Through the Eyes of a Migrant Learner: Distance Learning and Equality during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Slovenia

Local Dimension of Children's Migrations

and its Impact on EU Integration Policy

Krakow, 4 – 5 December 2020

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Guide

- **Social inequalities of migrant children in the school setting**

- **COVID-19 pandemic and school closure**

- **Methodology**

- **Results**

- **What now?**

Social inequalities, migrant children and schools

- social inequality = unequal opportunities based on individual's class, religion, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation etc.

- unequal opportunities in achieving educational goals, obstacles preventing access to information, preserving mother tongue and culture within the school context

- intersectional phenomenon + heterogeneous group (e.g. length of stay, legal status, cultural background, age)

- schools rely on formal equality while neglecting substantive equality

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School closure and migrant children

- equalising force of schools was jeopardised (Blundell et al. 2020)
- 12 March – 14 May
- school closure: 16 March
- insufficient experience with distance teaching
- absence of governmental instructions focused at migrant learners

Methodology

- **6 interviews with teachers (April – May 2020)**
- **45 interviews with learners**
- **6 focus groups with learners**

September 2020

Results

- **individualisation** of the educational process (sufficient technical equipment, a quiet study place, digital literacy)

- **digital divide** between native and migrant learners

- the effective use of ICT in the academic environment increases learners' success rate (Moore et al. 2018)

- confusion and procrastination

„We haven't got enough time for everything during the online classes. Professors had different requirements and expectations, some uploaded material in the e-classroom, others in the e-assistant and the rest via email. It wasn't possible to finish the work by 2:30 and it was easy to forget your homework." (Bosnian female, 17 years)

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Results

- **halted course of Slovenian language**

- **parental support** **– language constraints, familiarity with school culture (eAssistant app)**

- **the role of** **teachers**

- **peer** **relations**

„It is extremely important for migrant pupils that they don't forget the language. School is a place where migrant learners use Slovene 7 or 8 hours per day. Now, this is gone. Migrants don't use language actively and the consequence is a weaker knowledge. When this happens, other subjects will suffer too." (A primary school teacher of Slovene language for foreigners)

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Results

- **The social lockdown and ad hoc measures bypassed specific needs of migrant learners**

- **The complexity of educational institutions: reproducing existing disparities among specific social groups + an inherent ability to transform and overcome them**

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What now?

- **intercultural education**
- **individualised educational plans**
- **multilingual instructions**
- **digital literacy course**

What now?

Taking into account:

(1) approaches developed according to migrant's specific needs

(2) multi-agency partnerships including teachers, psychologists, pedagogues and parents

(3) organisational commitment of teachers to promote peer communication, socialisation and children well-being

(4) engaging with and involving migrants in the development of services

(5) developing capacity of teachers and educational staff in the field of child-centred intercultural education

(6) developing top-level guidelines, strategies and action plans focusing on migrant children, their needs, well-being and integration.

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