esha magazine

Challenges and solutions during difficult times

esha
European School
Heads Association

In this issue

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Covid-19 as a lesson of facing challenges in a co-operative way

It remains an indisputable fact that the biggest challenges we face are the ones we become confronted with unexpectedly. This has also proven to be true in the situation we have found ourselves in during the past few months. The outbreak of a new coronavirus disease has spread globally at a worryingly pace and remains a cause of great concern for a great number of people worldwide as well as an alarming factor for many areas of human activities.

Among the areas of everyday life education sector is the one that the coronavirus disease has had a significant impact on. In most countries around the world schools, universities and other educational institutions have been forced to close their doors almost overnight. Therefore, the traditional way of implementing the educational processes has made way for the switch to online teaching and learning.

The saying that nothing can really prepare us for a life-altering situation until we actually find ourselves in it has manifested itself also in terms of facing the changes in the education implementation. However, the joint efforts of all teachers, non-teaching staff and educational leaders have successfully enabled the ongoing online educational process. Had it not been for this unified strength, it would have been much more difficult to continue the teaching in the way the students rightfully deserve. Nevertheless, there is another factor not to be overlooked. That is the informational technology, which has actually enabled this switch from real into virtual classrooms and lecture halls. Broadcasting video lessons, online learning environments and electronic communication channels have become an integral part of the school everyday life and as such, all these technological tools have become our valuable teaching aids.

This precise development has become a challenging situation for many stakeholders in the educational processes- not only for teachers, but also for students and their parents. Particularly the students from the under-privileged social backgrounds and those with fewer educational opportunities beyond school have found themselves facing the biggest challenges out of various reasons.

The coronavirus situation has come to unveil some saddening reality. There are numerous students whose life stories we are not aware of, the latter ranging from students deprived of parental guidance and support to those who have in the present situation found themselves without the free or reduced-price school meals which could before for them very well have been the only proper meal in the day. Last, but certainly not least, there are hidden or well-disguised situations of domestic violence and abuse within family lives which have at this time dangerously escalated due to additional stress and reorganisation of family life routine.

All these are examples that unfortunately stretch far beyond the supervision and observant eyes of the educational workers. The feeling of helplessness within one difficult situation is what educators find most difficult to face and the physical distance from their students during this past few months has often made teaching staff feel powerless. Therefore, there remains the sore spot, which even the hardest efforts on the part of educators, have not managed to heal.

Another, less severe, but still pressing issue the students have had to face are the practical and fundamental limitations to online learning. On one hand, the coronavirus outbreak has presented the educators with a valuable opportunity to improve, develop and promote online learning, yet there are often students who struggle to use these learning platforms and tools in practice.

We can especially observe this in students without good online access or adequate technological equipment as well as with students whose living situations do not enable them to participate in the learning process. Considering all these, we must acknowledge the fact that educators worldwide have proven themselves helpful in overcoming many of such students' obstacles. Nevertheless, there remains the bitter aftertaste of the widened gap for disadvantaged students at this challenging time.

Consequently, it is unsurprising that the role of school leaders has in this uncertain situation become vital in equipping teachers to provide distance and online learning, but even more so in motivating all- the teachers, the students, and the parents- in order to sustain the educational process. School leaders have thus become an integral part in the communication among all education stakeholders.

Responsive school leadership equals tackling the most pressing issues within the crisis. Apart from connecting with students, teachers, parents

and the local community, there is also meeting the demands of the current policies, ensuring the quality of teaching and learning, and last but not least, following and adapting to all the changes at the appropriate pace. On the part of the school leaders this requires a lot of flexibility, organisational skills and responsiveness, all of which are in themselves the qualities of great leaders in general, not only in education.

Yet education is a particular aspect of our lives. It is essentially social with live interactions and cooperation among students, teachers, parents and school leaders being central to its success. The present coronavirus situation has forced us to re-establish this communication on a different platform, but the core aim of education remains the same: the advancement of knowledge and the nurturing of creative minds. ■

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New challenges in the days of Covid-19: Erasmus Projects do not stop!

Empower Teachers to Trigger Work-Based Learning

What a challenge we are facing!

Every portion of our social life has been upset since the spread of Covid-19 pandemic. We are forced to reassess all our working methods, think outside the box to continue our activities and not to stop. As the Italian Headmasters'Association (ANP Associazione nazionale dirigenti pubblici e alte professionalità della scuola), of course, we have firstly faced issues regarding distance learning and the support of headmasters and school education staff in dealing with such an emergency. At the same time, we put the effort in order not to lose any opportunity to continue the collaboration with our international partners. Since 2014 we have been promoting the participation to Erasmus Plus projects by launching ad-hoc training courses to support and
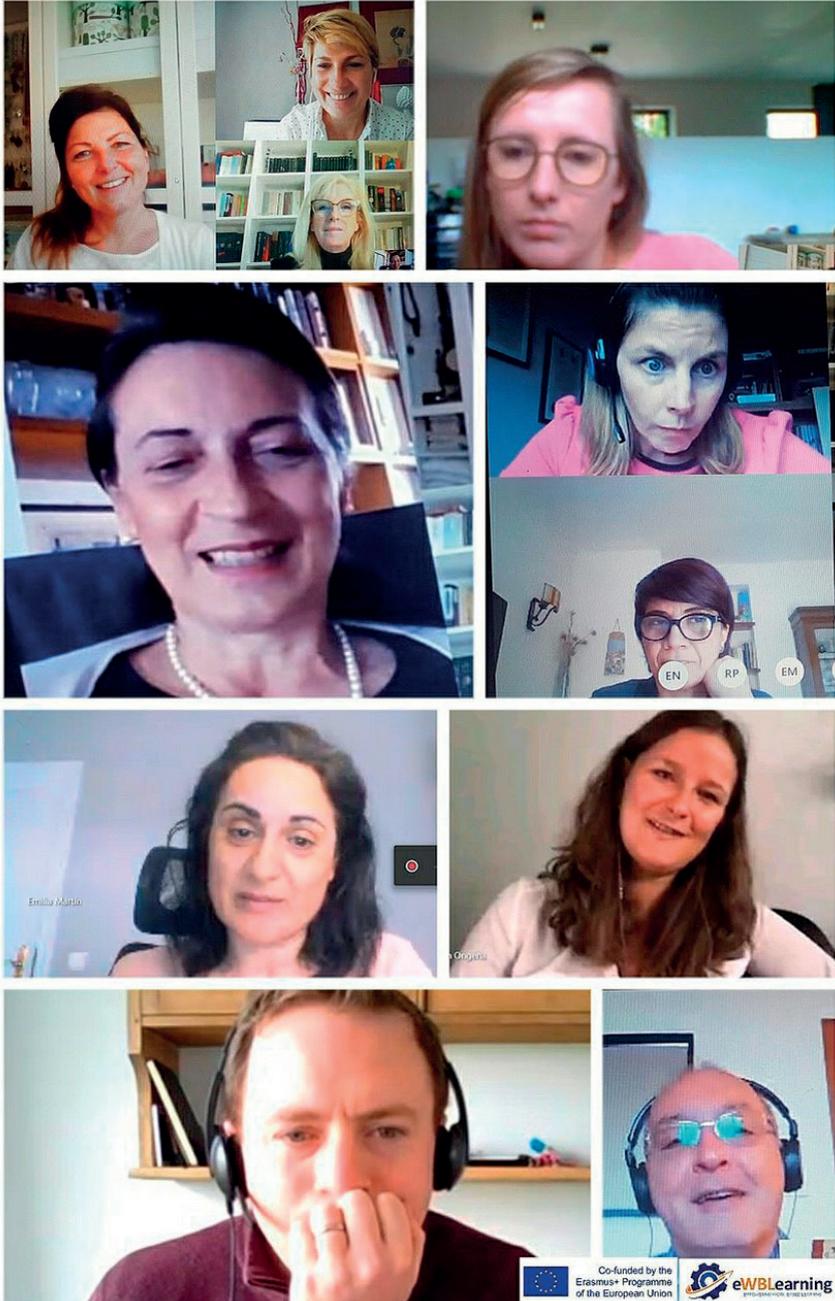
prepare Italian schools to apply to Erasmus Plus calls for proposal. We have continued by participating in Erasmus Plus projects as a partner. Then in 2018, we became coordinators of the Erasmus Plus Strategic Partnership "Empower Teachers to Trigger Work-Based Learning".

The current project involves another Italian partner (Euphoria Net) and other five EU Member States: Belgium (POV-Flanders), Bulgaria (BDA), Greece (IED), Ireland (CIT), and Spain (Fetico). It is a 30-months project which aims to create an EU training model (Work-Based Learning Teacher Training Model called eWBLearning) and to prepare European teachers, headmasters, trainers and mentors in both school and work-based settings to create high-quality work-based learning paths.

The partnership strongly believes that the quality of WBL is crucial to help students connecting their learning with the world of work, developing employability skills that employers search for, building their entrepreneurial capability and making more informed choices about their career options.

The recent emergency has hit the development of international projects too: we had plans, organized events to attend all over Europe and suddenly we had to reschedule everything. This new situation drove us out of our comfort zone. For our WBL project, we had plans to meet in Belgium in May 2020. Instead, we met online! Now you may think: "yes, you adapted, but you can't say it was the same thing!", and we honestly reply: "no, it was not at all". But it worked great anyway.

The main challenge to face was: "How to handle international projects during Covid-19 pandemic?".

First, we should focus on the real core of projects like Erasmus Plus Strategic partnership. Undoubtedly, it regards also international mobility, aiming at fostering cooperation and integration among European citizens. But we should also consider that many European projects,

including Erasmus Plus Strategic Partnerships, seek to create joint open online resources to be at the disposal of any European citizen. Therefore, mobility does not seem to be the focus; instead, international cooperation is, and it can continue through distance working.

The same principles applied to online teaching, now had to be employed for online working meetings. This new method is a turning point because nobody refused to get involved and from students to professors and headmasters in the school environment, all played an active role to make this extraordinary situation, more suitable for everyone.

Therefore, new abilities have emerged. First of all, digital competencies: we are making use of web-meeting platforms, but also of social networks and specific websites dedicated to the promotion of our projects.

Having already participated in strategic partnership projects, we were used to doing a large part of our work remotely from our colleagues. Still, the physical meetings allowed us to get to know our partners and their ideas better, get in touch with their working methods but also appreciate their hospitality.

We had to show flexibility and adaptability. Meetings which typically would last two or three days in another country, now they last three hours on an online platform. We are forced to concentrate our brainstorming or strategic sessions and to structure the meetings more rigidly. Someone might say that these new modalities limit creativity and the exchange of points of view because they reduce the debate and the circulation of ideas. But, indeed, they helped us to be still extraordinarily productive and to achieve our goals diversely, to be honest, in some cases, even faster. We are applying new abilities, and we have taken unique paths, making use of those abovementioned soft

skills which cleverly, support our communication and our efficacy to reach compromises and common views with our colleagues.

So, this is precisely what is happening: we keep working on our projects, having the goals clear and expanding our skills to supply for a final, good, quality outcomes and outputs.

The world of education and the Erasmus Plus community does not stop. We strive for confirmed projects to be implemented, we cultivate teamwork with the other partners, and we keep our eyes open to bring our ideas for new European didactical programmes. International cooperation is still working, and those online resources we always had to develop to implement Strategic Partnerships programmes have turned to be very useful nowadays.

In this perspective, also social media have become an essential tool for the communication sector; public events, like conventions with speeches, debates and catering are no longer possible, unfortunately. The promotion of innovative projects now relies on social media campaigns, videos to be shared and with many views. We are exploiting all these resources that were already part of our instruments; through them, we expanded and consolidated networks, partnerships, and friendships. This has been the occasion also to offer our knowledge to the service of colleagues and associations stuck in the same binding context. When we talk about international cooperation, this is what we mean. The bonds we have created during years of collaboration in projects, imply collective growth, and reliance, and have led to the demonstration of the ability to help, and support each other. The core is, therefore, the establishment and the excellent working of stable international relations in which the common aims favour cooperation and solidarity. Keeping on building our projects, means also raising the awareness of belonging to a community; whether we are talking either

of a European community or Erasmus community or even the school community, we are all involved in this hard challenge and partners like us, have the duty to carry out their responsibilities.

In our small way, as ANP, we believe that educational programmes, promoted by the European Commission, are the most important ones. In such a difficult time, when landmarks fail, as well as trust, education can be a fundamental tool to continue to increase the resources of students and those who train them. We do not have to forget that education is aimed at the training of those who will be the leaders of tomorrow. For this reason, international cooperation, between us partners, is strengthening during this period, to ensure a particular development in education and a wide range of possibilities, to be lived in our common European territory. We believe in this purpose, and this has made it possible to handle international projects even during Covid-19 pandemic.

We hope to see the end of this hard time very soon. Meanwhile, we also wish to have inspired other colleagues with this article and with our projects — colleagues who are striving to keep building ideas to implement relevant programmes for the community. There are many themes nowadays which deserve attention and empowerment, not only regarding education but also environment, social equality, and healthcare assistance. The pandemic has brought to the surface issues that over the years we have underestimated. We can only continue to improve ourselves, to develop new skills and tools, so that international cooperation and projects may be the collective response to these questions. ■

CONTACT
Do you want to know more about the eWBLearning-project?
Visit our website www.ewblearning.eu
or
follow us on Facebook.
https://www.facebook.com/eWBLearning/

21st Century skills:
Intercultural competence & the Values of living together

11th edition Colle Val d'Elsa (Tuscany, ITALY), November 12th – 14th 2020

Intercultural competence is one of the 21st Century skills that students should develop and school heads and teachers are more and more confronted with the need of including this aspect in the school life. This is mostly done through projects aimed at internationalisation of school such as pupil and teacher exchanges, and including intercultural competence in all aspects of school life as explored in the Erasmus+ project 'Intercultural Learning for Pupils and Teachers' where also ESHA was a partner.

Intercultural competence is often associated with knowledge skills and attitudes. More rarely it is associated with values, such as the ones that should inspire life in a democratic multicultural society.

Values and value education as it may be developed through international pupil exchanges, has been the topic of the 10th Forum on Intercultural Learning and Exchange, which took place in Colle di Val d'Elsa in October 2019. The proceedings are available here.

Discussions were inspired by important documents from international institutions such as:

• the Council of Europe's framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, where the element of values is included.
• the definition of intercultural competence given by the Ministers of Education of EU in 2008 and again in a document of 2018, where it was presented alongside with critical thought, problem solving, team work and creativity.
• UNESCO's definition as the ability to navigate complex environments where people with different cultures and lifestyles live together.

- OECD's link with the concept of global competence – the ability to appreciate different viewpoints and to interact with people from other cultures in pursuit of common good and sustainable development

The discussions revolved around the issue whether intercultural competence should mean just the acquisition or refinement of knowledge skills and attitudes – or whether it should give a positive impulse towards a change of mindset that may help humankind to live together in peace – one of the four pillars of education according to Jacques Delors (1996). The majority seemed to support the latter, but the topic will be taken up again in the **11th edition of the Forum on Intercultural Learning and Exchange** (FILE), which will take place on **12-14 November 2020**, again in the beautiful setting of Colle Val d'Elsa, Tuscany, Italy.

This year's edition is centred around '**The Values of living together: how to assess their evolution within intercultural student exchanges',** it aims at deepening the topic and to assess the changes that might/should occur in exchange participants towards valuing human dignity and human rights, respect for differences, active participation in the life of multicultural democratic societies.

It will revolve around three presentations that will be discussed both in plenary sessions and in smaller groups:

1. A presentation of **World and European values** as they are evolving by Ferruccio Biolcati and Riccardo Ladini, University of Milan, which is the Italian link to the Stockholm based WVS and to the EVS Foundation;

2. The outcomes of the 2018 OECD PISA survey that included an assessment of the **Global Competence** of pupils age 15 from around the world;

3. The DICTAM **(Developing Intercultural Competence Through Adolescents' Mobility)** study by Mattia Baiutti, Darla Deardorff, Roberto Ruffino on the level of intercultural competence acquired by 400 students involved in different types of exchanges.

FILE is an annual invitational conference that explores a particular topic in international educational exchange. It is one of the main activities of Fondazione Intercultura (www.fondazioneintercultura.org) and it is convened in cooperation with AFS Intercultural Programs and EFIL, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning. It gathers some sixty experts, researchers and practitioners in the field of international youth exchanges and intercultural learning. Although it is an invitational conference, there are also some places available for those interested in the subject. ■

Registration is open HERE**, until 15 September (first come, first served). Full programme:** HERE
For any further information, please email fondazione@intercultura.it

Covid-19
Can there be a silver lining?

Any viral pandemic which threatens to annihilate vast numbers of the human population is horrific. It frightens us to our core and prevents us from doing what comes natural to us, to take our nearest and dearest and hold them tight for protection. We must now practice social distancing and support our loved ones from a minimum of two meters. We must cope with the stress of confinement and in many cases the hardship of job losses. In some cases, we will have to grieve for the loss of someone close.

PAUL BYRNE: NAPD DEPUTY DIRECTOR, IRELAND

This is no doubt a very bleak time for all, but is there any silver lining to be found in this cloud of despair which will inevitably rain another bout of economic recession on our world? It has been said "*necessity is the mother of invention*" and "*from adversity springs hope*". The debate over the use of ICT in education has had many twists and turns in the last while. We are now firmly beholden to ICT to continue the education of our children and we all must engage. We now meet in a virtual world both nationally and internationally and we in Ireland are grateful to our colleagues in ESHA who have given us the benefit of their experience during this time. This truly reflects the mission of ESHA as outlined on our website.

"ESHA connects school leaders, researchers and policy makers with the collective aim to learn from each other and improve education."

ESHA has long been advocating for and facilitating collaboration and sharing of educational best practices between schools, colleges and universities and countries in education. This is now becoming a daily and weekly reality because of necessity. Through ESHA we are sharing our responses to dealing with Covid-19, we are giving each other the benefit of our countries experience both the good and the bad so we can learn from each other. The need to create stronger links between industry, business and education has been expressed by many countries as an education goal. In the current critical situation, many new collaborations and synergies are being born which facilitate this goal.

In Ireland Senior Cycle reform and entry into third level has been a topic of discussion for some time. We may now see reforms being implemented at a pace never imagined. Rather than being exam-focused, education will need to become more entrepreneurial and develop a range of adaptable skills needed for the world of work, further education or as a foundation for third level education. A review of university entry systems may happen and the use of online lectures has the possibility to become the norm. In this way the need for students to be physically present in colleges for all lectures in the future could be reduced thus addressing a student accommodation crisis that exists in Ireland.

There has been a strong call for action on climate change to become a reality. There are now very few aircraft flying and many of those who are still lucky enough to be employed can work from home. The carbon footprint of each person and each country is being dramatically reduced. The coronavirus lockdown in China led to an estimated 25% reduction in energy use and emissions over a two-week period. Similar reductions have been evident across Europe as lockdowns become more widespread. Further restrictions in transport of goods have forced us to source food locally, further reducing our carbon footprint. The viability of working and studying from home as already stated is

now a reality, all be it a forced reality. It will be an interesting exercise for environmental scientists to measure empirically the positive effects of this reduction in carbon emissions.

When this pandemic has run its course, which it will, we will return to what is being termed as a "*new normality*". Unfortunately, some of us will be left grieving for lost loved ones and friends. Yet it can be said that the silver lining, if there is one, is that we have witnessed some of the greatest examples of humanity in response to this catastrophe. There is a renewed level of support and empathy being expressed towards our front-line people, the volunteerism, the self-sacrifice, the courage. The levels of care and respect being shown to our elderly and most vulnerable shows how, in the face of great adversity, we can see true humanity rise to the fore. Look after yourselves and each other and when this crisis is over, we look forward to a brighter future where the best human values such as caring and sharing are now the norm in society. ■

Reflecting for Change

Reflecting for Change (R4C) has been designed to promote the use of self-reflection tools to support innovation and systemic change in schools. It proposes an innovation support framework (School Innovation Academy) and a roadmap to schools towards the meaningful uptake of sustainable innovation, with an emphasis on improved learning outcomes (Europe 2020).
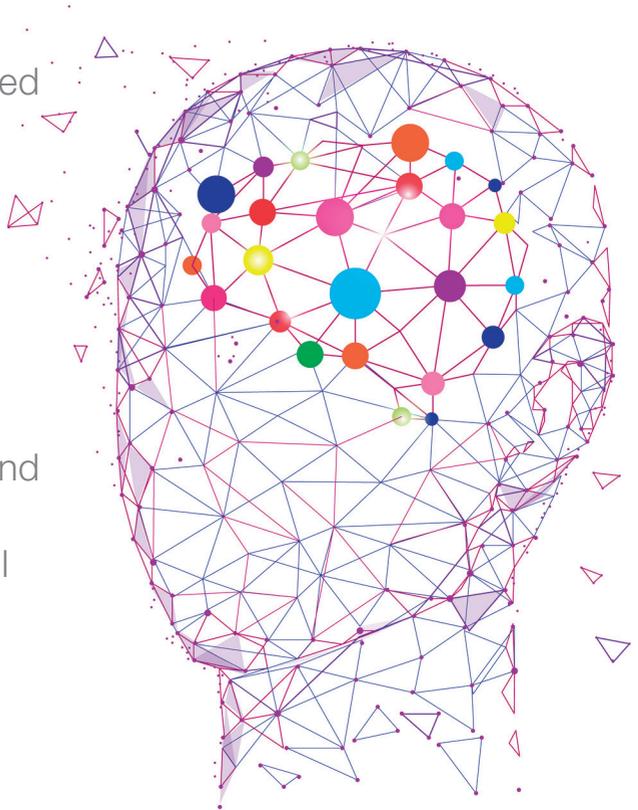
R4C highlights the potential of the SELFIE tool to act as a starting point by interconnecting ICT-based innovation with school openness for the development of an integrated plan to innovation. By using an established self-reflection process, 300 schools in 3 countries will be guided to set up a roadmap and an innovation strategy that makes the best use of ERASMUS + opportunities and policy related initiatives (national and international) to become innovative ecosystems. The project is bringing together key stakeholders who know how to generate systemic impact and to transfer the project's outcomes and findings at policy level.

In the R4C approach, innovation is understood in terms of a school's pathway to digital maturity (e-maturity) and its comprehensive relationship to the use of ICT, as well as a school's pathway to openness demonstrated in its relationship with external stakeholders, in parental engagement, in fostering the well-being of its community as a whole, in its ability to combine the delivering of the curriculum with a study of local challenges, in its willingness and capacity to share its achievements with other schools and in its engagement with contemporary Responsible Research Innovation (RRI) challenges.

R4C focuses on Priority 5 of the call for Forward-Looking Cooperation Projects that sees the use of self-reflection tools as a valid way to support innovation and systemic change in education. R4C explores how schools may **move from self-reflection to developing a comprehensive plan of action that utilises the results of a self-evaluation exercise**, but, crucially, in combination with fundamental principles and mechanisms of European educational policy for schools. The latter is rather significant in the sense that improvement in key areas within an evaluation scheme for schools is not an isolated process but has to be aligned with key priorities at both the national level but also at European level. The project relies on two established self-evaluation methodologies:

- **SELFIE (Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering the use of Innovative Educational Technologies** – https://ec.europa.eu/education/schools-go-digital/about-selfie_en) which is a tool designed to help schools **embed digital technologies** into teaching, learning and student assessment. It can highlight what's working well, where improvement is needed and what the priorities should be. The tool is currently available in the 24 official languages of the European Union.
- The Open Schools for Open Societies Self-Reflection Tool (https://portal.opendiscoveryspace.eu/osos/srt) which is a tool that monitors the **progress of the school towards openness** at three different levels, the Management Level, the Process Level and the Teachers' Professional Development Level. It is available in 10 official languages of the European Union.

The proposed project looks at how schools can be supported in using these tools to understand the current position of the organisation and build on the results to define and implement suitable action plans **by providing a step by step support mechanism for school heads and teachers.** R4C studies the actual processes and unique pathways (rather than looking simply into variations in scores) from self-reflection results to concrete actions in the school as a learning ecosystem, in key areas such as Teacher CPD, school management, cchool openness, technology integration, innovation uptake, community engagement, social responsibility and others.
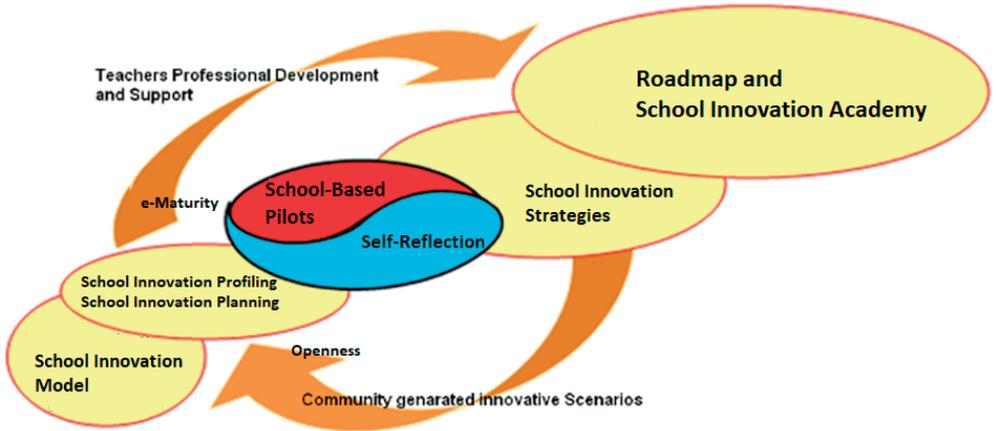
The R4C project foreseen evolution. The e-maturity and the openness of 300 schools are assessed. A series of tools are designed and developed to support the school heads of these schools to use the findings from the self-reflection process in an effective way to support the school development. Based on the finding the R4C consortium will form an innovation support service, the School Innovation Academy which will be the main outcome of the proposed project.

PHASE A: PREPARATORY PHASE

R4C has designed and will validate a **School Innovation Model**, which defines the specific elements of innovation in schools (based on SELFIE and OSOS-SRT indicators), as well as additional relevant indicators and metrics for measuring it based on holistic collection of educational data (e.g. teachers and students involvement in communities of practice, school generated contents and initiatives, students interest and motivation).

The **design of the School Innovation Model** adopts a holistic conceptualization of school innovation. It builds on the concept of **e-Maturity** and **School Openness** and extend it to incorporate the **competences**

and/or professional identity of the teaching staff regarding a) to the use of ICT and b) the adoption of an open culture in their practice. A state-of-the-art systematic literature review and analysis of existing e-Maturity and School Openness frameworks was performed so as to formulate a detailed set of School Innovation elements. The project team has continuous interactions with a) the **Joint Research Centre of the European Union** which holds a major role in implementing the SELFIE tool to European Schools, b) the **European Education Policy Network**, the ERASMUS+ European Policy Network on Teachers and School Leadership and c) the **ET 2020 Working Group on Digital Education: Learning, Teaching and Assessment** to harmonize the project approach and plans to the EU policies and agenda in the field. The **School Innovation Model** defines the specific elements to depict innovation in schools, as well as the relevant indicators and metrics for measuring it based on holistic collection of educational data.

Additionally, a **School Analytics Framework** is being designed, defining a) the specific educational data types to be collected from different layers of the school (student performance (micro level), continuous teaching innovation (meso-level), and institutional e-maturity and openness (macro level)), as well as b) the methods for exploiting these educational data towards building individual **School Innovation Profiles**. Capitalizing on these, the consortium will propose a set of guidelines and recommendations for the design of a **School Innovation Profiling Tool** and a **School Innovation Planning Recommender System**, which will generate holistic recommendations for school innovation development to inform school leadership strategic planning**.**
The consortium is designing and will set in action a **community support mechanism that will empower teachers and learners and facilitate innovation in the participating school settings**. The core activity in this framework will be to **build a group of change leaders who will share leading innovative practices**. Practitioners with specific

change management competences required to operate successfully as **change agents** in the participating schools facilitating the implementation of the R4C approach. An advanced professional development programme, which adapts and deploys state-of-the-art learning approaches will be implemented for this purpose. To guarantee sustainability of the approach, the gradual development of the **community of teachers – change leaders** will be supported by a state-of-the-art Web 2.0 collaborative learning and knowledge exchange environment. **A European School Innovation Map** will be developed to depict the evolution of the schools' network and offering opportunities for networking, common project at European level and exchange of school staff for sharing experiences and best practices.

PHASE B: LARGE SCALE PILOTS

Then the consortium will organize and coordinate **large scale pilots with schools to evaluate the effects of, and systematically validate the proposed approach** by implementing numerous activities and exploiting at the same time the opportunities offered by major ongoing initiatives and reforms, in **Greece, Portugal** and **Italy.** The project will be implemented with a bottom up approach **in 300 primary and secondary school**, in urban as well as in rural areas while the sample for the validation of the proposed approach will consist of **1,500 teachers and 15,000 students**. This work will take place in **WP3 (From School Reflection to School Development).**

In parallel with the large scale pilots the consortium will develop **a strategy to evaluate the effects of, and systematically validate the proposed Innovation Model.** Using as a reference the schools performance in a 12-month cycle of pre- and post-evaluation of their e-maturity and openness (by using the SELFIE and the OSOS-SRT tools), the evaluation of the project impact will focus on the effects (wished and unwished) and barriers to adoption in relation to the

following aspects in the participating schools: impact on the processes of learning, teaching, and assessment; impact on the students outcomes; impact on the classroom as a whole and the school as organization; overall acceptance of the innovation; and corresponding organizational and ethical issues arising. An experimental design involving quantitative and qualitative research will be applied, whereby data will be gathered, analyzed, findings synthesized, and evaluation reports produced at key points to serve the needs of the project**.**

PHASE C: ROADMAPING

Finally, based on the findings and the necessary adoptions the consortium will propose a set of guidelines and recommendations for the development of a school innovation support service, the **School Innovation Academy**, which will facilitate the process for envisioning, managing and monitoring change in school settings by providing a simple and flexible structure to follow, so school leaders and teachers can innovate in a way that's appropriate for school local needs. It will provide new ways for the use of technology and related approaches: not simply to automate processes but to inspire, to engage, and to connect. It will provide a powerful framework for school leaders to engage, discuss and explore: how schools need to **evolve**, **transform** and **reinvent**; how schools will facilitate open, more effective and efficient co-design, co-creation, and use of digital content, tools and services for personalized learning and teaching; how schools can become innovation incubators and accelerators. Towards this objective, the consortium will develop the **School Innovation Roadmap** to support schools to reflect on, plan and undertake changes in education for 21st Century learning. Applying the proposed service in local settings will make it clear that schools have much to gain by fostering connections between formal and informal learning, between existing providers of education and new entrants.

Learn more about R4C: reflecting4change.eu
Follow us on twitter: twitter.com/r4c_eu
Visit us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/Reflecting4Change

Is education
inspiring peace?

The focus of the UPPER project (https://www.esha.org/esha-projects/education-inspiring-peace/) is contributing to bringing peace education, intercultural dialogue and civic participation to the core of education policy and school practice by scaling up the results of existing good practices with the aim of producing significant improvements in learning outcomes of life competencies for youngsters living in Europe.

The UPPER consortium consists of Fondation des Régions Européennes pour la Recherche, l'Éducation et la Formation (FREREF – France), University of Modeno and Reggio Emilia (UNIMORE – Italy), Ministry of Education and Employment of Malta (MEDE – Malta), International Institute of Humanitarian Law (IIHL) and the European School Heads Association (ESHA – The Netherlands).

NEWS FROM MALTA

In Malta, the UPPER Erasmus+ project is being implemented in three schools: two primary cycle schools and one middle school. The aim of this project and our participation is to promote global peace education aimed at learners from a diverse background. It addresses global

citizenship, multiculturalism and interculturality, with the objective of enhancing education inspiring peace. The project was designed to foster an environment of self-worth and appreciation of diversity in young Maltese and migrant students through authentic multicultural and intercultural encounters and site visits. The learning experience made use of these encounters as an opportunity for the acquisition of skills, competences and values for more responsible and active citizenship, thus breaking multi-national barriers, enhancing social cohesion and fostering peace in a rapidly-changing youth environment.

Setting up exhibition stands for intercultural day

Artwork for our Intercultural Day

Using different activities, both in class and outside the classroom, students got to know one another through role-play and sharing. Migrant students learn about Malta, their new home, through on-site visits to historical and touristic places. Maltese students accompany migrants during outings and activities with the aim of promoting friendships between children from different nationalities. We also take insights of the highly acclaimed, tried and tested 'friendship cards' project (http://www.friendship-cards.org/). An Intercultural week was planned and executed with collaboration between students, teachers, administration, parents, community members and other stakeholders. The event focused

Getting to know our new country: Parliament

All are welcome !

on informal discussions held in small groups, with elements of music, art and food from different cultures.

The principles of peace education were also disseminated in different ways during school assemblies and lessons involving several subjects, and it was a theme discussed during upskilling sessions for educators. Another initiative was the setting up of a Peace garden. The idea of a Peace Garden came to mind as often it is hard to resolve differences and conflicts often arise for numerous reasons including clashes regarding beliefs or values. We felt what better way of tackling these issues than creating a serene, outdoor environment on the school premises that the students helped build themselves.

Maltese schools intend to continue pursuing the ideals of peace education in order to create global citizens who regard real peace as an extremely important value.

INTERNATIONAL LABORATORY FOR EDUCATION INSPIRING PEACE

Born in 2018 as a spin-off of the UPPER Erasmus+ project, the International Laboratory for Education Inspiring Peace (EIP Laboratory) will soon be formally constituted in Sanremo, at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law. Its main purpose is to help educators and policy-makers – if they are interested in putting peace education competences to live together at the core of the educational project – to find learning resources, examples of good practices, documentation and collaboration opportunities.

The EIP Lab takes the motto "from silos views to a systemic approach" as its mission statement (https://www.freref.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/EIP-Laboratory-brief-presentation_18112019-ENG.pdf), namely building bridges among different initiatives on citizenship education, positive conflict transformation and more classic education in peace in view of creating the necessary impact on policy, practice and research. Considering the objectives it pursues, the Laboratory, therefore, aims to carry out research, training of teachers, analysis and support for education and cultural policies at various institutional levels, to communicate the values, principles and the results of their work, to make available methodological instruments and guidance for schools and cultural institutions, and to link with similar initiatives worldwide. The EIP Lab focuses in particular on the connection between research, innovative practices and public policies. The Laboratory will thus encourage the use of research results to inform the orientation of public policies and provide guidance to educational activities.

In practice, the Laboratory is expected to develop participatory train-ing activities, primarily directed to those who train teachers, and will organise numerous seminars and conferences directed to the exchange of experiences and initiatives in the fields considered. Among the

Laboratory core activities, key will be the development of methods and resources for the evaluation of training systems and learning outcomes in the above-mentioned relevant fields of peace education, citizenship education and positive conflict transformation. This "assessment" will be conceived as a path towards a professional improvement of the educational practitioners' skills, which starts with self-evaluation (both on a personal and on a school level) and, through learning and project work supported by available methodological tools, lectures examples, peace games, good practices collection, takes to the development of effective intercultural learning approaches, innovative pedagogy and personal skills. With the help of this self-assessment methodology, educators will also find out where they need more help or additional training, enabling themselves to assess the individual progress they have made in peace education. Based on emerging learning needs, *ad hoc* training activities will be then planned

and implemented by the Laboratory with the support of its international network of Members and partner institutions.

Obviously, the Laboratory will then take into great consideration the school leaders' perspective, being aware of the vital role they play in creating a peaceful school environment. Thanks to their positive attitude toward peace education and conflict management, they represent, in fact, the developers of a social context where every stakeholder, ranging from educators, pupils, parents and surrounding community, is heard and appreciated. Due to this, the tools and activities designed by the Laboratory will help in assessing where more attention and resources are needed. The already available organisational readiness questionnaire, for example, would like to represent a useful tool for every school leader to get a participatory overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school as an institution regarding peace education and the progress achieved over a given period of time. Along with

this instrument, the online collaborative benchmarking system allows to position each school with respect to a set of indicators emerging from the analysis of good practices, in order to understand where a school stands when compared to an international public of education institutions. Finally, teachers and school heads will find suggestions for lessons and extra-school activities in the Laboratory, as well as examples of curriculum guidelines coming from Europe and beyond. Last but not least, the Laboratory will offer the opportunity to contribute to its development, not only by supporting innovative ideas and projects coming from educators but also by providing them with the possibility of enriching its collection of good practices through the presentation of self-developed good practices through an *ad hoc* e-form.

The EIP Laboratory inherits from the UPPER project the aim of contributing to bring peace, intercultural dialogue and civic participation at the core of educational policies and school practice by scaling up the results of existing good practices. You can find more information about good peace practices in school on http://eiplab.eu/good-practices. You can research good practices on http://eiplab.eu/database and suggest a good peace practice on http://eiplab.eu/collection.
Organisations interested in discovering more and collaborating are invited to visit the Laboratory website at www.eiplab.eu and/or to contact the Laboratory at sanremo@eiplab.eu.

EDUCATION INSPIRING PEACE PILOTS

From December 2019 – September 2020 the UPPER partners have been and will continue to conduct UPPER pilots in schools in various countries in Europe. In this pilot teachers and school heads will be guided through 4 integral parts of peace education, the Educators' Competencies Framework, the Self-assessment for Teachers and School Heads, the Organisational Readiness Questionnaire and the Collaborative Benchmarking System.

In case you are interested in participating an UPPER pilot, please consult http://eiplab.eu/self-assessment. In case you would like to receive further guidelines for participation please be in touch with your local partner or Edwin Katerberg (ESHA consultant) at edwin.katerberg@esha.org.

FINAL EVENT UPPER

Due to the travel restriction that were implemented due to Covid-19 the final UPPER event that was planned to be held in Sanremo on June 29th and 30th 2020 has been postponed until further notice. The new dates and venue are yet to be decided.

HOW MUCH DOES PARTICIPATION IN UPPER COST?

The UPPER project is funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. Project materials that are generated are delivered free of cost and to the benefit of school leaders, educators, parents, pupils and policy makers.

WHY IS MY PARTICIPATION AS A SCHOOL HEAD, TEACHER, PARENT, STUDENT OR POLICY MAKER NEEDED?

In these testing times of COVID-19 combined with mass immigration around the world and in particular in Europe, Peace Education is a subject that touches us all whether we are pupils, parents, family members, teachers, school staff or school heads. Therefore in case you are interested in lending your support to the UPPER, we invite all school leaders and educators to consult www.eiplab.eu regularly for events, articles, newsletters, good practices, school resources and tools, training modules and manuals. and/or to contact local GEM partners directly. Details of UPPER partners can be found here: http://eiplab.eu/partners-of-the-laboratory. ∎

New mindful ways in the Covid era: Suggesting new measures and new time-out practises

The "millennial curse", an attribution of the Covid-19, has certainly led us to reconsider much about what we have conceived so far as learning spaces, the learning environment and educational practices.

"Everything that contributes to a child's awareness of himself also leads him to form a picture of himself, of his IDEAL self."
M.M.Lewis

The need for a new approach and a new school architecture, one that could help us all in bringing back wellness after the traumatic experience of confinement connected to the global outbreak, makes up the basis of this article. Consultation with ESHA ambassadors was also supportive of the idea that mindful practices at school are essential to reduce stress and antisocial behavior.
Previous suggestions about the creation of aesthetic time-out practices find a follow-up here with additional data collected in this period of the suspension of lessons at school and the on-line continuation with DAD (i.e. Distance Didactics).

"The times they are a changing", that is for sure.

Teachers and students are engaged in a new learning-teaching process, which is becoming more and more mindful in terms of involving the teachers and supporting student well-being.
Martin Clarke gives a few clues about what has already changed within the new context, where adjustments are called for on four levels: physical, behavioral, interactional and emotional. The teachers' pedagogical role here is being replaced by a social one. School management is moving the same way, in the need for effective communication being short, consistent, repeated and empathetic.

Where we had previously focused on correctional measures including new time-out spaces, as a school principal I had to think clearly about the new context and other priorities: a) maintaining the relationship between teachers and students, like keeping in touch; 2) providing the students with devices needed for DAD; 3) training the teachers on DAD ;4) motivating students, administration and teachers, 5) tracing problems of all kinds-social, psychological, economical; 6)focusing on help agendas; 7) promoting divergent thinking and creativity; 8) combining government provisions with decision-making and SOS's of all kinds; 9) keeping close contact with the Neighborhood Committee for information about needs and problems beyond the surface; 10) networking with district schools.

The bonus question now for a school principal is : What is mindful after Covid-19? Mindful is thoughtfulness and common sense. It begins with slow and gradual procedure on DAD; it continues with the lifelong learning process in the mode of webinars, on-line courses, bulletins and up-to dates.
What counts most in an emergency case? Saving lives, saving minds, ensuring education at all times.
What makes good leadership? Active listening, working bottom-up, grouping, being there.
And what about attention on-line? We should encourage lessons for minimum attention, time flexibility, with varied, chunked and contained activities, plus a better focus on mind maps, interdisciplinary procedures, breaks with inspiring quotes and boredom killers.

Disciplinary issues may arouse with the students who might misbehave in a virtual classroom, and this might call for DAD adaptations within the School Regulations. In this case, time-out spaces with the new school architecture, once back to school, can be replaced with other solutions, as long as the family is informed about what the child/

student is up to and how remedies may be found on educational terms. According to our own experience it might take some time before the family can be traced in times of confinement: emails may not suffice and if so, parents might not show up at on-line meetings.

At home, some children might not even have their own room for DAD or, what may be worse, space for play ad themselves. Tiny home spaces, parents on Smart Working, households with the elderly, the disabled or enlarged families.

Covid-19 has told us a bunch of things we might have never found out otherwise. Plus, children are bound to post-traumatic syndrome, which, experts say, might take some time to submerge.

Alienation and frustration may derive from the virtual reality they comply to : is this perhaps not enough to deal with?

Social services are all involved during Covid, for assisting families and children with special needs, from disability to disadvantages : jobless parents, violence in the household, poverty.

The No Child Left Behind policy is more than ever not to be done without its connections to No Family Left Behind, as already pointed out at Fact Finding Workshop " Children Living in Precarious Family Situations", which I attended as ESHA ambassador in Rome on Oct 22, 23, 2019.

The Covid was unplanned for, but schools and society have to cope with it, now and in the future, as a quest for new wellness and welfare policies.

What are the expectations for the future? Should we even ask ourselves at this point : Has man a future ? And what about phase II ? So far, we could take into consideration fair distancing, limiting number of students in a real classroom, varied shifts, additional teachers and perhaps a new pedagogy based on mindful approaches and mindful aims. If mindfulness is being conscientious, non-judgmental and creative, education is entering a new era.

Attached to the article, we would like to include suggestions on behalf of the school architects, that this new era could perhaps recur to in a post Covid –related back to school context. ■

Our special thanks to architects (who are also parents on the School Council) : Stefano Prosperi, Erika Fabiani

Also, we would like to express our gratitude to ESHA ambassadors for their useful observations and contributions:
Euan Mackie
Warner ten Kate
Maria Silva Boccardi

School Leaders and Teachers in Open Schooling

Key messages:
- Teachers and school leaders need professional autonomy for successful open schooling programmes
- Appropriate training and support as well as remuneration are necessary factors for any education innovation to succeed

Teachers and school leaders are the cornerstones of introducing open schooling activities at any school. They need to have autonomy to make such decisions and they also need professional support – training, coaching, mentoring – to introduce new ways of teaching. Introducing and maintaining open schooling activities require time investment, and this needs to be acknowledged in their workload.

While teachers have been identified as key actors in achieving the EU education targets and goals as well as Sustainable Development Goal 4, experience and statistics show that there are several aspects of teacher career paths that need to be addressed to overcome the main challenges in relation to attracting and attaining teachers for the goals to become reality. This is especially true in the context of open schooling delivery.

One of the most important aspects is training: initial teacher education is as crucial factor in assuring an effective functioning of an education system as Continuous professional development (CPD). Such programmes can be considered compulsory in all EU countries, but their extent varies from country to country. There are also major differences between time and budget provisions for CPD. Training needs are to be considered when developing open schooling programmes as a key

element of success. Appraisal systems can also be considered as an incentive for open schooling and play a very important role in reviewing and determining professional development needs. Appraisal systems also have a role in detecting low performance and they lead to support-ive/remedial measures.

Motivated teachers are inevitable for good school provisions. Financial benefits such as salary, pension and insurance are often mentioned in research as extrinsic factors motivating in-service teachers. For this reason, it is of utmost importance that teachers' overall workload is considered and remunerated, including extra effort in establishing and maintaining open schooling processes. At the same time, these direct factors are closely interrelated with elements such as 'the perceived benefits or convenience of teaching', 'the nature of teaching work' and 'the status of teaching'. A successful open schooling approach can greatly contribute to these indirect factors. A strong professional com-munity and exciting working environment, along with stimulating and challenging colleagues, has also long been considered important by teachers.

School leaders usually have a very important role in designing, organizing and evaluating open schooling programmes as well as in establishing, nurturing and maintaining partnerships, but most school head training schemes do not offer training in the field. What is more, research evidence shows that school heads are second only in school to classroom teachers in their influence upon student outcomes. The provision of appropriate CPD, together with mentoring and coaching schemes, for school leaders is of great importance, especially when it is considered that, conventionally, leadership rarely features in initial teacher education programmes, and the most common pathway to school leader positions originates from teacher positions.

Autonomy is a main factor for both teachers and school leaders to be successful and motivated promoters of open schooling. When teachers are able to choose materials, teaching methods and determine class-room organization and discipline, their motivation is reportedly higher, however only if a high degree of continuous support exists. Research has shown that greater autonomy has a positive impact on the system level, students' achievements are higher in systems with overall higher autonomy and where school leaders can be more independent in their responses to local conditions. One of the key elements in this success is the freedom to choose open schooling approaches in addressing student needs by entering into partnerships. It is also clear that as curriculum autonomy increases, teachers' on-the-job stress decreases and as general teacher autonomy increases, their motivation, empow-erment and professionalism increase. All these factors result in a better and more inclusive school climate and greater overall wellbeing of school staff and job satisfaction. However, it must be stressed that autonomy and accountability are interconnected, and that teachers and school leaders need to be empowered and supported in order to be effectively autonomous.

Sources: EACEA, EURYDICE, EEPN

EXAMPLE 1 – E4F

Within the Education for the Future (E4F) project – a joint international Master's level in-service programme for teachers, school leaders and other educational specialists – has been developed, tested, evaluated, adapted and implemented. The programme created a context for sup-porting teachers, school leaders and other educational specialists to strengthen their leadership capacities and their expertise with respect to school development and innovation.

The programme was developed within a sustainable partnership between three universities and an educational authority in four different countries (Liechtenstein, Estonia, the Netherlands and Switzerland). The programme is unique because it brings together teachers, school leaders and other educational innovators as partners in innovation, by stimulating international exchange at a Master's level, by stimulating intensive reflection about national systems and school practices, and by combining both individual professional development of the participants and school development within their schools through small-scale innovation projects at local level.

Project website: https://edu4f.wordpress.com/

EXAMPLE 2 – ELITE

The "Learning in Teaching via e-inquiries" approach for STEM teachers' professional learning is based on the principle that the teacher teaches in such a way in which he/she was taught. Inquiry-based learning (IBL) has been identified as a powerful innovative teaching approach, providing opportunities to develop the scientific literacy of all learners. At the same time, teachers meet difficulties when implementing it in the classroom, due to missing experience in it, as, usually, the teachers' professional development courses are conducted in a traditional way via lectures. The main assumption of the ELITe project is that the implementation of the IBL methodology in teachers' competence development courses will provide them with real situation experience and know-how as well as with a reflection from 'students' point of view'. Something more – the IBL has a very poorly explored potential as an effective teacher training method, which can contribute to effective STEM teachers' competence development.

Whereas current prevailing approaches in initial and continuous training programs focus on subject knowledge, pedagogy and 'practice' (classroom-based training), the ELITe approach for STEM CPD calls

for the need to address teachers' competence development goals, articulated as knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by teachers to address their challenging roles. The implementation is based on proven links between inquiry skills practice and STEM teachers' competence development. Contextual aspects affecting effective provision of CPD in the above mentioned countries have been taken into consideration, while challenges and needs in terms of renewing the thematic of STEM teacher training have also been addressed.

http://www.learning-in-teaching.eu/index.php/en/

ABOUT PHERECLOS

PHERECLOS is aiming at establishing 6 "Local Education Clusters" (LECs) of different design as examples of open schooling, that bring together schools and further relevant actors in the education eco-system of a particular pilot region, supported by a peer mentoring programme. The LECs will be incubators for enabling a dialogue between various parties and help to set up joint activities in (formal and non-formal) education, helping to develop collaborative learning environments as experimental testbeds for schools. At the same time LECs shall impact on the quality of science engagement opportunities in these areas.

Open Schooling lessons learnt from Covid-19

Key messages from the #Ed2030 Global Forum by OECD (19-20 May 2020):

• The current COVID-19 reality is clearly challenging for everyone involved in education, but also provides is us a unique opportunity to learn from each other – H.R.H Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands

• We can use the momentum from the crisis to reshape curricula and learning environments to the needs of the 21st century – Andreas Schleicher, OECD Director for Education and Skills

The experiences of school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic has some elements open STEAM schooling initiatives can use as leverage. The active use of digital tools is just one aspect. If we want to use these experiences, we need to focus on other elements such as new ways of assessment, playfulness, collaborative learning methodologies, inter-generational learning, focus on arts and life skills, or the secondary nature of academic content.

The education research community has reacted quickly and there are several ongoing or already finished research activities and evidence related to the impact of school closures due to COVID-19 published by May 2020. Researchers call for a stark differentiation between digital or online learning and provisions due to school closures, but there are research results that can be useful for designing open schooling activities in regular times.

Online provisions can enable the flexibility of teaching and learning anywhere, anytime, and this has been very well received by both students and their families. For teachers, however, balancing work and family life

has proven to be challenging. Online learning also carries a stigma of being lower quality than face-to-face learning, despite research showing otherwise. These are significant considerations when designing open schooling as teacher well-being is as important a consideration as that of learners. When designing open schooling provisions, there are the highly variable design solutions that have been developed and implemented: distance learning, distributed learning, blended learning, online learning, mobile learning, and others. It is crucial to understand their characteristics and benefits when designing open schooling.

As Janet Goodal (https://impact.chartered.college/article/engaging-parents-during-school-closures/#respond) has put it, the current situation makes it possible for all school stakeholders, but especially school leaders "to consider what's really important in schooling – to think about what schools are for, and to concentrate on that. Schools were originally set up to enable groups of children to learn the things that society deemed were important for them to know (Goodall, 2017), and have come a very long way in being able to do that, mainly through the dedication and professionalism of the staff within the school walls. Now, though, we need to get back to those basics, to become radical if you like (the word means 'root') – what's really important for our children to learn? To do, to be, to become? And how can we help families support that learning? Now, more than ever, we need to see growing partnerships between school staff and other families – and I say 'other' because one facet of the whole debate that seems to be ignored is just how many school staff are themselves parents or carers." Non-formal education providers have made a vast amount of content and tools available for free, and have gone a long way curating content to support emergency remote schooling, proving to be suitable partners in open schooling.

Child mental health experts have urged governments to prioritise children's play and socialising with friends over formal lessons and academic progress when schools reopen. At the same time there is long-established evidence about the benefits of playfulness in learning, as well as gamification methodologies supporting iterative learning. Open schooling in STE(A)M can support the implementation of diverse methods more beneficial for deep learning than traditional school instruction. In a recent research by Scientix a grim picture has been drawn about the use of non-traditional, non-frontal methodologies in STEM teaching in Europe, while their benefits have proven to be widely known.

Last, but not least, current experiences also made education stake-holders rethink the role and use of digital technology, to understand the difference between passive screen time and using the screen for being active and to evaluate the benefits against potential risks. Open school-ing partnerships can contribute to finding a healthy balance between digital and traditional education having partners more proficient using technology than the average school teacher. Maintaining the use of digital alternatives can also help reduce pressure on the environment by making choices between necessary and not-so-necessary travel, while keeping a healthy level of physical interpersonal contacts. Open schooling programmes can also support teachers to become more proficient using digital platforms and tools. ■

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Next issue
OF THE ESHA MAGAZINE
WILL BE OUT IN SEPTEMBER 2020

The deadline for submitting an article for the next issue is
Friday 28 August 2020.

Do you have interesting success stories?
A perfect programme?
Good experiences with the job shadowing project?
Liked a seminar you attended?
Have found a great solution everyone should know off?

Did you do research and found something great?
Found knowledge you have to share?
Found out something great?
An answer to all our questions?

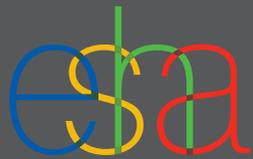### Do you have an upcoming event you want everyone to know?
Something that shouldn't be missed?
A thing you have to go to?
A date which no one should forget?

Or do you want to read something about a certain theme?
Children's diversity
Coaching and mentoring school leaders
Hybrid integration
Inclusion
Social innovation
....

Please contact (luca.laszlo@esha.org) us so we can make great
next issues of the ESHA magazine for you!

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