training centers, and migration associations need to do is open the boundaries of out-of-school learning by ensuring that all students with a migrant background have access to the technology and internet they need. Of course, students in some school districts currently do not have these opportunities because school districts often do not have a strong financial income to do so. Therefore, state and local authorities should meet this need.

In conclusion, the global lockdown of educational institutions is causing major disruptions to students' learning and disrupting internal evaluations. Then, what can be done to overcome these problems? How these resources are used and how to target particularly affected children is an open question. However, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the how strong the need to have a backup system is for school districts. This system will allow schools to transition seamlessly to online education during this period of closure.

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Annexes

Annex A: DO-IT questionnaire for Teachers

DEMOGRAPHIC

1. Age

2. Gender

F / M / Other / Prefer not to say

3. Country where you live:

Belgium,

Greece,

Italy,

Spain

4. Do you work in the public sector?

Yes / no

5. In which percentage migrant students are the beneficiaries of your job?

- a. Not at all
- b. Less than 25%
- c. More than 25% but less than 50%
- d. About half of the young people
- e. More than 50% but less than 75%
- f. More than 75% but not all of the young people
- g. All of the young people
- h. Do not know

6. How old are the majority of your students?

- a. <10 years old
- b. 10-14 years old
- c. 15-17 years old
- d. 18-24 years old
- e. 25-30 years old
- f. >30

7. Who did propose you the questionnaire?

THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 - ASSESSMENT OF CHANGES

To what extent you agree with this sentence:

8. How do you think the pandemic influenced in the motivation of the migrant students you work with?

Options:

	Less motivated than local	Similar motivation than local students	More motivated than local	fairly positively	very positively
Before the pandemic in general migrant students were					
During the lockdown periods					
In the “new reality”					

9. Did you notice an increase of dropout in migrant students after COVID-19? (yes, no, I don't know)

10. In your opinion, the increase of digital tools made from March 2020, affected the performance of migrant students? In which way? (yes, not, and if yes, they had a worse performance than locals, or better)

11. If yes, which of these aspects in your opinion contributed?

	Negative impact		neither negative nor positive impact		Positive impact	Not applicable

Worse connection at home than locals						
Lack of devices						
Parent cannot follow the instructions from school						
Lack of a private place for home working						

12. Which of the following elements had generally a **negative impact** in the participation of young people with a migration background in your experience?

	Generally, not relevant	Fairly relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant	Not applicable in my case
Activities in presence					
Young people being afraid of					

catching COVID-19					
Young people had to take care of a cared one					
Loss of connection after the lockdown					
Loss of motivations due to the new conditions to participate (wearing mask, personal distance etc)					
The place of the activities is not able to comply with the COVID- 19 regulations					
The activities with all restrictions become less					

attractive to them					
Other (please specify)					
	Generally, not relevant	Fairly relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant	Not applicable in my case
Online activities					
Young people had to participate in the sessions from their bedroom/house where the conditions might not be adequate (family issues, financial issues, etc.)					
Young people feeling controlled by parents/relatives					
Young people had problems to					

keep the focus					
Digital divide					
Lack of adequate tools (PC, tablet etc) to participate					
Bad/absent internet connection					
Activities became less dynamic and interactive					
The lack of personal interaction					
Lack of in-person informal moments with their peers					
Lack of in-person informal moments					

with me/my colleagues					
Other, please specify					

13. On the contrary, which of the following elements had generally a positive impact in the participation of young people with a migration background in your experience?

	Generally, not relevant	Fairly relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant	Not applicable in my case
Activities in person					
They felt lonely and wanted to have some moment of interaction					
The overall offer of training opportunities in our community decreased thus they come to us					

Online activities					
Wake up later because there is no transport time					
Appreciation of the fewer social interaction					
Possibility to involve participants from distant places					
Possibility to involve experts and guests from distant places					
There were fewer classroom distractions					
Other, please specify					

14. Have you found any difficulties in the practice of teaching during the pandemic?

Yes/No

15. Based on your experience, how effective have distance-learning strategies (online, television, radio, take home packages, or other) been in maintaining or advancing the levels of learning?

Very Effective/Fairly Effective/ Not Effective/Do not know

16. Do you think that the learning of migrant students has been more difficult than the native one?

Yes/No

If yes, Were there certain subjects in which they had more difficulties? (Please select one, or more than one)

- a) Reading, writing, and literature
- b) Mathematics
- c) Natural sciences
- d) Social studies
- e) Second or other languages
- f) Physical education and health
- g) Arts
- h) Religion/ ethics/ moral education
- i) Information and communication technologies (ICT) o Technology;
- j) Practical and vocational skills
- k) Other
- l) Do not know

17. How many migrant students approximately dropped out?

- a) less than 25%
- b) More than 25% but less than 50%
- c) About half of the students
- d) More than 50% but less than 75%
- e) More than 75% but not all of the students
- f) All of the students
- g) Do not know
- h) Not applicable

18. Have you had a (constant) exchange of opinion with youth migrants' parents?

Yes/No/rarely

19. What measures have been taken to support parents of migrant students?

- a) Emergency childcare services
- b) Financial support to families
- c) Guidance materials for home-based learning
- d) Meals/food rations to families of students
- e) Psychosocial counseling services for children

f) Regular telephone follow-up

g) no measures

h) other (please specify)

THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 - TOOLS AND METHODS

20. Have you ever used digital tools/remote lessons during the pandemic?

Yes/No

If yes, Which one ? _____

21. Do you believe that they have affected your teaching somehow?

Yes/No/ I don't know

22. Do you believe they have influenced the learning of migrant students?

Yes/No/I don't know

23. Have you had any students (young migrants) who were not able to take distance learning?

Yes/No

If yes, Why?

a) Bad Connection.

b) Lack of devices

c) Financial restrictions

d) Other (Please specify)

24. Which measures have been taken to facilitate access of students to online distance learning/ have been taken to ensure the inclusion of youth migrants (vulnerable population):
- a) Improved access to infrastructure for learners in remote areas and in urban high-density areas
 - b) Design of learning materials for speakers of minority languages
 - c) Subsidized devices for access
 - d) None
 - e) Don't know
 - f) Other (Please Specify)

25. Was it the first time you used remote learning software?

Yes/No

26. Will you continue to use them after the pandemic?

Yes/No/I don't know

27. How much time did you take to prepare an online lesson?

Same/More/Less

28. Have you received any kind of help from your country/municipality/schools/institutions?

Yes/No

Annex B: DO-IT questionnaire for Migrant Association Members

DEMOGRAPHIC

6 Age

7 Gender

F / M / Other / Prefer not to say

8 Country where you live:

Belgium, Greece, Italy, Spain

9 Do you have a migration background?

Yes / No

10 If yes, from which country?

11 Name of the association you belong to

12 How old are the majority of your beneficiaries?

- a. <10 years old
- b. 10-14 years old
- c. 15-17 years old
- d. 18-24 years old
- e. 25-30 years old
- f. <30

13 Who did propose you the questionnaires?

THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 - ASSESSMENT OF CHANGES

14 How do you think the pandemic influenced young people you work with?

Options:

	very negatively	fairly negatively	neither positively neither negatively	fairly positively	very positively
In their education					
In their mental well- being					
In their physical well-being					
In their knowledge of the local language					
In their social inclusion					
In their primary needs					

15 Since March 2020, in which way the following activities with young people with migration background have changed?

	very much decreased	fairly decreased	neither decreased neither increased	fairly increased	very increased	Not applicable
Mentoring activities						
In presence work						
Online work						
Dual mode (mixed programme, partly in presence, partly online)						

16 Which of the following elements had generally a **negative impact** in the participation of young people with a migration background in your experience?

	Generally, not relevant	Fairly relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant	Not applicable in my case
Activities in presence					

Young people being afraid of catching COVID-19					
Young people had to take care of a cared one					
Loss of connection after the lockdown					
Loss of motivations due to the new conditions to participate (wearing mask, personal distance etc)					
The place of the activities is not able to comply with the COVID-19 regulations					

The activities with all restrictions become less attractive to them					
Other (please specify)					
	Generally, not relevant	Fairly relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant	Not applicable in my case
Online activities					
Young people had to participate in the sessions from their bedroom/house where the conditions might not be adequate (family issues, financial issues, etc.)					
Young people feeling controlled by					

parents/relatives					
Young people had problems to keep the focus					
Digital divide					
Lack of adequate tools (PC, tablet etc) to participate					
Bad/absent internet connection					
Activities became less dynamic and interactive					
The lack of personal interaction					
Lack of in-person informal moments with their peers					

Lack of in-person informal moments with me/my colleagues					
Other, please specify					

17 On the contrary, which of the following elements had generally a **positive** impact in the participation of young people with a migration background in your experience?

	Generally, not relevant	Fairly relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant	Not applicable in my case
Activities in person					
They felt lonely and wanted to have some moment of interaction					
The overall offer of training opportunities in our					

community decreased, thus they came to us					
It was a good “excuse” to go out from home					
Fewer possibilities to get distracted					
Other, please specify					
Online activities					
Wake up later because there is no transport time					
Appreciation of the fewer social interaction					
Possibility to involve participants from distant places					

Possibility to involve experts and guests from distant places					
There were fewer classroom distractions					
Other, please specify					

THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 - TOOLS AND METHODS

18 Did it take you more or less time to prepare an online lesson than a traditional one? More / Less / Same

19 Before the pandemic, were you aware of the various tools for distant learning during the pandemic? (Moodle, platform, prepared lessons, best practices, etc.)

20 Did you start using tools and methods for distant learning that you didn't use before? Yes / No

If yes, which ones?

21 Will you continue to use online tools and methods in the future? Yes / No / Do not know

22 If yes, which ones?

23 Did you receive any kind of help from your country/municipality/organization for implementing distant learning activities?

Yes / No

24 If yes, which ones?

25 In the future what measures would help you in the carrying out of remote lessons?

- i. Training/courses about online teaching
- j. Better guidelines from education authorities
- k. Access to best practices
- l. Other

Please specify:

Annex C: DO-IT questionnaire for Trainers

DEMOGRAPHIC

1. Age

2. Gender

F / M / Other / Prefer not to say

3. Country where you live:

Belgium, Greece, Italy, Spain

4. Where do you work?

Intergovernmental organization / NGO / Other, Please specify:

5. Who did propose you the questionnaires?

6. Did you work constantly in this last pandemic year (from March 2020 to March 2021)?

Yes / No

If no, in which percentage of time did you work?

- a. Less than 25% of the time
- b. More than 25% but less than 50%
- c. About half of the time
- d. More than 50% but less than 75%
- e. More than 75% but not all of the time

7. What percentage of your students are migrants?

- a. Not at all
- b. Less than 25%
- c. More than 25% but less than 50%
- d. More than 50% but less than 75%
- e. More than 75% but not all of them
- f. All of the young people
- g. Do not know

8. How old are the majority of your beneficiaries?

- a. 15-17 years old
- b. 18-24 years old

- c. 25-30 years old
- d. >30

9. What kind of training do you conduct?

- a. Cultural orientation
- b. Language or literacy
- c. Pre-employment orientation
- d. Vocational or skills
- e. Financial literacy
- f. Other

Please specify:

THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 - ASSESSMENT OF CHANGES

10. How did you carry out the training during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- a. Entirely online
- b. Entirely in presence in accordance with the COVID-19 regulations of your country
- c. In dual mode (half in presence half online)
- d. The training was discontinued

Please answer these questions if you carried out the training entirely in presence or in dual mode.

-Regarding in presence training:

11. Did you see a decline in the number of participants?

Yes / No

If yes, what do you think were the reasons for the lower attendance?

- a. Students being afraid of catching COVID-19
- b. Students not being able to comply with the COVID-19 regulations (for instance not being able to buy a mask)
- c. Students had to take care of an ill relative
- d. Other

Please specify:

12. Did you experience any difficulties during the training?

Yes / No

If yes, what difficulties did you face?

- a. The place where the training took place not being able to comply with the COVID-19 regulations
- b. Increased working hours
- c. Increased stress level both from your and the students side
- d. Personal concerns (such as catching COVID-19)
- e. Other

Please specify:

13. Do you think the training facility ensured the safe conduct of activities during the pandemic?

- a. Enforced mask wearing rules: Yes / No
- b. Cleaning and sanitization: Yes / No

- c. Separated classes to minimize personal interaction between different groups:
Yes / No

Please answer these questions if you carried out the training entirely online or in dual mode.

-Regarding online training:

14. Did you see a decline in the number of participants?

Yes / No

If yes, what do you think was the reason for the lower attendance?

- a. Students not having access to internet / devices enabling distance learning
- b. Loss of motivation due to the loss of real interpersonal interaction
- c. Having troubles with self-study
- d. Other

Please specify:

15. What do you think posed the biggest problem for your students in the course of their studies?

- a. Not having access to internet / devices enabling distance learning
- b. The use of digital tools
- c. Time management
- d. Self-study
- e. At home not having appropriate conditions for studying (family issues, financial issues, etc.)
- f. Not having the necessary tools at home (in case of vocational and skills training)
- g. Other

Please specify:

16. Did you experience any difficulties during the training?

Yes / No

If yes, what difficulties did you face?

- a. Difficulty in the communication with the students
- b. Learning the use of distance learning instruments
- c. Increased working hours
- d. Increased stress level from both you and your students side
- E. Your digital skills were lower than your students´
- e. Other

Please specify:

17. If students did not have access to internet / devices enabling distance learning what other ways did you use to reach them?

- a. Sending learning materials through post
- b. Holding lessons on the telephone
- c. Radio/Television broadcasts of lectures
- d. None
- e. Other

Please specify:

18. Did any of your students decide to discontinue their training?

Yes / No

If yes, how many students decided so?

- a. Less than 25%
- b. More than 25% but less than 50%
- c. About half of the students
- d. More than 50% but less than 75%
- e. More than 75% but not all of the students
- f. All of the students
- g. Do not know

19. What outreach/support measures do you think can encourage the return to training?

- a. Community engagement to encourage the return to training
- b. Effective communication about the importance and availability of the training
- c. Provision of financial incentives
- d. Reviewing/revising access policies
- e. Do not know
- f. None
- g. Other

Please specify:

20. Do you think that by the end of the course the students could attain the same skill level as other students that you taught before the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes / No / Depends

If no, do you or your organization plan on providing them with further lessons?

Yes / No / Do not know

21. Did you conduct any trainings regarding COVID-19?

Yes / No / Do not know

If yes, what were your trainings about?

- a. Importance of testing and vaccination
- b. Health and safety
- c. Hygiene
- d. Other

Please specify:

THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 - TOOLS AND METHODS

22. Have you ever used digital tools/remote lessons during the pandemic?

Yes / No

If yes, which one?

Please only continue the questionnaire if you used digital tools/remote lessons during the pandemic.

23. Based on your experience, how effective were distance-learning strategies in maintaining or advancing the levels of learning?

Very Effective / Fairly Effective / Not Effective / Do not know

24. Do you believe that they affected your teaching in a positive or negative manner?

Positive / Negative / No change

24 a) If positive, what do you think are the causes?

- a. There were fewer classroom distractions
- b. Flexibility regarding when the trainings are held
- c. Could make the lessons more interesting and interactive
- d. Other

Please specify:

24 b) If negative, what do you think are the causes?

- a. Loss of real-life interaction with students
- b. Problems with the use of digital tools / technical problems
- c. Cannot adequately measure the level of understanding of the material
- d. Other

Please specify:

25. Do you think that the digital tools influenced the learning of youth migrants in a positive or negative way?

Positive / Negative / No change

25 a) If positive, what do you think are the causes?

- a. The novelty of the method made learning interesting for students
- b. Students could schedule their own time

- c. More importance was given to self-study
- d. Reduced stress by being able to participate in lessons from a familiar space (own house/bedroom)
- e. Other

Please specify:

25 b) If negative, what do you think are the causes?

- a. Time management issues
- b. This year more importance was given to self-study
- c. No access to internet / devices enabling distance learning
- d. At home not having appropriate conditions for studying (family issues, financial issues, etc.)
- e. Other

Please specify:

26. Was it the first time you used remote learning software?

Yes / No

27. Will you continue to use them after the pandemic?

Yes / No / Do not know

28. Did it take you more or less time to prepare an online lesson than a traditional one?

More / Less / Same

29. Did you receive any kind of help from your country/municipality/organization?

Yes / No

If yes, please specify from which one of these:

31. In the future what measures would help you in the carrying out of remote lessons?

- a. Training/courses about online teaching
- b. Better guidelines from education authorities
- c. Access to best practices
- d. Other

Please specify:

Annex D: DO-IT questionnaire for Youth Centre Workers

DEMOGRAPHIC

1. Age

2. Gender

F / M / Other / Prefer not to say

3. Country where you live:

Belgium, Greece, Italy, Spain

4. Do you have a migration background?

Yes / No

26 If yes, from which country?

27 In which percentage of time did you work with people with a migrant background from March 2020 until now?

- a. Less than 25% of the time
- b. More than 25% but less than 50%
- c. About half of the time
- d. More than 50% but less than 75%
- e. More than 75% but not all the time
- f. All the time

28 In which percentage young migrants are the beneficiaries of your job?

- a. Not at all
- b. Less than 25%
- c. More than 25% but less than 50%
- d. About half of the young people
- e. More than 50% but less than 75%
- f. More than 75% but not all of the young people
- g. All of the young people
- h. Do not know

29 How old are the majority of your beneficiaries?

- a. <10 years old
- b. 10-14 years old
- c. 15-17 years old
- d. 18-24 years old
- e. 25-30 years old
- f. <30

30 Who did propose you the questionnaires?

THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 - ASSESSMENT OF CHANGES

31 How do you think the pandemic influenced young people you work with?

Options:

	very negatively	fairly negatively	neither positively neither negatively	fairly positively	very positively
In their education					
In their mental well-being					
In their physical well-being					
In their knowledge of the local language					
In their social inclusion					
In their primary needs					

32 Since March 2020, in which way the following activities with young people with migration background have changed?

	very much decreased	fairly decreased	neither decreased neither increased	fairly increased	very increased	Not applicable
Mentoring activities						
In presence work						
Online work						
Dual mode (mixed programme, partly in presence, partly online)						

33 Which of the following elements had generally a **negative impact** in the participation of young people with a migration background in your experience?

	Generally, not relevant	Fairly relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant	Not applicable in my case
Activities in presence					

Young people being afraid of catching COVID-19					
Young people had to take care of a cared one					
Loss of connection after the lockdown					
Loss of motivations due to the new conditions to participate (wearing mask, personal distance etc)					
The place of the activities is not able to comply with the COVID-19 regulations					

The activities with all restrictions become less attractive to them					
Other (please specify)					
	Generally, not relevant	Fairly relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant	Not applicable in my case
Online activities					
Young people had to participate in the sessions from their bedroom/house where the conditions might not be adequate (family issues, financial issues, etc.)					
Young people feeling controlled by					

parents/relatives					
Young people had problems to keep the focus					
Digital divide					
Lack of adequate tools (PC, tablet etc) to participate					
Bad/absent internet connection					
Activities became less dynamic and interactive					
The lack of personal interaction					
Lack of in-person informal moments with their peers					

Lack of in-person informal moments with me/my colleagues					
--	--	--	--	--	--

34 On the contrary, which of the following elements had generally a **positive** impact in the participation of young people with a migration background in your experience?

	Generally, not relevant	Fairly relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant	Not applicable in my case
Activities in person					
They felt lonely and wanted to have some moment of interaction					
The overall offer of training opportunities in our community decreased, thus they came to us					
It was a good “excuse” to					

go out from home					
Fewer possibilities to get distracted					
Other, please specify					
Online activities					
Wake up later because there is no transport time					
Appreciation of the fewer social interaction					
Possibility to involve participants from distant places					
Possibility to involve experts and guests from distant places					

There were fewer classroom distractions					
Other, please specify					

THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 - TOOLS AND METHODS

35 Did it take you more or less time to prepare an online lesson than a traditional one? More / Less / Same

36 Before the pandemic, were you aware of the various tools for distant learning during the pandemic? (Moodle, platform, prepared lessons, best practices, etc.)

37 Did you start using tools and methods for distant learning that you didn't use before? Yes / No

If yes, which ones?

38 Will you continue to use online tools and methods in the future? Yes / No / Do not know

39 If yes, which ones?

40 Did you receive any kind of help from your country/municipality/organization for implementing distant learning activities?

Yes / No

41 If yes, which ones?

42 In the future what measures would help you in the carrying out of remote lessons?

- m. Training/courses about online teaching
- n. Better guidelines from education authorities
- o. Access to best practices
- p. Other

Please specify:

Annex E: DO-IT questionnaire Researchers

DEMOGRAPHIC

43 Age

44 Gender

F / M / Other / Prefer not to say

45 Country where you live:

Belgium, Greece, Italy, Spain

46 Do you have a migration background?

Yes / No

47 If yes, from which country?

48 In which percentage of time did you work with people with a migrant background from March 2020 until now?

- a. Less than 25% of the time
- b. More than 25% but less than 50%
- c. About half of the time
- d. More than 50% but less than 75%
- e. More than 75% but not all the time
- f. All the time

49 In which percentage young migrants are the beneficiaries of your job?

- a. Not at all
- b. Less than 25%
- c. More than 25% but less than 50%
- d. About half of the young people
- e. More than 50% but less than 75%
- f. More than 75% but not all of the young people
- g. All of the young people
- h. Do not know

50 How old are the majority of your migrants beneficiaries?

- a. <10 years old
- b. 10-14 years old
- c. 15-17 years old
- d. 18-24 years old
- e. 25-30 years old
- f. <30

51 Who did propose you the questionnaires?

THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 - ASSESSMENT OF CHANGES

52 How do you think the pandemic influenced young people with migrant background, in your opinion?

Options:

	very negatively	fairly negatively	neither positively neither negatively	fairly positively	very positively
In their education					
In their mental well-being					
In their physical well-being					
In their knowledge of the local language					
In their social inclusion					
In their primary needs					

53 Did you conduct any research about this topic (the negative impact of the COVID-19 and digital learning, on the education of youth with migrant background), in the last year (from March 2020 to March 2021) ?

Yes/No

54 Do you think that the effects of the lockdown period there will have a long-term impact, according to you or the research you have carried out?

Yes/No/I don't know

12. a). If yes, what kind of effects?

- a) dropping out of school
- b) social exclusion
- c) lower level in graduation/education
- d) child labor
- e) segregation

12. b) based on what evidence?

- a) your own research
- b) secondary sources

c) other 13. Do you think that young migrants will have particular problems in certain specific subjects?

Yes/No/I don't know

14. If yes can you choose one of the following subjects (or more than one)

- a) Reading, writing, and literature
- b) Mathematics
- c) Natural sciences
- d) Social studies

- e) Second or other languages
- f) Physical education and health
- g) Arts
- h) Religion/ ethics/ moral education
- i) Information and communication technologies (ICT) o Technology;
- j) Practical and vocational skills
- k) Other

15. According to the research you have carried out, do you think schools were well prepared to handle the learning distance classes?

Yes/No/ I don't know

16. Were schools enough prepared to manage the most vulnerable groups, in your opinion?

Yes/No/ I don't know

17. According to the research you have carried out, What aspect do you think was crucial during the distance learning for the youth migrants?

- a) Help from parents
- b) Good internet connection
- c) Regular telephone follow-up
- d) Financial support to families
- e) Guidance materials for home-based learning

18. Did you find any evidence that can encourage the return to school for vulnerable populations?

- a) Community engagement to encourage the return to school
- b) Provision of financial incentives

- c) School-based mechanisms to track those not returning to school
- d) Reviewing/revising access policies
- e) Do not know
- f) None
- g) Other (Please specify)

19. What measures can be handled to make their integration easier/smooth after this period?

- a) Community engagement to encourage integration
- b) Provision of financial incentives
- c) School-based mechanisms to track those not returning to school
- d) Reviewing/revising access policies
- e) Foster social integration through sports and associations
- f) Provide flexible education pathways
- g) Intercultural education
- h) The teaching and learning of the language of instruction and home language(s)
- i) Do not know
- j) None
- k) Other (Please specify)

20. Were there any measures put in place by your country to leave no one behind, during the lockdown period?
yes/no/ I don't know

21. If yes, can you cite one (or more than one) put in place by your country?

- a) Radio/television broadcast
- b) Moodle

- c) Free connection
- d) Free devices
- e) Financial support
- f) Offline learning material

22. What evaluation would you give about the measures put in place by your country to leave no one behind, during the lockdown period?

very negative/ fairly negative/ neither positive neither negative/ fairly positive/ very positive

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23. Do you believe digital tools/remote lessons during the pandemic have influenced the learning of youth with migrant background?

Yes/No/I don't know

55 If yes, which of these aspects in your opinion contributed?

	Negative impact		neither negative nor positive impact		Positive impact	Not applicable
Worse connection at home than locals						
Lack of devices						

Parent cannot follow the instructions from school						
Lack of a private place for home working						

56 Which of the following elements had generally a **negative impact** in the participation of young people with a migration background in online classes, in your experience?

	Generally, not relevant	Fairly relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant	Not applicable in my case
Online activities					
Young people had to participate in the sessions from their bedroom/house where the conditions might not be adequate (family issues,					

financial issues, etc.)					
Young people feeling controlled by parents/relatives					
Young people had problems to keep the focus					
Digital divide					
Lack of adequate tools (PC, tablet etc) to participate					
Bad/absent internet connection					
Activities became less dynamic and interactive					
The lack of personal interaction					

Lack of in-person informal moments with their peers					
Lack of in-person informal moments with me/my colleagues					
Other, please specify					

57 On the contrary, which of the following elements had generally a **positive** impact in the participation of young people with a migration background in online classes, in your experience?

	Generally, not relevant	Fairly relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant	Not applicable in my case
Online activities					
Wake up later because there is no					

transport time					
Appreciation of the fewer social interaction					
Possibility to involve participants from distant places					
Possibility to involve experts and guests from distant places					
There were fewer classroom distractions					
Other, please specify					