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Mapping senior leaders' perceptions of the impact of local and national covid-19 closure/lockdown policies on schools and vulnerable young people and those at risk of exclusion

Erasmus+ Project Co-MAP: Collaborative, Community mapping of young people's learning experiences during COVID-19

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INTRODUCTION

Context of the Co-MAP Erasmus+ Project

The Co-MAP project responds to the urgent need to understand these issues the impacts of children and young people (CYP) learning in lockdown in relation to the most vulnerable young people, including refugees, and to ensure that school leaders, teachers and parents are equipped to respond to the consequences of their lockdown experiences. Co-MAP will work with a social justice theory of education (Tikly 2011) that understands education practice as constituted through the complex interplay of policy, the school environment and family and wider community. As such, Co-MAP does bring these three key constituents into dialogue. Co-MAP will work with school leaders in 25 schools five participating countries (Greece, Germany, The Netherlands, Hungary and the UK) to map a state-of-the-art comparative case study of national and local policies for schooling during the pandemic. This will include a study of how definitions of vulnerability and categories of 'at risk of exclusion' have shifted as result of the social and economic precarity created by the pandemic and how schools have attempted to adapt pedagogies and practices to meet the needs of the 'newly vulnerable'.

Examples of inspiring practices are collected through this process and shared via the online learning platform developed through the project. Co-MAP will then make use of participatory, arts-based methods to bring into dialogue young people (100), teachers (50) and parents (50) from 10 schools in five participating countries (Greece, Germany, The Netherlands, Hungary and the UK). These intergenerational, cross sector groups will work together to undertake collaborative, community mappings of lived experiences of learning through the pandemic. Mapping will focus on identifying barriers and enablers and consider the roles and functions of people, resources, materials, spaces and places as well as opportunities for young people's agency and self-mediation of learning. This will be followed by a series of artist led 'Maker Space' encounters that will teach young people new creative skills in comic-making and animation and "provide the freedom to play, experiment, tinker and exchange ideas" (Rowse, 2020:14 drawing on Marsh).

As an outcome of these encounters young people will narrate the outcomes of community mapping through creation of a range of artefacts that will be shared with the wider community and general public (as the third key constituent in education practice) through well-established street papers The Big Issue in the UK, Shedia in Greece and Fedél Nélkül in Hungary who are Associate Partners in CoMAP. This will open up and shape public discussions about the experiences of schooling for young people at risk of exclusion during the Covid-19 crisis and inform a series of policy briefings in all five project languages for school leaders and policy makers to inform future strategic decision making about policy and resource allocation.

A short face-to-face learning programme for teachers and an online learning platform will provide continuing professional development. A collaborative 'digital conversation' space designed for ongoing conversations between teachers, young people, parents and artists and will facilitate upscaling of the project outcomes and an Advocacy Toolkit will secure the sustainability of the project with all beneficiary groups beyond the period of funding. Whilst primarily focussed on young people's learning Co-MAP will secure a legacy for the creative community by enabling participant artists and publishers with the opportunity to experience collaborative work in school settings with teachers, leaders and young people and build entrepreneurial models of practice that will enable them to grow new markets for their work in the education sector.

Context of the IO1 research report

Working with Tickly (2011) and Tickly and Barrett's (2011) socially just theory of education that recognises education practice is constituted through the complex interplay of three interacting and overlapping environments (the policy context; the school environment; and the family and wider community environment) IO1 focused on the policy context.

IO1 output produces a first-time mapping of the national and local policy contexts for schooling during the Covid-19 pandemic paying particular attention to both the impact on young people most at risk from exclusion in the pre-pandemic period, including those facing multiple disadvantage e.g. in deprived urban areas of the UK or rural environments in Hungary and those from newly arrived families (e.g. asylum-seekers, refugees, Roma families) and those made newly vulnerable as a direct consequence of the pandemic, for example those experiencing food poverty, economic or housing crisis. School leaders were recruited from at least five schools in each country (a minimum of 25 schools in total) to participate in interviews and focus groups to discuss their experiences of working with young people during the pandemic. These activities explored a) School leaders' perceptions of the impact of national and regional policy on schools and communities b) the role and accessibility of digital technologies in sustaining learning and or creating divisions between different groups of young people c) any particular impacts on those already at risk of exclusion and changing definitions of 'vulnerability' and 'at risk of exclusion' as a result of the pandemic d) examples and case studies of inspiring practices from each country.

Subsequently, a summary report (in English) was completed for each country IO1, A1. These reports inform the comparative analysis undertaken in this report. which will in turn inform discussions in IO2 as well as policy briefings in IO5. All templates and resources associated with the production of IO1 will be available on the learning platform produced in IO4 to ensure that the work is replicable in new contexts.

Theoretical considerations – a perspective from English education research

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Key issues and debates in the English context

1. Introduction

This report is structured around Gee's (1999) concept of 'Big D' and 'Little d' as a strategy for exploring the complex inter-relationships between the public narratives that framed school decision-making during the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK and the contingent, local decision-making or Little d 'world figuring' that shaped/patterned action within schools and communities. This approach puts UK policy moves and the discursive aftermath of Covid-19 school closures into dialogue with the lived experiences of school decision makers and provides a context for the exploration of children and young people's (CYP) lived experiences that we will undertake in the phase two of the Co-MAP project. Drawing on Foucault's notion of discourse as the conditions of possibility for thought, that is: 'what makes it possible to articulate thought within itself' (Foucault 1970: 275) Gee's Big D/Little d makes possible an exploration of the interplay of micro and macro relations. At the macro level, 'Big D' discourses describe the 'ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity' (2011:201), whilst at the micro level 'little d' (Gee 2011) describes the 'figured worlds' of individuals, that is to say 'their socially and culturally constructed ways of recognising particular characters and actors and actions and assigning them significance and value' (2011: 205). Additionally, our report takes account of the intersecting factors of experience of diverse groups during the Covid-19 pandemic: integrating into our discourse framework Crenshaw's notion of intersectionality as a lens to see where power simultaneously emanates, collides, interlocks, and intersects (1989; 2017).

This review explores some of the main themes emerging from the contemporaneous literature (i.e. from the period 2020 - 2021) that have emerged throughout the period of the (ongoing) pandemic regarding the impact of school closures on CYP in England, at times drawing comparisons more broadly to wider international contexts. Drawing on diverse sources, including government and charity reports, peer-reviewed academic literature, television documentaries, and social media from interdisciplinary fields including education, health and the wider social sciences, we frame our report around prevalent Big D narratives such as 'learning loss', the 'digital divide', and present controversial public narratives of 'lazy teachers' in dialogue with counter narratives from research. Our literature review begins with the political context setting of top-down approaches to decision-making that started at UK Government level, followed by a critique of what this then looked like at local council level and school management level. At times the Big D critiques are interwoven with 'little d' accounts from school leaders and public figures before moving in more depth to reflections and experiences of school practitioners towards the end of the literature review. It ends with some of the themes emerging around 'future thinking' as we look ahead to a world where school closures or restrictive measures within schools are likely to continue in the long-term.

Big D: Narratives

1 Learning Loss

Whilst systematic and intensive approaches to tracking data have helped shape understandings of the impacts of Covid-19 on the economy and acute healthcare, data on school systems in the pandemic have been less easy to capture (Engzell et al., 2020). Yet despite this paucity of evidence, 'Big D' narratives about 'learning loss' and 'catch up' have emerged in the Anglophone public realm over the course of the pandemic. To reiterate, Gee's (2011) concept of 'Big D' offers a helpful way of understanding the dominant, public and institutional discourses that pattern and frame micro interactions and lived experience. Big D narratives of 'loss' conceptualise education within a neoliberal paradigm of consumption and acquisition narrowly framing schooling in relation to economic participation and advantage/disadvantage:

While the precise learning losses are not yet known, existing research suggests that the students in grades 1-12 affected by the closures might expect some 3 percent lower income over their entire lifetimes. For nations, the lower long-term growth related to such losses might yield an average of 1.5 percent lower annual GDP for the remainder of the century. These economic losses would grow if schools were unable to re-start quickly (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2020: 3).

Eyles et al. (2020) refer to the total estimated cost of each week of state school closures in England: that is in terms of loss of resources, amounting to in excess of £1 billion. This is set against figures of spending on state-funded education, which in England amounts to around £50 billion per year. Eyles et al. (2020: 5) foreground challenges in making up 'educational deficits' caused by time lost due to schools needing to input more hours than is possible in the traditional school year. They pose pertinent questions such as: 'if the Covid-19 school closures do affect achievement, what can be done about it once schools re-open and what will it cost to make up the achievement deficit?...what can be done to compensate?'

In attempting to gauge perceived learning loss, Stringer and Keys (2021) refer to the need to engage with evidence from testing programmes that measured the progress of students before and after school closures: data that can then be measured against previous cohorts that did not experience school closures. Stringer and Keys's (2021) report, commissioned by the UK Government's Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), comprises a review of international research on school closures as a way to focus on understanding the possible scale of learning loss by CYP in England, drawing on literature related to Covid-19, as well as themes such as teacher strikes, absenteeism, and learning loss during summer holiday periods. In addressing such themes, Stringer and Keys (2021) foreground heightened learning loss in particular subjects: with mathematics learning loss deemed particularly high, citing an estimation of losses in mathematics learning at a 3-month delay compared to losses in reading at 1.5 months.

Unsurprisingly, socio-economic factors were also deemed to impact upon distributions of learning loss. Little evidence was found of gender as a significant differential factor, and there was some evidence related to age in which younger students were more adversely affected compared to older students. Overall, CYP who had experienced school closures were deemed to be 2-3 months behind the academic milestones their cohorts were expected to reach (Stringer & Keys, 2021). Parallels are highlighted in Engzell et al.'s (2020) study of The Netherlands, where, despite a relatively short period of school closures and a high rate of broadband access compared to other European countries, the effect of learning loss was still found to be one-fifth of a school year. Their data suggests that overall CYP spent considerably less time studying during school closures.

A report by the National Foundation for Educational Research (Sept. 2020) across UK primary and secondary schools cites some key findings related to CYP and the 'need for catch up', with some of the main findings including: 98% of teachers reported that pupils were behind where they would expect them to be at the end of the 2019/20 academic year; teachers estimated that pupils were 3-months behind on average; over 61% of teachers reported that 'the learning gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has widened since the previous year'; 'teachers in the most deprived schools are over three times more likely to report that their pupils are four months or more behind in their curriculum related learning in July [2020] compared to teachers in the least deprived schools' (Sharp et al., 2020: 4).

Stringer and Keys's (2021) report considers the potential effectiveness of learning measures that were put in place as a result of the school closures in England, focusing predominantly on remote learning.

2 Digital Divides

As schools around the world closed down to differing degrees according to locally and nationally based Covid-19 regulations, schools started to look to alternative teaching forms, with a transition from face-to-face to online forms as an 'important tool to sustain skills development during school closures' (OECD, 2020). Schools' increasing reliance on online learning for large majorities of its student population whilst positive in some respects, inevitably brought challenges from the outset:

there are still concerns that online learning may have been a sub-optimal substitute for face-to-face instruction, especially so in the absence of universal access to infrastructure (hardware and software) and lack of adequate preparation among teachers and students for the unique demands that online teaching learning pose (OECD, 2020: 2).

Echoing such concerns, UK based research highlights the differing capacity of schools to provide remote learning, and suggests a causal link between online learning and poorer learning outcomes (Stringer and Keys, 2021; Eyles et al., 2020). Issues of preparation time were also identified by Kim and Asbury (2020) with teachers being given only two days' notice to put remote learning in place, following the announcement of the first school closures in England. Stringer and Keys (2021) also refer to online teaching delivery as adversely affected by teachers' lack of preparation and adjustment time, as well as decreased motivation amongst CYP due to lack of peer engagement. Similarly, children from socio-economically disadvantaged families within wealthier G7 countries, such as England, will likely have experienced more adverse effects than those from more privileged backgrounds due to a disparate availability of learning resources such as access to online resources and family support (Eyles et al., 2020).

Addressing online learning from an international perspective, Kardefelt-Winther et al. (2020) suggest the likelihood of a large proportion of CYP around the world having limited access to the internet, with some who relied on school or public networks having their access cut off completely. Kardefelt-Winther et al. (2020) also problematise disparities in internet access according to gender: foregrounding barriers for girls in some countries and/or communities having less opportunity to access online learning and digital communication modes due to culturally informed traditions and expectations. Similarly, evidence from Stringer and Keys's (2021) international review suggests that the effectiveness of online learning varies extensively according to individual CYP characteristics and circumstances and suggests a gender-difference in how boys and girls are affected in different ways. In a different context, regarding access to UK digital public health initiatives in Covid-19, Sounderajah et al. (2020) refer to digital health initiatives as opening up the risk of further excluding vulnerable

groups: their findings indicate the intersecting factors of gender, age, socioeconomic group, and educational attainment levels as impacting upon confidence in accessing digital health information. Their findings suggest that this was a detrimental cycle in which barriers and divisions were exacerbated, which in turn had a detrimental impact on health outcomes. Although indirectly, issues of digital confidence amongst the adult population potentially interlinks with attitudes and barriers passed down to CYP. This is an important consideration that speaks to the OECD's (2020) assertion of the importance in developing strong positive attitudes in CYP towards online learning to maintain CYP's concentration and motivation in digital learning, with an emphasis on this support from a combination of teachers, parents/carers, and other role models. The OECD (2020: 2) raise challenges in providing adequate support in online learning among all groups due to 'lack of time, insufficient digital skills or lack of curricular guidelines'.

Writing in the first year of the pandemic, Eyles et al. (2020) draw attention to the absence, at that time, of national UK policy on how, and in what format, schools should provide remote learning instruction to CYP during school closures. They propose that data from the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) provided a useful tool to gauge how well schools could switch between classroom instruction and online learning by referring to its questions for students and school leaderships teams regarding the use of technology in classrooms. Citing PISA's 2018 data in relation to the availability of online learning support platforms, Eyles et al. (2020) refer to a significant digital divide according to socioeconomic context: an estimated 65% of UK secondary school students had access to online learning platforms at this time, with this figure falling to 40% for those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

In continuing to expand statistical data of remote learning through the pandemic in the UK-context for the period April 2020-June 2021, the ONS's measurements of remote learning takes into account policy changes that occurred during this time. The passing of *The Coronavirus Act 2020* is significant in this regard, with the '*Coronavirus Act 2020 Provision of Remote Education (England) Temporary Continuity Direction*' (referred to in policy documents as 'The Direction') published on 30 September 2020, the purpose of which was to clarify the legal obligations of state-funded schools to provide remote education for CYP unable to attend school due to Covid-19 and the supportive role of the DfE to enable this. Accompanying this supplement to the legislation was a set of new guidance from the DfE for schools on providing remote education (Practical Law Public Sector, 2020). An update to the Direction, the '*Provision of Remote Education (England) Temporary Continuity (No.2) Direction*', was published this academic year on 18 August 2021 (DfE, 2021). The intention of the updated Direction was 'to provide legal certainty for all involved in the education sector, including parents, teachers and schools themselves', continuing to state that 'the Direction requires that where a class, group of pupils, or individual pupils need to self-isolate, or there are local or national restrictions requiring pupils to remain at home, schools are expected to provide immediate access to remote education' and to have regard to the DfE's 'Statutory obligations and expectations' for remote education in its updated guidance on 'Get Help with Remote Education' (DfE, 2021: 1).

The ONS (2021) report takes into account these changes, and states that as a consequence, the impact of the first lockdown on education output and the months prior to this (January to March 2020) was larger than their initial estimates suggested, with their data also suggesting a stronger recovery from the first lockdown in terms of education outputs than they had first estimated. Data for this period was gathered from the 'Teacher Tapp' survey, run by Educational Intelligence Limited, that comprises multiple choice questions sent to teachers on a monthly basis based on their job role. For the period of the ONS's report (April 2020-June 2021) the ONS modified the questions in line with policy changes that were occurring throughout the pandemic. For example, data shows that Key Stage 1 and 2 teachers (in UK primary schools) covered less material remotely compared to their in-class instruction for children who were still attending school, and data showed that despite an

increased need for parental support for Key Stage 1 children this did not lead to affective disparities between KS1 and KS2 in the materials covered.

In the UK context, issues of broadband accessibility and its intersection with such factors as socio-economic status, migration status, both of which were simultaneously contingent on housing and welfare conditions, was evident in diverse sources (e.g. *Dispatches*, 2021) and a discourse of a 'digital divide' became increasingly exposed in the public realm. Considering our 'little d' discourse of the digital divide, a Channel 4 *Dispatches* documentary about the 'hidden homeless' in the UK during the pandemic is useful. The documentary centred on the voices of three primary school aged friends, all of them boys aged 8, all living with members of their families in temporary accommodation, with some input in the documentary from their teachers and families. One little boy from Bangladesh, Jacob, who was in Key Stage 2 at school and who lived with his mother and sister in supported accommodation for asylum-seeking families, spoke of only being able to access WiFi on his mum's mobile phone when he and his sister sat outside the local Co-op supermarket. Jacob and his mum and sister lived in a flat in Luton in one room with a shared kitchen and bathroom, all of which were in disrepair, and he alluded to strong feelings around boredom and depression during the pandemic, saying that he sometimes felt like jumping off a cliff and not waking up. Another little boy Kai spoke of his ongoing financial worries about his mum not being able to pay the rent, of his fear of having to move home at short notice as that had happened before, and of her being in a queue of hundreds of people in a bidding war to move to Council-support accommodation. Kai said: "It wouldn't be fun living on the streets because you have to beg people for food and they'll say no" (Channel 4 *Dispatches* Twitter, Oct 2021).

3. Food Poverty

Issues raised above connecting the 'digital divide' and widening learning gap with socio-economic disadvantage are heightened for children living in conditions of poverty. Added to this, long-term school closures can lead to long-term detrimental health and social inequalities, with schools providing many children with a place to eat as well as to learn. Van Lancker & Parolin (2020: 243) refer to research that evidences how 'school lunch is associated with improvements in academic performance, whereas food insecurity (including irregular or unhealthy diets) is associated with low educational attainment and substantial risks to the physical health and mental wellbeing of children'. In the UK it is estimated that 4 million children (30%) live in poverty and are reliant upon free school meals when in school (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020), and for those not in school during the closures children were reliant upon support in the form of meals, food vouchers, and food parcels (Ziauddeen et al., 2020). Ziauddeen et al. (2020) report that 3 million adults in the UK went hungry during the lockdowns, with food security heightened in families with children.

Issues of food poverty for CYP became a topic of national debate in the UK throughout the first lockdown, with international Manchester United footballer Marcus Rashford leading a campaign on social media to highlight a Government proposal to withdraw free food provision for families during the school holidays in the form of food vouchers. Speaking of his own upbringing which sparked his activism in food poverty, Rashford said: "My mum worked full-time, earning the minimum wage, to make sure we always had a good evening meal on the table, but it was not enough...the system was not built for families like mine to succeed, regardless of how hard my mum worked" (Twitter, 1st Nov. 2021). Rashford became an ambassador for charity FareShare in March 2020. At the start of the pandemic FareShare launched an urgent nationwide appeal: 'calling for donations, food and volunteers. FareShare was preparing for an unprecedented crisis, and expectations soon became reality with demand for food almost doubling within one month of the lockdown' (FareShare, 2021). FareShare (2021) refer to Rashford's social media campaign #MakeTheUTurn campaign as

transformational with its result of gaining widespread public support that worked to change the Government's decision on the food voucher scheme, which was consequently extended over the summer holidays, ensuring that 1.3 million children could access food. Rashford also launched the 'Child Food Poverty Taskforce' that brought together a conglomerate of food charities that campaigned during the second November 2020 lockdown, leading to the UK Government's 'Winter Package' to support vulnerable CYP until Easter 2021 (FareShare, 2021). Comprising three strands of support, the Government's Winter Package included: Welfare Assistance Grants for which LAs had responsibility for distributing to eligible households between Christmas 2020 and Easter 2021; the allocation of £220 million to the Holiday Activity and Food Programme for the 2021 school holidays, to be allocated by LAs; and the increase in value of the Healthy Start voucher scheme from April 2021 onwards (FareShare, 2020).

4. Hidden poverty and safeguarding

Child poverty has also been exacerbated during the pandemic when families experience housing issues such as a lack of heating in homes and instabilities in living conditions and/or homelessness (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). A report commissioned by Crisis, a national UK homeless charity, cites various support mechanisms put in place over the initial period of the pandemic from the UK Government, including: the 'Everyone In' initiative to house people sleeping rough during the first lockdown; £3.2 billion of targeted funding for local councils to assist individuals and families classed as vulnerable in terms of their living conditions; supportive measures put in place regarding Local Housing Allowance rates and an additional £20 added to weekly Universal Credit support for a 12month period; and a freeze on evictions for social and private housing (Fitzpatrick et al., 2020). Singh et al.'s (2021) research on child wellbeing during the UK lockdowns uses the Social Determinants of Health model as a framework to measure the impact of UK lockdowns directly on CYP and indirectly through impact on parents, carers, community policy, and Government policy. Summarising their findings they propose:

Children have suffered directly with lack of access to healthcare, and a decline in their mental health. Infant bonding may have been affected due to maternal stress, anxiety or depression, compounded by limited Health Visitor support. Poverty, food insecurity and lack of exercise contributed to increased obesity. Many children will have been exposed to domestic violence, parental mental illness and child abuse without being able to tell teachers or other adults outside of the home, these Adverse Childhood Experiences increase the risk for subsequent health and behaviour problems. Children have spent many hours online for school learning and socializing with friends but faced risks of criminal exploitation and grooming (Singh et al., 2021: 1).

Aligned to these concerns in the context of the need for increased safeguarding measures for CYP as a result of the school closures and lockdowns Bows (2021) refers to official Government statistics stating an increase of almost 20% in serious child harm cases reported by councils in England during the first year of the pandemic (UK Government, 2021a in Bows, 2021), a rise that has partially led to the independent review into children's social care launched this year in 2021 (Bows, 2021). As well as adapting to online teaching and learning, a significant challenge faced by early years' (EY) and school practitioners during the nursery and school closures has been the monitoring and/or detection of potential safeguarding issues, accompanied by the switch to online communication with parents/carers (Khan and Mikuska, 2021). A week after the national school closures in England, the Department for Education (2020) issued Covid-19 guidance on safeguarding which focused on CYP

already deemed vulnerable and directives for them to continue attending school during the main closures.

Khan and Mikuska's (2021) mixed-methods study with 55 EY and school practitioners working with children aged 3 to 8 attempted to capture the measures nurseries and schools adopted to put safeguarding measures in place during the closures. The study found considerable emotional and physical challenges placed on school practitioners in this regard, particularly as they had to simultaneously manage their own professional and personal priorities. Many referred to the situation as 'chaotic', with conflicting advice from the government, : 'a unified response from the participants appears to be that identifying safeguarding issues amid COVID-19 school closures is near impossible' (Khan and Mikuska, 2021: 3). Participants in Khan and Mikuska's study cited difficulties with a lack of response from parents from online communication channels. Moreover, many institutions gradually established wellbeing teams to monitor safeguarding once a week or fortnight but were not always successful in this approach. Specific safeguarding issues related to online communication modes were also cited, through criminals and computer hackers.

Drawing their research to some conclusions, Khan and Mikuska (2021) propose that even when robust safeguarding strategies are in place they are challenging to uphold when an unexpected situation occurs such as the need for a rapid switch to online communication between school practitioners and parents. In response, they suggest that 'a review is required to ensure that a flexible safeguarding framework is developed that can seamlessly enable detection of safeguarding issues , amid school closures due to Covid-19' (Khan and Mikuska, 2021: 6). As well as its focus on safeguarding issues, Khan and Mikuska's (2021) research focused on reflections of school and EY practitioners on the impact of school closures on them as an educator. A strong emotional response was unified amongst participants due to the connections they felt to the children, which Khan and Mikuska refer to as 'akin to a sense of bereavement' (2021: 4). Moreover, stress and worry emerged as strong responses, with many school practitioners concerned how children would adapt on their return to school and many fearful that they would not see particular children again.

5. Lazy teachers v public heroes

As well as other prevalent public narratives throughout the course of the pandemic, teachers were also subject to public scrutiny in terms of what they were doing during the school closures. Exploring this further, Asbury and Kim (2020) interviewed 24 teachers from state-funded schools in England in June 2020 as part of a longitudinal study that they later revisited with participants at different intervals. From their initial study Asbury and Kim identified four themes, some posed as questions: 'heroes or villains?;' 'key workers or not?;' 'voiceless and disrespected;' and 'appreciated locally' (2020: 2). The teachers spoke about the anxiety caused by the dichotomy that simultaneously positioned them as both lazy and as heroes, both with specific pressures attached to each. Overall, the teachers expressed feelings of anger towards the Government due to feeling voiceless and disrespected, and expressed concerns that the DfE had, at least at that time, attempted little direct communication with teachers or expressed an interest in their views and experiences.

In another paper connected to this one, Kim and Asbury (2020) explored the experiences of the 24 teachers across a range of levels and seniority in English primary and secondary state schools. Interviewees were asked to 'tell stories of three key scenes during the first 5– 6 weeks of lockdown: a low point, a high point, and a turning point' as a way of exploring the sudden changes to their working practices in the first period of school closures. Six themes emerged from the study, including: 'uncertainty, finding a way, worry for the vulnerable, importance of relationships, teacher identity, and reflections' (2020: 1076). In drawing conclusions from the teachers' narratives Kim and Asbury suggest that:

after an initial period of uncertainty they settled into the situation and found a way forward, supported by strong relationships. However, they remain extremely worried about the most vulnerable pupils and want more joined-up thinking from the government on how to support them effectively, along with clarity from policymakers to enable planning ahead. Teachers reflected on how to use their learning during this period to improve pupils' experiences of education post-COVID-19, and on how aspects of shared teacher identity have worked as stressors and coping mechanisms (Kim and Asbury, 2020: 1062).

Moreover, in a third study utilising the same data Kim et al. (2021a) raise challenges in navigating new forms of education and the impact of CYP's lack of routine, individual home environment, and levels and nature of parental involvement as leading to inequalities in remote learning, which in turn impacted upon CYP's learning support needs and wellbeing following the first school closures. Kim et al. (2021b), paralleling Beauchamp et al.'s (2021) study of headteachers (see Section 2.2) also refer to the blurring of professional boundaries and roles as a result of the pandemic, with in their study teachers craving their normal teaching routine and citing anxiety that arose from the breaking down of this.

Marchant et al.'s (2020) qualitative study of 208 primary school teachers in Wales (of pupils aged 3-11) aimed to explore the experiences of teachers during the school closures and initial reopening of schools. The study was conducted through a national online survey through the 'HAPPEN' primary school network. Following their thematic analysis, Marchant et al. identified five main recommendations centred on: prioritising the health and wellbeing of staff and students; increasing support for parents/carers, particularly to make home learning an enabling process; improving digital competency amongst staff, pupils, and parents; considering changes in terms of increased staffing levels and smaller class sizes and connecting this with pastoral support; and improving communication channels between schools and parents/carers and between government and schools.

Big D: School community

Meanings attached to the notion of 'school community' are inevitably context specific, varying across temporalities, localities, and individual interpretations/understandings. In Co-MAP, the answers contributed by individuals or groups of school leadership teams from our questions on 'community' at times referred specifically to the student community, teacher community, parent/family community, the wider locality around the school, community organisations and, for some, answers that could be interpreted as a sense of community that were inclusive of all these groups.

Literature in this field similarly attaches diverse meanings to 'school community,' including for example, 'feelings of belongingness within a group' (Osterman, 2000: 233), 'a localized moral community' (Regnerus, 2003: 529), and with terms such as 'imagination', 'acceptance', and 'democracy' (Greene, 1993). Moreover, Taylor et al. (2012) critique the gap in thinking of spatial and 'more-than-human' aspects in understanding the 'relational assemblages' of the school community, with Nieto-Romero et al. (2019) referring to more-than-human school communities as 'sites of transformation'.

Empirical findings on the role of digital technologies from German education research

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Studies on Covid-19 closure/lockdown policies on schools and Digital Technologies

To slow the spread of the Covid 19 pandemic, the majority of German states closed their schools on March 16, 2020. Learning since then largely took place as distance learning until the 2020 summer vacations - an experience that was to be repeated shortly after the start of the 2020/2021 school year. The situation was new for all involved and held many challenges. What data is available on the experience gained in the process? To an unusual extent, distance learning has been and continues to be the subject of extensive regional, and in some cases national, media coverage since its inception. This has mostly focused on presenting case studies from a variety of perspectives - teachers, principals, students, parents, educational researchers, school administrators, and school policy makers - as well as occasional smaller regional surveys of parents, students, and teachers. Almost simultaneously, several large, partly representative studies on learning at home were conducted between March and April 2020 and published between April 6 and May 6, 2020:

1. "German School Barometer Special" by the FORSA Institute and DIE ZEIT,
2. "Survey of Thuringians during the 2020 school closures caused by the Corona crisis."
3. "School Barometer for Germany, Austria and Switzerland" of the Institute for Educational Management and Economics IBB of the PH Zug and the World Education Leadership Symposium WELS of the PH Zug,
4. Vodafone Foundation "School at a Distance" Survey

As authors involved in a comparative kind-of meta-analysis research (Schaarschmidt et al., 2021) this article presents the results of this comprehensive review of these studies on the topics of communication, teaching, and learning with digital media as well as the potential benefits and challenges that arise with regard to methodology and findings by answering the research questions on the use of digital media in distance learning. The Education and Science Union (GEW) member survey on the digital pact and digitization in schools (February 2020) is used as a supplement and contrast.

At the outset, the research questions are posed and the studies are compared in terms of their methodology. Since a detailed presentation of the review, i.e., the individual results of the studies in the individual categories and their comparison, would go beyond the scope of this paper, it focuses on answering the research questions on the basis of the analysis conducted. In the outlook, research findings for future studies are formulated.

For the comparative consideration of the four studies as well as the GEW member survey, questions arise on the use of digital media for purposes of communication and teaching and learning. In this context, the challenges and advantages of teaching and learning with digital media in the school context are also of interest.

Research guiding questions in the analysis of the studies include:

- To what extent is it possible to draw a representative and at the same time homogeneous picture of the use of digital media in distance learning at the beginning of the pandemic on basis of the studies published nationwide?
 - What technologies and applications did teachers* use to deliver and guide learning at home during the Covid19 pandemic?
 - From the teachers' point of view, which technologies and applications are (particularly) suitable to support and accompany learning at home?
 - What framework and support services are required for the use of technologies and applications for learning at home?
 - What attitudes do teachers have towards digital media?
 - What are the changes in the use of technology and applications when comparing learning in school before the Covid 19 pandemic and learning at home during the first weeks of the Covid 19 pandemic?
- Is the picture of the use of digital media in distance learning described in this way at the beginning of the pandemic transferable to the situation in the further course of the pandemic?

Use of digital media in distance learning at the beginning of the pandemic

The studies provide a comprehensive overview of the use of digital media in distance learning at the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic. Since they cover nationwide data as well as regional foci regarding the samples (survey of Thuringian teachers), they depict the situation in Germany as a whole. At the same time, the studies include larger samples of between 300 and 1300 teachers from Germany, so that a total of around 4000 of a total of 782,613 teachers* working in Germany in the 2019/20 school year were surveyed as part of the studies evaluated. Based on the samples studied, it can be assumed that the picture drawn is of limited representativeness. In addition, not all aspects of media use in distance learning are examined to the same extent or in the same way in all studies, so that a multi-layered overall picture of media use in distance learning emerges from the synopsis of the results. With regard to the sub-questions, this can be described as follows:

Technologies and applications used among teachers to support learning at home

The studies examined provide comprehensive insights into the technologies and applications used in distance learning. Before going into concrete figures to answer the research question, it should be noted that a large proportion of teachers used private devices for digitally supported teaching. Despite the digital pact, the technical equipment at schools and among teachers with official devices was still inadequate (GEW Hauptvorstand 2020, 33). It should be emphasized that the inadequate technical equipment within schools contrasted with very good technical equipment at home (Huber et al. 2020, 23; Dreer et al. 2020, 13).

First, a classification of the technologies and applications used to deliver and guide learning at home during the Covid 19 pandemic is provided. The media used by teachers can be grouped according to the following purposes, for example:

- Communication with students and/or parents
- Knowledge transfer
- Reflection of learning content (knowledge) and/or learning behaviour
- Knowledge review/application
- Exam preparation

– Learning Organization

The data available on the *communication technologies* used is both extensive and informative; E-mail contact was already widespread among teachers in their work before the pandemic: 93% of respondents used *e-mail* to communicate with students and parents (GEW Hauptvorstand 2020, 26). This is also true for distance teaching during the Covid19 pandemic: for the vast majority of respondents (83%), email was the main means of communication between teachers and their students or their parents (Huber et al. 2020, 25). *Telephone, cloud services, learning platforms, video/audio chats, forums, messenger services such as WhatsApp, or social networks* played a rather marginal role as means of contact (Dreer et al., 2020, 10f; GEW Hauptvorstand 2020, 26).

The findings regarding other purposes of the technologies and digitally supported teaching materials used, on the other hand, permit few differentiated statements and point to a need for further research. Figures on the types of media used were often reported, showing extensive media use in the classroom (GEW Hauptvorstand 2020, 23). However, hardly any statements can be derived from this about possible use and application scenarios of digital media by teachers, since both the one-time use of smartboards, beamers, computers or tablets as well as the Internet in general were summarized under digital media use. Nevertheless, results on the intended use of the media types used can be found in isolated studies.

Asynchronous, information-providing (low-interactivity) formats predominated in learning during pandemic-related school closures:

- Task sheets that were sent digitally were used most frequently (Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with ZEIT 2020, 16).
- In addition, traditional print media as well as electronic versions of texts and worksheets were also widely used to communicate learning tasks (Dreer et al. 2020, 10f).
- Explanatory videos were used by 39% of teachers to convey knowledge in distance learning (Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with ZEIT 2020, 16).

Interactive formats, which allow for a variety of didactic uses, were used much less frequently in distance learning:

- Only a few of the teachers surveyed offered live digital instruction in the form of video and writing conferences or audio conferences (Huber et al. 2020, 26; Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with ZEIT 2020, 17).
- There was hardly any work with learning platforms, textbooks and workbooks, or learning apps (Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with ZEIT 2020, 17).
- Furthermore, wikis, digital learning games, simulations, electronic tests or exercises, or learning apps were hardly common (Dreer et al. 2020, 11).

In summary, the table below presents an overview of all studies in terms of the types of media used.

Teachers' idea of suitable technologies and applications for a learning at home

The surveys in the studies recorded which technologies teachers used to communicate or for which purpose certain applications were used. The figures show the frequency and purpose for which these technologies and applications were used (see research question 1.1). None of the surveys addressed whether and to what extent the technologies and applications used are suitable to support and accompany learning from home, or which technologies are better suited for this purpose than others. Therefore, this research question cannot be answered within the scope of the present study.

This would have required the teachers' subjective assessment of the use of learning technologies. This was not collected in the present studies.

Table: Overview of all studies with regard to the media types used.

Media Type	Union-Member Survey	German School Barometer	School Barometer for Germany, Austria and Swiss	Survey of Thuringian teachers	School at a Distance
E-Mail	93%* (Communication)	79%* (Communication), 69%* (Provision of Learning Tasks)	83%* (Communication), 65%* (Provision of Learning Tasks)	89,9%*** (Communication)	63%* (Distribution of Learning Tasks)
Task Sheets		84%*** (Task Format), 33%* (Provision of Learning Tasks)			
Workbooks and Books		33%* (Provision of Learning Tasks), <5%*** (Task Format)	46%* (Provision of Learning Tasks)	73%*** (used didactically)	
Electronic Texts				70%*** (used didactically)	
Office Programs				67%*** (used didactically)	
Learning Portals / Platforms	61%* (Communication)	<5%*** (Task Format), 45%* (Communication), 41%* (Provision of Learning Tasks)	49%* (Provision of Learning Tasks)	7%*** o.d. (Preparation of Tasks), 14,8%*** (Communication)	25%* (Distribution of Learning Tasks)
Telephone		46%* (Communication)		56%*** (Communication)	
Messenger-Services	47%* (Communication)	13%* (Provision of Learning Tasks), 28%* (Communication)		3,9%*** (Communication)	20%* (Distribution of Learning Tasks)
Paper Printouts		33%* (Provision of Learning Tasks)	45%* (Provision of Learning Tasks)		
Explanatory Videos		39%*** (Task Format)			
Videos				38%*** (used didactically)	
School Portal		31%* (Communication), 27%* (Provision of Learning Tasks)	30%* (Provision of Learning Tasks)	29,9%*** o.d. (Preparation of Tasks)	28%* (Distribution of Learning Tasks)
Social Media	17%* (Communication)	13%* (Provision of Learning Tasks), 28%* (Communication)		3,9%*** (Communication)	
Cloud-Solutions			20%* (Provision of Learning Tasks)	18,8%*** (Communication)	11%* (Distribution of Learning Tasks)

Legend: *= Number of Respondents | ** Number of Respondents Multiple Answers Possible | ***= Frequency of use of the media (always or frequently used) | o.d. = open disclosure

Conditions required for using technologies and applications for learning at home

In order for the use of technologies for learning to be successful, the creation of appropriate framework conditions is required, as is the provision of suitable support services. The *accessibility of students* was named as an essential prerequisite for teaching and learning during distance learning in the "German School Barometer" (Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with ZEIT 2020, 3). The insufficient accessibility of students by the teachers surveyed was problematized (Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with ZEIT 2020, 3). One possible explanation is considered by the authors of the present review: It can be assumed that there is an insufficient number of digital devices in the households for all family members.

Furthermore, a *sufficient media competence of the teachers* is required as a central framework condition for remote teaching. In this context, the results of the reported studies pointed in dichotomous directions: One group of the teachers felt confident in media didactics, another group, on the contrary, stated to feel insecure in media didactics. The teachers also had different levels of experience and competence with regard to digitization (Huber et al. 2020, 25). After all, 40% of them had already been working with digital media for some time (Huber et al. 2020, 25) and thus already had experience in supporting teaching digitally. Furthermore, the studies pointed to a situation that was in line with expectations: teachers had experience in the use of established digital tools related to communication, lesson preparation, and lesson design. Less widespread, however, were competencies to the use of comprehensive applications with interactive elements or even the provision of self-created digital content or subject-specific learning programs and learning platforms in the classroom (Dreer et al. 2020, 13). At the same time, the results with regard to established digital tools (Dreer et al. 2020) pointed in a promising direction.

The authors of the present review consider the *motivation of teachers* to use digital media for teaching and learning to be a further framework condition for the success of distance teaching. In the "School Barometer for Germany, Austria and Switzerland," this was assessed as "high" in addition to the widely varying competencies in the use of digital media (Huber et al. 2020, 24). The *previous experience of the school and the teachers with the use of digital media* in the classroom can also be seen as a supporting condition for distance learning. The progress of digitalization at school ("digital culture") was reported by the "Survey of Thuringian Teachers" (Dreer et al. 2020, 15), according to which at least one fifth of the respondents indicated a pronounced digital culture at their school. However, a third of the schools reported a rather low digital culture (Dreer et al. 2020, 15).

In addition to the teachers, *sufficient media competence of the students* was necessary for learning at home. The study "Schule auf Distanz" (School at a Distance) identified the limited media competence of students as a cause for the insufficient use of learning opportunities provided (Eickelmann / Drossel 2020, 15). In addition, the "School Barometer for Germany, Austria and Switzerland" referred to *sufficient acceptance of learning with digital media on the part of the students* for the success of distance learning. Since only 37% of the surveyed students and parents had a positive attitude toward e-learning (Huber et al. 2020, 48), a possible scepticism on the part of the students regarding new learning formats can be surmised. As inhibiting framework conditions for the use of technologies and applications for learning at home, the studies reported a great deal of uncertainty due to legal issues related to *copyright* and *data protection* (Dreer et al. 2020, 20). In addition, the respondents stated that they were *overwhelmed by the great variety and flood of information provided* by digital media (Huber et al. 2020, 62; Dreer et al. 2020, 21).

Finally, the need for improvement relevant to future developments was outlined to support learning at home. In this context, an *improvement of the technical equipment of schools as well as of students and teachers* was seen as necessary for future developments (Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with ZEIT 2020, 22; Huber et al. 2020, 59; Dreer et al. 2020, 22 ff.; Eickelmann / Drossel 2020, 26 ff.). In addition, the *need for media literacy training and media-related continuing education for teachers* became clear (Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with ZEIT 2020, 22; Huber et al. 2020, 32; Dreer et al. 2020, 22-23; Eickelmann / Drossel 2020, 28). For teachers to achieve the best possible quality of learning processes and outcomes, continuing education and training in the digital field are of great importance. The *development of school media concepts* has also been addressed as a future-oriented issue (Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with ZEIT 2020, 22; Huber et al. 2020, 32), as has *legal certainty with regard* to data protection (Huber et al. 2020, 32 and 85).

Attitudes among teachers toward digital media

The authors see teachers' attitudes as a factor influencing the successful use of digital media, in addition to experience and media competence. In the studies, teachers' attitudes toward the use of digital media during school closure were not explicitly asked but can be derived from the perceived time required for the use of digital media in the classroom, among other things. According to the "GEW Member Survey on the Digital Pact and Digitization in Schools," *teachers' attitudes toward digital media were neutral*, as they were neither perceived as particularly positive nor rejected (GEW Hauptvorstand 2020, 24). The comparison of benefits and time expenditure showed that those who attributed a high benefit to digital media also perceived them as saving time significantly more often, and vice versa (GEW Hauptvorstand 2020, 25). The *situation of learning at home was assessed positively by the teachers surveyed*: Thus, a positive attitude towards digital media could be read from the survey results, and furthermore, more than half of the respondents coped well with the new situation (GEW Hauptvorstand 2020, 24, Huber et al. 2020, 21, Dreer et al. 2020, 19, Eickelmann / Drossel 2020, 23).

Many teachers felt that *digital media* were *helpful in shaping lessons* and also facilitated trying out new tools (GEW Hauptvorstand 2020, 24, Dreer et al. 2020, 19). From the teachers' point of view, the *achievement of their teaching goals regarding the learning material and the effectiveness of the learning opportunities provided* also played an important role: more than half of the teachers made slower but good progress with the given learning material during the school closures (Eickelmann / Drossel 2020, 21). Many teachers rated the effectiveness of the learning opportunities provided as lower compared to face-to-face instruction before the school closures (Eickelmann / Drossel 2020, 20). In the view of the authors of this review, this could be due to several factors: the new situation, the lack of preparation on the part of the students with regard to self-directed teaching and learning with digital media, the lack of media-didactic competence of the teachers to design lessons digitally, as well as numerous other inhibiting framework conditions.

Changes in the use of technologies for learning in school before and during the Covid 19 pandemic

From the perspective of the authors of this review, it is reasonable to assume that the pandemic related school closures have resulted in changes regarding the use of digital media for learning. Three of the studies examined explicitly confirmed this assumption and stated that the *use of digital educational technologies in the school context changed as a result of the pandemic-related school closures* (Eickelmann / Drossel 2020, Huber et al. 2020, Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with ZEIT 2020). For example, 59% of the teachers surveyed as part of the "German School Barometer" stated that there were *developments in the area of digital teaching and learning formats as well as communication channels* that would not have taken place without school closures or would have taken place over a longer period (Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with ZEIT 2020, 24). *Consequently, the school closures led to an intensification of digitization in the school sector.* However, not only did the use of digital media increase, but at the same time there was a more intensive engagement with them and teachers and pupils' digital skills developed (Eickelmann / Drossel 2020, 28, Huber et al. 2020, 28 and 59). A change in the use of technologies thus occurred primarily in the sense of an intensification of use.

A direct comparison of the GEW member survey on the digital pact and digitization in schools with the surveys conducted during the Covid 19 pandemic does not show the changes so clearly. Even before the school closures, many teachers used e-mail, learning platforms and social media messengers to communicate with their students. It can be assumed that the frequency of use has changed. However, since this was not explicitly surveyed in the GEW study, it is not possible to make a statement on this. It is also difficult to compare concrete usage scenarios before and during the Covid 19 pandemic, as the "GEW Member Survey" does not contain a dedicated survey of digital teaching scenarios, but also understands the use of digital media to include the use of beamers, for example. One can only assume that explanatory videos, which were used by around 40% of teachers during the school closures (Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with ZEIT 2020, 16, Dreer et al. 2020, 10 et seq.) as well as videoconferencing, which was used by 14% of the respondents, were used comparatively more frequently due to distance learning than before in face-to-face teaching.

Transferability of experiences with distance learning in the early phase of the pandemic

The analysis of the studies presented with regard to media use in distance learning paints a comprehensive picture for the first weeks of Covid 19 pandemic-related school closures (see research question 1), but does not allow any conclusions to be drawn about further developments

in the progression of the first lockdown (April to May 2020) or the restricted regular operation (from June to the end of the school year), the return to regular operation at the beginning of the 2020/21 school year, the second lockdown (from December 2020) or beyond. This would require further studies that have been or will be conducted at later time points. However, it can be assumed that the first weeks of distance learning in particular had a high novelty value, which may have worked in different directions - from actionism to panic to rejection of the use of digital media. Learning effects, established habits or fixed offers are likely to become apparent only later and in retrospect. Therefore, the research question remains unanswered at this point and refers to the existing need for research, which will be addressed in the outlook (see chapter 4.1). In addition, Chapter 3 (Question 1.5) already addressed possible changes resulting from the school closures in spring 2020 with regard to the use of digital media and the development of digitization-related skills.

However, based on the data of the studies cited (GEW Hauptvorstand 2020; Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with ZEIT 2020; Dreer et al. 2020; Huber et al. 2020; Eickelmann / Drossel 2020), hypotheses can be derived. It can be assumed, for example, that media usage competence will improve, while media didactic or media pedagogical competence will not necessarily develop further. However, due to the increased motivation of the teachers (Huber et al. 2020, 25), an increased willingness can be stated, which can represent a basis for a possible further development of corresponding competence. This dynamic must, however, be supported by suitable offers - at the levels of politics, school administration and further education programs.

Methodical design of the report

IO1 is co-ordinated by TUD. TUD provided a briefing and training for all partners at International Partnership meeting one (kick off) to standardise the approach taken. This ensured a high level of comparability of results. Each partner country recruited a minimum of five senior leaders from five schools to participate. This included School Principals, Head Teachers or other members of a school's senior leadership teams as appropriate in each context. Participants participated in an individual interview to explore their local experiences or where possible, a focus group with other leaders to explore national level issues in their own country context.

In light of ongoing restrictions due to Covid-19 and to secure participation from leaders in rural settings by ensuring minimum impact in terms of travel requirements interviews were undertaken either face to face or online (using an agreed, GDPR compliant platform to be agreed at kick-off). To enable structured comparative analysis between countries Interviews and focus groups followed a standard, systematic approach, following the four key focal points detailed above, and agreed at transnational meeting 1. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in either English or the national language as applicable so as not to exclude school leaders who have an important contribution to make but who do not feel comfortable speaking English.

Each partner produced a country report IO1, A1. TUD has produced the comparative report IO1, A2.



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COUNTRY REPORT: United Kingdom

Alex Kendall, Louise Lambert, Mary-Rose Puttick, Louise Wheatcroft

Section A: Context UK

A.1. Covid-19 School closures in England: the policy context

The national and local policy contexts for school closures in England in response to the Covid-19 crisis provide an important framing for the lived experiences and decision-making of the group of school leaders who shared their stories for this report.

On 23rd March 2020, the British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced the first compulsory 'stay at home' lockdown in England in response to assessment of the health risks posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The first lockdown lasted almost 3 months until June 2020. A report commissioned by the Institute for Government (IfG) states that it was five days before this, on the 18th March 2020, that 'with just two days' notice, Boris Johnson, in the second of his televised broadcasts from Downing Street, announced that England's 24,000 schools were to close "until further notice" from that Friday evening. Public examinations taken at age 16 and 18 and due to take place three months later, were cancelled, '...marking what followed as easily the most disruptive period in children's education since at least the start of the Second World War' (Timmins, 2021: 4).

Similar measures were implemented across the four nations of the United Kingdom (UK) in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The IfG's report notes that by the date of the first official lockdown announcement some schools in England had already closed due to teachers' becoming ill or self-isolating, and for those that remained open student attendance had decreased significantly (Timmins, 2021). After the 23rd March schools remained closed to all but the children of key workers¹ and those considered most vulnerable² (ONS, 2021). Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), states that between March and July 2020 the 'in-person attendance rate in English schools fell very sharply, to between 1% and 10%' (2021: 3).

Between September 2020 to December 2020 English schools were open again for face-to-face education, apart from a 4-week 'circuit-breaker' lockdown in England on the 5th November as well as 'bubbles' of children when positive Covid cases were reported (ONS, 2021). 'Bubbles' described the managed circulation of children into small units ranging from very small groups to whole classes or even year groups depending on how schools were able to manage movement around their buildings. On the 6th January 2021, England entered a third lockdown, just two days after the PM had advised that children should return to schools after the Christmas break (Timmins, 2021). The third lockdown lasted, to differing degrees, for six months until July 2021 with schools returning on 8th March 2021 and restrictions on social interaction continuing until July.³ Whilst our report presents an overview of the picture of English school closures generally, through the literature we also seek to explore how

decision-making and the nature of teaching and learning was entangled with temporality, locality, and wider social factors: aspects illuminated in further depth through our empirical material.

¹ The definition of a 'key-worker' parent was formally defined as "Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections. Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can."

[Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/children-of-critical-workers-and-vulnerable-children-who-can-access-schools-or-educational-settings)

² Broadly defined as those with a social worker, young carers, children in temporary accommodation and those with family circumstances or with support needs that would make engagement in remote study difficult. For a full list, see [Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/children-of-critical-workers-and-vulnerable-children-who-can-access-schools-or-educational-settings)

³ This institute for government has compiled a useful visual timeline summary of school closures <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/timeline-lockdown-web.pdf>

Up until mid-March 2020, the Department for Education (DfE) was operating on the influenza pandemic plan that had not been updated since 2011 (Timmins, 2021). New legislation was therefore rapidly introduced around the same time as the first lockdown with The Coronavirus Act 2020 fast-tracked through Parliament and given Royal Assent on 25 March 2020 (Timmins, 2021). The Act contained 'emergency powers' to enable the Government to close schools and to support public bodies in their response to the pandemic and had three main aims: 'to give further powers to the government to slow the spread of the virus', 'to reduce the resourcing and administrative burden on public bodies', and 'to limit the impact of potential staffing shortages on the delivery of public services' (Timmins, 2021). This legislation is revisited in Section 3.2 below on the 'Digital Divide'.

In the UK, macro level decision-making regarding school closures came from the DfE. The DfE's website shows that during the period 25th February 2020 to 14th September 2020, nineteen pieces of guidance were issued by the DfE to educational settings. This included, for example: general guidance documents on 'cluster arrangements' or bubbles (31 March 2020), 'implementing social distancing' (3 April 2020), 'guidance on vulnerable children and young people' (10 April 2020); general letters from the Minister of Education to the education sector, as well as letters on specific aspects such as the Safer Schools app (10 April 2020) or the Education Restart Programme (3 June 2020); a statement from the Minister of Education on the Covid-19 Response (20 March 2020); and a letter from the Permanent Secretary to principals (20 March 2020). Information regarding national decision-making across all areas of society was also communicated in the British Government's daily televised Covid19 briefings that started on the 16 March 2020 (BBC News, 2020), most often delivered by the UK Prime Minister or Health Minister alongside the UK Government's Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty, who is also on the Executive board of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

On 17 June 2020, towards the end of the first lockdown, the UK Government published their first official operational guidance through dialogue with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Public Health England (PHE), regarding actions for schools during the Covid-19 pandemic with an emphasis on the importance on delivery of 'face-to-face, high-quality education to all pupils' (DfE, 2020). This guidance covered risk assessment, mixing and bubbles, tracing close contacts and isolation, use of face coverings, triggers for stepping measures up and down, hygiene control measures, attendance expectations, travel and quarantine, remote education, education recovery, pupil wellbeing and support, school workforce, school meals, educational visits, extra-curricular activities, and school inspection and accountability expectations. Following first publication the guidance document was updated at various intervals often at short notice, sometimes at weekends continually shifting expectations and demands. This ever 'ever-changing government policy advice' argue Fotheringham et al. (2021) was identified by senior leaders as one of the main causes of considerable stress (Fotheringham et al, (2021), Greaney et al (2021)

A.2. Governance contexts for school leaders' decision making during Covid-19 school closures

Whilst macro level decision-making for state-funded schools came centrally at Government level, operational responsibility for what decision making looked like 'on the ground' inevitably varied depending on the specific education context, local governance arrangements impacting on the school and the shape and structure of the school leadership team.

Following three decades of academisation of primary and secondary schools in England, many state schools are now either single academies, or part of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) or partnerships, that is 'a sector-led arrangement where a school and trust work together, testing whether a formal partnership will benefit both parties' (DfE, Oct. 2021). MATs vary greatly in size, with some in the UK comprising a chain of only 3 schools and others comprising chains of 40 schools across England. The

size of the MAT therefore impacted upon the level of support given to individual schools during the school closures, with partial operational decision-making coming from the MAT level which filtered down to several schools within the partnership simultaneously (Timmins, 2021; Perkins, 2020). The IfG's report states that by early 2020, the DfE had responsibility for the funding and oversight of more than 8,700 academy schools in England, including standalone academy schools as well as MATs. Whilst there is some regional governance in place for liaising with academies within its region, their power and resources remain very limited (Timmins, 2021). The IfG's report explains that schools that are not part of academies are maintained by LAs with local councils also retaining a wide set of responsibilities for all state-funded schools including school meals, transport, facilities for CYP with Special Educational Needs (SEND) and overseeing school places. The report includes the following quote from a 'highly experienced academy leader' regarding decision making during the school closures, giving a sense of a complex macro picture:

The education system used to work where the department held the ring and local authorities were responsible for schools. Now we have this very complex mix of single academies, multi-academy trusts and local authorities, and none of us have a clearly enough articulated role in a situation like this. The department [DfE] did not really have a communication network which was functional for the vast majority of schools. That led to very prescriptive decision making, because if your only real way of communicating with people is in writing in a guidance document, it is difficult to get over your broad intentions and purpose, and you fall back on rules and stipulations (Timmins, 2021: 8).

Fotheringham et al. (2021) refer to the immense pressures school leaders faced in keeping abreast of, as well as interpreting, and implementing, rapidly changing government guidance whilst working simultaneously within the constraints of limited resources and school buildings, prioritising the welfare of staff and students, and addressing and adapting to the needs of communities. As such, in their research, school leaders are reframed as 'school policymakers' (Fotheringham et al., 2021). Conducted through surveys and interviews in June 2020 the study utilises a randomised and stratified sample of primary and secondary school leaders across England, their findings propose that the quality, quantity and frequency of top-down communication in varying forms 'contributed to school leader stress, while horizontal communication and collaboration between school leaders and across school communities supported leaders during rapid change' (Fotheringham et al., 2021: 1). The research recommends that the government and the DfE 'strengthen and streamline stressful communication systems while building cooperative communities, mitigating against the challenges identified by school leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic' (2021: 1).

Beauchamp et al.'s (2021) small-scale research with school headteachers across the four devolved nations of the UK focused on their perspectives on leadership and management during the pandemic. The results found headteachers were required to provide 'effective emotional and moral leadership in uncharted and rapidly shifting territory, '...with a resilience which drew heavily upon the strengths of pre-existing structures and teams' and which was underpinned by values of trust and fairness amongst teachers, parents and the wider school community (2021: 375). In analysing the perspectives of headteachers, Beauchamp et al. (2021) devised a 'model of school leadership', specifically related to the first period of school closures in the first lockdown through which they conceptualise the key elements of school leadership during this time, both inside and outside of school.

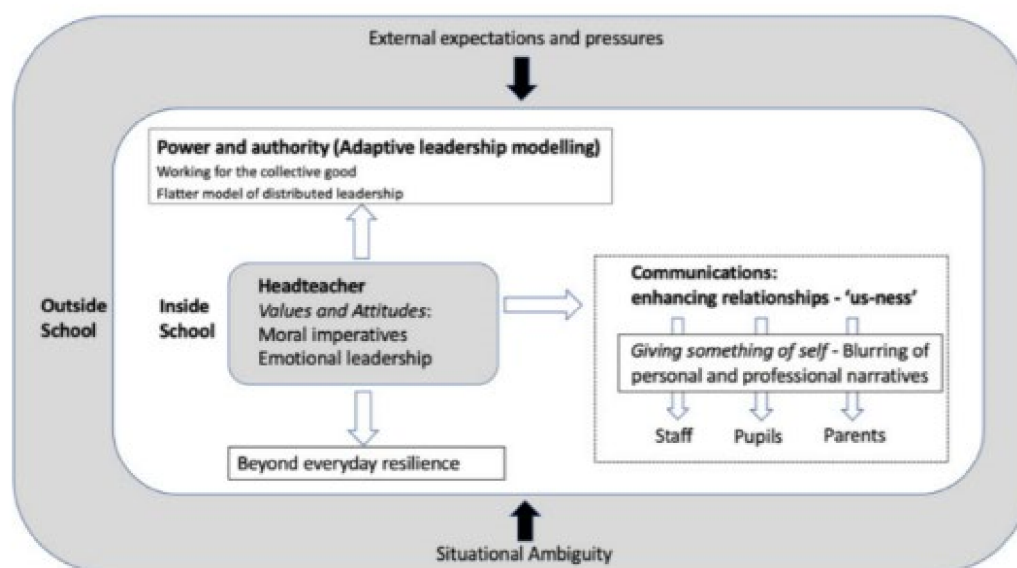


Figure 1. Model of school leadership in the early stages of the COVID-19 crisis.

Ref: (Beauchamp et al., 2021: 389).

Centring the headteacher in the middle of the model, Beauchamp et al. (2021) work outwards from the headteacher: making key connections to external obligations and expectations from local and national agencies, that were subject to 'situational ambiguity' and rapid overnight change. The model emphasises also the essentiality of continued clear communication with the school community, with a commitment to 'a humane way of working', permeated by a 'personal investment' in headteachers' modes of communication and the blurring of professional and personal narratives, and changes in their perceptions of, and actions towards, power and authority (Beauchamp et al., 2021: 388).

Section B: Mapping school leaders' responses in UK

B.1. Exploration of interviews with school leaders

B.1.1. Introduction

In this section we explore the contingent, local decision-making or Little d 'world figuring' that shaped/patterned action within schools and communities. We read our conversations with school leaders relationally to understand how public discourses are mobilised or resisted within school settings to assign particular forms of value and significance to people, roles and behaviours. We consider how these 'police, produce and constitute a field' (Lather 1999:5) structuring ways of being, doing and knowing that pattern 'what can be played' in school contexts (Foucault 2000:139-140). Through this work we pay particular attention to the expanded function of schools within local civic infrastructure and public services and the new complexities and demands that this placed on school decision-makers.

We begin our discussion with an exploration of school leaders' perceptions of their school's relationship with local communities and the changing nature of pedagogy, notably the move from face to face to online learning, over the period of school closures. We then move on to consider discursive constructions of teachers and learners, changed implications for identity making and taking and outcomes and effects for different groups of teachers and learners.

B.2. Little d Narratives

B.2.1. School Communities

School leaders were invited to reflect on what their student and teaching community looked like before and during the pandemic.

Literature in this field attaches diverse meanings to 'school community', including for example, 'feelings of belongingness within a group' (Osterman, 2000: 233), 'a localized moral community' (Regnerus, 2003: 529), and with terms such as 'imagination', 'acceptance', and 'democracy' (Greene, 1993). Moreover, Taylor et al. (2012) critique the gap in thinking of spatial and 'more-than-human' aspects in understanding the 'relational assemblages' of the school community, with Nieto-Romero et al. (2019) referring to more-than-human school communities as 'sites of transformation'. The nature of school communities are also linked in the literature to 'quality' of educational provision and measurements of 'success', in which the school leader plays a key role. For example, UNESCO (2021) states that:

'Successful schools understand the importance of establishing good and harmonious [relations with the community](#) in which they lie. These relationships exist at two levels, at a formal and legal level, as well as an informal and voluntary one...The school principal must examine the community in which the school lies in order to create good relationships with its members. Communities are composed of different ethnic, religious, and socio-economic groups that may have either mutual or divergent interests.'

In terms of their teaching community, four of the five schools referred to a relatively stable community with only one secondary school citing a higher than normal turnover of teaching staff over the period of the pandemic. However, when discussing their school community more broadly the picture was very different with only one of the primary schools (UK5) referring to a 'long-established immigrant community' which had changed very little over the last ten years. One characteristic of the community of this school were high numbers of extended family members living in one household. Moreover, this school, and the other two primary schools (UK1 and UK3), referred to their school communities and local geographical community: with both reflective of historical and political changes such as their more stable populations of Somali families who had arrived in the UK in the 1990s from the civil war, as well as long-established Pakistani and Afro-Caribbean families. Two schools spoke of a diminishing cohort of Roma families who had left the area following Brexit. One primary school had had a large intake of students from countries all over the African continent in the last two years, and another of students from Bangladesh. Many of these families had lived in other European countries first, prior to arriving in the UK, which one Headteacher said had resulted in some of the children 'not being fluent in any one language'.

One primary school (UK1) spoke of being 'one of the highest mobility schools in Birmingham' with around 100 students leaving in a year and 100 joining. The schools that had the highest mobility, measured by a tool from the Department for Education (DfE), such as primary school UK1 which had 30-35% mobility and the two primary schools that came under the leadership of one Headteacher (UK3) spoke at length of specific welfare issues connected to migration status. For example, for families seeking asylum this status impacted upon unemployment levels and their experiences of multiple-occupancy households as well as transient accommodation. Three schools specifically referred to having families classed as homeless who were living in hostels.

Other welfare issues cited by schools included issues around gang culture. For these schools there was an increased potential for criminalisation amongst young people, as well as issues around domestic violence. The four schools with high levels of transiency referred to their location as being in areas of high economic deprivation. Our further education college participant (UK4) had a uniquely wide community reach, due to them providing transport into the college from a wide geographical



area of around 25 miles. The college reported a higher than normal drop-out of students during the pandemic, for example 412 first year learners left in June 2020 and did not return for their second year.

B.2.2. Relationships with parent/family community: 'comradeship' and 'rebuilding trust'

There is an extensive body of literature on models of 'parental involvement', including critiques of terms such as 'involvement versus engagement' and 'hard-to-reach parents versus hard-to-reach schools' (see for example Kendall and Puttick, 2020). In our literature review, we discussed the rapidly changing guidance from the DfE during the school closures, many of which implicated expectations around parents. In Co-MAP we asked school leaders how the nature of their relationships with their parent community had changed during the pandemic and asked about the changing nature of the community's contributions and assets.

Leadership teams from the secondary school and college spoke of their relationship with the parent community in very different terms than the three primary schools: reflective of findings from our previous Erasmus project, Open School Doors. In general, secondary schools in the UK have a much less 'hands-on' approach with parents than primary schools, partly due to age-related factors which inevitably means more young people travel to school independently with less opportunity for the 'school gate literacies' characteristic of primary schools (Rasool, 2018) and in-turn parents' closer, affective face-to-face relationships with primary school staff. The secondary school and college emphasised the transition to a 'virtual community' of parental involvement. The Deputy Head from the UK2 secondary school stated that 'there weren't particularly strong relationships before' and that 'parental engagement remained a challenge' and they now needed 'to rebuild relationships with families'. One primary school (UK1) similarly implied the need to rebuild relationships although this was with a very small group of parents who had been very vocal and 'aggressive' with school staff during the closures. Two schools (one primary and one secondary) spoke of the increased frustration from parents by the third lockdown as expectations regarding their part in home schooling intensified and became more of a legal obligation – also reflective of increasing pressures on the schools. Notably, the Headteacher of two of the primary schools with high mobility (UK3) spoke of their families as if they were customers for whom they were 'providing a service' and therefore had to listen and respond and adapt directly to their changing needs in order 'to prevent them moving their children elsewhere'. For this particular school leader, she placed a particularly powerful emphasis on the work they had done prior to the pandemic to build trust with their families. There was also a direct link with the two schools' partnership within a larger Academy Trust, discussed in the literature review. This meant that one of UK3's schools had funding for a specific employee in the form of a parent coordinator to support parents and there was, at least at one of the schools, a separate building solely for parent/family activities which in turn gave the parents a lot of autonomy and voice in the use of their 'hub'. At this particular primary school, the parents supported newly arrived families in diverse ways. The families at this school had formed 'bubbles' during the Government lockdowns where two or three families gathered together to form a rota for home schooling and food shopping. The primary school with the stable community (UK5) gave a very different and sobering account of their parent community. This community, in which many of the teachers also lived and came from the community, had been affected by very high Covid death rates, particularly as there were so many family members living in one house. The learning mentor manager, who was himself from the community, spoke of a WhatsApp group the community had set up to report deaths and that in 'one night there were 16 deaths across 2 streets' and a 'makeshift mortuary had to be set up outside the local mosque'. A former Assistant Head at the school, who had retired during the second lockdown, spoke of the community as very 'close-knit' with neighbours who would report to the school of 'families who had travelled out of the UK at the start of the pandemic and were still stuck abroad'.

This staff member used the word ‘comradeship’ to describe the school community and another staff member, the Deputy Head, spoke of their need to provide families with bereavement counselling as the most pressing concern at one point of the school closures.

B 2.3. Food poverty: ‘exposure and coping with capacity’

Four of the five schools spoke at length about the extent to which food poverty had been exposed/made visible as a result of the pandemic: an issue that had ‘had always been there but Covid exposed it to another level’ (UK1). All of the schools quickly realised that they were unable to cope with the capacity for need in terms of their on-site facilities: with capacity particularly heightened due to specific dietary requirements as well as the amount of food that was needed to support families to feed their children. Three schools spoke of their use of the ‘Magic Breakfast’ scheme that delivered breakfasts to families. All of the schools also relied on the extended food voucher scheme established as a result of the FairShare campaigning. Food parcels and vouchers became essential components of the daily role of schools during this time.

The general feelings amongst the school leaders when they spoke of their schools’ new and/or heightened role in addressing welfare support and food needs was of the community ‘reaching in’ to them for support. Two school leaders spoke of the ways in which they now knew more about their parent community’s personal welfare needs (which wasn’t necessarily seen as a positive) than they ever had before. Overall, this essential role that the schools now played was on the whole viewed as bringing the school community, particularly in terms of the teachers and the students, much closer.

B.2.4. Changing Pedagogies

School leaders in England talked of how the nature of teaching and learning was entangled with temporality, locality and wider social factors that affected their specific communities and how these factors challenged the everyday work of teaching and learning. Senior leaders’ accounts highlighted the complexity of the role that schools played during the pandemic and how their role shifted significantly to respond in affective ways to the more pressing needs of pupils and their families by prioritising safeguarding, pupil and family well-being and supporting families experiencing food poverty and housing issues all whilst continuing to maintain a focus on the everyday work of teaching and learning. The pandemic changed the work of schools and teachers. Some changes were temporary whilst others are longer lasting. These personal accounts highlight the very central role that schools play in the communities in which they are situated.

One of the most significant shifts taking place in schools was the rapid move to teaching and learning online, which quickly exposed issues of digital access for many families and led to increased public awareness of the ‘big D’ Discourse around digital poverty. Ofcom’s Online Nation 2021 report showed that whilst people became more dependent than ever on online services, still 6% of the UK did not have internet access in their homes, creating a greater digital divide than ever before. All of the school leaders in our study talked about digital poverty in their schools and how they sought to address this urgent issue for children to continue their education during school closures. Our data brings the real, lived experiences of this Discourse to life.

When schools closed for the first time and the situation was at its most uncertain, there was little direction from the DfE regarding remote teaching and learning. However, by October 2020 the DfE published a directive which made clear schools’ legal duty to provide immediate remote education for state-funded, school-age children unable to attend school due to public health advice, UK government guidance or law relating to coronavirus (COVID-19). Then again, in September 2021 once schools had fully reopened the DfE published guidance for schools outlining the remote education expectations and duties of schools stating ‘we continue to expect schools to provide remote

education for pupils whose attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around Covid-19. Schools should therefore maintain their capabilities to deliver high quality remote education for the next academic year'. The directive provided the number of expected hours of online teaching for each age group and included a detailed list of expectations.

B.3. Audits of digital access

Schools have always been places where teachers and learners come together in physical spaces for the work of learning and teaching. Suddenly being plunged into a situation where learners could not attend school and needed to learn remotely, schools had to quickly shift the ways in which they teach and learners learn. The schools in our study tried different approaches but most began with providing paper materials whilst they considered how they might deliver teaching online. Before they could deliver online learning, they needed to know that pupils had access to digital devices and so schools quickly carried out an audit of digital devices owned by pupils' families. It was at this point that the Big D Discourse around digital poverty began to take hold with up to 40% of secondary students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds having no access to online platforms according to Eyles et al. (2020). School leaders explained the extent of the issue and talked about the challenges that families and schools faced. This was a situation never before encountered and schools overall were unprepared. One headteacher of a primary school talked about how having an accurate picture of digital access/poverty before would have been helpful as they discovered that only about 50% of their pupils had broadband and most were accessing online learning by sharing their parents' mobile phones with their siblings. Prompted by the possibility of school closures in the media one school quickly sent out an audit prior to the first lockdown. However, the audit soon revealed how much they had underestimated the digital access outside of school with most families using mobile phones to access online learning, were sharing devices or had no internet access at all. An FE provider (UK4) also talked about the significance of the issue for their adult learners.

We were always aware of digital poverty but realised how significant it was. It brought digital poverty to the forefront of our thinking... Issues over families having to share devices and very often secondary pupils took priority or ESOL mothers were giving priority to their children's learning.

Once schools and colleges had a clearer understanding of the extent of the issue, they quickly put in place strategies for teaching remotely. Most provided paper resources for all classes in the first instance whilst they worked hard to access digital devices for their pupils. Schools had to make difficult decisions about budgets in order to continue teaching remotely as one primary school (UK5) explains 'The children did not have paper, mini-whiteboards and markers so we ordered stationery for children – a pack for every child 'within our budget' and reading books were sent out'.

One primary school (UK3) talked about how they managed to get access to a digital device for all of their pupils and the longer-lasting impact that this has had on teaching and learning but also highlighted the complexity of the issue of digital poverty.

We did not have enough devices but managed to get in the academy's (redacted) scheme enabling every child to have an iPad for their time in school from R-Y6 and this changed the way that we teach – the devices are now integrated into lessons. Pedagogy completely changed – all pupils have devices, we have changed the curriculum and delivery and assessment so now at any point learning can go online.

However, addressing digital poverty cannot be fixed by simply providing digital devices for families as there are wider social issues to address. The school quickly realised that many families did not have enough money to charge the devices overnight. 'So they would be charged in school. If you have 5 kids, 5 iPads - you can see the meter going down' (UK3).

Most schools managed the provision of laptops and 4G dongles for families who needed them through the DfE scheme although many schools commented that the DfE devices were late to arrive. Whilst most schools felt that they were well-equipped in school to support teaching and learning with technology prior to Covid one school explained 'We thought we were fine re: laptops and tech until lockdown and online teaching was all new to us' (UK5). Remote learning suddenly raised issues of digital poverty, safeguarding, teachers' digital skills and increased workloads as many teachers were juggling remote teaching and face-to-face teaching in parallel.

B.3.1. Teacher's digital skills and continuing online provision

Teachers had to quickly adapt to teaching online and whilst most were confident using the technology in school to support teaching and learning, providing remote learning required new skills and practices. As highlighted by Kim and Asbury (2020) earlier, there was little/no time for teachers to adapt to online teaching which coupled with the insufficient digital skills required for remote teaching and a lack of curricular guidance (OECD, 2020) further exacerbated the issue of how teachers could make the immediate switch to online teaching and learning. School leaders in England talked about how they provided professional development for teachers through provision of CPD courses for staff to increase teachers' digital skills, IT support, opportunities for teachers to share best practices and new learning platforms were explored resulting in teachers becoming more willing to engage with digital technology in their teaching practices as they moved from creating paper-based resources, to digital worksheets to more interactive online teaching. Schools talked about how many of the digital practices and online resources continue to be used in school to support learning and teaching once schools reopened. One secondary school (UK2) talked of how they explored online extra-curricular clubs during the lockdown and will continue to do so as this enables pupils who need to go home after school to also engage in extra-curricular activities from home.

B.3.2. Pupil engagement with online learning

One of the biggest challenges raised by the schools in the study was that of engaging pupils in online learning. Even when issues of digital access were addressed, it was still a challenge to teach and learn online. As one primary school (UK5) explained

You can't teach children online – it's not as effective. It needs to be face to face. In the classroom teaching is tailor-made, instant feedback but can't do it online. Children were so glad to be back – the social interaction.

This school leader illustrates perfectly the issue identified in the OECD report (2020) that online learning is 'sub-optimal' compared to when pupils are learning in classrooms with their teachers and their peers. The OECD report also went on to highlight the importance of developing pupils' positive attitudes towards online learning in order to keep them engaged and focussed especially when some adults lack the digital confidence to support their children's online learning. There were many issues that impacted in online engagement: digital access, lack of quiet spaces, disruption in communities due to death in close-knit communities, parents finding it challenging to support pupils' learning due to work commitments or lack of own skills and knowledge of the curriculum. Online learning was immensely difficult for learners as they are used to daily face-to-face interaction, the predictability of

school routines and ongoing monitoring and feedback in the classroom situation. Teachers and schools had a huge challenge on their hands to ensure that children were both safe and learning. Not only did they manage it but they have carried forward new pedagogies and practices.

B.2.4. Identities B.2.4.1 Teacher identities

In the contracted space of the lockdowns, there was a seismic shift in the roles and purpose of both schools as institutions, and in how the professional practices and identities of teachers became reimagined. The expectations of the professional work of teachers within a wider public discourse, by parents and families, by government and the school's regulatory body, Ofsted, suggested an identity shapeshifting for teachers as they faced multiple and often conflicting demands to meet the changing needs of students and their families.

The identities of teachers in the professional space of schools and colleges have always been a site of considerable contestation, as noted in A.2.2.4 above. Teacher identities are subject to the shaping forces of the political, social and cultural landscapes of schooling alongside the considerable mythologizing and 'redemptive narratives' that provide the discursive structure of the teacher figure in popular culture and popular imagination. The positioning of schools as sites for social transformation frames teachers as 'both the target of harsh social criticisms and the last agent of hope' (Fischman, 2020:244). These normative and polarised discourses and taken-for-granted reference points of the teacher and the professional role and professional identities of teachers were both exposed and heightened during the lockdown. Teachers, alongside other key workers, were scrutinised in both public and political spaces and subject to a range of extraordinary expectations in their roles to support both school and community.

B.2.4.1.1. Being present

The lockdowns shifted the spatiality and temporality of 'being present' in school. The normally highly regulated and bounded space and time of the school day, the lesson, the timetable, gave way to a new sense of always being present, of always being available, whether virtually or in person and sometimes both, in personal spaces of teachers' own homes. Hybrid ways of working suggested an availability and ability to connect to teachers, and 'learning' spaces became spaces of pastoral care and safeguarding responsibility, blurring the boundaries of teachers' primarily educative roles. Across all interviewees, there was a considerable prioritising of pastoral care. Disparities in students' ability to engage or access learning (as outline above in 1.2.2.1), demanded both flexibility in response and values-based approaches and resources that teachers and school leaders were responding to quickly and building and delivering 'in flight.'

Our interviewees spoke of the not always generous public perceptions of this 'presence' and the implications that teachers were 'off' work. The reality for many teachers were that many had to make a sudden shift into teaching online, whilst others were back in school within days of the announcement of a national lockdown, teaching priority groups of CYP (see A.1.1 for definition of this group). The pressures to be 'seen' to be teaching in digital spaces (e.g. in synchronous 'live' lessons), to provide "quality service" by some parents and within a broader public discourse, despite schools learning that a-synchronous or pre-recorded learning was more appropriate for the students and teachers who were experiencing multiple barriers to online learning. Our Senior leaders spoke of making local decisions for pre-recording lessons, despite such pressures. The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson (TES, January 2021) suggested live teaching was "shown to be the best way in terms of delivering teaching" despite numerous contradictions to this position from the regulatory body, Ofsted. There was a recognition by our interviewees that teachers themselves were also navigating their own children's care and 'home schooling,' caring responsibilities, bereavements, and personal health concerns. The presenteeism of 'live' learning had some unintended consequences on the

wellbeing of both students and teachers. All the senior leaders in our study talked of the mitigating steps they made to try to manage a culture of overwork and burnout as formerly bounded time and space of schooling blurred. Interviewees noted that having both online and in person schooling was like running and delivering “two schools in parallel” where there was “no let up at all.” The notion of ‘being online’ was a “misnomer,” when the school was open and provided a multitude of other services and support for both the teaching of key worker and vulnerable family children, and beyond into supporting the wider community.

B.2.4.1.2. Shifting responsibilities

Teachers’ responsibilities shifted beyond the school gates. Senior leaders described ways in which they fulfilled the roles of social workers and those of third sector advocacy and support for issues such as insecure housing, accessing, and completing forms for welfare and finance, addressing food and nutritional needs and in one example, accessing safe houses and liaising with the police. The presence of teachers filled the absence of many of the services upon which communities and young people had depended, most notably that of social services who were not doing any home visits, but “wanted schools to do this,” and who one of our headteachers described as inaccessible even by phone. Several schools described situations where senior leaders and teaching teams were not only present during the school day but also responded at all hours, moving beyond the boundaries of the school’s usual temporality and spatiality. They took on monitoring the safeguarding of students in their homes, sometimes with “daily or three times a week” calls, or in- person socially distant visits where they would “knock and knock” until they had seen a child was safe. Teachers delivered food parcels “All the time...hundreds and hundreds,” digital equipment and other resources. The direct contact with police in response to a domestic violence case was illustrative of the radical shifting of the roles and functions of the teachers who “became an emergency service.” The relative invisibility of this new and risky work of teachers with individuals and communities in crisis was rationalised by one headteacher as “having no other choice...who do you turn to? Where do we turn to as a school?” This was a school who already had significant community support and engagement activity as part of its day-to-day practice, but who absorbed the new ways in which their communities were made precarious during lockdown, even when the safety nets of trained services were absent. As such, the normative understanding of teaching as a vocation and the personal responsibilities associated with teaching took on a new imperative within the space of the lockdown, despite the risks to teachers’ own bodies and emotional health. Highly emotional and physical work which left “everyone exhausted” as one interviewee noted, and all referenced in some manner. Interviewees described the “toll” taken on staff who had no breaks, worked extended hours and were “still expected to teach and care” despite having family bereavements or being subject to the virus themselves. One school noted that by October 2021 there were “still over half of the staff off”, across two schools. In the interviews, the teacher body can be seen as a site where the absence of adequate support systems beyond the school played out. The failure of timely intervention from services other than the school to support the most vulnerable families, jeopardised the personal health and wellbeing of the teachers and positioned them as vulnerable within risky and precarious community relations and simultaneously responsible for fulfilling the gaps and failures of community support systems.

The identity and professional role of teachers then is a newly contested site of struggle because of the lockdown. As the responsibility of teachers for addressing the Big D ‘lost learning’ becomes firmly established within the regulatory and policy Discourses of schooling, there is a danger that the multiple other practices of teachers become invisible and ignored, other than tacit expectations that such work is part of a ‘vocational,’ ‘selfless’ commitment to a redefined notion of what schools and teachers have become. Paying attention to and interrogating these constructions of teacher bodies has enormous implications for the health and sustainability of the workforce, including that of its senior leaders, a group for whom there are notable recruitment and retention risks linked to high

stress, accountability pressures and operational demands. The demands on leaders prior to the pandemic to take technical and managerial approaches, focussed on evidencing the closing of attainment gaps were demonstrably inadequate in the face of contingent, values and human focused leadership demanded of them during the lockdowns. There are also real implications for the initial and continuing professional development of teachers, which prepares and expects of its teachers only that which fits with the dominant discourses of professional standards agendas, rather than the lived experiences of teachers exposed during lockdown.

What was particularly striking was how school leaders talked of their concerns for pupils, families, and teachers' wellbeing but when asked about their own personal challenges, they struggled to articulate the impact of the pandemic upon their own wellbeing. When pressed about their personal challenges they talked about the challenges of maintaining motivation and 'maintaining a focus on things that mattered most' or 'not letting it get too big.' And one school leader talked of how they worked hard to protect staff where possible by not always sharing the bigger picture, a view also shared by another school leader who said, 'You have to be there for your staff'. They talked of the responsibilities on their shoulders whilst looking after their own children when running a school and making important decisions.

B.2.4.2 Student identities

In contrast to the epistemic shifts in concept-making about teacher roles and identities and the spaces, places and reach of formal education practices explored above, discursivities of 'the student' appear to remain relatively stable becoming arguably exaggerated rather than transformed as the pressure on teachers to be 'present,' and 'accountable' in the absence of a wider civic infrastructure increased. Students simultaneously represent a cognitive demand (learning and knowing) and an affective demand (caring, nurturing, safeguarding) with the domain of teaching 'boundary-spanning' the domain of 'parenting' (Mitchell-Price, 2009), in both the public and civic sense, way beyond MitchellPrice's notion of 'hovering' at the "peripheries of home, school and community" (2009:14). However far from reconciled these demands work in tension as young people's bodies operate as complex discursive sites of need, absence and deficit inviting bifurcated responses that aren't necessarily (or easily?) reconcilable for either teachers as subjects or perhaps young people as objects of education practice. Yet arguably this is not a new, merely newly framed dynamic/diagrammatic.

B.2.4.2.1. Affective demands: discourse of care, wellness and resilience

School decision makers were keenly alert to affective demands of young people with this most often manifesting as concern for mental good health, wellbeing and safety. Whilst this varied by community, reflecting the ways in which structural inequalities play out in the diverse, post-industrial context of our city so that some schools "weren't managing any more trauma need than usual" and in others "all the children knew someone who'd passed away with covid...lots of loss and bereavement has gone on..." (UK5) there was a sensitivity and vigilance to mental wellbeing: "we did a mental health week when they came back...doing a whole range of things".

However, this is not necessarily a new phenomenon for many UK schools where ideas about mental good health are well embedded in existing discourses of wellness, safeguarding and the everyday practices of "managing trauma":

Our safeguarding team were very busy, very busy...but whilst that's not a good thing...we were pleased at least that they were aware...very pleased that students were able to use our [redacted] system to report any concerns they'd got about themselves, friends, families...and they were proactive at home reporting concerns about other students through conversations they'd had or whatever it might be ...we've got a strong safeguarding culture here...we did find

we'd got more much more in the way of mental health....brought to the forefront [other] issues... (UK2)

Other issues students mentioned included challenges such as living in over-crowded housing. Whilst 'safeguarding' and 'mental health' awareness have different origins they are bundled together here to connect a range of initiatives and expectations around protecting and securing the young person as they navigate their life-worlds. What is interesting about this is the ways in which these discourses face away from the practices of education silencing the connections between the cognitive and the affective and closing down exploration of 'school' as a potential site of trauma for young people and indeed their teachers (see above). Some commentators (see for example Hayes, Ecclestone) understand this as a neo-liberal effect that works to discipline the schooled subject (student and teacher) diverting attention away from more radical, socially just imaginings of/potentials for schooling. However, within the framing of such structural contentions what is evident in this study is that for these teachers attending to affective demands operates as an expression of 'professional love' [Page, 2018]), a deep commitment to 'connecting with' and 'caring for' what Noddings might call an 'ethic of care' (2003):

We did aromatherapy...what does this smell remind you of...what can it help you with...just trying to get engaged with where their mind is...trying to understand them a bit more...that's when we found that someone had passed away...(UK5)

B.2.4.2.2. Cognitive demands: discourses of knowing/not knowing

This (professionally) loving attention to affective demand contrasted with constructions of the young person as an object of the educational gaze where discourses of 'deficit' and 'loss' played out to fix young people's identities in relation to normalised (arboreal) expectations of learning and development:

what we did we looked at the curriculum to look at where children's learning was...we did a baseline and then testing at the end....but the gaps in their learning are huge...trying to bridge those gaps is our priority and then to ensure the curriculum is broad and balanced and the Maths and English it's filling the gaps and we've been doing that so we have sets...we have the children in sets so there's a teacher taking each set...and trying to find out where the children's gaps are... really as a result of the fact that we found they weren't very independent learners at home, they couldn't manage their time very well as lots of adults found too...and also they weren't resilient when they found the work hard, so they would often give up when they found their first kind of challenging process or challenging question they were set so I think at the start it was much more about how to get people engaged.

In contrast to the ethic of care explored above discourses of learning reposition student identities as knowable and describable by the teacher as "psycho-diagnostician" (Malcolm and Zukas, 1999), they become knowable, testable, measurable, sortable beyond the affective work of 'engagement' – 'engagement in terms of what they were doing was very low...many pieces of work that didn't get done by a significant majority' - they are required to perform particular forms of schooled identity.

B.2.4.2.3. Curriculum contradictions/conundrums: bifurcation of cognitive and affective

It is possible to see in our material then that young people become sites of discursive contradiction for teachers who must at once perform the labour of 'professional love' and the work of the psycho-diagnostician holding together competing demands of care and performance. This bifurcation is not

disinterested however, and we see that the latter is often subjugated to the dominance of the former, mobilised as an enabling means to a performative end:

Initially it became a very big workload to phone those students and parents who weren't engaging and get them to understand the value...address any mental health issues...and then adapt to their own needs...as each class has its own kind of personality almost...

As such whilst the 'post-covid teacher' is epistemologically transformed the 'post-covid student' is simply a re-inscription and/or re-production of a pre-covid discursivity as discourses of care quietly give way to discourses of performance. Paradoxically this bifurcation, the holding apart of affect and cognition as relational or inter-related rather than entangled and intra-related, has the potential to exaggerate the ways in which vulnerabilities and/or marginalisation might be understood as a context for rather than an effect of schooled experience (and it will be interesting to see how this plays out for young people themselves in IO2...) potentially (and *cruelly*) undermining teachers' personal commitment to an ethic of care and the function and purpose of their 'vocational' labouring. This is underscored by concerns about how the effects would play out for children with a recognised 'special education need or disability' (known as SEND in the UK). Three of our Co-MAP schools have 18-20% of their student population with SEND. One of the schools (secondary school UK2) spoke of their students with SEND as making up a large proportion of their identified 'vulnerable' in-school student cohort during the school closures, whilst another school (primary school UK5) spoke of parents of children with SEND choosing to keep their children at home during this time. Elaborating further on their identified vulnerable population, one primary school (UK1), said the children they identified as vulnerable were those children with learning difficulties; those under a social worker; those who had a statement of social need; and their own definitions of need such as those children living in the homeless shelters. SEND also emerged as an important consideration in terms of experiences during school closures, with 'a noticeable gap in learning for children with SEND who were at home during the school closures and who struggled to participate in online learning'(UK1). The same primary school talked about the impact on children with SEND once the schools had reopened due to the Local Authority's approach to SEND 'which was in a mess prior to the pandemic' and had resulted in no external professionals being able to access the school during the school closures or on their full reopening. She spoke of a lack of specialist provision more widely with lots of children in school who needed the support and resources of a special school.

Such aspects chime with Ofsted's (2021) report on SEND during the pandemic regarding the continued deterioration of long-standing problems in the system of care for CYP with SEND resulting from the pandemic. Despite this, Ofsted's (2021) report also identified a key finding that multi-agency partnerships had improved yet specified that this improvement was not universal. In the primary school above (UK5) multi-agency partnerships had struggled to cope: a finding that could be connected to them being the only school (apart from the FE college) that was under LA governance, and not an Academy trust. Additional findings from the Ofsted (2021) report referred to heightened mental health needs and loneliness for young people with SEND that could detrimentally impact on assessment outcomes and future employment prospects for CYP. Mental health aspects for CYP with SEND came out of the Co-MAP interviews in terms of challenges for many CYP accessing remote learning provision.

B.3. Inspiring Practices

In this section we offer an illustrative selection of the many inventive examples of new practice that participating schools developed as a tailored response to the needs of young people and communities.

B.3.1. Aromatherapy

UK5 Primary school developed sensory approaches to working with children to help them open up and share their experiences of living through lockdown. This helped the school to better understand children's experiences and to provide empathy and support where necessary but also to identify any emotional, mental health needs or safeguarding issues that needed signposting to specialist services.

B.3.2. Food pantry

An innovative/inspiring practice scheme established by UK3's two primary schools (with additional funding coming from the Academy Trust charity?) was what has now become a 'permanent food pantry system' and which at one of their primary schools has created a paid employment role for one of the parents. Through this scheme, the parents pay £2-3 per week and take home £40 worth of food shopping. Importantly, the food pantry scheme is open to the whole local community and not just the school community. The other primary school for UK3, provides a similar scheme in the form of a weekly 'pop-up' food pantry. Essentially, the Headteacher spoke of the pantry scheme as enabling families using it to then use their government issued vouchers for other essential items such as clothes for their children which they would otherwise have been unable to buy or referred to some parents as giving away their vouchers to other families 'who needed it more than them'. This school leader went on to criticise the Government's recent reduction of the vouchers on top of their cutting of the additional £20 Universal Credit top-up for families: consequently leaving families now struggling to survive again, which in turn leads to a greater dependency on schools.

B.3.3. Play Packs

UK5 Primary School created 'play packs' for children which included a variety of materials for creative learning and play providing opportunities for more hands-on, embodied experiences beyond screen mediated interactions. Packs included a range of materials e.g. crayons, coloured pans, mini whiteboards and playdough and were made available to each child.

B.3.4. Expanded Enrichment

Since returning to school UK1 Primary school has expanded its range of wrap around provision to provide through pupils with high quality enrichment activities through a range of after school clubs (including cookery, computing, first aid, sports, arts and craft, singing, dance). This has enabled over half the pupils to access at least one out of school enrichment activity per week over the last term. This will continue through the coming academic year. The schools breakfast club is funded by Greggs (national bakers' shop chain) and caters for upwards of 40 pupils each morning.

UK2 Secondary school has introduced an online package of enrichment activities to enable flexible participation in activities like drama from home which supports young people who have responsibilities for caring for younger siblings in the hours after school.

Section C: Summary of key points

Key Points

1. **Role of Schools in Communities:** Schools played a pivotal role in communities during periods of school closures often becoming the only front-line public service open and accessible to local communities beyond emergency services (police, fire brigade, ambulance service).

2. **'School community':** Definitions of 'school community' were fluid, contingent, and responsive to the rapidly changing needs of different groups. The experiences of families, and the impact of Covid on them, within a school's locality varied greatly according to transiency. More established communities experienced differing impacts, such as bereavement and overcrowding within households, compared to more transient communities who had urgent welfare needs.
3. **School Services:** School functions expanded beyond education to incorporate a range of services including provision of food, redistribution of household items (including washing machines and beds) as well as brokerage and advocacy functions. These provisions continued into the school holidays in recognition of the ongoing challenges facing some families and schools are now continuing to provide food and basic necessities for families as a 'year-round response' to meet local needs as increased welfare payments agreed for the period of lockdowns are phased out.
4. **Teachers' roles and identities:** Teachers' roles expanded significantly, and often without boundary, to span education, social service and sometimes parenting functions. This included the necessity to accept heightened levels of physical, mental and professional risk without necessarily having access to additional specialist training or support.
5. **Digital Learning:** Whilst all school had to develop an online offer for the majority of pupils there is no settled view on the future value of digital learning as a consequence of learning online through the pandemic. Leaders expressed a range of views about the value and purpose of digital in their school curriculum that were highly situated in their understandings of their local context and community characteristics
6. **Learning:** Unlike expectations around teachers' roles and identities concept-making around of learning focussed around the 'pre-pandemic' curriculum with discourses around learning 'gaps' and 'deficits' frequently mobilised.
7. **Well-being / mental health:** Schools now place greater importance on student and staff wellbeing and embed this into their daily provision in different ways. For some schools these are new additions, whilst for others they are expanding or developing activities that were in place pre-Covid. Examples include: embedding wellbeing into their curriculum; expansion of after-school enrichment programmes; integration of online staff social gatherings; and continuation of a Community Council which focuses on pupil performance and wellbeing. There were many unknowns as to the long-term impacts on CYP mental health, such as the effect of deaths within school communities, and the conditions of poverty many CYP had experienced. All schools said relationships of their staff and student community within school had become closer as a result of the pandemic.
8. **Vulnerability:** Definitions of vulnerability shifted and expanded: with food and digital poverty affecting many more groups than schools had anticipated / than had been previously visible. There was less emphasis on specific groups such as refugees and asylum seekers, and a much broader understanding of intersectional vulnerability. Children and young people with SEND

were referred to as particularly impacted yet there appeared to be uncertainty as to what that looked like for those CYP with SEND who were kept at home during the lockdowns.

9. **Leadership / decision-making:** School leaders struggled to keep up with the frequently changing Government guidance and operated as autonomous agents in many respects. Decision-making for UK schools looked different depending on the type of governance of the schools. Schools within larger academy trusts were able to access more support mechanisms, such as digital devices, and interpretation of Government guidance came from higher up within the Trust. School 'closures' did not happen in the UK: all schools opened immediately following Government announcements of school closures and school decision-making/leadership continued into the school holidays.
10. **Bodies/ school spaces:** There were affective differences that the pandemic has had on CYP bodies in school spaces. All schools have had to manage bodies/spaces within schools in new ways such as 'bubbles', mask wearing, testing. Younger children had been affected in terms of muscle development (e.g. core strength). Anxiety was a particular factor amongst the secondary school and college in terms of the impacts within school spaces long-term, such as social distancing.

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COUNTRY REPORT: Greece

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Section A: Context Greece

A.1. Summary of the school policy context and school closures in Greece

The headteachers of the school units in Greece and particularly in Patras (where the empirical study took place) were found not to have enough opportunities for self-action, apart from the framework set by the Ministry of Education. It is evident that the Ministry of Education – the central government – took the decisions and introduces what it considers to be the most important policies. The education system operates based on the educational approaches set by the Institute of Educational Policy. Primary education in Greece includes students aged 6 to 12 divided into six classes. In terms of headteachers and teachers, most belong to the middle class, and the salaries they receive are usually lower compared to their fellow teachers in other European countries.

Regarding the school community of the schools of Patras, we could say that it is stable, as the number of students who enrol each year in the school units (enter the 1st grade of the primary school) is equal to the number of students who graduate (complete the 6th grade of primary school). Regarding the educational community, it is renewed every year – within the framework set by the Ministry of Education, as many teachers throughout Greece move from region to region, based on years of service and formal qualifications. However, the core of the educational community in each school unit remains almost the same every year. Moreover, communication and cooperation between parents and teachers was considered by the participants to be excellent – both before and during the covid-19 pandemic.

The provision of digital devices to facilitate inclusion in most schools in Patras seems to have been gradually implemented during the pandemic and while the schools were closed and after their opening until today. Of the three headteachers in Patras, two talked about the pattern we described above, and only one of them stated that digital inclusion had been implemented before the covid-19 pandemic occurred. Furthermore, this differentiation can be attributed to the socioeconomic status differences of the families that exist in each school, their profession, and their social class (socioeconomic status).

The schools remained closed for six months, and during all this time, hybrid distance education was implemented. The issues that arose were many, both for teachers and students. For example, many teachers did not have ICT training, and students did not have the necessary equipment or services to attend classes (laptop or internet connection). These issues were gradually resolved with the help of the Ministry of Education and the individual parent associations. Note that during the closing of the schools and their opening, they strictly followed the protocol set by the National Public Health Organization. For a student, teacher, or parent to enter the school, they would have to wear a mask and present a negative self-test twice a week. Otherwise, entry was not allowed.

A.2. Overview of key literature and issues and debates emerging.

The closing of schools and the sudden implementation of distance education formed a mosaic of attitudes. The respective features of the digital education platforms (i.e., e-class and e-me) worked for some teachers and did not work for some others. In the first case, many teachers recognized the opportunity to progress and gain new online teaching and communication knowledge. The teachers treat the tools of modern and asynchronous education as a potential that can serve both their own needs for producing an exciting and accessible lesson and the needs of their students to continue their

engagement with the cognitive objects. Consequently, the teachers could create functional digital classrooms.

On the other hand, in the second case, teachers turned the distrust in the tools into disbelief and chose not to get involved in distance education. The obstacles and problems that arose during digital education platforms made these platforms inaccessible to teachers. Although they existed for everyone, the problems affected everyone on a different level. The previous knowledge in ICT, the willingness to learn something new, the feedback from the school support team, their participation, and comments coming from students and their parents contributed significantly to shaping attitudes and the way teachers handled distance education (Bakirtzi, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about a multi-level shift in the use of digital media across a wide range of educational activities. The level of digitization and the integration of activities in digital technologies is a crucial criterion for dealing with the secondary complications caused by the pandemic today in the global community. The digital divide concerns unequal access to digital media and digital skills at the level of households and individuals and digital maturity in each country.

The pandemic has served as a powerful catalyst for enhancing digital performance and as an accelerator of inequality for the poorest sections of the population and countries with low maturity and inclusion into digital technologies (Zissi & Chtouris, 2020).

Section B: Mapping school leaders' responses in Patras - Greece

B.1. Discussion of the interviews

As for Patras, the sample selection was convenient – that is, we proceeded to conduct interviews with those primary school headteachers who were available and wished to give us an interview. There were three interviewees, and all were principals in primary schools in the urban centre of Patras. Therefore, the city centre was considered as an ideal choice of schools, as it gathers most of the students of the city and at the same time includes families with different socio-economic statuses. In more detail, regarding the participating schools in the city of Patras. The three schools are primary, public, and funded by the state. Regarding the distinct characteristics of each school:

- The first school (IO1GRE4) has 120 students, 30 from other countries, but those children are considered second-generation immigrants; thus, there is a high integration. The rate of children with special educational needs is 10%. Moreover, there are Roma students in a percentage of approximately 6%. Concerning the stratification, this school is considered a middle-class school.
- The second school (IO1GRE5) has 120 children, not many children from other countries (only about 2%), and few Roma students. The percentage of disadvantaged students is low, about 5%. The rate of children with special educational needs is around 3%. To the stratification, this school is considered a high-class school.
- The third school (IO1GRE6) has 192 children and several children from other countries (about 8%), including India, Albania, and Moldova (immigrant children). In the past, this percentage was even higher. As for the students with special educational needs, it is around 2%. Overall, according to the school headmaster, the rate of disadvantaged students is about 10%. For the stratification, this school is considered a blue-collar class school.

All the interviewees stated that what happened was something completely new, and at the beginning, they faced several difficulties – these difficulties concerned both students and teachers. On the one hand, the students had trouble accessing the internet or using a computer, and on the other hand, some teachers did not have ICT knowledge. The headmaster performed his work remotely – the way the headmaster managed the school unit had changed. In some cases, the headmaster's position seems to have deepened, and the pressure on him has intensified. Nevertheless, the measures introduced by the Ministry of Education were considered correct. Concurrently, the participants do not stop emphasizing the effort made by the educational community to implement distance education.

Before the period of covid-19, digital inclusion had not been implemented in all schools. Therefore, vulnerable children and those at risk of exclusion are most likely to stay out of the ICT context – this was supported by two out of the three headmasters, as one of the three schools included families from upper social classes, and digital inclusion was at a very high level both before and during covid19. In addition, there was an issue of internet access or computer use; this issue was gradually resolved with the help of the Ministry of Education, the parents' association, or other local organizations. Note that two headmasters out of three spoke to us in very favourable terms about the activities of the Ministry of Education, stating that what was provided by the Ministry of Education helped resolve several issues. In contrast, one headmaster was quite cautious, blaming the Ministry of Education for any failures during the period of distance learning.

The closure of the schools seems to have had a decisive effect on one of the three headmasters, as he stated that the whole situation intensified the pressure and the help provided to him was not enough. The other two said that there was no change in their role, and they continued their work normally – this time from their home. Perhaps the most crucial action was by the Ministry of Education through the provision of tablets to students. This action essentially continues to this day, as vouchers (discount of 200 euros) are offered to students to purchase technological equipment. Note that during the pandemic, the Ministry of Education provided the teachers the opportunity to teach their students through the computer lab at the school unit if they did not have a computer or internet connection at home.

The target groups mainly include students from other countries (except Greece), Roma children, and students with special educational needs. In addition, we can add children of indigenous families (Greeks) to these children who face grave financial problems. Therefore, we are talking about families from lower social classes and, in some cases, from the middle class. In terms of interventions, materials, and resources, we can point out the efforts of the Ministry of Education shortly after the start of distance education (due to the pandemic). It began providing tablets as a gift to students whose families were facing financial problems and were in danger of being excluded from the new school routine. This action continues by offering vouchers to students to purchase technological equipment.

Other interventions include the efforts of the parents' association and donations from local businesses & organizations.

B.2. Identification of Inspiring Practices

As already mentioned, in Greece, the education system is centralized. Therefore, the headteachers do not have autonomy to take initiatives and actions that they wish – they must be approved by the Ministry of Education or be within the framework set.

For this reason, it is difficult to identify an inspired practice. However, we can identify as an “encouraging initiative” the vouchers given by the Ministry of Education to students to purchase electronic equipment (basically tablets, but also computers) that continues to day - this was a practice adopted when schools were closed and aimed at normalizing inequalities and eliminating the digital divide especially for students on the verge of social exclusion.

Section C: Summary of key points

Key Points

Regarding Patras, COVID-19 decisively changed the way the headmasters managed the school. This process was done remotely by the headmasters. The pandemic seems to have burdened the headmasters, and their obligations have increased. The offer of tablets to students by the Ministry of Education can be considered a unique action. This action continues to this day, helping several children.

Patras' target groups include children from other countries, Roma children, children with special educational needs, and children from Greece from low-income families. A key common feature of these children is that they come from the lower social strata. Special assistance to these children was provided through donations by the Ministry of Education, the parents' associations in each school, and local businesses.

Regarding Patras, cooperation and mutual support are the educational community's essential elements. Moreover, the headmasters think they have adequately responded to the new circumstances. The headmasters said they did the best they could. It was challenging to implement socialization, the transmission of values, and ethics; Pedagogy changed, but it retained its character. The main thing is that people must adapt quickly to a rapidly changing environment. The school learned to operate digitally, and the students showed particular interest in the lessons through computers. The educational community has demonstrated how strong it is and has managed to cope with this unique situation.



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COUNTRY REPORT: Hungary

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Section A: Context Hungary

A.1. Theory: Articles and interesting practices

A.1.1. On the impact of local and national covid-19 closure/lockdown policies on schools

Lockdowns in Hungary were initiated by the state, and although parents could have requested daily childcare in small groups, such requests were rare (around 1-2 %) and schools only offered supervision, but no teaching. Every school was closed for several months, with no exceptions (although during the second and third waves of the restrictions, the very young could participate in education offline throughout the country). The circumstances forced the whole educational system to continue online, though the necessary infrastructure was not accessible to many, especially to those living in more deprived, rural areas of the country. Senior teachers were asked for the number of days for which the school had to operate online – they could not give an exact figure. They could roughly guess the number of months affected by the lockdown. According to their estimates the first wave started in mid-March 2020 and lasted until the end of the academic year. The second wave of restrictions only affected older students (it started in early November 2020), and finally the third happened during the spring of 2021 from March to June (the time of opening varied: for some it happened earlier in May that year, but some had to wait until the end of that academic year).

A.1.2. On vulnerable young people and those at risk of exclusion

The Covid-19 policies applied in schools had a profound effect on all children. The absence of each other's presence, the missing informal connections during breaks or after schooltime took its toll on all the pupils. Though they initially enjoyed themselves amongst the new circumstances, at the end they really missed their teachers, their friends and classmates. As mentioned earlier, institutions were not provided with the means of online education by the state. This meant that although every child experienced the downsides of the pandemic, deprived children experienced an even higher degree of exclusion than before. According to the interviewees involved in this research, a few people were totally left out of online education due to insufficient resources. This included a maximum of five families per institution. This, combined with the slower pace of education online, meant that by the time schools were allowed to be open, teachers had to do a lot of catching up with most of the students. One senior teacher suggested that digital education, combined with the unevenly distributed access to technology, further increased the gap between students of different social and economic backgrounds.

To illustrate the digital infrastructure available to most people appearing in the interviewee's remarks, the following should definitely be addressed: most families had limited resources, nonetheless most of them managed to provide the children with at least a smart phone for educational purposes. Furthermore, between lockdown waves, the wealthier could invest in additional digital tools (laptops, tablets, etc.). Two interviewees mentioned that even when families had enough cell phones or other devices, they could not access sufficient internet bandwidth, or in very extreme cases: even electricity. Teachers also had problems with accessing the internet: they could not permit everyone to turn on their cameras or microphones at the same time during the digital classes as the connection would

have collapsed due to overload. To cope with these circumstances, many students, who otherwise would have been excluded, were granted a 'paper-based' solution. This included teachers writing down or printing homework and other assignments and sending it out with the help of the local postal services. This method was proven to be limited in efficiency. In this case an alternative was to have pupils pick up the paper-based assignments themselves. Oral exams were conducted via telephone. The most useful platforms for teaching according to interviewees were the so-called 'Kréta' (Chalk) system (a Hungarian online platform originally designed for the administration student assessment) or the Google Classroom.

Section B: Mapping School Leaders responses in Hungary

B.1. Data: National experiences

B.1.1. Sample and selection of interviewees for national experiences

LMA has been working with the schools of the five interviewees for several years. Four of these schools are base schools for our educational programme, Dragonfly (can we add a link/URL to this programme? Might of interest to readers). The fifth school has also been a very active participant in the programme and the school head has attended several of our training sessions as well as one in Amsterdam. We chose them because through the years we had developed a high level of trust with them, and we knew they would be open and truthful if we could grant them anonymity. All these schools have a large number of socially and economically disadvantaged students (can we illustrate this with the data from the schools?). In order to get a wider aspect of the situation, after the five interviews we contacted the heads of two more educational institutions that are very different: one is a Catholic after school support programme, specially designed to help Roma students for free, the other is an expensive private school in Budapest. We asked them to read the summary of the five interviews and to comment on them, pointing out the similarities and the differences. These comments are also included in our country portrait.

B.1.2. Senior leaders' perceptions

B.1.2.1. Perceptions on local and national covid-19 closure/lockdown policies on schools

For most schools in Hungary the first lockdown came as a 'cold shower'. Teachers were required to switch to online education overnight. No previous preparations were made. The online workflow was said to be hard to integrate into everyday practices because of an array of factors. First, teachers had to gather intelligence about the equipment available to local families and as it turned out parents were not always completely honest about the technical supplies of their households. Teachers also had to organise 'conferences' to decide on certain policies about platform preference, curriculums and rearranging assignments. The use of platforms was somewhat diverse: some used Facebook Messenger groups, others stated it was not that useable, some used the Kréta system and some the Google Classroom. As described earlier, many students could only rely on 'paper-based' education which led to chaotic daily schedules on the teachers' part: often they had to work from early morning to late at night with minimal or no breaks. The hardest part amongst these circumstances was to keep the students motivated, to maintain their openness and cognitive abilities. Most of the time parents

were cooperative, especially in later lockdown waves. Interviewees complained that they could only teach superficial knowledge during times of the digital education as suitable learning materials had to be rearranged and often reduced to a minimum. The only upside mentioned during the interviews was the loosening control of the state: the previously rigid system was much more lenient regarding educational or other organizational issues.

B.1.2.2. Perceptions on local and national activities related to vulnerable young people and those at risk of exclusion

During the lockdowns, priorities of teachers did not fundamentally change compared to the pre-covid era. Being situated in more deprived areas the focus of education remained the same even during the pandemic: to maintain and strengthen the motivation and endurance of pupils, maintain their openness and enhance their cognitive abilities as much as possible. According to teachers, lexical knowledge can be learnt in later phases in the course of education by underprivileged students, so this should not be the primary concern in digital education, either. Due to problems with digital access, the motivation of students, and the whole infrastructure in general, the only plausible thing was to maintain knowledge already learnt before the pandemic. Proceeding with the curriculum was said to be close to impossible, though many teachers tried to be more creative making the most of the possibilities the digital environment offered. This was especially hard in the case of subjects that require some sort of interaction, like physical education, or foreign languages. Children could not maintain their daily routines, not even with the assistance of their teachers. In fact, even parents lacked the appropriate digital literacy needed for participation in online classes. Apart from the loosening control, interviewees reported about mixed experiences regarding the role of the state. Apparently, in some places the state provided equipment (mainly tablets) to the schools and students, but more often than not it simply did not get involved in solving everyday problems – or even structural ones.

B.1.2.3. Perceptions on current situation: initiatives and projects in the area of local and national covid-19 closure/lockdown policies on schools

Nowadays teachers are getting more used to the integration of digital tools into offline education too, according to the interviewees. This mechanism compliments the offline classes rather nicely, as it created opportunities for parents to get involved to a greater extent and be more informed about their children's education in general. It also made life and learning easier for pupils who could not attend classes, because they could catch up and proceed with their assignments. Probably this latter seems to be the more important aspect as even after the lockdowns many children were not allowed to go to school because parents were worried about potential infections. Many teachers have participated and/or participating now in seminars preparing them to navigate in the digital environment with higher efficiency. An interesting experience for interviewees was the fact that the so-called 'digital natives', the children were not as competent in using technology as their teachers hoped they would be. Another peculiar experience was that the felt that CYP got used to 'loneliness' during the quarantine and they had less tolerance towards each other than they used to have. Although this resulted in conflicts of different magnitude, their perception was that kids were relieved when schools reopened, and they could meet their peers offline again.

B.1.3. Facts & figures: target groups, interventions, and materials

All the institutions involved in the research are state funded institutions from different parts of the country. School from the countryside and from cities are presented in the sample. Most institutions had disadvantaged students. In some of them, the number of disadvantaged students remained moderate (staying around 10–30 percent), though in the case of others, this number is remarkably high (could be anything between 80–95 percent). Every interviewee was up to date in knowing the factors that are used for calculating if a pupil counts as being disadvantaged. The main factors are: maximum eight years spent in the educational system, home located in a segregated area and that one has received governmental subsidies in the past year. The age of students varies from school to school but all together it includes a population age ranging from 6 to 18 years. The environment of the schools varies from towns to less developed, rural areas. Unemployment is present to a high degree in these parts of Hungary. The wealthier and more educated population moved from these places to bigger cities with better prospects, leaving behind the less educated workforce. Most people are employed in (semi-)illegal conditions. The only minority here is the Roma population (apart from very few students with disabilities or special education needs, no other minorities appeared in the narratives of the senior teachers). In the case of teachers, the most important factor is the age pyramid that displays teachers getting old.

B.1.4. Lessons learnt: transfer of experiences for an effective Co-MAP project development.

When it comes to the transfer of experiences, identification of dos and don'ts, there is a need to identify what would make a difference and contribute to the delivery of a sustainable communication plan and the design of a successful and effective Co-MAP project development.

All interviewees said that they do not think there were any alternatives to what happened to education given circumstances. According to them, the only way they could perform better during the lockdown would have been if the state had helped more to create an educational environment suitable for the restrictions and accessible to all students equally. Under the conditions given at that time, both teachers and parents were overwhelmed with the surplus of tasks they needed to cope with. It took time until they could balance their daily routines and chores. Teachers emphasised that preparations could play a key role in how efficient online education can be: before the second and the third wave school staff had more time to prepare their institutions for lockdown resulting in much higher efficiency. They had more well rehearsed routines in adjusting curriculum, involving excluded pupils, cooperating with parents and maintaining transparency.

B.2. Data / Synopsis: The European dimension

B.2.1. Comparison of initiatives and projects around local and national Covid-19 closure/lockdown policies on schools

To conclude the key aspects of the current situation should be highlighted again. One of them is the integration of digital tools into offline education. Though, on the one hand this creates an opportunity for most children to catch up with the curriculum more easily, many face obstacles that are still present when accessing the educational system online. Despite the growing number of digital tools in families the situation is still less than ideal, according to senior teacher's narratives. 'Paper based' and phone-based solutions did not lead to satisfactory results: teachers were not able to make progress.

The only plausible aim they could strive for was to maintain knowledge that had been taught before the Covid-19 pandemic. Receiving no substantial help from the government, school personnel now simply hope that the number of infections stays low, thus avoiding any further lockdowns. Although the state was more lenient with administrative requirements, it did not help a lot. The freed-up time and energy of teachers was used to handle the somewhat chaotic daily proceedings of online education. The overall picture shows us that the educational system is simply not ready to fulfill its purpose properly in the event of school closures and switching to digital classes. This is not changed by any number of the seminars that aim to train the so-called digital immigrants (teachers) to be able to face the challenges the situation calls for. This situation is not that much better in the case of digital natives (students or even parents), either. Some interviewees expressed their surprise over the inability of children to adequately search for information or properly utilise the digital apparatus granted for educational purposes. Another factor should be addressed is the lack of protocols regarding the curriculum and its adaptation to digital classes. This is especially an issue in the case of the youngest who were required to learn reading, writing and calculus online.

B.2.2. Facts and figures: comparison of target groups, interventions, materials and resources

Despite the homogeneity of the sample, two groups seem to have emerged nonetheless: one with an extremely high degree (around 80–95 percent) of disadvantaged students and one with a moderate number (10–30 percent). In general, households tend to lack the sufficient degree of digital access (in extreme cases some families did not have the means to access the necessary internet bandwidth or electricity to participate in education during lockdowns). Typically, one smart phone was available for an entire family. Tablets and personal computers (laptops) were not accessible for most people. This situation improved somewhat between the further waves of restrictions as more well-off parents were able to invest into further devices. The schools involved in the research are functioning mostly in rural, deprived areas with a high degree of unemployment. These sites were functioning as industrial hubs during the socialist era of Hungary, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union and with the privatisation of most industrial assets, most factories were shut down leaving the majority of the workforce unemployed. This resulted in a huge exodus of educated employees. The population left behind is either too old or undereducated to possess occupations providing the necessary incomes to sustain life. (Semi-)Illegal employment is widespread among people living here. Another typical ‘career’ path is through low paying government funded jobs including mostly low added value physical work. Young girls give birth at an early age, while young men commute to the closest city for jobs paying extremely low salaries. The lack of employment has forced many families to rely heavily on government subsidies. Though most schools in the sample were equipped with the necessary digital apparatus, they still faced obstacles of a different nature. Some of the assignments were hard to adapt to the digital environment (such as physical education or basic literacy and calculus skills) and teachers being mostly digital immigrants had a hard time to navigate between the numerous platforms designed for online education. The high age of teachers combined with the overwhelming number of tasks imposed by digital education tremendously reduced the efficiency of teaching. An interviewee reflected on the ever-increasing gap between social groups and how this mechanism is further accelerated by the pandemic.

B.2.3. Lessons Learnt: comparison of transfer of experiences

In this section we discuss comparison of transfer of experiences, identification of dos and don'ts, that would make a difference and would contribute to the delivery of a sustainable communication plan and the design of a successful and effective Co-MAP project development.

Apart from emphasizing the anomalies experienced during digital education, most interviewees seemed satisfied with the results of their institutions. They praised the school personnel, especially the teaching staff for their creativity and persistence. None of them thought that any other endeavour could be carried out given the infrastructural conditions of their institution. At this point, the government was mentioned as the only organisation capable of improving the efficiency of their work. In their opinion, instead of making wired internet connections free of charge (which is not the one poor families had access to in the first place), the state should have given more substantial help for schools to carry out their tasks. New protocols and educational standards should have been established to cope with the dire consequences imposed on young, vulnerable people by the lockdowns. In the absence of any of the above, most schools were only able to maintain knowledge learnt before the Covid-19 pandemic, without much progress in their curriculum. In fact, curriculums needed to be reduced to a minimum with teachers limiting themselves to the basics of each subject, hoping that if they can get it across (even in a slow pace), later when the school reopens, they will be able to build on that foundation. Even with this 'minimalistic' approach to teaching, teachers had to provide many students extra classes at the end of the academic year in order to help them catch up with their peers. Apparently, there is a general need for the rearrangement, ranking of curriculums and setting up the appropriate standards that can and should be achieved in such unfortunate circumstances. Apart from the problems outlined above many senior teachers reported that the quality of connection with pupils and their parents changed a lot for the better. Families and school personnel alike learned to appreciate more the times spent together offline. Some mentioned that despite the obstacles caused by the less-than-ideal circumstances, children received more attention and care from teachers, compared to offline education.

B.3. Discussion of the interviews

B.3.1. Identification of Inspiring Practices

Nowadays teachers are getting more used to the integration of digital tools into offline education too, according to the interviewees. This mechanism compliments the offline classes rather nicely, as it creates opportunities for parents to get involved to a higher extent and be more informed about their children's education in general. It also made life and learning easier for pupils who could not attend classes, because they could catch up and proceed with their assignments. Probably this latter seems to be the more important aspect as even after the lockdowns many children were not allowed to go to school because parents were worried about potential infections. Many teachers have participated and/or participating now in seminars preparing them to navigate in the digital environment with higher efficiency. An interesting experience for the interviewees was the fact that the so-called 'digital natives', were not as competent in using technology as their teachers hoped they would be. Another peculiar experience was that the CYP got used to 'loneliness' during the quarantine and they had less tolerance towards each other than they used to have. Although this resulted in conflicts of different magnitude, the kids were relieved when schools reopened, and they could meet their peers offline again.

To illustrate the digital infrastructure available to most people appearing in the interviewees' remarks, the following should be addressed: most families had limited resources, nonetheless most of them

managed to provide the children with at least a smart phone for educational purposes. Furthermore, between lockdown waves, the bit wealthier could invest in additional digital tools (laptops, tablets, etc.). Two interviewees mentioned that even when families had enough cell phones or other devices, they could not access sufficient internet bandwidth (or in very extreme cases: even electricity). Teachers also had problems with accessing the internet: they could not permit everyone to turn on their cameras or microphones at the same time during the digital classes as the connection would have collapsed due to overload. To cope with these circumstances, many students, who otherwise would have been excluded, were granted a 'paper-based' solution. This included teachers writing down or printing homework and other assignments and sending it out with the help of the local postal services. This method was proven to be limited in efficiency. In this case an alternative was to have pupils pick up the paper-based assignments themselves. Oral exams were conducted via telephone. The most useful platforms for teaching according to interviewees were the so-called 'Kréta' (Chalk) system (a Hungarian online platform originally designed for the administration student assessment) or the Google Classroom.

Section C: Summary of key points

Key Points

One of the key aspects of the current situation is the integration of digital tools into offline education. Though, on the one hand this creates an opportunity for most children to catch up with the curriculum more easily, many face obstacles that are still present when accessing the educational system online. Despite the growing number of digital tools in families the situation is still less than ideal, according to senior teacher's narratives. 'Paper-based' and phone-based solutions did not lead to satisfactory results: teachers were not able to make progress.

The only plausible aim they could strive for was to maintain knowledge that had been taught before the Covid-19 pandemic. Receiving no substantial help from the government, school personnel can only hope that moving forward the number of infections stays low, thus avoiding any further lockdowns. Although the state was more lenient with administrative requirements, it did not help a lot. The freed-up time and energy of teachers was used to handle the somewhat chaotic daily proceedings of online education. The overall picture shows us that the educational system is simply not ready to fulfil its purpose properly in case of school closures and switching to digital classes. This is not changed by any number of the seminars that aim to train the so-called digital immigrants (teachers) to be able to face the challenges the situation calls for. This situation is not that much better in the case of digital natives (students or even parents), either. Some interviewees expressed their surprise over the inability of children to adequately search for information or properly utilize the digital apparatus granted for educational purposes. Another factor should be addressed is the lack of protocols regarding the curriculum and its adaptation to digital classes. This is especially an issue in the case of the youngest who were required to learn reading, writing and calculus online.

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COUNTRY REPORT: Netherlands

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Section A: Context Netherlands

A.1. Summary of school policy context and school closures in the Netherlands

School leaders are autonomous and independent in designing curricula, choosing pedagogical approaches (e.g. Montessori schools are very popular) entering into partnerships, and teachers choose their teaching methods as long as they meet output requirements at the end of school cycles.

School funding is around OECD average, teachers and school leaders are acknowledged as professionals with corresponding status afforded to them in society and has appropriate salaries. There is a strong teacher and separate school leader voice in education policies, and governments regularly consult both groups. Since March 2020 there has been a task force in place, established by the Ministry of Education¹, to do regular reality-checks with schools and share good practices.

Students are regularly and meaningfully involved in decisions concerning school and their own learning, although they are not formally involved in school boards that have a proportionate representation of parents and teachers. Boards have a decisive role on overall school programme, but play only a consultative role on curricula or specific activities such as open schooling partnerships as it falls under the teacher autonomy category. At the same time parents have a decisive role in questions that require the allocation of school funds or direct payment by parents. Schools still report that they are not successful enough in engaging all parents.

The school system in the Netherlands is more complex than in most countries on secondary level, and is characterised by early stranding with students having to decide on following general or different types of vocational strands at the age of 12. Some groups of schools have compensation measures in place to allow for changing paths.

A.2. Stages of the Education System

A.2.1. Childcare/ early childhood education (ISCED 0)

Prior to primary school, children from 6-8 weeks to 4 years can stay at a kindergarten (the Netherlands and Belgium have the shortest paid maternity leave, the Dutch allowance has just been increased to 16 weeks). Playgrounds are meant for children from 2 years old up. Municipalities are responsible for maintaining the quality of playgrounds.

In addition, there is early childhood education, focussed on children from 2.5 - 5 years old who are at risk through educational disadvantage.

A.2.2. Primary education (ISCED 1)

Primary education covers:

- mainstream primary education (BAO)
- special schools for primary education (SBAO)
- special schools catering for both the primary age group (SO and VSO).

¹ Country contribution at the OECD Policy Dialogues in Ghent, Belgium, 22 November 2021

Mainstream primary education lasts 8 years and is for all children aged 4-5 to 12. All children must make an attainment test in group 8 of primary school. In group 8 the primary school gives advice on which secondary school fits the level of the child. Therefore, the school examines inter-alia the learning achievements, creation and development of the primary school.

Advice on secondary education

Since 2015, the advice on secondary education prevails for the placement of students in secondary education. The school in secondary education must place the child at the minimum level that the primary school advises. In some cases, the child does not have to make the compulsory attainment test (for example, if the child has learning or behavioural difficulties or has multiple disabilities).

A.2.3. Secondary education (ISCED 2 and 3)

Secondary education encompasses schools providing:

- Pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO, duration of 4 years)
- Senior general secondary education (HAVO, duration of 5 years)
- Pre-university education (VWO, duration of 6 years)

These pathways lead on to MBO programmes. After completing a combined or theoretical programme, students may also go on to HAVO.

HAVO and VWO courses prepare students for tertiary education programmes/higher education.

A.2.4. Special Education and Practical Training (ISCED 2)

Special education covers different forms of education:

- special education/ special secondary education
- special schools for primary education
- practical education

Besides mainstream primary education and secondary education, there are schools for special primary education and schools for special (secondary) education. These schools are meant for students who need ortho-pedagogical and ortho-didactical support.

For students who have not obtained their diploma on VMBO, nor with long extra help, there is practical training. This special form of education prepares students for a place on the labour market. Special primary education is meant for all children who need ortho-pedagogical or ortho-didactical help. They attend a special school for primary education.

A.2.5. Vocational education (ISCED 2 and 3)

The Adult and Vocational Education Act (WEB, introduced in January 1, 1996) arranges secondary vocational education (MBO) and the adult education.

A student in vocational education (MBO-student) can choose between:

- school-based vocational training (BOL)
- block or day-release programmes (BBL)

BOL can be taken either full-time or part-time. Within BBL, the focus is on practical training, which takes up 60 per cent or more of the course. MBO courses can be taken at four different qualification levels:

1. assistant level (level 1)
2. basic vocational training (level 2)
3. professional training (level 3)
4. middle-management or specialist training (level 4)

A.3. School closures in 2020 - 2021

In the Netherlands there were two periods of partial school closures and no full closure at all. In the first period, between March and the beginning of May 2020 schools were partially closed for 6-8 weeks, including regular and planned spring breaks. Secondary schools fully re-opened later due to holding some of the national summative tests (but abolishing the school leaving exam). Primary school students were not assigned any online learning in most schools in this period, but government communication incentivised parents to allow for children to play as much as possible instead and to do so together. For this, the majority of schools made their playgrounds available in a surprisingly mild weather for local communities – both adults and children – 24/7.

Schools are autonomous in the Netherlands, and how partial school closures were executed, largely depended on school leadership. According to regulations, children of essential workers as well as children with special education needs or fewer opportunities were allowed to continue attending school without disruption.

Municipalities immediately started programmes to distribute laptops and tablet computers to older students in need, and thousands of devices have been handed out to families. In the spring of 2020 all shops and most services but restaurants remained fully open, thus most parents were working. The second partial school closure period started with an early winter holiday on 14 instead of 19 December and lasted until the beginning of February, a roughly 5-week period again including the regular school holiday. Secondary schools were advised to not be open at full capacity until May, but working on projects and away from school has not been alien to secondary school students before either. In this period, again, essential workers and those children whose development was at risk were allowed continue attending schools, and a high number of school leaders decided to not close any longer than for the regular school holidays. In the second partial school closure period special focus was on those finishing school as school leaving exams were planned to take place, and thus they could all continue their studies as normal.

It is important to mention that there has been a strong advice against wearing masks under the age of 12 and no mask mandates for other students either. This had a large positive impact on mental health. Also, libraries were accessible for students, although at limited capacity, all the time that helped computer access.

A.4. Overview of key literature and issues and debates emerging

There are only two studies that are available and relevant for this review. The OECD5 had published data on digital preparedness of students and teachers. Based on TALIS and PISA data as well as the OECD education indicators, the Netherlands was better prepared than average.

⁵ <https://www.oecd.org/education/Netherlands-coronavirus-education-country-note.pdf>

Classroom use of digital technologies was around OECD average, roughly half of the teachers used ICT in their teaching before 2020 according to TALIS. The percentage of teachers who mentioned that they can support their students in using ICT for learning was 73% as compared to the OECD average of 67%. The willingness of teachers to regularly participate at collaborative learning and to change is lower than OECD average, the question is whether (assumingly) it is due to the changes had already taken place or being mainstreamed. Participation in online training is way below OECD average - 14% as compared to 36%.

Access to ICT by students is well above OECD average. 95% of all students had access to computers prior to the closures, including a 90% access in the lower quadrille according to socio-economic status. 97% of students reported that they have a quiet place to study, that is 94% in the case of disadvantaged students.

Students are generally comfortable with self-directed learning, 90% of them coping with tasks is slightly above OECD average. At the same time, Dutch clearly prioritise learning outside of school with only 36% of students focus on learning at school as much as possible as compared to 47% OECD average. Parental support in learning is slightly above the 89% OECD average at 92%.

Another available study 7 on “learning loss” in the first partial school closure period highlights that the Netherlands has the highest rate of broadband penetration in Europe.

This study compared data from 15% of Dutch primary schools from the years of 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020, and has uncovered a 0.5-2.5% percent lower achievement. This is not surprising as for primary school children remote learning was not promoted. However, they report a dissatisfaction with remote arrangements and uneven home support in learning.

The study makes an in-depth analysis of the impact of parents’ levels of education and other factors such as migrant backgrounds, but doesn’t uncover serious issues. However, the study does not mention what percentage of children from different backgrounds were actually beneficiaries of school closures being partial and could continue to go to school.

Regardless of the low percentage of students whose school learning was hindered by school closures, the study points out that keeping schools open must remain a number one priority.

A third report 8 by researchers at Utrecht University was focusing on parents. This shows that during the closure periods parents started to work more than usual. Leisure time available for parents substantially decreased and the situation did not resolve by the summer of 2020 either with mothers reporting a much bigger decrease. At the same time, there has been a shift in gender roles with father taking on more child care obligations while more arguments were reported. Parents are quite satisfied (68-73%) with the division of child care and household tasks.

Section B: Mapping school leaders’ responses in the Netherlands

B.1. Discussion of the interviews

Interviews were made with the leaders of a primary school implementing Montessori pedagogy in a privileged area of Amsterdam, a general secondary school near the German border with also fairly

⁶ This might be one of the explanations for low numbers of teachers switching to online teaching, preferring project work of groups of students or continuing f2f teaching during partial school closures.

⁷ Enzell, P., Frey, A., Verhagen, M. (2021) Learning loss due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2022376118>

⁸ <https://theconversation.com/five-things-we-learned-about-dutch-parents-during-the-pandemic-newresearch-151616>

privileged students, and a group of 13 schools – primary, general secondary and vocational – in the middle of the Netherlands with a relatively disadvantaged student population.

Approaches and challenges during the first and second school closures were different in all schools with the dangers relatively unknown during the Spring of 2020. However, the Netherlands was somewhat luckier in this sense as the first outbreaks were relatively large due to the high number of people coming back from winter holidays abroad and attending the Carnival festivities in very large numbers in the South of the country. For this reason, the government's "intelligent lockdown" approach, basically leaving it to the people to take measures they see fit was well received as most of the population had personal – even if second hand – experiences of the severity of the situation or rather the lack of it. In the winter of 2020, the government decided to go for stricter measures that were neither enforced nor taken very seriously.

The three most impacting measures mentioned by senior leaders were 1. the closure of many catering establishments that resulted on the one hand in students losing their part time jobs (as most students over 13 work part time either in retail or catering) and on the other hand parents being sent home with no work at hand, 2. the strict lockdown of old peoples' homes resulting in many families rescuing their elderly relatives and taking them home upending family balances and sometimes resulting in a lack of quiet place for the children (while another number of especially younger children were affected by not being able to meet their grandparents), and 3. working from home for highly educated parents with longer working hours and often taking the family ICT equipment for work. Secondary schools also reported an impact of the first days of the brief curfew period. As there was no real understanding of how much it will be enforced, secondary school students partied until the early hours of the morning to avoid fines, thus being less able to concentrate during the day. All schools invested in disinfectants, focused somewhat more on cleaning and allowed the wearing of masks although it was discouraged (before the school closures it was forbidden according to Dutch law not enforced at the moment).

The Amsterdam primary school is located in a neighbourhood where the majority of people took relatively many precautions. They are a small school with a strong parent and teacher community. During the two brief periods of partial school closures, they decided not to open the school buildings, but parents took turns in providing childcare and activities for groups of children. This is not an unusual setting for many of them as parents are engaged in day-to-day school activities. They have an international community, and they reported anxiety over not being able to see relatives and families. Many people were prevented from visiting relatives or receiving them during the Christmas holidays due to travel restrictions. Being a Montessori school helped to implement holistic measures that balanced curricular and non-curricular learning.

In the secondary school, disabled children and children coming from families with more challenging backgrounds were encouraged to keep attending school. In the first school closure period, it was a relief for teachers that they did not have to focus on school leaving exam preparations, but at the same time the lack of these exams was a kind of anti-climax for many students. Also, it was problematic that these students had no actual schoolwork and also often no work to do for a long period. Although they were required to attend classes (in person or virtually according to their choice) and do schoolwork until the end of April, many were not motivated to do so, and even if they were, the period between the end of April and end of August when university started was too long not being able to work either.

The interviewees consider it a good decision on the government's side to hold the school leaving exams in 2021 and prioritising the education of those in the final grades, adding to their motivation. Thus, during the winter closure, teachers were somewhat overburdened with working with students attending part time and working autonomously part time. Part time school attendance was not a problem, the overwhelming majority of students did not miss any schooldays, although school leadership was lenient on truancy.

In the groups of schools we interviewed the situations were complex which called for complex solutions. Leadership built on strong school-family relationships and from the announcement of the first school closures they implemented a direct personal relationship approach to convince families with children at risk or with special needs to keep attending schools. They implemented a similar approach to teachers during and also after the school closure periods by making it possible to stay at home if they felt in danger. In the case of both children and teachers the attendance rate with this soft approach after the school closures was well over 95%. During the first school closure school attendance based on agreements with the families was a little under 50%, and most of their schools worked at nearly full capacity during the second period with secondary schools offering in-school learning 2-3 days week and individual/group assignments on the other days, having about half of the students present in the building at any given time.

While it was not a problem in the Amsterdam primary school, the other schools experienced an increase in tensions at home, even aggressive behaviour by parents experiencing unemployment, self-employed people not receiving government support and uncertainties.

Spending more time online has resulted in some cyberbullying incidents, but it was not a major challenge. Spending time outside and doing physical activities was strongly incentivised by government and schools, so senior leaders have not experienced major decrease in health. A lot of families have adopted dogs for company, but also fearing lockdown and finding them a possible escape (reading reports from Italy or Spain). It is posing a challenge with families going back to fully normal routines.

Dutch media was relatively balanced when reporting on coronavirus, and open discussions with scientific evidence being available was encouraged. It was very helpful that for the first months the national public health institute provided measured explanations on the situation and why measures are not necessary, why children are not at risk and what precautions are really necessary. Interestingly enough, according to a study published in the end of 2020 (mentioned by one of the leaders) shows that over 1/3 of Dutch people do not even wash their hands regularly, eg. after using the bathroom. In all schools, senior leaders had detected cases of families that switched to panic mode. Building on strong family-school relations, leaders have taken steps to ease this pressure on children. Fatalities or serious cases of coronavirus infections were very rare and impacted mostly very old or chronically ill relatives. However, grief as a natural consequence had to be tackled as usual. In the Spring of 2021, teachers were given priority with the vaccination, that caused some disruptions due to severe reactions (one of our interviewees was severely impacted personally), but no major disruptions in teaching or deaths (while the implementation of CoMap in the Netherlands is currently impacted by the death of the artist colleague by the vaccine).

Some children spent more time indoors and alone than usual. As a result, there are more severe and frequent cases of viral respiratory infections that are not coronavirus since the start of the 2021/22 school year.

B.2. Identification of Inspiring Practices

1. **Open school yards policy:** This was a typical practice all over the country. Opening schools' playgrounds and school facilities 24/7 made community engagement stronger, incentivised active living and sports, and supported well-being. Most schools still keep their yards open when they are not used by classes.



2. **Strong collaboration between school and family:** Knowing your families support making decisions together for the best interest of the individual student and also of the whole of the family. Strong relationships help overcome fears and help understand what is best for each child. The school is also more aware of the challenges that may impact learning outcomes and behaviour.
3. **Incentivising collaborative learning of students inside and outside of schools:** Autonomous learning strategies in place helped secondary schools to not be too crowded, easing possible fears, while it incentivises children to spend time together and also gain soft skills useful for later life. This can help prevent decrease of learning outcomes in case working outside of the school becomes necessary again.

Section C: Summary of key points

Key points

The Netherlands was one of the few countries that had no full school closures and no mask mandates for children. School autonomy made it possible to provide education in the school for all in need. It has proven to be a successful approach with better levels of mental health, well-being and satisfaction while there were no negative epidemiological consequences.

The Netherlands is well equipped for and students are used to independent work using digital means, while not focusing on school learning only. Municipalities supported those in need of digital tools. It was an understandable, but bad decision to not hold the school leaving exams in 2020. Many students had difficulties due to circumstances outside of schools such as (temporarily) losing their jobs or rearranged households due to elderly relatives moving in with them.

It is important to mention that most probably any further implementation of CoMap will happen in schools other than the ones involved in this report due to unforeseen change of artistic support.

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- Country contribution at the OECD Policy Dialogues in Ghent, Belgium, 22 November 2021 (oral)



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COUNTRY REPORT: Germany

Authors: Thomas Köhler, Jacob Romankiewicz, Lena Citra Manggalasari

Section A: Context Germany

A.1. Theory: Articles and interesting practices

To slow the spread of the Covid 19 pandemic, the majority of German states closed their schools on March 16, 2020. Learning since then largely took place as distance learning until the 2020 summer vacations - an experience that was to be repeated shortly after the start of the 2020/2021 school year. The situation was new for all involved and held many challenges. What data is available on the experience gained in the process? To an unusual extent, distance learning has been and continues to be the subject of extensive regional, and in some cases national, media coverage since its inception. This has mostly focused on presenting case studies from a variety of perspectives - teachers, principals, students, parents, educational researchers, school administrators, and school policy makers - as well as occasional smaller regional surveys of parents, students, and teachers.

For a detailed description of theoretical approaches and research studies, please refer to the introduction of this report, section "Empirical findings on the role of digital technologies from German education research".

Section B: Mapping School Leaders Responses in Germany

B.1. Data: National experiences from Germany

B1.1. Sample and selection of interviewees for national experiences

Overview of interview partners Co-MAP

Name	Institution	Function	Date of Interview
NN	BSZ Bau und Technik Dresden	Inclusion Assistant	December 2, 2021
NN	TU Dresden/ Universitätsschule der TUD	Project Leader / Professor Inclusion	December 3, 2021
NN	BSZ für Technik II Handwerkerschule Chemnitz	Counseling teacher/inclusion officer/specialist advisor "Inclusion"	December 7, 2021
NN	76. Oberschule Dresden	Coordinator All day offer	December 8, 2021
NN	BZ Lernen und Technik gGmbH Dresden	CEO	December 9, 2021
NN	Akademie für berufliche Bildung Dresden (AfBB)	Assistant principal	December 16, 2021

In order to get the broadest possible spectrum of measures, six interviews with different school types were undertaken in December 2021. Various statements, which frequently refer to respective problems during the pandemic in each school or age group, came up in these interviews.

The results were obtained from the university school of TU Dresden, which currently includes classes 1 to 7. The pupils are therefore between the ages of 6 and 13 years old. The high school ("Oberschule") survey covers grades 5 to 10, the students range in age from 11 to 16 years old. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with representatives of two (state) vocational training centres. The

vocational students start at the age of 16 and continue up to adulthood. The students of AfBB (Academy for Vocational Education) are also 16 years and older. At this private vocational school, it is possible to take the Abitur, completed vocational training or carry on further higher education level. The BZ (Education Centre for Learning and Technology) is a company that advises educational service providers and carries out partly further training which participants are all adults.

B.2. Senior leaders' perceptions

B.2.1. Perceptions on local and national covid-19 closure/lockdown policies on schools

Diverse perceptions of local and national covid-19 closure and lockdown policies on schools were the target groups to which the surveys referred. A partial specification of the perceptions is therefore necessary.

In the university school of TU Dresden, the school's notion was geared towards digitization and this approach did not run into any obstacles. All students were already equipped with a laptop and other learning facilities by the school. This called "laptop driver's license" which transformed the old teaching activities smoothly into digital teaching. Furthermore, most young teachers bring a certain affinity for this type of teaching. Nevertheless, there are continuously problems until now, since the cooperative learning style that was actually intended, cannot be fully implemented due to the pandemic.

The interviewees in other schools considered the decisions by politicians more critically. While there was still a lot of understanding for the first school lockdown (March 2020), as nobody had any real experience of dealing with a pandemic, in the subsequent lockdowns, decisions were clearly rejected. Due to the exhaustingly implemented hygiene protocols in the schools, these were no longer perceived as a place with an increased risk of infection. At least the disadvantages of a school lockdown outweigh the benefits of the pandemic restriction from the perspective of the high school and vocational school centres. In contrast to the university school, the implementation of digital learning did not run so smoothly in these types of schools. In vocational training in Germany, there is also the aspect of dual training, which makes vocational school only a temporary place of learning. During the lockdown, the training companies tried to bind the students more to the companies, as the high level of sick leave created gaps. Some vocational school students also have children of their own who then had to be cared for at home. All of the interviewees criticized the short-term nature of the measures to be implemented by the government, some of which were supposed to be implemented over the weekend, and which posed considerable problems for the schools.

Despite this determined rejection of some measures, the school's internal policy was highlighted as very good and efficient policy. Since many measures to combat the pandemic were decided at the level of the German federal states, on the interviews in December 2021, there was a discussion about the possibility of another school lockdown shortly before Christmas, which ultimately did not happen. Representatives of adult education welcomed this, as politicians were allowed to learn from the previous lockdowns. Practical vocational training in Germany in the lockdown did not work well. The representatives of this area of education therefore felt neglected by the political decisions.

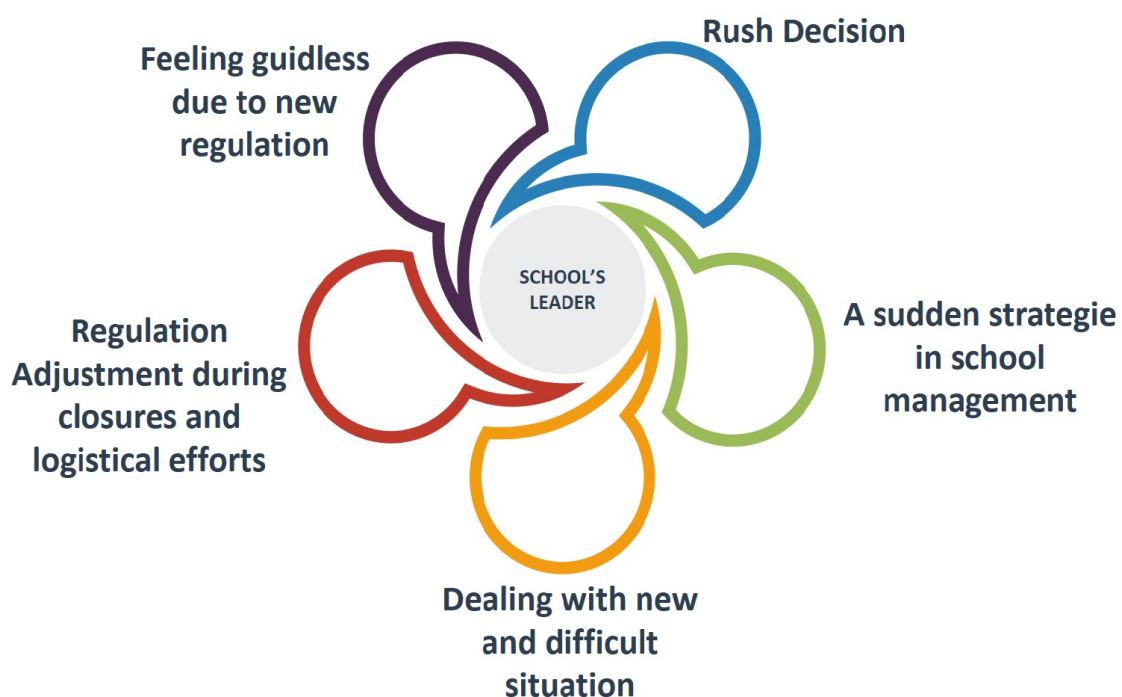
Many leaders were facing a difficult situation during the schools' closure, particularly in the first lockdown. Setting a learning teaching strategy in the schools' closure was also not simple. The school

management, teachers, students and parents need assistance to adapt with the new learning system. Moreover, in the vocational schools, all the practices are implemented directly in the school since all the learning tools are inside the schools. However, a vocational school uses a longitudinal axis platform to hold training, i.e. online. In this case, managing 1900 students in the Vocational School Centre was a huge challenge.

Accommodating all the needs of students and teacher through online was challenging, but the management had to ensure that all students had the right timetables and were able to take a part in the online lessons. Often, the management made a lot of phone calls, letters and even telephone conferences to organise the online learning activities.

Considering that many students were struggling to be able to cope with the material, coordinating with the teachers was also a challenge. There were copious tasks that had to be completed in self-study and it is clear that the students had to deal with obstacles when studying independently. Students have to analyse, elaboration and research by themselves. These are activities which commonly assistance directly by their teachers in the classroom. Students can also register themselves via online conference that they need assistance and this approach was helpful.

How overall respondents perceived the local and national Covid-19 measures to close schools?:



B.2.2. Perceptions on local and national activities related to vulnerable young people and those at risk of exclusion

In order to summarize the results, a clear distinction has to be made between the school types. At the university school (6 to 13 years old), as well as at the high school (11 to 16 years old), the statements on vulnerable young people apply to inclusive students, i.e. students with a learning disability, with emotional support needs, students with intellectual disabilities, etc. At the high school with a clearer focus on a social need. In the other school forms in the youth and adult area, it is exclusively about the students with those at risk of exclusion due to social weakness.

There were no national measures created specifically for the pandemic. The results therefore relate to the internal school changes to the measures that were in place anyway. Overall, however, far too little has been done for groups of people who are particularly worthy of protection. For students with intellectual disabilities and those with motoric problems such as spasms, the school lockdown, as well as the general contact restrictions, meant a complete loss of support. Physiotherapy no longer took place, so that in some cases the physical condition could not be maintained. Integration workers could not make home visits because they were prohibited. In the field of adult education, contact with a few students broke off completely because they could no longer be reached. As a result, lower grades were also measurable, up to a higher rate of students who had to repeat a year.

In the other areas of special educational needs, such as learning disabilities in children, as well as social weaknesses in older students, many positive measures were taken by the schools. The university school developed differentiated learning material for students with learning disabilities, with instructions for parents to support them, which worked well. However, this was not a substitute for a teacher as a reference person.

Among the older students in the other types of school, few students benefited from distance learning because the social pressure was gone and they were better able to learn independently. For many learners however, the situation worsened due to the pandemic. Some summarized results among the socially disadvantaged students are a noticeable increase in weight, increased auto-aggression, depression, sadness, fear of infection, family imbalances, also due to different views on the subject of vaccination. A few students could not take part in the digital lessons because they had no internet at home or no digital device. However, they managed the situation individually, so that these conditions remained the exception.

In the vocational school sector in particular, there was a lack of direct contact with students in the lockdown and there was also a lack of opportunity to exert influence. There were no separate measures within the school either.

During the lockdown, the teachers delivered the tasks and received the feedback from the students, which used to give explanation to the students. This approach was not effectively implemented in this group of vulnerable students. Mostly, the teachers did not receive any feedback. Establishing communication with the training companies to discuss about the students' condition have been done, but at that moment, any kind of help came too late.

It is hard to standardize because all students and teachers were overwhelmed with the situation. The self-structured learning was more stressful for some students depending on the levels of support available at home because maybe some students got a support at home and some not. Due to the perception of the senior leaders that is why it is hard to generalize since each student has different background, but today the students become stronger than ever.

For many parents it was a struggle, even the children said that they were good and able to manage themselves. Indeed, the parents see that it was true that they managed their academic workload but there were downsides to their health, but during lockdown, the children have gained their weight. That is the signal that they are not healthy. There are feeling that felt by some children e.g. feeling that they are burdened and tend to aggressive actions. The worst feeling presented in the interviews was they felt sad since they felt thrown.

How overall respondents perceived local and national policies affected vulnerable young people and those at risk of exclusion?



B.2.3. Perceptions on current situation: initiatives and projects in the area of local and national covid19 closure/lockdown policies on schools;

Total lockdown time in the schools was relatively short. In addition, there were variants of alternating lessons i.e. half the amount of students in the class or school learned at different times. Therefore, one of the most important measures is self-awareness regarding to hygiene concept that implemented individually at the schools. It is not only the announcement of a rule, such as the obligation to wear masks or a minimum distance of 1.5 meters to be maintained, but these regulations must also be checked. This task was assigned to the teaching staff even during the breaks. A creative solution was implemented at the high school by hiring the instructors/teachers/artists from the discontinued allday programs as supervisors. It was also possible to counteract a loss of payment for this group.

The most successful measures in schools involved the implementation of digital teaching. The various learning platforms did not have to be created from scratch, but already existed before the corona pandemic because of the digital pact concluded at national level in 2018. However, they were used to different extents in the school types. The university school has made intensive use of its own digital networking opportunities since it was founded in 2019. The "LernSAX" platform was used at the secondary school and the vocational training centres. This platform was not used intensively until the pandemic, which led to initial difficulties for both students and teachers. In the meantime, there was

very positive feedback from all interview partners from these schools and the digital learning platform with a wide variety of application options will also be used beyond the pandemic. The same applies to the "ILIAS learning platform", which is used by AfBB.

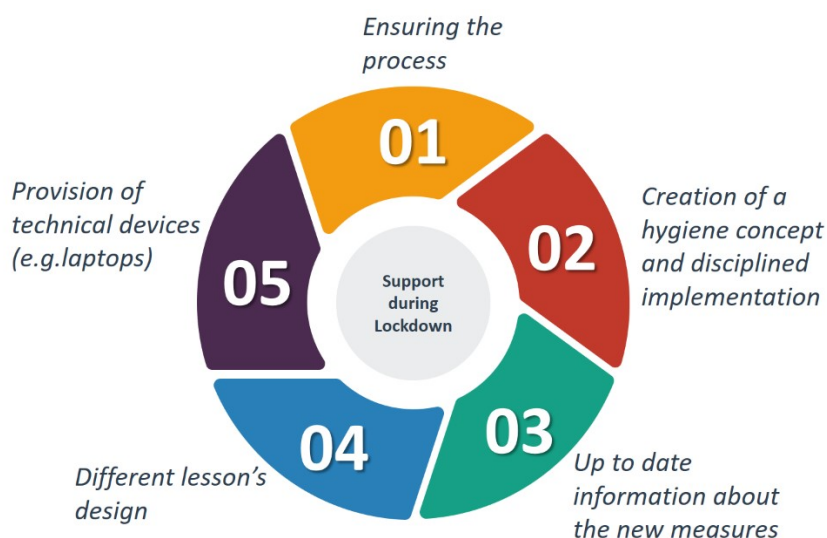
Other successful measures to deal with the pandemic can be found in the personal initiative of teachers and other staff:

- own new technology purchased by teachers (university school and BZ (Learning and Technology))
- Mutual training in team meetings, handouts (high school and BZ (Learning and Technology))
- Corona as a lesson topic: the "Corona Challenge" served to creatively transform the teaching material in such a way that the students could participate at home, e.g. instead of formulating building instructions according to the curriculum, a recipe was chosen, which was then also cooked and presented by videos and photos (university school)
- Learning sponsorships (also taken over by students), "inclusion tandems" (High school and BSZ)
- Flashcard Project: Instructions for parents to support students (second Lockdown in High School)
- Summer school (project at High school)
- School psychologist as contact person (AfBB): she conducted a survey among the students and displayed the results in the school building, so that everyone could identify themselves and were not alone with their problems

Some reflections regarding to school closures are also essential i.e. there are concerns, particularly in relation with learning and skill disparity among real secondary school students in the lockdown times because somehow the learning teaching process was not the same comparing to the normal situation. The honorary staff was a good support to school, moreover to the students during school closures because in the first lockdown the work change into rotation system, which need sufficient human resources. In this phase means that respondents supervised, made sure that the learning groups were not separated, introduced extra supervision so that everything was pleasant slightly, because as teachers we could not do that easier at all in class. Then this allowed senior leaders to have a comprehensive oversight. The honorary staff was enormously helpful that they secured the breaks. That relieved us immensely.

In the second lockdown, the idea of developing the learning group projects came up that more were prepared and intense. The goal is to support the pupils and parents during a learning from home policy. In the second lockdown, the learning teaching activities were improved. It can be seen from the 50 students who registered within a very short time, reported that they need assistance and teachers could directly responded through online platform.

What kind of support during lockdown that overall respondents mentioned during the interview?.



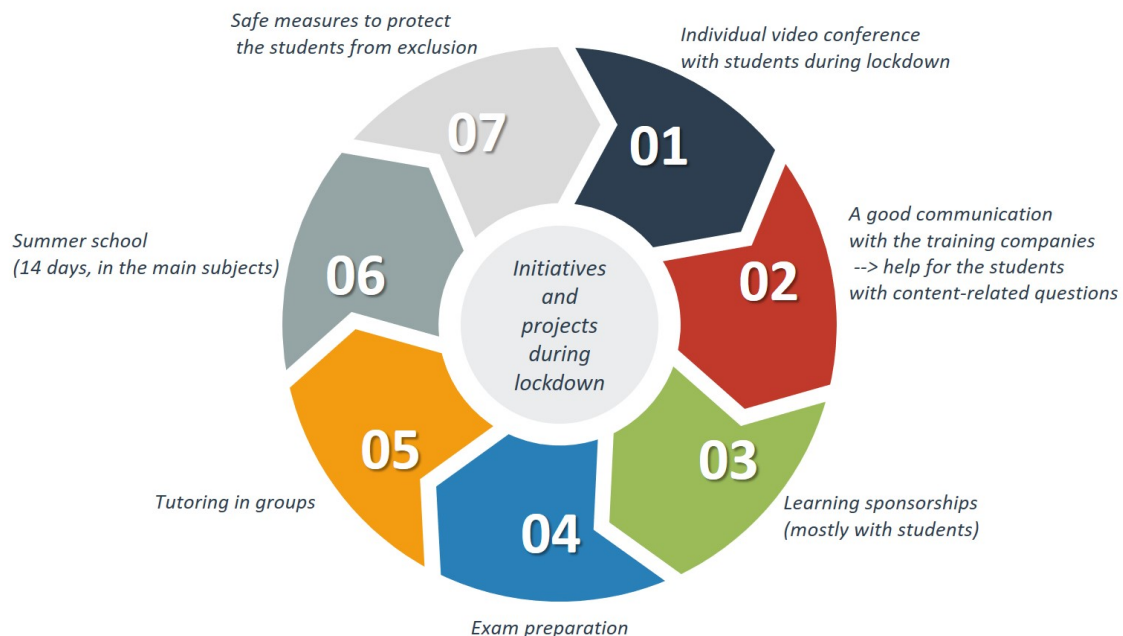
B.3. Facts & figures: target groups, interventions, and materials

All schools and education providers have tried to resolve the changed conditions in a certain way according to the target groups. Some attempts have been made on the part of the vocational schools to graphically implement complex practical training scenarios in such a way that they can also be taught digitally. The teachers also learned and appreciated many new digital possibilities.

Furthermore, the target group-oriented intervention refers to a new dimension of communication. In the case of the vocational schools, this was individual communication with the training companies. It had to ensure that the students had the opportunity to pass the final exams. This worked very well at the local level, since local peculiarities could be addressed. At national level, e.g. nationally formulated tasks of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, there were limitations and poorer results.

In the school types with younger students, the target group-oriented intervention worked better, also because it is not just 4-week blocks of instruction, as in the vocational school, but partly all-day assistance. Furthermore, in classes 1 to 10 it is easier resorted to existing mechanisms that do not only exist during the pandemic. This applies in particular to vulnerable young people and those at risk of exclusion.

What overall respondents mentioned regarding to examples of initiatives and projects in the school in relation to local and national Covid-19 school closure/lockdown policies?



B.4. Lessons learnt: transfer of experiences toward effective Co-MAP project development.

All respondents agree that there is no digital substitute for face-to-face teaching and perhaps there will not be replaced in the future either. Even if there are positive aspects that lead to mixed classes, online teaching is lacking of eye contact since the student just sees the monitor. This case should be of concern particularly in the area of special educational needs.

In work culture, a term named *pausengespräch* means a casual and informal conversation to coordinate with colleagues, gather news and build collegiality cannot be replaced digitally and leads to a worse working atmosphere over a longer duration. In the BZ (Learning and Technology), there is quite a long adaptation to the migration of new employees. However, we can see in the digital working activities, there are advantages i.e. business trips were not necessary and the option to work from home is employee-friendly.

To some extent, the corona pandemic is the gate to the digitization, which has been long overdue to be implemented in schools. This pandemic experience will flow into lessons for the future learning style, but still has to be improved as much as possible.

The disadvantages clearly outweigh e.g. no possibility of cooperative learning, barriers in individual support, barriers in recognizing the needs of the students, cooperation disparity. On the other hand, the recent feedbacks also come from the parents who noticed that their children became significantly calmer even though they spent much more time at home. In the local political level, a clear problem regarding to digital learning implementation was also revealed. The separation of the educational network and the administrative network in Dresden was an example and the right solution to

overcome it has not been found until now. There is no reliable software and the technology has to be updated regularly. Due to that issue, staff have to be wary all the time. Moreover, in Germany, inadequately developed internet as general problem arise and schools are not able to provide comprehensive WLAN.

What kind of lessons that overall respondents learnt?

Management & Teaching

- A Considerable focus on subject and contents but less on students

Technology

- Innovative practices related to team activity

Psychological

- Vulnerable student will be left behind
- Solutions are open for students with different
- High risk is not only related to migrant population but as well to those from groups with lower level of socio economic resources

Leadership & Policy

- Considerable difficulties to defining measures and continuing school services during the pandemic.
- Late effective measures in 2021

Key points

Type of School/ Age of Students	Leadership Challenges during Schools Closures	Schools Closures Effects to Vulnerable Students	Schools and Communities Initiatives/ Projects	Special Impact + needs for Socially disadvantaged students + Inclusion Students	Support by Education Authority / Government
BSZ Bau und Technik Dresden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The challenge was to accommodate all 1,900 students at the BSZ in the material distribution plans. - The appropriate equipment had to be available and everyone had to be put in a position to participate through many telephone calls, letters, conferences and registrations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the most serious effects was the home office for the students. At beginning there were few opportunities to carry out the training online, there were no appropriate tools. - Struggle with technology, connection and devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In individual cases, "learning sponsorships" were developed, especially with students with special educational needs. - During time at school, so-called "inclusion tandems" were implemented, which means that a teacher is the contact person for an inclusion student: accompanying, guiding and helping to make things better. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some students didn't have their own devices, didn't have their own room, didn't have a quiet learning environment at home - Some students have to repeat the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving Lernsax/ an online learning platform
TU Dresden/ Universitätsschule der TUD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very challenging during the lockdown, particularly to manage the old learning teaching style to digital but comparing other schools, it was quite easy to adapt with the situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental problems cannot be assessed yet - 60 to 70% of the students can directly deal with the digital very well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A short-term decision from the school board that the students have the opportunity to take the laptops home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children with intellectual disabilities were facing many obstacle. - The parents, who were also hit by the pandemic with home office/ home schooling etc., could not always assist their children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The city of Dresden only talked, e.g. about a digital pact that has not yet been implemented.

BSZ für technik II Handwerkerschule Chemnitz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trying error measures in the first lockdown - IT knowledge is not simple - There was a need for coordination at management level. - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The group of people who are disadvantaged in terms of integration (also results from other federal projects) results from financial problems, which does not apply to people with a migration background, but can affect all groups of participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lot of experience was gained within a short time - The development went from being voluntary to being necessary. - There is a noticeable greater openness to digital solutions among the companies and among the participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The absence of larger rounds of talks becomes a problem after a few weeks. Especially for new colleagues or colleagues with a migration background (almost 50% of the workforce), there was a longer period of acclimatization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -
76. Oberschule Dresden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The School was completely closed in the first lockdown - All the lessons change into online working group - Working on concept development so that courses can still be offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no general information, but parents find that the children gain their weight and they tend to be self-aggressive, feel sad - No more motivation to learn - Difficulties in self-structure learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing learning sponsorship to overcome the measures - The summer school was developed in the context of the pandemic: 14 days in the main subjects. There was positive feedback and all the students did well. - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were also stressful family imbalances: unemployment, loss of income, insecurities, fears, conflicts due to different opinions on vaccinations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving Lernsax/ an online learning platform - There are funds for material and fee costs through the Saxon Development Bank and it is fixed in the state contract with the Ministry of Education. The funding amount depends on the number of students.
BZ Lernen und Technik gGmbH Dresden			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schedule here 		
Akademie für berufliche Bildung Dresden (AfBB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using ILIAS Platform for digital learning was easier in the total lockdown - Very challenging to make a coordination with the company, when they have internal problem to prioritize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of happiness among students during school closures - Students from disadvantaged background were the most affected group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was no initiatives / project, but a school psychologist were always available as a contact person for students who need psychological support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The students are massively involved in practice without being properly instructed because trainers are ill - The practice rooms in the school cannot replace the setting in a nursing home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voucher for disadvantaged family from social welfare department - Loan Devices for student -



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		<p>They were struggling with family welfare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lack of access to the learning equipment such laptop and internet access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Students organize themselves into private study groups, so that they can share, encouraging and motivate each other through chat, video call or phone call- Additional initiatives would not have been possible for this school because The students were already at the limit between work, school and family. This is especially happened with students who already have children		
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From the Interviews conducted in 2021, it can be concluded that there are schools that can adapt well during the pandemic, but more schools find it difficult to adapt to school closures. People need protection and those who threatened by exclusion were neglected as a group or not given sufficient consideration in the decisions. People were struggling to get information, situation and condition about the new measures and measures were taken too late. People were trying and error to get the suitable solution. In the first lock-down, there was insufficient financial resource (bureaucratic hurdles). Projects initiates only by the schools (rarely happened) and unfortunately no projects proposals from the federal and state governments.

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COMPARATIVE SYNOPSIS: Cross-National Mapping of Senior Leaders

Perceptions

This final section presents a synopsis of the main conclusions from all country reports in a comparative way.

No	Dimensions	UK	GREECE (Patras)	HUNGARY	NETHERLANDS	GERMANY
1	Role of Schools in Communities	Schools played a pivotal role in communities during periods of school closures often becoming the only front-line public service open and accessible to local communities beyond emergency services (police, fire brigade, ambulance service).	Cooperation and mutual support are the educational community's essential elements.	State schools are highly centralised in Hungary and have very little autonomy. Schools maintained by various churches have more money and opportunities to collaborate with the community. There are also a few private schools that are for the privileged, but also provide scholarships for talented underprivileged students.	Schools played an important role in identifying the needs of working families, based on previous experience and collaboration locally. It resulted in most children in need being able to attend school without a break. Schools' opening their gates to communities also contributed to people being together outdoors and doing sports more than before.	So everything we know from Corona is the importance of fast communication channels between learning companions , students, but also learning companions and parents.


2	 School community Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union	<p>Definitions of 'school community' were fluid, contingent, and responsive to the rapidly changing needs of different groups. The experiences of families, and the impact of Covid on them, within a school's locality varied greatly according to transiency. More established communities experienced differing impacts, such as bereavement and overcrowding within households, compared to more transient communities</p>	<p>Target groups include children from other countries, Roma children, children with special educational needs, and children from Greece from low-income families. A key common feature of these children is that they come from the lower social strata. Special assistance to these children was provided through donations by the Ministry of Education, the parents' associations in each school, and local businesses.</p>	<p>Teachers noted that a stronger, more communicative school community was very helpful during the online schooling, as parents often helped each other and even the teachers to overcome the challenges posed by their lack of IT knowledge.</p>	<p>School leader autonomy made it possible for schools to best cater for local needs and take the level of comfort of community members into consideration. Thus, those few who did not feel safe being among people could stay home without issues around sick leave or truancy. The strict no-mask policy for children nationally also helped communities to sail through this period with higher levels of well-being.</p>	<p>Innovative practices found were related to team activity.</p>
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		<p>who had urgent welfare needs.</p>				
3	School Services	<p>School functions expanded beyond education to incorporate a range of services including provision of food, redistribution of household items (including washing machines and beds) as well as brokerage and advocacy functions. These provisions continued into the school holidays in recognition of the ongoing challenges facing some families and schools are now continuing to provide food and basic necessities for families as a 'year round response' to meet local needs as increased welfare payments agreed for the period of lockdowns are phased out.</p>	<p>Moreover, the headmasters think they have adequately responded to the new circumstances. The headmasters said they did the best they could. It was challenging to implement socialization, the transmission of values, and ethics; Pedagogy changed, but it retained its character. The main thing is that people must be immediately adapted to a rapidly changing environment.</p>	<p>Very few children (2–10 per school) attended school during the online schooling, and they were only offered supervision, not teaching. Disadvantaged children who had no computers or internet access could sometimes participate in the online schooling by using the computers in the school, but as social distancing had to be taken into consideration, only one or two children could sit in the same classroom.</p>	<p>All schools remained open for those in need, especially families with more deprived circumstances and parents who either could not work from home or actually had to work from home without being disturbed. In higher grades, collaborative online teaching as well as self paced learning was supported.</p>	<p>Schools surveyed did develop a rather late effective reaction to the pandemic which did start in 2021 only.</p>



4	Teachers' roles and identities	Teachers' roles expanded significantly, and often without boundary, to span education, social service and sometimes parenting functions. This included the necessity to accept heightened levels of physical, mental and professional risk without necessarily having access to additional specialist training or support.	Teachers took on an extra demanding role during the quarantine period. In conditions of technological turmoil, they were called to develop appropriate teaching material, teach remotely, do repetitions, and achieve new learning goals - at the same time some teachers had no computer skills at all. As a result, the teachers suddenly found themselves outside the	Despite the growing number of digital tools in families the situation is still less than ideal, according to senior teacher's narratives. 'Paper-based' and phone-based solutions did not lead to satisfactory results: teachers were not able to make progress. The freed-up time and energy of teachers was used to handle the somewhat chaotic daily proceedings of online	Teachers' role has not changed significantly, although the use of digital technologies became somewhat more widespread. The ministry monitored related teacher needs and tried to cater for them in constant collaboration with practitioners.	
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			interactive living environment of a classroom, in which they could until then guide their students, share their problems and with their presence reassure them of any concerns caused by the current reality.	education. This is not changed by any number of the seminars that aim to train the so-called digital immigrants (teachers) to be able to face the challenges the situation calls for.		
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5	Digital Learning  Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union	<p>Whilst all school had to develop an online offer for the majority of pupils there is no settled view on the future value of digital learning as a consequence of learning online through the pandemic. Leaders expressed a range of views about the value and purpose of digital in their school curriculum that were highly situated in their understandings of their local context and community characteristics</p>	<p>The offer of tablets to students by the Ministry of Education can be considered a unique action. This action continues to this day, helping several children.</p>	<p>The overall picture shows us that the educational system is simply not ready to fulfill its purpose properly in case of school closures and switching to digital classes.</p>	<p>The Netherlands is well equipped for and students are used to independent work using digital means, while not focusing on school learning only. Municipalities supported those in need of digital tools.</p>	<p>There was a huge lack of digital infrastructures at general schools but to lesser extent at vocational schools. Considerable difficulties with defining measures for continuing school services during the pandemic could be found as well.</p>
6	Learning	<p>Unlike expectations around teachers' roles and identities concept-making around of learning focussed around the 'pre-pandemic' curriculum with discourses around learning 'gaps' and 'deficits' frequently mobilised.</p>	<p>The school learned to operate digitally, and the students showed particular interest in the lessons through computers.</p>	<p>The only plausible aim they could strive for was to maintain knowledge that had been taught before the Covid19 pandemic. Another factor should be addressed is the lack of protocols regarding the curriculum and its adaptation to digital classes. This is especially an issue in the case of the youngest who were required to learn reading, writing and calculus online.</p>	<p>The government emphasised the importance of being together as much as possible and being outdoors weather permitting. This has resulted in more collaborative learning and also in fields not necessarily curricular. Research shows a small decrease in curricular learning for primary school that is understandable as online learning was not prioritised for this age-group, rather nonformal and informal learning was incentivised.</p>	<p>There was a considerable focus on subject and contents but less on pupils.</p>



7	Well-being / mental health	Schools now place greater importance on student and staff wellbeing and embed this into their daily provision in different ways. For some schools these are new additions, whilst for others they are expanding or developing activities that were in place pre-Covid. Examples include: embedding wellbeing into their curriculum; expansion of after-school enrichment programmes; integration of online staff social gatherings; and continuation of a Community Council which focuses on pupil performance and wellbeing. There were many unknowns as to the long-term impacts on	The educational community has demonstrated how strong it is and has managed to cope with this unique situation.	This situation is not that much better in the case of digital natives (students or even parents), either. Some interviewees expressed their surprise over the inability of children to adequately search for information or properly utilize the digital apparatus granted for educational purposes.	School autonomy made it possible to provide education in the school for all in need. It has proven to be a successful approach with better levels of mental health, well-being and satisfaction referring there were no negative epidemiological consequences.	It was observed that the Pandemic meant an opening up for some pupils with different needs , i.e. a less authoritarian regime during times of pandemic.
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		CYP mental health, such as the effect of deaths within school communities, and the conditions of poverty many CYP had experienced. All schools said relationships of their staff and student community within school had become closer as a result of the pandemic.				
8	Vulnerability	Definitions of vulnerability shifted and expanded: with food and digital poverty affecting many more groups than schools had anticipated / than had been previously visible. There was less emphasis on specific groups such as refugees and asylum seekers, and a much broader understanding of intersectional vulnerability. Children and young people with SEND were referred to as particularly impacted yet there appeared to be uncertainty as to what that looked like for those CYP with SEND who were kept at home during the lockdowns.	Teachers and schools may have made every effort to keep children out of hybrid distance education. Still, children from low socioeconomic backgrounds and low-income families experienced inequality and were left out of hybrid distance education for a while. To some extent, this phenomenon began to weaken with the initiative of the Ministry of Education to provide tablets to children who needed them to participate in hybrid distance education.	One of the key aspects of the current situation is the integration of digital tools into offline education. Though, on the one hand this creates an opportunity for most children to catch up with the curriculum more easily, many face obstacles that are still present when accessing the educational system online.	It was an understandable, but bad decision to not hold the school leaving exams in 2020. Many students had difficulties due to circumstances outside of schools such as (temporarily) losing their jobs or rearranged households due to elderly relatives moving in with them.	Observation reported that especially vulnerable pupils are at risk being completely lost. Evidence that risk is not only related to migrant population but as well to those from groups with lower level of socio economic resources.



9	Leadership / decision-making	School leaders struggled to keep up with the frequently changing Government guidance and operated as autonomous agents in many	Regarding Patras, COVID-19 decisively changed the way the headmasters managed the school. This process was done remotely by the headmasters.	Receiving no substantial help from the government, school personnel can only hope that the number of infections stays low, thus avoiding any further	The Netherlands was one of the few countries that had no full school closures and no mask mandates for children.	The school management sees each other almost every day, and so do the teachers, that they have a different way of looking for answers, even in
		respects. Decision-making for UK schools looked different depending on the type of governance of the schools. Schools within larger academy trusts were able to access more support mechanisms, such as digital devices, and interpretation of Government guidance came from higher up within the Trust. School 'closures' did not happen in the UK: all schools opened immediately following Government announcements of school closures and school decision-making/leadership continued into the school holidays.	The pandemic seems to have burdened the headmasters, and their obligations have increased.	lockdowns. Although the state was more lenient with administrative requirements, it did not help a lot.		crisis situations. And I remember that was, that was tricky, this back and forth with the question, do we have to have the debates now or can we decide?



10	Bodies/ school spaces	<p>There were affective differences that the pandemic has had on CYP bodies in school spaces. All schools have had to manage bodies/spaces within schools in new ways such as 'bubbles', mask wearing, testing. Younger children had been affected in terms of muscle development (e.g. core strength). Anxiety was a particular factor amongst the secondary school and college in terms of the impacts within school spaces long-term, such as social distancing.</p>	<p>During the closing of the schools and their opening, they strictly followed the protocol set by the National Public Health Organization. For a student, teacher, or parent to enter the school, they would have to wear a mask and present a negative selftest. Otherwise, entry was not allowed.</p>	<p>Most schools in Hungary still not allow parents to enter the school building. Parental engagement is a very new concept in Hungarian education and the COVID regulations further strengthened the rigidity of the system that tries to keep parents out in every sense.</p>	<p>In many places, especially in big cities, schools became more embedded in local community through opening up their outdoor spaces 24/7 for the locals. This practice has remained in place with the yards being used by school children during school hours and the local communities after hours and at weekends.</p>	
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