

Impact evaluation of COVID-19 restriction measures on Children's Rights – Greece

The research has been conducted by Dr. Antonis Kouroutakis in 2021, Assistant Professor at the University of Madrid, in the framework of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) and UNICEF Greece Country Office under the supervision and coordination of the Deputy Ombudswoman for Children's Rights.

The content of the report is particularly based on the data collection through questionnaires in a population sample as described in particular in Chapter 3.1.1.

The percentages in the graphs included in the survey have been captured after rounding to decimal places.

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1. Background

The World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a 'pandemic' on March 11th, 2020. As of today, September 1st 2021, the coronavirus, which known as SARS-CoV2 or severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus, has been confirmed to be present in more than 220 countries.¹ Over 150 million people have contracted the coronavirus disease (COVID -19), and more than four million people have died.

While the pandemic spread across the globe at varying paces affecting some countries to a greater degree than others, all governments were under pressure to respond. The mortality rate of COVID-19 was unprecedentedly high, estimated in excess of one percent—much higher than common influenza.² Unfortunately, the transmission rate of the virus was also considerably high.³ As epidemiologists have observed, the COVID-19 pandemic 'is the most serious seen in a respiratory virus since the H1N1 influenza pandemic of 1918.'⁴

The world witnessed these circumstances create the dire situation seen over the past year and a half: high mortality rates, rapid transmission, and the slow development of medical technologies to combat the virus which strained hospitals and health resources exposing the lack of preparedness of the world to such a pandemic. As a result, tools normally utilized by policy makers around the world were ineffective against the exigency of the situation.

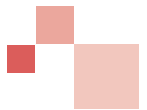
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1. For an update on the development of the pandemic see <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> Accessed 31st August 2021.
 2. According to a report published in February 2020, the case fatality ratio (CFR) was estimated in the range 1.2-5.6%. However, the mortality rate from country to country may vary as it depends on the statistical methods used in combination with the 'sensitivity of the divergent surveillance systems to detect cases of differing levels of severity of the illness. For more details, see I. Dorigatti, L. Okell, A. Cori, et al. Report 4: Severity of 2019-novel Coronavirus (nCoV) Available at https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200219-sitrep-30-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=3346b04f_2, Accessed 31st August 2021.
 3. According to a report published in January 2020 it was estimated that each patient infected 2.6 new people. For more details see N. Imai, A. Cori, I. Dorigatti, et al. Report 3 - Transmissibility of 2019-nCoV Available at <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/mrc-global-infectious-disease-analysis/covid-19/report-3-transmissibility-of-covid-19/> Accessed 31st August 2021.
 4. See N. Ferguson, D. Laydon, G. Nedjati-Gilani et al, Report 9: Impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to reduce COVID-19 mortality and healthcare demand Available at <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/mrc-global-infectious-disease-analysis/covid-19/report-9-impact-of-npis-on-covid-19/> Accessed 31st August 2021.

As the pandemic progressed, social or physical distancing was the widely adopted strategy for mitigating the spread of the virus.⁵ Social distancing practices include instructing people to keep a 'safe distance' which is six feet or about two arm's length between people who are not from the same household in both indoor and outdoor spaces. Social distancing also includes wearing masks and other protective measures.⁶ As a result, daily activities such as attending school, sports activities, religious ceremonies, dining at restaurants, office work, and using public transportation were all generally abandoned.

Balancing public health with rights and freedoms such as the freedom of movement and assembly, the right to pursue economic activities, and the free exercise of religion became a challenge since some states adopted emergency measures such as absolute or partial lockdowns and other bans and restrictions. These restrictions included curfews, travel bans, quarantines, mandatory testing before entry of certain spaces, limited capacity for indoor activities, and entry to indoor spaces limited only to those using protective masks.

Specifically, Greece implemented stay-at-home orders, curfews, limited sized gatherings, closing schools, banning of sports activities, restricted entry to Greece unless proof of a negative COVID test, and a mandatory 14-day period of quarantine among other rules. These measures aimed to safeguard the right to life and the right to health for adults and children. However, well-intended measures can simultaneously negatively impact other rights. While there is a plethora of discussion of the impact of such restrictions on general human rights,⁷ there is less

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5. See N. Ferguson, D. Laydon, G. Nedjati-Gilani et al, Report 9: Impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to reduce COVID-19 mortality and healthcare demand Available at <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/mrc-global-infectious-disease-analysis/covid-19/report-9-impact-of-npis-on-covid-19/> Accessed 31st August 2021 '(a) mitigation, which focuses on slowing but not necessarily stopping epidemic spread – reducing peak healthcare demand while protecting those most at risk of severe disease from infection, and (b) suppression, which aims to reverse epidemic growth, reducing case numbers to low levels and maintaining that situation indefinitely.'
 6. For more details, see Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 'Social Distancing' available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html> Accessed 31st August 2021.
 7. See for instance William J. Brennan, Jr., 'The Quest to Develop a Jurisprudence of Civil Liberties in Times of Security Crises' (1988) 18 Israel Yearbook on Human Rights 11; Richard A. Posner, 'The Truth About Our Liberties', in Amitai Etzioni and Jason H. Marsh, eds Rights vs. Public Safety after 9/11: America in the Age of Terrorism (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2003) 24; Gábor Halmai, Gábor Mészáros, Kim Lane Scheppele, From Emergency to Disaster: How Hungary's Second Pandemic Emergency will Further Destroy



focus on the impact that these measures specifically had on the rights of children.

Therefore, ENOC and UNICEF designed an initiative to explore the impact of COVID-19 related measures on children's rights. Given the numerous emergency measures implemented by the Greek authorities, a Child Rights Impact Evaluation (CRIE) was carried out to collect, organize, and analyze information related to the impact of COVID-19 related measures on the rights of children in Greece. CRIE is a tool for the ex post evaluation of laws in relation to their impact on children's rights, while the ex ante assessment of bills and forthcoming laws takes place with a Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA)

Within this context, the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) and its members have committed themselves to monitoring the impact of some of the emergency measures on children's rights as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant European and International Human Rights instruments.

Under the auspices of and with the coordination of the Greek Deputy Ombudswoman for the Rights of the Child and in collaboration with UNICEF, a CRIE was conducted to draft a report on the effects of the pandemic on the rights of the child in Greece.

the Rule of Law, VerfBlog, 2020/5/30, Available at <https://verfassungsblog.de/from-emergency-to-disaster/> Accessed 31st August 2021; Stefanus Hendrianto, Early Warning Signs of Abusive Constitutionalism in Indonesia: Pandemic as Pretext, Int'l J. Const. L. Blog, Jun. 20, 2020, at: <http://www.iconnectblog.com/2020/06/early-warning-signs-of-abusive-constitutionalism-in-indonesia-pandemic-as-pretext/> Accessed 31st August 2021.

2. Scope and objectives

2.1 Goals

The rationale for undertaking a CRIE on the pandemic measures is twofold;

First, to document children's rights issues in relation to the relevant legislation. In particular, to examine the positive and negative impact of such measures on the rights of children in order to inform future policy and planning; and

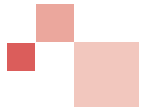
Second, given the absence of a Child's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) in the drafting stages of COVID-19 related measures, the goal is to emphasize the importance of using such assessment tools in law-making in order to create consistent structural deficits in law-making and the administration for the future in order to respond better to the needs of children and respect children's rights in emergency situations as well as in non-emergency situations. This CRIE is therefore aimed to evaluate the consequences of the COVID-19 related measures introduced in Greece on children's rights and to further inform decision-makers about their positive and negative effects so, in the future, the negative effects are mitigated and the positive effects are promoted.

In particular, the CRIE elucidated three interrelated questions: first, whether the enforced COVID -19 measures were appropriate and absolutely necessary or whether there was an alternative way to achieve the same goals; second, what was the impact of these measures in relation to education, mental health and domestic violence for children respectively; and third, whether the rights of children were taken into account during the adoption, implementation review And renewal of the measures.

2.2 Screening and Scope

The COVID-19 pandemic measures regulated a plethora of human activity, including transportation, trade, work, education, worship, leisure activities etc. Such measures potentially affect multiple rights of children including their mental and physical health, their education, their right to practice their own cultural traditions, their right to be in contact with their family, their right to holistic development, and their right to protection from violence.

In line with the ENOC-UNICEF suggested methodology for the CRIE on COV-



ID-19 measures, the screening of all pieces of legislation, primary and secondary, that were enforced to combat the pandemic is a necessary preliminary step. Therefore, a screening process of the legislative and policy measures which were adopted between March 2020 to February 2021 was conducted. This 12-month period allowed us to assess the development, implementation, and impact of such measures against the rapidly changing COVID-19 policy landscape. This 12-month scope also allowed us to understand the evolving and cumulative nature of the COVID-19 measures.

Among the range of measures enacted and their potential effects on divergent human rights of children, the scope of the CRIE is limited to three (3) subject areas: education, mental health, and domestic violence. These key components correspond to separate articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) namely, Child's right to Education (Article 28); Child's right to protection from all forms of violence (Article 19); and Child's right to Health and to Health Services (Article 24) in light of the general principles of the UNCRC - namely the principles of non-discrimination (Article 2), the consideration of the best interest for the child (Article 3.1), the optimal possible survival and development of the child (Article 6.2), and respecting the views of the child (Article 12.1).

In particular, to face the exigency of the pandemic, in March 2020, the Greek government first temporarily suspended all the school units for two weeks,⁸ and it launched asynchronous and synchronous online education to keep the students in touch with the educational process.⁹

Then, the government extended the suspension for three weeks,¹⁰ then, for another month,¹¹ and on May 6, 2020 it ordered the restart of the face to face classes for the senior classes of the high school and progressively for the rest of the students.¹² Interestingly, the option of face to face class simultaneously with online class was enacted.¹³ Moreover, the extension of the school year was or-

8. See Ministerial decision published at Government Gazette 783 / B / 10.3.2020.

9. See bylaws enacted by the Ministry of Education Reference Number Φ8/38091/Δ4, 16-3-2020 entitled "Transmission of Instructions for the Implementation of Distance Education Programs".

10. Regarding the extension up to April 10, 2020 see Government Gazette 956/B/21.03.2020.

11. Government Gazette 24343/B/10.4.2020 and 1293/B/10.04.2020.

12. Government Gazette 1739/B/06.05.2020 and 1699/B/05.05.2020 and B2026/B/27.05.2020.

13. Government Gazette 1859/B/15.05.2020.



dered with extra two weeks, until the 12th of June 2020,¹⁴ as a recovery from the lack of in person classes during the year.

For the new academic year of 2020-2021, face to face classes resumed with special measures to prevent the spread of the virus, with mandatory use of mask and with special regulations for the school canteens etc.¹⁵ However on the 14th November 2020 online education was re-imposed.¹⁶ On the 8th of January face to face classes resumed¹⁷ but on 10th of February online education was re –imposed for the certain regions of Greece (including its biggest region Attica)¹⁸ while progressively more schools closed across the country.¹⁹

14. Government Gazette 1764/B/08.05.2020.

15. Government Gazette 3780/08-09-2020

16. Government Gazette 5043/B/14.11.2020.

17. Government Gazette 23/B/08.01.2021.

18. Government Gazette 23/B/08.01.2021.

19. Government Gazette 793/B/27.02.2021.



**Table A: Ministerial decisions and their legislative scope
in relation to education**

Suspension of face to face education	Government Gazette 783/B/10.3.2020	Online education for two weeks
	Government Gazette 956/B/21.03.2020	Online education for three weeks
	Government Gazette 24343/B/10.4.2020 and 1293/B/10.04.2020	Online education for a month
Reopening of face to face education	Government Gazette 1739/B/06.05.2020 and 1699/B/05.05.2020 and B 2026/B/27.05.2020	face to face classes for the senior classes of the high school and progressively for the rest of the students
extension of the school year 2019-2020	Government Gazette 1764/B/08.05.2020	Extension of the school year and face to face classes until the 12th of June 2020
Face to face education	Government Gazette 3780/08-09-2020	Face to face classes with mandatory use of mask
Suspension of face to face education	Government Gazette 4810/B/31.10.2020.	Online education Until the end of 2020 (with extensions)
Face to face classes	Government Gazette 23/B/08.01.2021	Face to face classes with mandatory use of mask
Suspension of face to face education	Government Gazette 23/B/08.01.2021 and 793/B/27.02.2021	Online education was re-imposed progressively in every region

In relation to mental health, the critical measure implemented to prevent the spread of the virus was a general lockdown. A stay at home order was issued with enumerated exceptions, such as visits to doctor, outdoor exercise, doctor appointments or shopping. In addition, sport and cultural activities were prohibited and even playgrounds were shut down.²⁰ These measures were first imposed in March

20. Government Gazette 4829/ B` 2.11.2020.

2020²¹ until May 4th.²² Then, on September 21st the gathering of more than 9 people were banned initially for the region of Attica²³, but a general stay at home order was re-imposed in October 2020 for most regions of Greece²⁴ which was extended to the whole country on November 6th²⁵ until the 18th of January 2021 when some restrictions were replaced with a night curfew.²⁶ Finally, a general lockdown was re-imposed on the 10th of February 2021.²⁷

All of these measures, combined with the online education, meant that children were confined indoors and their ordinary social lives and interactions were hindered.

In relation to domestic violence, a general lockdown was imposed and a stay-at-home order was issued with enumerated exceptions such as visits to doctor, outdoor exercise. Only essential services remained in operation such as supermarkets, pharmacies, gas stations, and medical centers. In the public sector, the operation of the Courts and the Prosecutor's Office was suspended²⁸ and work from home was promoted,²⁹ which inevitably led to the limited function of some public services.

21. See Government Gazette 986/B'22.3.2020, 'Imposition of the measure of temporary restriction of the movement of citizens in order to deal with the risk of spreading the coronavirus COVID-19', which was complemented by Government Gazette 1040 / B` 26.3.2020,

'Completion of No. Δ1α / Γ.Π. 20036 / 22.3.2020 of joint ministerial decision - "Imposition of the measure of temporary restriction of the movement of citizens in order to deal with the risk of spread of the coronavirus COVID-19" (B' 986)' and was extended several times, see for instance, Government Gazette 1168 / B` 4.4.2020, 'Extension of validity of the joint ministerial decision no. Δ1α / ΓΠ.οικ.20036 / 22.03.2020 (BΔ 986), as supplemented with no. 20797 / 26.03.2020 joint ministerial decision (B' 1040)'.

22. Government Gazette 1168/B/04.04.2020.

23. Government Gazette 4019/B/20.09.2020.

24. Government Gazette 4709/B/23.10.2020.

25. Government Gazette 4899/B/06.11.2020.

26. Government Gazette 3060/B/15.01.2021.

27. Government Gazette 534/B/10.02.2021.

28. See Government Gazette 833 / BD / 12.3.2020) which provides for the suspension of operation of all Courts and Prosecutions of the State from 13.3.2020. to 27.3.2020.

29. See Act of Legislative Content (Ordinance) 11.3.2020, Article 5 'Urgent measures to deal with the negative consequences of the occurrence of coronavirus COVID-19 and the need to limit its spread.'



Table B: Ministerial decisions and their legislative scope in relation to mental health and domestic violence against children

Stay at home orders	Government Gazette 986/ B`22.3.2020	For two weeks
	Government Gazette 1168/ B`4.4.2020	Extended for a month
Restrictions on gatherings	Government Gazette 4019/B/20.09.2020	Gatherings of more than 9 people were banned in the region of Attica
Stay at home orders	Government Gazette 4709/B/23.10.2020	for most regions of Greece
	Government Gazette 4899/B/06.11.2020	For the whole country until the 18 th of January 2021
	Government Gazette 534/B/10.02.2021	From the 10 th of February 2021
Closed playgrounds	Government Gazette 986/ B` 22.03.2020.	Local authorities were allowed to close playgrounds.
	Government Gazette 4829/ B` 2.11.2020	In case a region was considered red in terms of covid-19 incidents, the playgrounds were shut.

The selection of these three areas was made by the office of the Deputy Ombudswoman for Children based on the complaints that the office of the Deputy Ombudswoman for Children received as well as references from key stakeholders. Furthermore, the selection is in line with ENOC guidance on Methodology, particularly steps 1 and 2, which outline the criteria for selection of issues, namely: impact on a large number of children, most impact on the most marginalized children, and impact appearing significant and succinct. Accordingly measures in relation to education were selected because they impact every child in Greece, while measures affecting their mental health and measures weakening the protection against domestic violence were selected due to their significant and succinct impact.

Finally, these fields create a scope of the CRIE that is narrow and precise which allowed for a more in-depth and focused analysis, simultaneously acknowledging the considerable interdependence between these three (3) areas.

3. Methodology

The technical approach to this assessment was the use of online surveys. All results were synthesized under the three areas: education, mental health, and domestic violence. In doing so, various methods were used to address the assessment questions: including, first, a desk review of secondary information and sources such as academic articles, official statistics, public inquiry responses and briefings, secondary and independent reports; and second, analysis of data collected through the five surveys.

The evidence was then used to draw conclusions and recommendations for the studied fields.

3.1 Data collection:

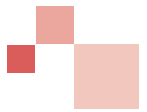
Pertaining to the online data collection, there were five surveys: one was addressed to children, one to parents, and three surveys were addressed to key informants such as service providers and other stakeholders.

For the survey addressed to children, the focus was education while mental health issues were examined only by proxy questions. Questions on domestic violence were not included. The assessment was centered on the closure of schools, its substitution with online education, and online schools' efficiency.

Given that the surveys were addressed to both children of primary, including preschool, and children of secondary education (5-18 years old), the survey had two versions to account for the capacity of younger children. One was tailored to children of preschool and primary education while the latter was addressed to children of secondary education.

The surveys were designed to also consider the views of children who are usually invisible in policy making such as children on the move.

Three channels for the distribution of the surveys were followed. First, the network of collaborating bodies of the Ombudsman was utilized and surveys were sent to the Regional Centers for Educational Planning, and through them, the surveys were delivered to the administrations of every school in the country. Then, the administrations sent the survey to the emails that parents used to enroll their children.



Second, surveys were sent to the Network of Young Advisors of the Greek Children's Ombudsman 2021, a 25-member group from different parts of Greece (Attica and Peloponnese), as well as to former members of (2020 Network).

Third, surveys were distributed through the national Child Protection sub-Working Group and UNICEF partners in most of Open Accommodation Sites to the children living there.

The second survey was addressed to professionals in education, mainly teachers in preschool, primary, and secondary education, with the main focus on education. Again, the network of collaborating bodies of the Ombudsman was utilized and the surveys were sent via the Regional Centers for Educational Planning, and through them, the surveys were delivered to the administrations of every school in the country. Then, the administrations sent the surveys to every teacher in their preschool, primary, and secondary education system.

The third and the fourth surveys were designed to reach people who are in contact and/or interact with vulnerable population groups, specifically, children on the move and children in institutional care. Thus, the content was adjusted to match their experience and expertise. Thus the Network for the Rights of Children on the Move and the Network for Deinstitutionalization, collaborating with the Ombudsperson were used.

Specifically, the third survey was addressed to key informants, service providers, and other stakeholders in institutions, private or public, with expertise in relation to the Rights of Children on the Move.

The fourth survey, was addressed to key informants, service providers, and other stakeholders in institutions with expertise in Alternative Care and Deinstitutionalization

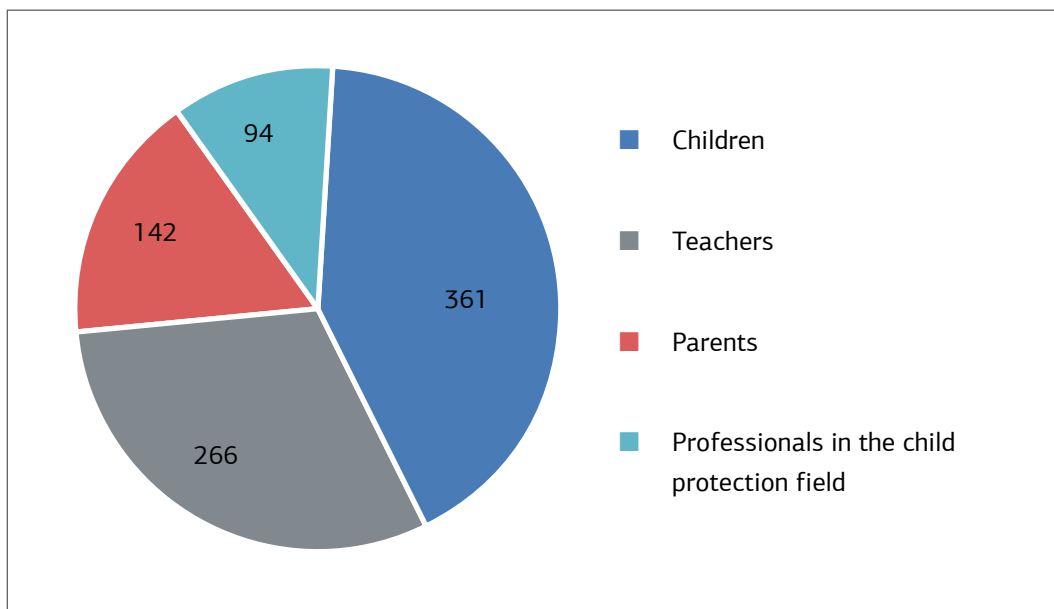
Finally, the fifth survey was addressed to parents. For the distribution of the fifth survey, schools and social media platforms were used.

All surveys followed a standard structure, starting with a request for consent followed by demographic questions and then a set of ten to eleven questions on substantive issues.

All five surveys were conducted online from the 1st of June until the 30th of June, via the Survey Monkey platform, and participants selected their own answers. The study involved 863 people, of whom 361 were children (See Graph A), 56% girls and 44% boys. In addition, 266 teachers participated (121 teachers in

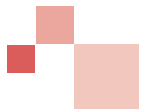
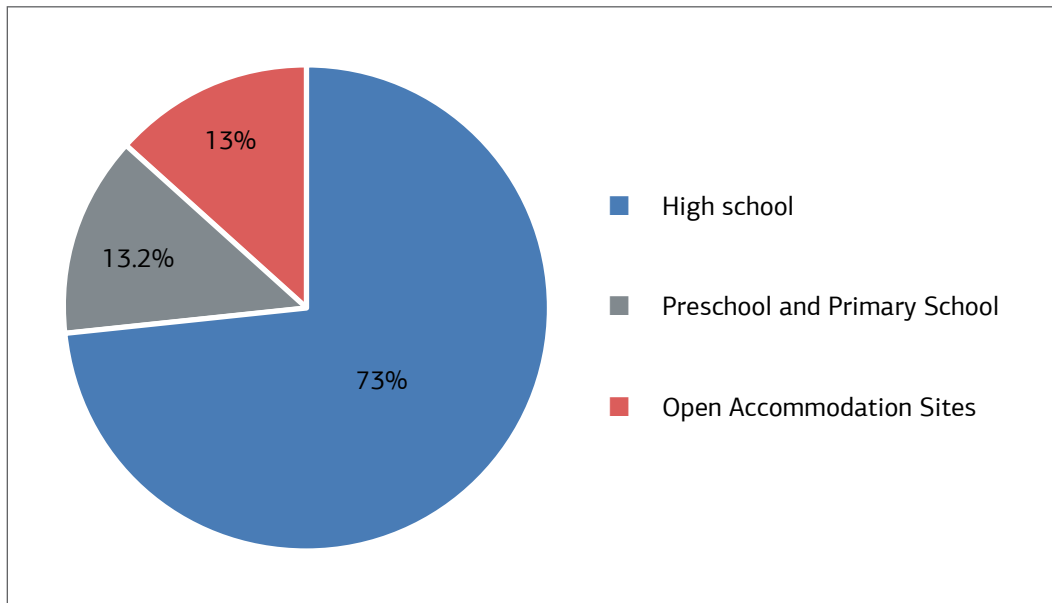
primary education and 145 in secondary education), 142 parents, and 94 professionals in relation to institutional care and children on the move (42 professionals in relation to institutional care and 52 professionals in relation to children on the move). The sample of children included primary and secondary school students as well as children on the move, aged 5 to 18 years and in particular 48 children from preschool and primary school, 266 children from high school, and 47 children on the move going to high school (see Graph B).

Graph A: Participants

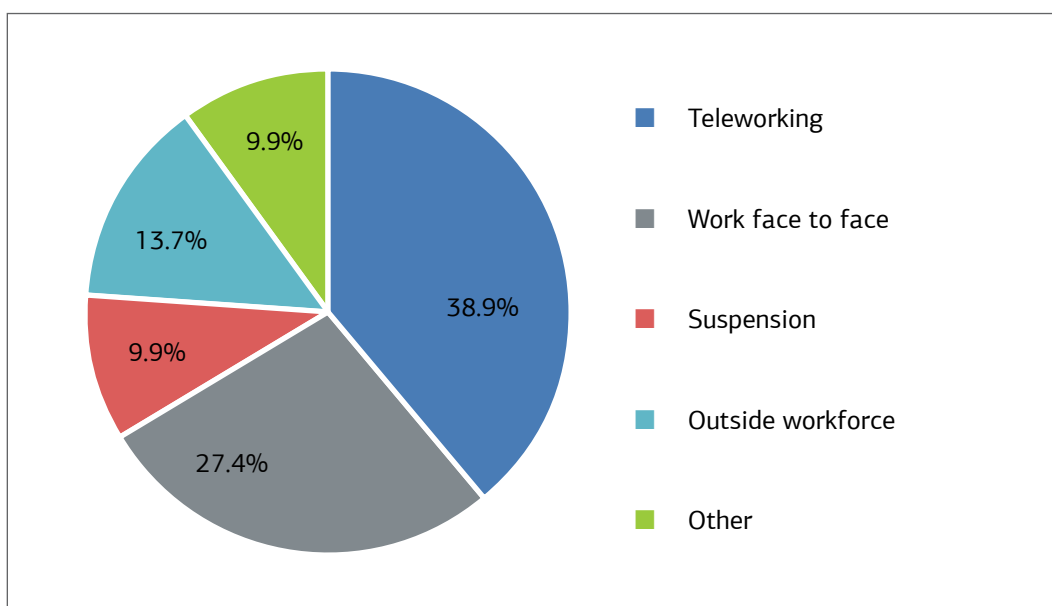


Interestingly, in terms of the responses, no significant differences were found between the surveys conducted through schools and surveys conducted through accommodation facilities where refugee and migrant children reside. However, it seems that the vast majority of children on the move were not allowed to enroll in public schools, and they did not attend school neither face to face or online.³⁰ Obviously, this marks a complete violation of their right to education.

30. Bill Van Esveld and Eva Cossé Will Greek Schools Open for All Kids This Year? (13 September 2021) available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/13/will-greek-schools-open-all-kids-year>

**Graph B: Children according to level of education**

It is noteworthy that Parents with varying work statuses participated in the survey, with 38.93% working from home, 27.48% working face to face, 9.92% having their employment under suspension, and 13.74% being outside the work-force (see Graph C).

Graph C: Parents' work status

3.2 Data Security

The surveys were conducted online via the Survey Monkey platform. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured as (1) the survey creator made Anonymous Responses the default setting, (2) the survey creator did not track IP addresses, and (3) the survey creator did not track email invitations. The data stored on the Survey Monkey platform are automatically deleted after 60 days. Once the CRIE is finalized, the data will be downloaded and stored in the office of the Greek Deputy Ombudswoman for the Rights of the Child.

3.3 Consent

All surveys required informed consent. Each survey's title was accompanied by a brief description of the survey and its purpose. Moreover, the first question provided more details about the survey, information about who was collecting the data, contact information of the survey creators, an explanation of why the survey was created, and then the question asked for the participant's consent. If consent was not provided, the survey ended. Additionally, for the surveys addressed to children, informed consent was first required by their parent or guardian and then also required informed consent by the child themselves.

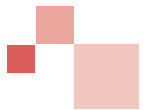
3.4 Ethical Review

The CRIE followed UNICEF Procedure on ethical standards in research and received Ethical Approval. These standards emphasize the importance of respect for and protection of human rights and, more specifically, reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child's (UNCRC) principles of the right to life, survival and development, the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, and participation.

3.5 CRIE Questions

To determine the merit or value of a regulation, in this case, the measures on COVID-19, the proportionality test was utilized.

The proportionality test has four main steps: whether the government has a



legitimate goal, whether the measures are suitable to achieve that goal, whether the measures are necessary in the sense that there is no alternative measure with less negative impacts on rights, and whether there is a balance between the purpose and the harm of such measures.

Within this framework, the CRIE examined the value of a regulation considering proportionality tests and, in particular, the focus was on the appropriateness of the measures and the balance between the purpose and the harm. In doing so, the questions of the evaluation were designed to reveal the last two aspects of the proportionality test: the necessity of the measures and to investigate the potential harm on children's rights.

Therefore, the evaluation had two questions which related to i) whether the enacted COVID-19 measures were appropriate and were absolutely necessary or whether there was an alternative way to achieve the same goals; and ii) what was the impact of these measures on education, mental health, and domestic violence. These questions were complimented by a more specific question: whether the government considered the rights of children when they adopted and enforced the COVID-19 related measures and whether they consulted children.

These questions were broken down into specific evaluation questions in order to produce essential evidence used in the analysis and the conclusions of the CRIE.

3.6 Limitations

The evaluation had the following limitations:

1. Online surveys were developed using an online platform, Survey Monkey. The sampling method took place via self – selection of the participants. This inevitably results in the collection of data that are not statistically representative. Nevertheless, these surveys provide a glimpse into the experience of children, teachers, parents, key informants, service providers, and other stakeholders.
2. Given that the sampling method occurred by participants self-selection, this also might lead to biased data as the participants- respondents do not represent the entire target population.
3. Given that all questions were mandatory in order to collect the data at the end, some respondents may have decided not to complete the survey, implying that some views are not accounted for in the final evidence.



4. The evaluation did not include interviews due to the time constraints to deliver the final report as well as the issue of the closure of schools. This means that the evaluation potentially lacks the deeper emotional experiences of respondents.
5. In relation to children's surveys, given that the parents were the contact person especially for younger children, it is possible that parents filled in the surveys, and hence may have affected the reflection of children's views.
6. A challenge when conducting online surveys is the limited access to the internet of certain children due to the lack of access to computers and internet, as well as access to information in general. Hence the views of children without access to computers, internet and to information are not captured.
7. Finally, most of the refugee and migrant children in open accommodation sites during the lock down periods were not allowed to attend classes in schools neither face to face nor online. Thus the views of these children are not recorded in the evaluation of online education.

4. Analysis

4.1 Education

Article 28 of the UN Convention for Child's Rights (hereinafter, the Convention) establishes the right of children to education³¹ More specifically, Article 28 guarantees the access to education and prescribes a school system fit for children. As it is the case for the rights of the Convention, the right to education cannot be properly understood in isolation, detached from the general principles encapsulated in the Convention and without examining the interconnectedness between different values enshrined in other rights.³²

Thus, Article 28 must be read in combination with Article 29 of the UN Convention for Child's Rights so that the right to education is not only about the access to the education system, but also about the quality of that education.³³ Most importantly, 'education must be provided in a way that respects the inherent dignity of the child and enables the child to express his or her views freely in accordance with Article 12 (1) and to participate in school life.'³⁴ Moreover, such rights must consider the general principle of Article 2 of the Convention on non-discrimination which states that the right to education must be achieved "on the basis of equal opportunity."

As mentioned above, to face the exigency of the pandemic, the Greek government suspended face to face learning in schools. Interestingly, the government extended the school year to an extra two weeks, until the 12th of June 2020,³⁵ in order to make up for the lack of in-person classes earlier the year, and without a doubt, the government policy to keep schools in charge of the education of

31. This right is in line with both article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 13(2) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

32. Rachel Hodgkin and Peter Newell, Commentary. Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations Children's Fund 2007 3rd ed) 409.

33. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), General comment No. 1 (2001), Article 29 (1), The aims of education, 17 April 2001, CRC/GC/2001/1, Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4538834d2.html> Accessed August 31st 2021.

34. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), General comment No. 1 (2001), Article 29 (1), The aims of education, 17 April 2001, CRC/GC/2001/1, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4538834d2.html> Accessed 30 August 2021.

35. Government Gazette 1764/B/08.05.2020.

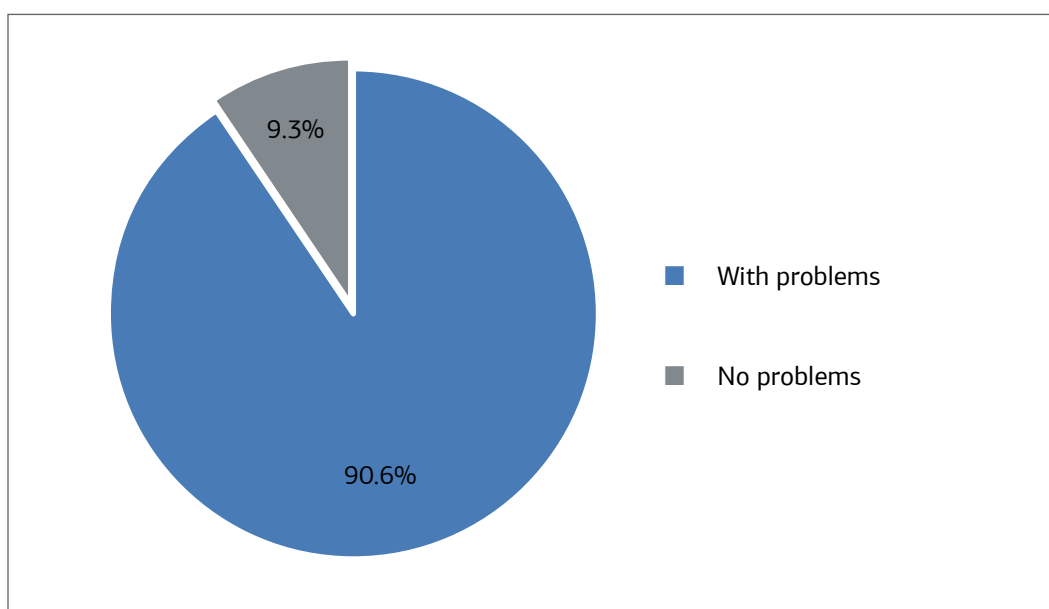
children with disabilities open was a positive measure for children's with disabilities rights.³⁶

The implementation of online education requires digital infrastructure which was lacking in Greece. Suffice to mention that Greece was ranked 27th out of the 28 EU Member States in the European Commission Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) in 2020.³⁷ This ranking demonstrates the prima facie incompatibility of online education with the reality of Greece, while underscoring the capacity development needed for both the government and the citizens to efficiently utilize online education.

4.1.1. Encountering problems during the online education

First, it is clear that children in secondary schools and children on the move encountered problems during online education. Only 9.37% (9 girls and 9 boys, in total 18 children) said they had no problem, while 90.63% (174 children) experienced difficulties during online education (see Graph 1).

Graph 1: Existence of problems during online education

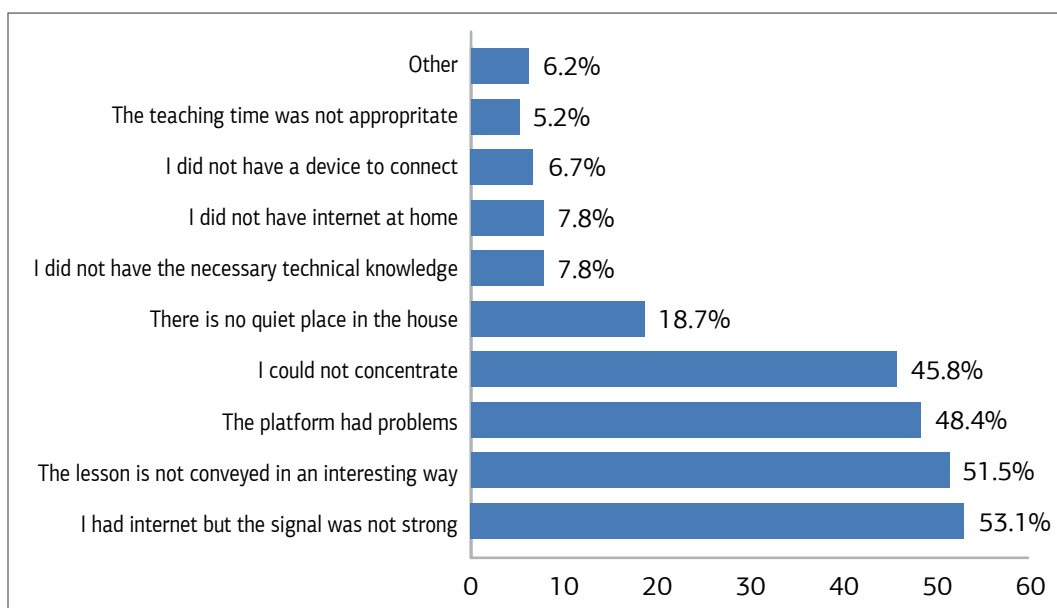


36. Government Gazette 4810/B/31.10.2020.

37. Digital Economy and Society Index 2020 Thematic chapters page 14 available at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/desi>

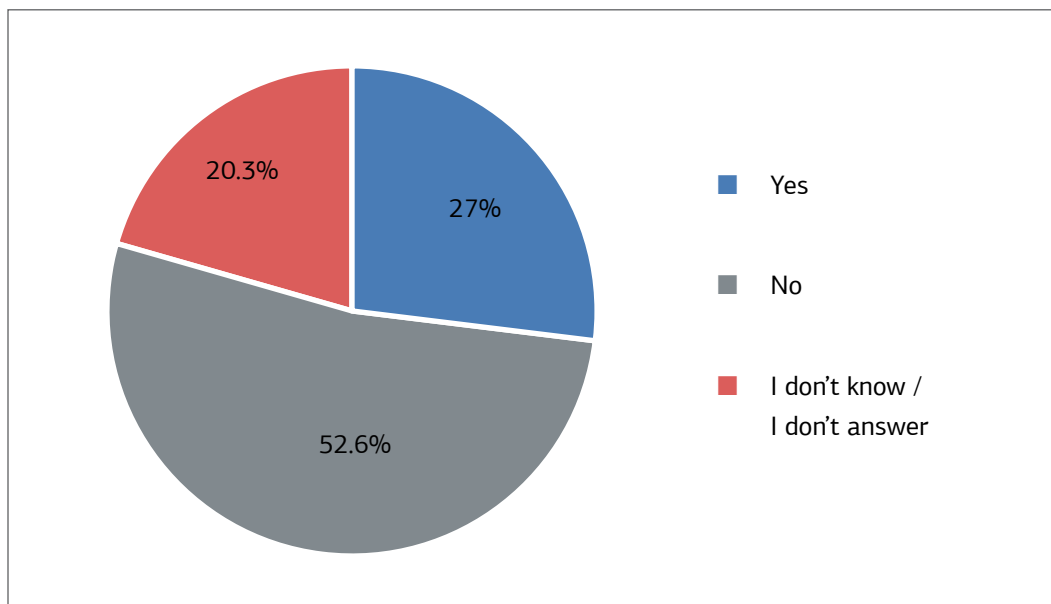
The obstacles faced by the children from secondary schools including the children on the move concern both technical internet issues and inherent problems of online education.³⁸ The leading issues included the lack of a good internet signal (53.12%), the way the online lesson was conducted was not interesting (51.56%), the online learning platform had problems (48.43%), and that students could not concentrate on the lesson (45.83%) (see Graph 2).

Graph 2: Main problems encountered by children



38. see D Valentine, Distance Learning: Promises, Problems, and Possibilities Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration Volume 5, Number 3, 2002.

Graph 3: Satisfaction rate with online platform

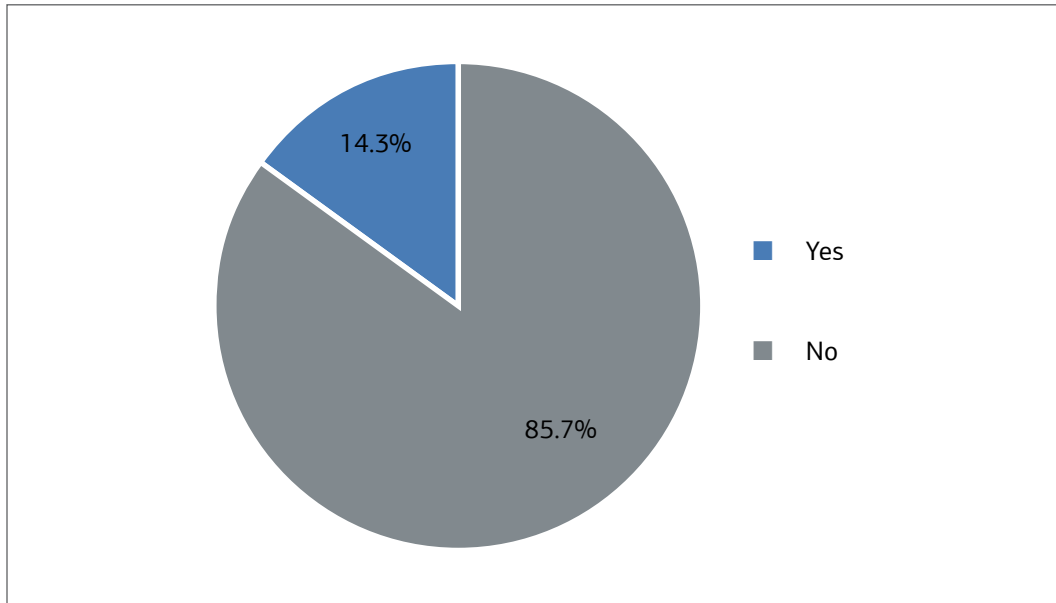


Another key issue in relation to online education is the software which is used to connect teachers and students. Interestingly, before the pandemic, in 2018, according to a report from OECD, only 34.2% of students in schools had available an effective online learning support platform.³⁹ From the outset, this low percentage implies that few students were familiar with online learning support platforms was not widespread. In particular, regarding the specific online platform used for teaching, the majority of students from secondary schools and children on the move were not satisfied with a percentage of 52.6%, and only a percentage of 27.08% of students were satisfied with the platform (see Graph 3).

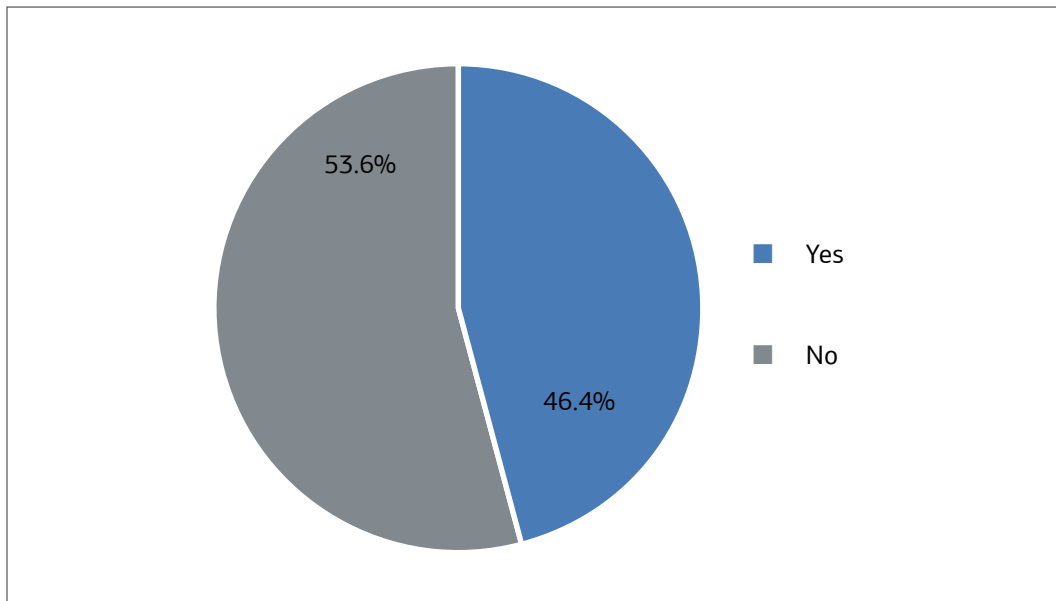
Furthermore, although the vast majority of children 85.71% (Graph 4) in primary education and kindergarten knew how to use electronic devices such as computers or tablets, more than half of them 53.57% (Graph 5) reported that they found it difficult to connect to the internet. Interestingly, the 75% of children who did not know how to use electronic devices such as computers or tablets were girls going at kindergarten.

39. OECD 2020: Initial education policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic: Greece available at: www.oecd.org/education/policy-outlook/country-profile-Greece-2020.pdf

Graph 4: Computer (or tablet) usage knowledge

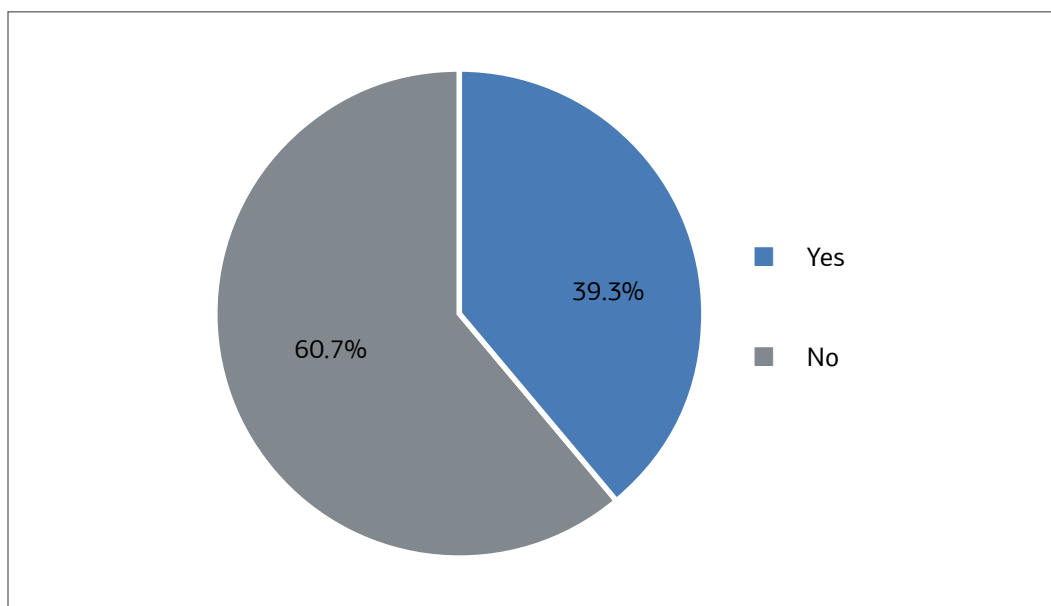


Graph 5: Ease of internet connection and course attendance



Additionally, the children in primary education and kindergarten stated that they had difficulties watching the teacher through the computer screen. Overall, the majority of primary school students did not like the computer lessons, at 60.71% (see Graph 6).

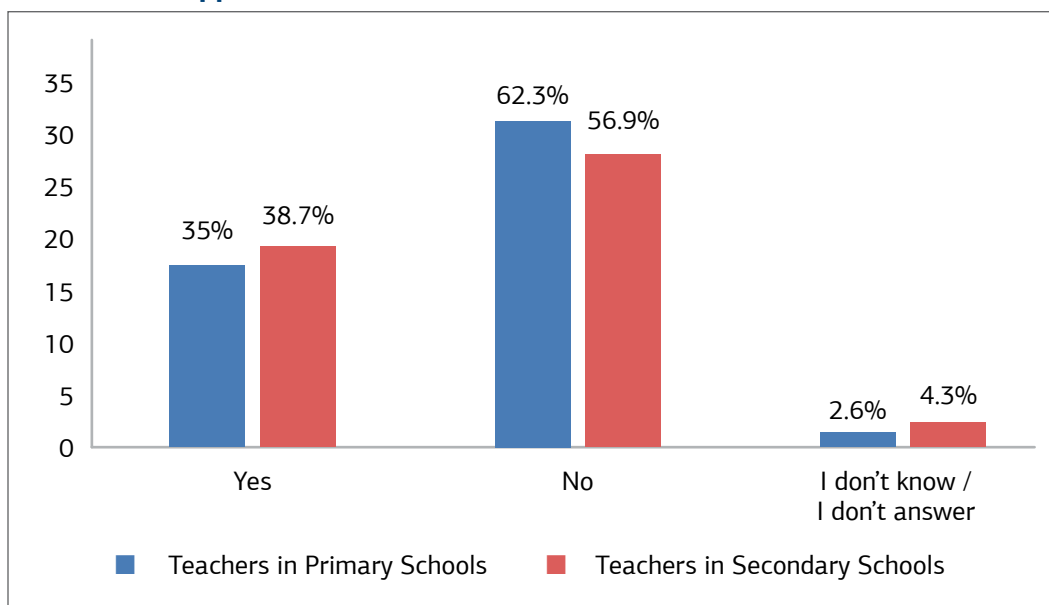
Graph 6: Ease of watching a teacher (s) through the computer (or tablet) screen



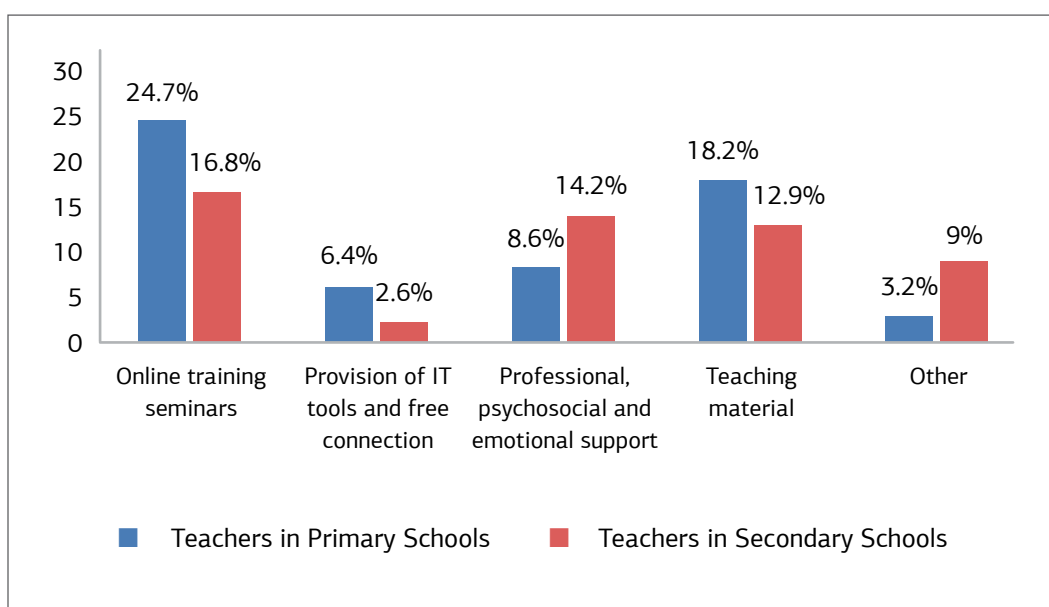
The findings of the research conducted on primary and secondary school teachers mirror the students' poor experience with education. First, the majority of primary (62.34%) and secondary (56.99%) grade teachers stated that they had not been provided with the necessary additional support for a smooth transition to online education (see Graph 7). It should be noted that a percentage of teachers stated that they had been provided with online training seminars (24.73% of teachers in secondary schools and 16.88% of teachers in primary schools), IT tools and connectivity (6.45% of teachers in secondary schools and 2.6% of teachers in primary schools), professional, psychosocial and emotional support (8.6% teachers in secondary schools and 14.29% of teachers in primary schools), and didactic content (18.29% of teachers in secondary schools and 12.99% of teachers in primary schools) (see Graph 8).



**Graph 7: Provision of necessary (overall)
support for the smooth transition to online education**

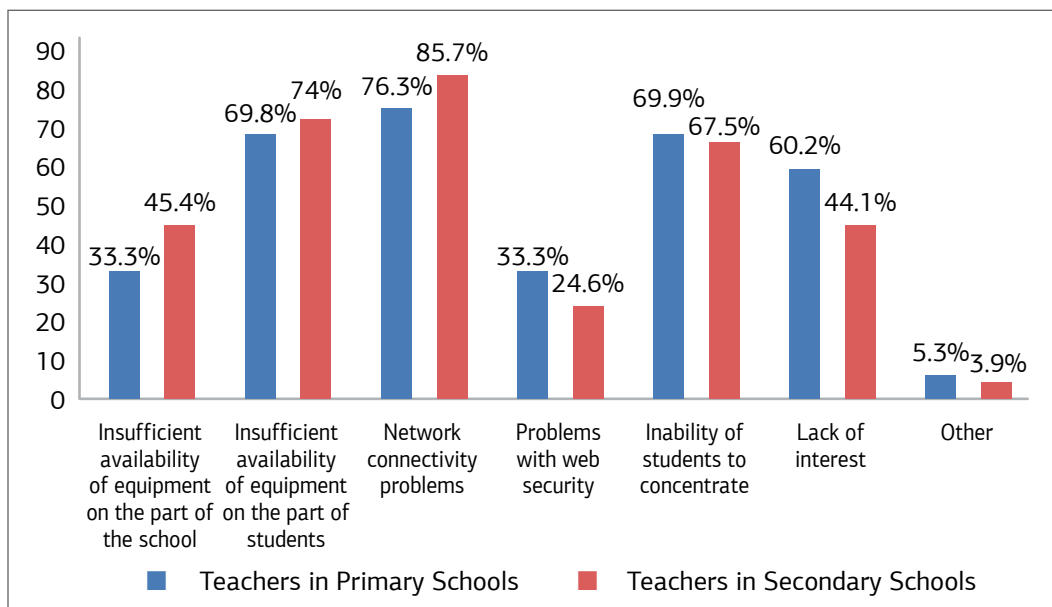


**Graph 8: Support provided to teachers
aiming to the smooth transition to online education**



As teachers are the foundation to a good education, it is also essential to note the problems faced by them during education. Unfortunately, like students, the main issue recorded by teachers was related to network connection problems (teachers in primary schools 85.71%, teachers in secondary schools 76.34%) which confirms insufficient availability of equipment on the part of students (teachers in primary schools 74.03%, teachers in secondary schools 69.89%), inability of students to concentrate (teachers in primary schools 67.53%, teachers in secondary schools 69.99%), indifference (teachers in primary schools 44.16%, teachers in secondary schools 60.22%), insufficient availability of equipment on the part of the school (teachers in primary schools 45.45%, teachers in secondary schools 33.33), and problems with internet security (teachers in primary schools 24.58%, teachers in secondary schools 33.33%) (see Graph 9).

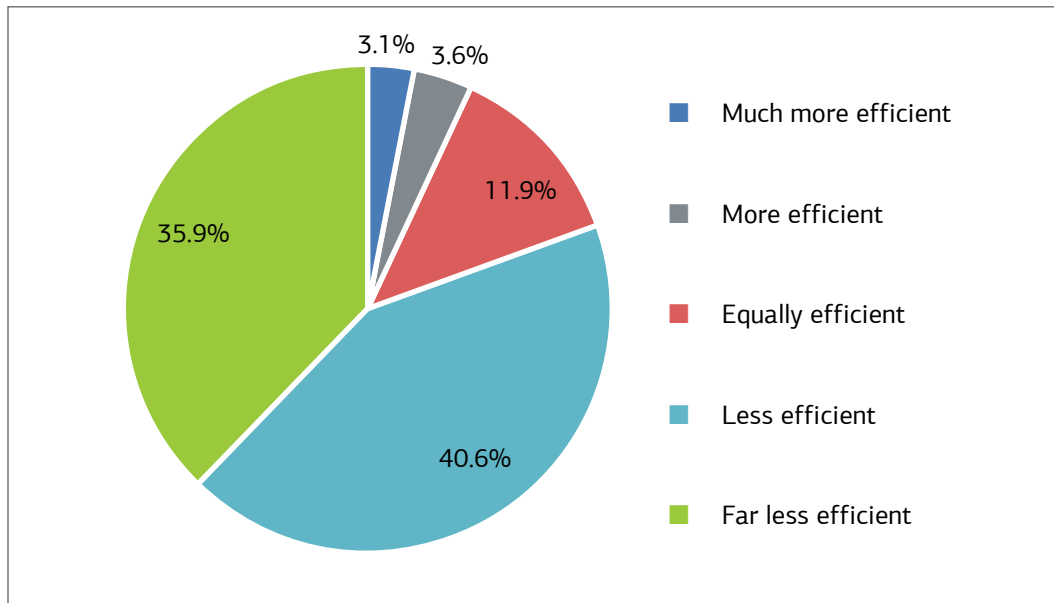
Graph 9: Problems encountered during education



4.1.2. Was Online Education Necessary and Efficient?

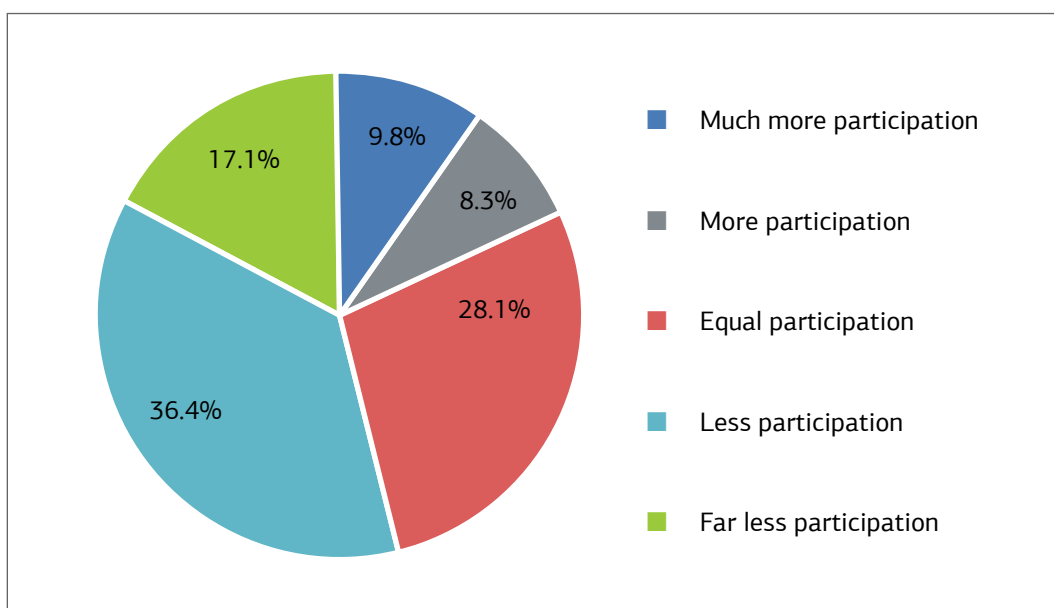
Of particular interest in assessing the overall right to education is the fact that the majority of Children in secondary education including children on the move (75.55%) considered that the delivery of new material was less effective during online education compared to the physical presence in face-to-face classes (63.01% were girls and 36.98 were boys) (see Graph 10).

Graph 10: Efficiency of delivery of new material



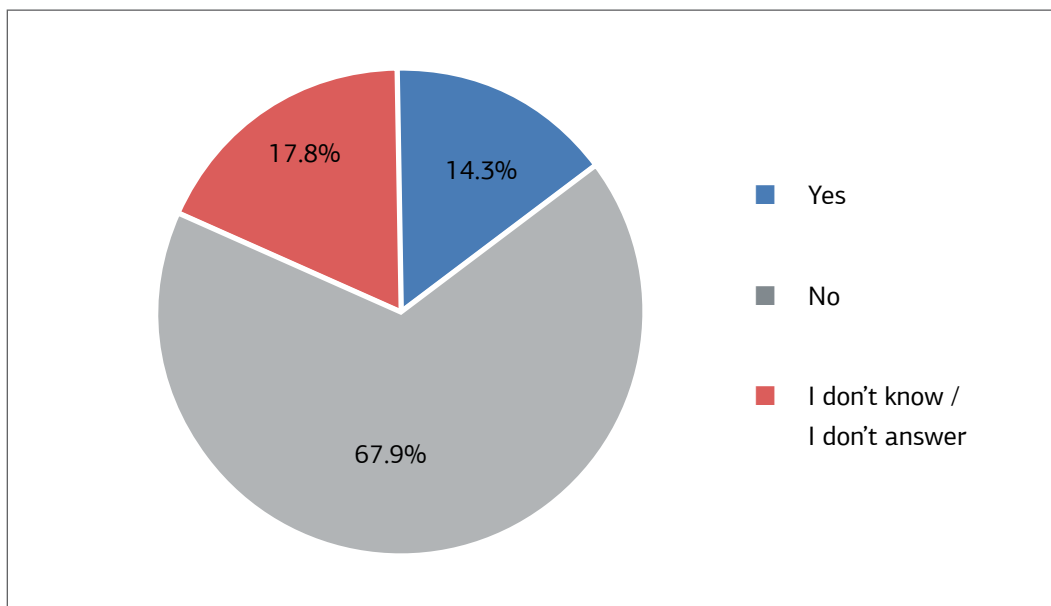
Thus, unsurprisingly, it was discovered most children in secondary education including children on the move (53.63%) stated that they were less engaged in the course during the online education (see Graph 11)

Graph 11: Degree of participation during the online course



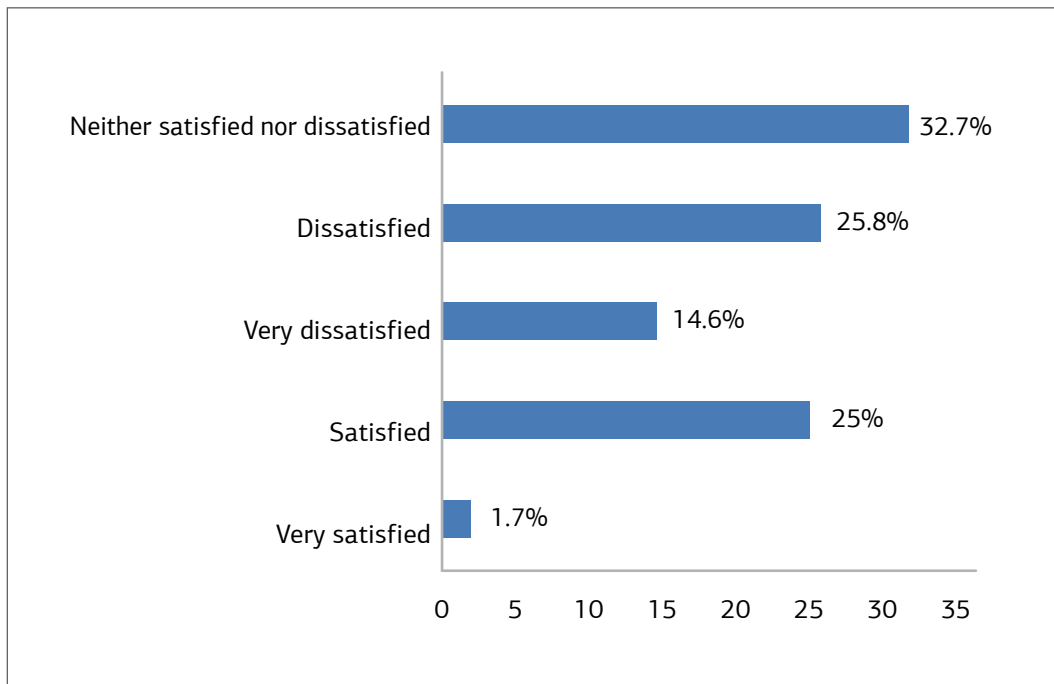
Overall, the majority, 67.86%, of primary and kindergarten children did not like online education (57.89% boys and 42.10% girls) - in contrast to the mere 14.29% who were satisfied with the online education (50% boys and 50% girls) (see Graph 12).

Graph 12: Satisfaction about online education from primary school children



Next, the survey addressed to the parents of primary and secondary school children further clarifies the online education experience. On the issue of online education, 40.52% of parents stated they were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with online education and only 26.72% said they very satisfied or satisfied, with a percentage of 32.76% stating neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (see Graph 13).

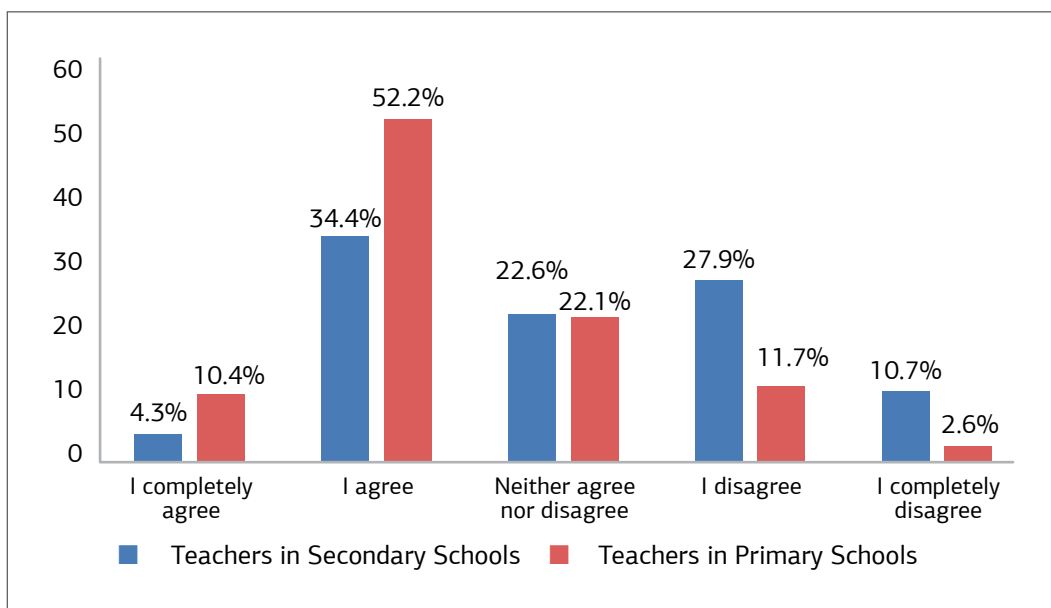
Graph 13: Degree of satisfaction from the online education as a means of delivering quality education: the parents' perspective



Regarding the pandemic's overall effect on children's education, there were essentially three fundamental questions. First, if online education maintained the students' contact with the learning process, second, if online education replaced the lesson in the classroom and third, if education could provide the necessary knowledge to students.

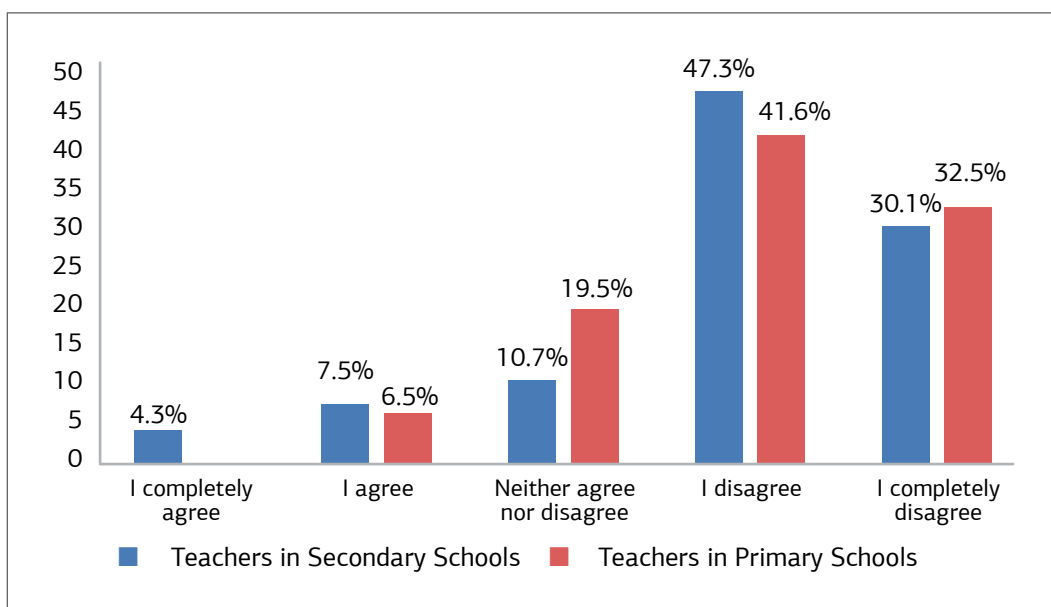
In relation to the first question, there was a difference of opinion between primary and secondary school teachers. Specifically, a generous majority of primary school teachers (62.64%) stated that online education ensured that contact between students and the learning process was maintained and only 14.29% considered online education not being able to ensure that contact between students and the learning process (see Graph 14) was maintained. However, secondary school teachers' feedback was considerably different split with only 38.71% of secondary school teachers having stated that online education maintained the contact between students and the learning process and 38.71% of secondary school teachers stated that online education did not ensure that the contact of students with the learning process (see Graph 14) was maintained.

Graph 14: Maintaining contact of students with the learning process during online education



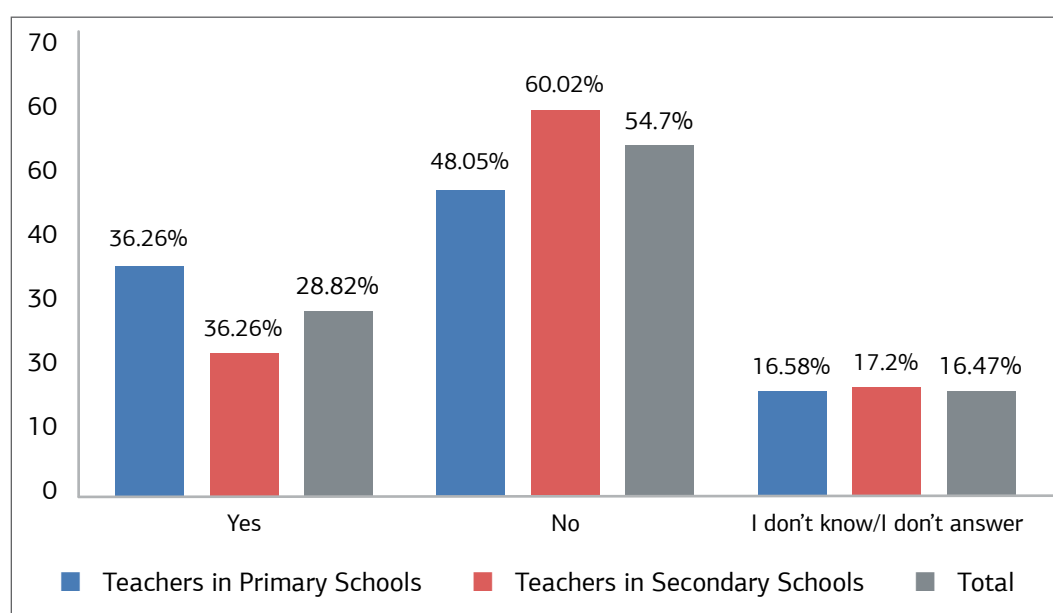
Nevertheless, when both primary and secondary teachers were asked if online education replaced the lesson in the classroom, the majority, over 70%, stated that online education did not replace the lesson in the classroom (see Graph 15).

Graph 15: Was the lesson in the classroom substituted by online education?



Another similarity in opinion was also recorded between primary and secondary school teachers relating to whether online education was able to provide the necessary knowledge to students. The majority of the teachers in primary and secondary schools answered negatively (54.70%), and only 28.82% answered that online education was able to offer the necessary knowledge to the students (see Graph 16).

Graph 16: Ability to provide students with the necessary knowledge during online education



Finally, it is important to put the children's words in terms of their experience with online education:

"I do not want online education; better in the classroom. If we do it again, teachers and students must have good internet and fast internet. "

"I do not believe that any improvement in online education can replace the physical presence (in the class)"

"I wish we were not in the same situation again, just physical presence is more effective"

"I do not agree with online education. I prefer the physical presence "

"[Online education] should not exist"

4.2 Mental Health

Article 24 of the Convention establishes the Child's Right to Health, physical and mental, and the right of access to health care services.⁴⁰ Again, the realization of the child's health rights depends on many other rights such the child's right to an adequate standard of living (Article 27), to an education (Article 28), to play and recreational activities (Article 31) and to protection from all forms of physical or mental violence (article 19).⁴¹

Considering these points, in Greece, the critical measure implemented to prevent the spread of the virus was a lockdown.⁴² A stay-at-home order was issued with limited exceptions, such as visits to doctor, outdoor exercise ⁴³ doctor appointments, or essential shopping. In addition, sports and cultural activities were prohibited and even playgrounds were closed.

All of these measures, combined with the online education, meant that children were confined to the indoors and their ordinary social lives and interactions were obstructed. While the positive aspect of these measures was that children spent more time with their family members, the findings show that such measures negatively affected their mental health.

It is well documented that social isolation and loneliness have severe impacts on children's wellbeing and mental health. New findings reveal that isolation and

40. Universal Declaration of Human Rights "Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection." (Article 25) and The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in article 12

41. Rachel Hodgkin and Peter Newell, Commentary. Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations Children's Fund 2007 3rd ed) 344.

42. Government Gazette 915 / B / 17-3-2020 the Joint Ministerial Decision with the Imposition of the measure of the temporary prohibition of operation of private enterprises, in the whole Territory, for the period from 18.3.2020 up to 31.3.2020, to limit the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus.

43. See Government Gazette 986 / B` 22.3.2020, 'Imposition of the measure of temporary restriction of the movement of citizens in order to deal with the risk of spreading the coronavirus COVID-19', which was complemented by Government Gazette 1040 / B` 26.3.2020, 'Completion of No. Δ1α / Γ.Π. 20036 / 22.3.2020 of joint ministerial decision - "Imposition of the measure of temporary restriction of the movement of citizens in order to deal with the risk of spread of the coronavirus COVID-19" (B' 986)' and was extended several times, see for instance, Government Gazette 1168 / B` 4.4.2020, 'Extension of validity of the joint ministerial decision no. Δ1α / ΓΠ.οικ.20036 / 22.03.2020 (BΔ 986), as supplemented with no. 20797 / 26.03.2020 joint ministerial decision (B' 1040)'.



loneliness increase the risk of depression up to 9 years later.⁴⁴ Moreover, there is a wide array of research stressing the importance of friendship on the wellbeing and the mental health of children.⁴⁵ Furthermore, in relation to COVID-19 it is documented that stressful events such as an epidemic are found to be significantly positively associated with adolescents' suicidal ideation which is caused by depression.⁴⁶

Therefore, the lockdown and school closures had an impact on children's wellbeing because of social isolation.

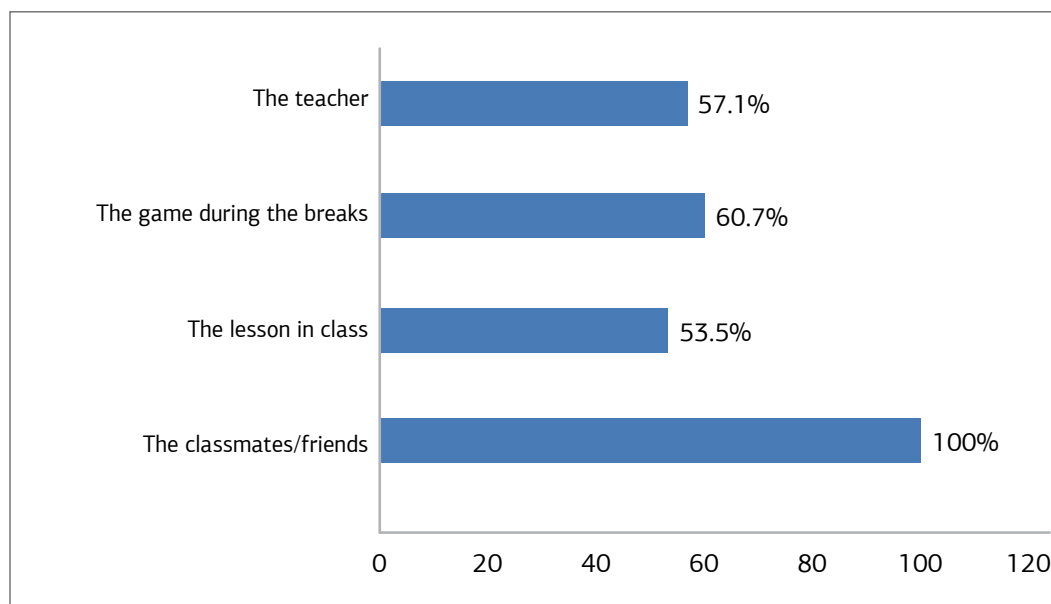
The findings of the survey reflect this. Primary and kindergarten students, in absolute terms (100%), missed their classmates: 60.71% of them missed games during the break, 57.14% missed their teacher, and 53.57% missed the lessons in the classroom (see Graph 17).

44. See Karen Dineen Wagner, New Findings About Children's Mental Health During COVID-19 October 7, 2020 Available at <https://www.psychiatrictimes.com/view/new-findings-children-mental-health-covid-19> Accessed 31st August 2021.

45. Robert L. Taylor et al, Friends Can Be Good Medicine: An excursion into mental health promotion (1984) 20 Community Mental Health Journal 294; Robert J. Donovan and Julia Anwar-McHenry, Act-Belong-Commit: Lifestyle Medicine for Keeping Mentally Healthy, (193) American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine 193; RJ Taylor et al, 'isolation from family and friends and mental health among African Americans and Black Caribbeans' (2020) 90 American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 468; Mark Rubin et al, 'A Longitudinal Study of the Relations Among University Students' Subjective Social Status, Social Contact with University Friends, and Mental Health and Well-Being' (2016) 35 Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology 722.

46. Gang Cheng et. al. Stressful events and adolescents' suicidal ideation during the COVID-19 epidemic: A moderated mediation model of depression and parental educational involvement (2021) 127 Children and Youth Services Review available at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740921001262>

Graph 17: What children missed from school?



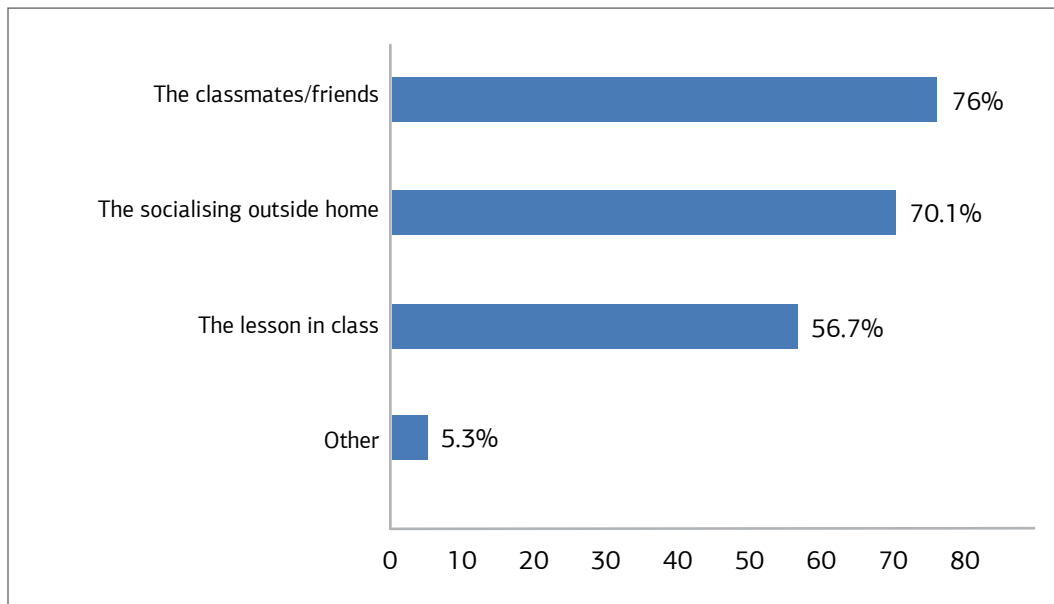
Likewise, students in secondary school responded that they missed their classmates and friends (76.02%), socializing outside of home (70.18%), and the lessons in class (56.73%). These responses emphasize the value of physical schools, not only as education hubs, but also as places for important social interaction (See Graph 18).

Furthermore, parents who participated in the survey also provided information about their concerns regarding changes in their children's daily habits, behavior, and mental health. Parents largely agreed, 83.97% of the parents, that their children's psychology was burdened during the pandemic (see Graph 19). Interesting, a survey conducted at an early stage of the pandemic, and published on October 2020 and found that 'approximately one-third of participants reported that the psychological health of their child was negatively affected by the lockdown'.⁴⁷ The disparity between the results between the survey of October 2020 and the current survey is possibly exemplified by their different timing as the former took place dur-

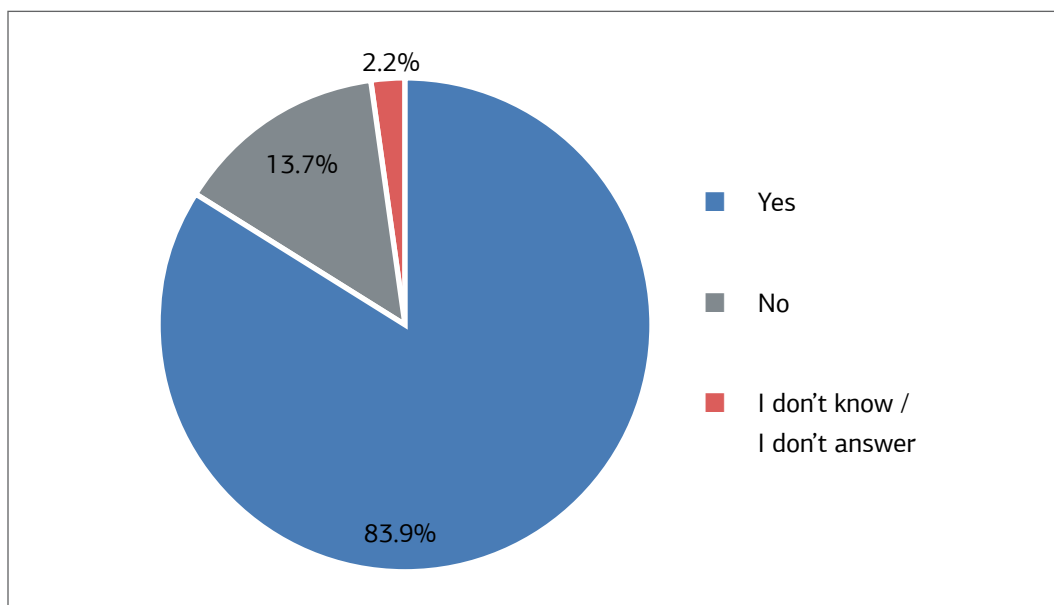
47. Konstantina Magklara, Helen Lazaratou, Anastasia Barbouni, Konstantinos Poulas, Konstantinos Farsalinos, Impact of COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown measures on mental health of children and adolescents in Greece available at <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.10.18.20214643v1.full>

ing an early stage of the pandemic measures, while the current took place at a later stage and possibly records the accumulated impact of the pandemic measures.

Graph 18: What high school students missed most about school?

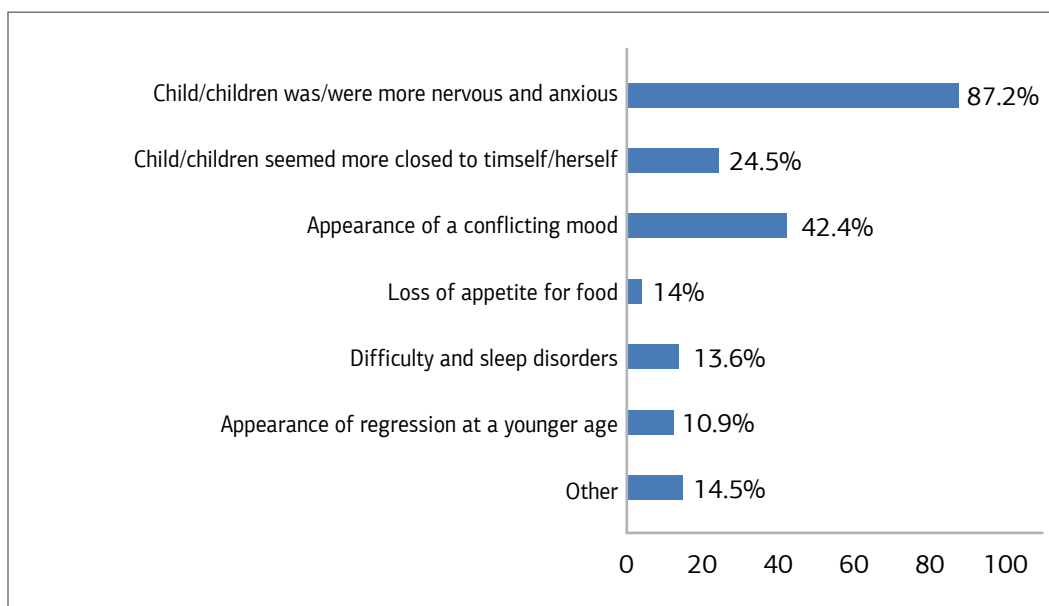


Graph 19: Was your child's psychology burdened?



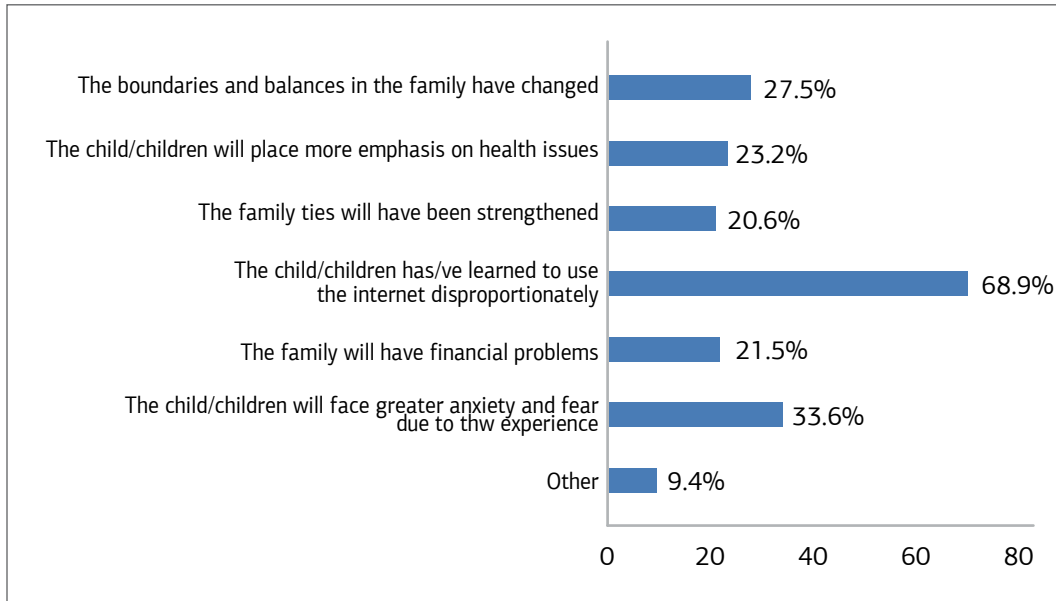
In particular, the overwhelming majority of the parents (87.27%) said that their child/children was/were more nervous and anxious, 42.47% of parents said that conflicting emotions appeared, 24.55% of parents said that their child/children seemed more closed off, 13.64% of parents said that their child/children faced difficulty sleeping, and 10.91% of parents said their children underwent regression and started to act like children of younger age during the lockdown (see Graph 20).

Graph 20: How was children's psychology affected

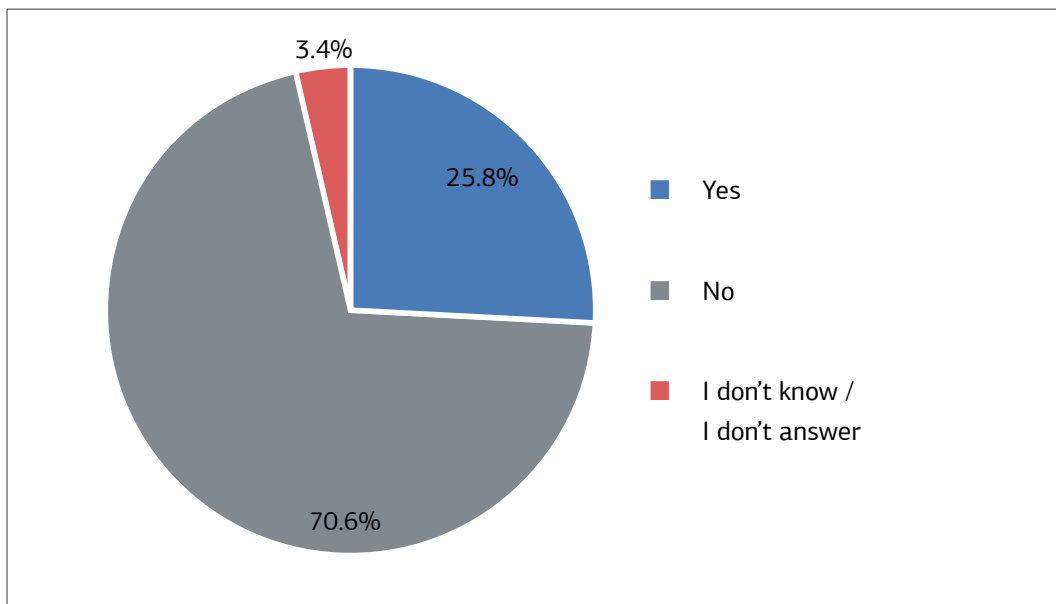


The survey addressed to parents reflected their anxieties about the future effects that the pandemic will have on their children. 69.83% of the parents said that their child/children has/ve learned to use the internet too frequently, 33.62% stated that their child/children will face greater social anxiety and fear due to the experience, 27.59% remarked that the boundaries and balances in the family have changed, and 21.55% of parents stated that the family will have financial problems. On the positive side, 23.28% of parents said that their child/children will pay more attention on health issues in the future and 20.69% of parents said that family relationships will continue to strengthen (see Graph 21). Regarding mental health concerns, 70.69% of parents did not feel the need to seek assistance from experts (see Graph 22), and actually one, 6.9%, of the parents sought assistance from a private or public institution such as mental health public services or private psychologists (see Graph 23).

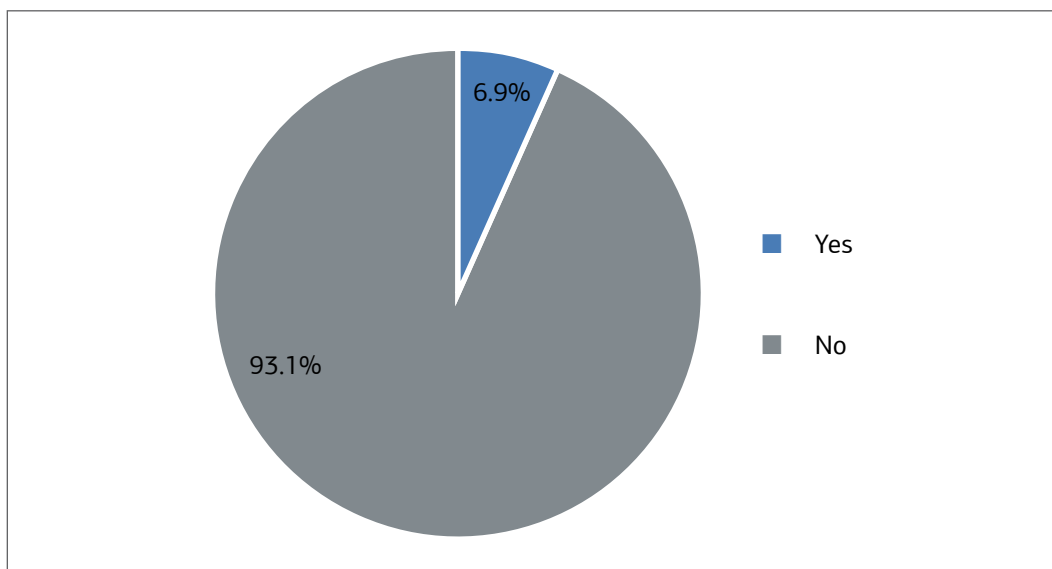
Graph 21: Future consequences to children according to parents



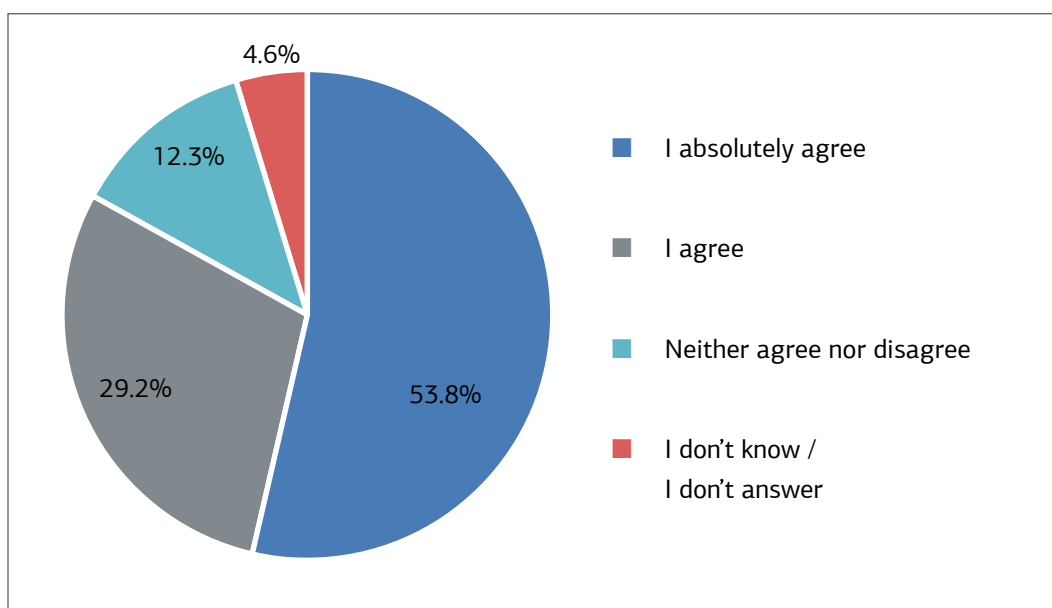
Graph 22: Did you feel the need to seek assistance from experts?



Graph 23: Did you seek assistance from experts?



Graph 24: Was access to child mental health services more difficult?



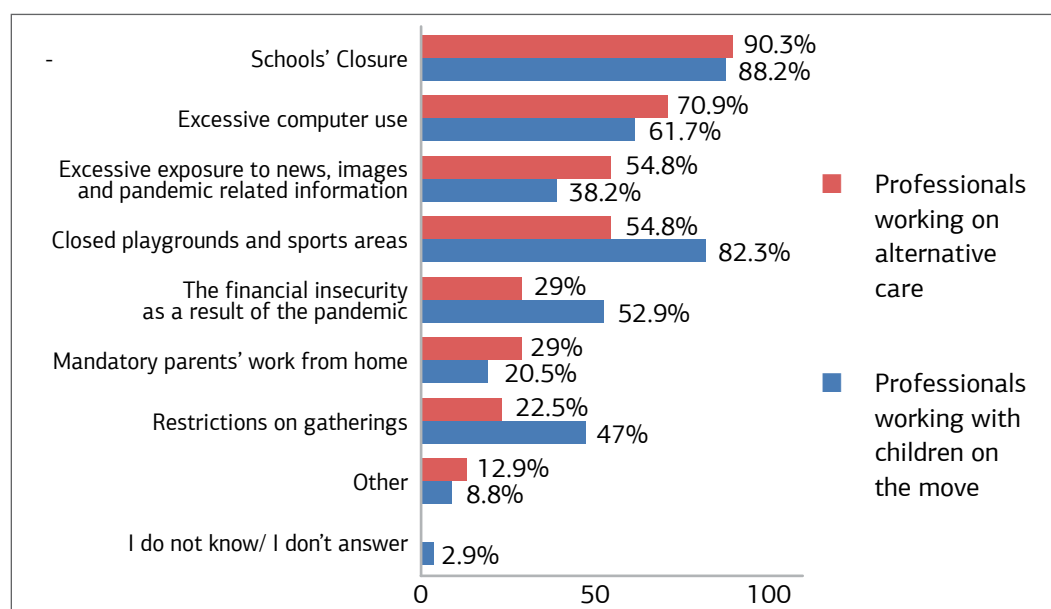
Furthermore, in relation to the mental health of children during the pandemic, the professionals belonging to the network for the Rights of Children on the Move



and the network for Alternative Care and Deinstitutionalization acknowledged that children's access to child mental health centers during restrictive measures was more difficult. In particular, 53.84% completely agreed with this statement, and 29.23% simply agreed, while no one responded that children's access to child mental health centers during restrictive measures was easier. The rest did not know or they neither agreed nor disagreed (see Graph 24).

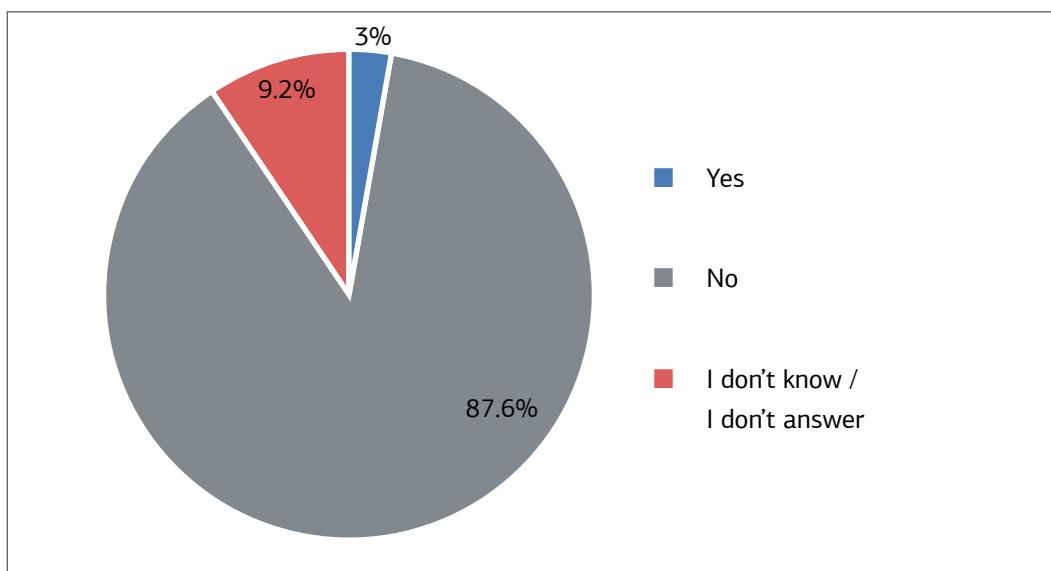
On the question of what was most detrimental to children's mental health, the professionals belonging to the network for the Rights of Children on the move believed that it was the restrictions on movement and the forced confinement of children at home or in open accommodation sites (91.17%), while the professionals belonging to the network for Alternative Care and Deinstitutionalization believed that it was the schools' closure (90.32%) (see Graph 25).

Graph 25: What was more detrimental to children's mental health?



Finally, regarding the measures enacted by the government, the 87.69% of the professionals belonging to the network for the Rights of Children on the Move and the network for Alternative Care and Deinstitutionalization stated that the government did not take the impact on children's mental health into account (see Graph 26).

Graph 26: Do you think that the government took into account the mental health of children?



4.3 Domestic Violence

Article 19 of the Convention establishes children's protection from 'all forms of physical or mental violence,' while in the care of their parents or their caregivers and Article 39 provides that "children have the right to get help if they have been hurt, neglected, treated badly or affected by war, so they can get back their health and dignity" These articles assert 'children's equal human right to full respect for their dignity and physical and personal integrity' from all forms of violence, particularly within the domestic space.⁴⁸ Therefore, an obligation is imposed on states to pass appropriate legislative and administrative measures to protect children from all forms of violence, abuse, or exploitation whether perpetrated by state officials, parents, other children, or caretakers.

The World Report on Violence against Children, an in-depth international study into this matter under the auspices of the General Assembly of the UN, recommended among other things that 'states have the primary responsibility to uphold

48. Rachel Hodgkin and Peter Newell, Commentary. Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations Children's Fund 2007 3rd ed) 250.



children's rights to protection and access to services, and to support families' capacity to provide children with care in a safe environment; States have the obligation to ensure accountability in every case of violence; The vulnerability of children to violence is linked to their age and evolving capacity. Some children, because of gender, race, ethnic origin, disability or social status, are particularly vulnerable; Children have the right to express their views, and to have these views taken into account in the implementation of policies and programs.⁴⁹

As previously discussed, Greece imposed a general lockdown and a stay-at-home order was issued with few exceptions for movement such as visits to the doctor or outdoor exercise. Only essential services remained in operation such as supermarkets, pharmacies, gas stations, and medical centers. In the public sector, the operation of the Courts and the Prosecutor's Office was suspended⁵⁰ and working from home was promoted,⁵¹ which inevitably led to the limited function and capacity of some public services. Numerous reports from around the world and Greece alerted the authorities about a substantial increase in incidents of domestic violence against women and children.⁵²

In relation to children, the data from National Telephone Hotline for Children SOS 1056 provides a better insight on the incidents of domestic violence. Comparing the data from 2019, calls to the violence helpline during the pandemic increased by over 36% in 2020. Specifically, before the pandemic, from 1/1/2019 to 31/12/2019, the "National Telephone Line for Children SOS 1056" recorded a total of 825 complaints of serious incidents of child abuse and the complaints

49. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, World report on violence against children (United Nations Publishing Services 2006) 17.

50. See Government Gazette 833 / BD / 12.3.2020) which provides for the suspension of operation of all Courts and Prosecutions of the State from 13.3. to 27.3.2020.

51. See Act of Legislative Content (Ordinance) 11.3.2020, Article 5 'Urgent measures to deal with the negative consequences of the occurrence of coronavirus COVID-19 and the need to limit its spread.'

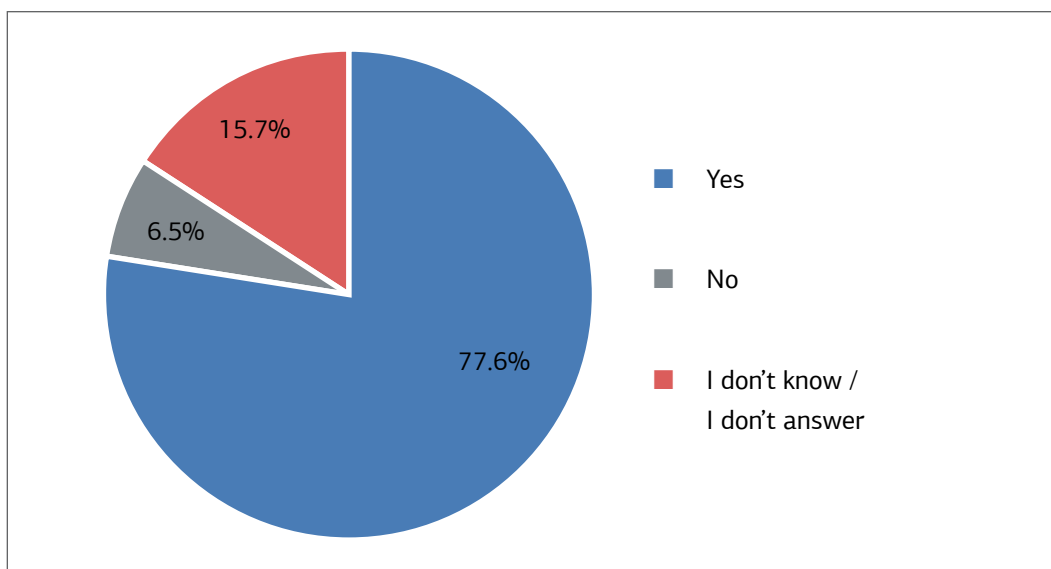
52. See for instance, Office for Planning and Creating Standards and Monitoring Policies of Gender Equality and Directorate of Social Protection and Counseling Services, '1st Annual Report on Violence Against Women' (November 2020). See also Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 'Second General Report on GREVIO's activities' (Council of Europe, April 2021). About Greece see for instance Bimonthly Report Newsletter #1: Policies and Actions of the G.S.F.P.G.E for the Prevention and Response to Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, During the Movement Restriction Due to the Pandemic of the Covid-19 in Greece. Analysis of Gender-Based Violence Data from the Network of Structures and the SOS Hotline 15900 (March 2020 -April 2020).

concerned a total of 1,622 children. In 2020, in comparison, the total number of reports of serious child abuse was 1,123 and the total number of children to whom the reports concerned was 2,009 children. Still, these numbers are not able to uncover the full story. Necessary preconditions to use the helpline include among others access to a cellphone/telephone, the ability to leave the house to make the call, or the access to a private space in the house from which the child suffering from domestic violence can make a phone call to report the violence. Naturally, such conditions are difficult to come by for children so there is underreporting of incidents of domestic violence against children.

Given this trend, we asked professionals belonging to the Network for the Rights of Children on the Move and the Network for Alternative Care and Deinstitutionalization, first, whether they were aware of an increase in incidents of domestic violence against children and whether services to prevent or address domestic violence against children were effective during the pandemic.

The majority of professionals (77.63%) showed a perception on an increase of domestic violence and declared that they became aware of an increase in incidents of domestic violence, while only the percentage of 6.57% said that they had no knowledge of any increase (see Graph 27).

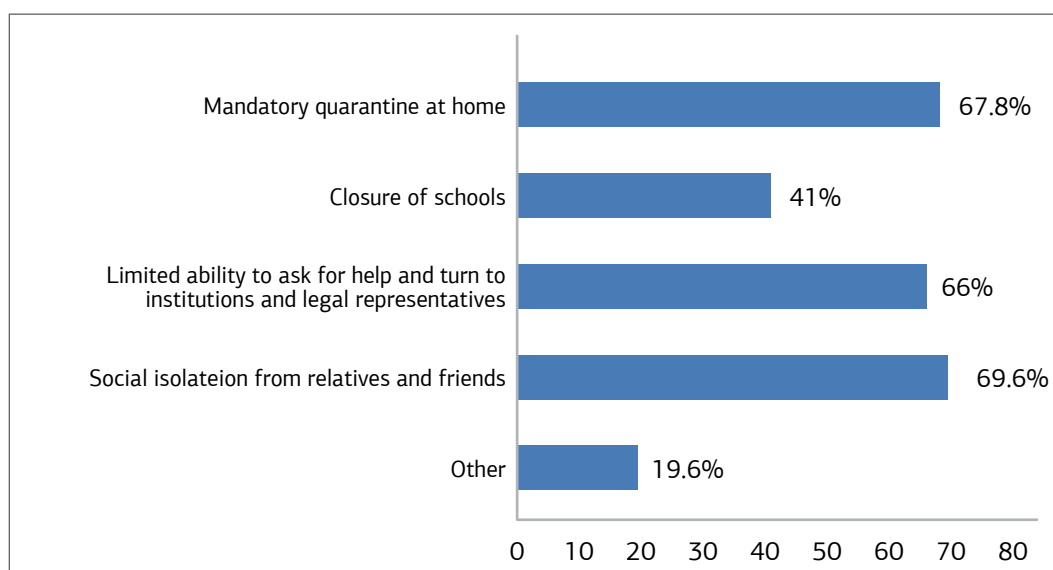
Graph 27: Have you noticed an increase in domestic violence cases from your experience?





In relation to the reasons behind the perceived increase, the main reported causes were the social isolation from relatives and friends (69.64%), the mandatory quarantine at home (67.85%), the limited ability to ask for help and turn to institutions and legal representatives (66.07%), and the closure of schools (41.07%) (see Graph 28).

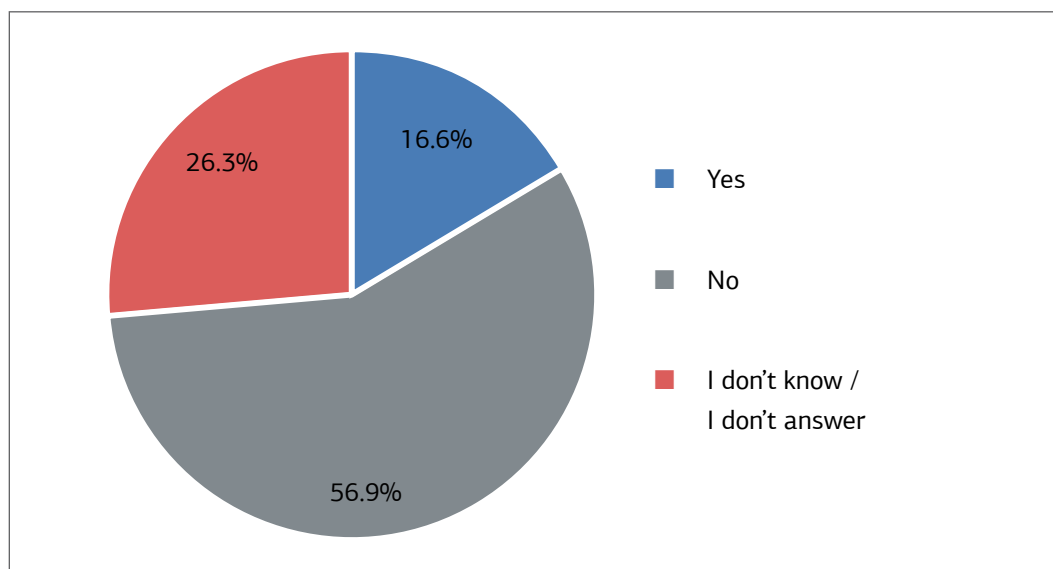
Graph 28: Factors that contributed to the increase of domestic violence



In relation to handling cases of domestic violence against children, there were two key questions. First, whether the services to address domestic violence were effective, and second - given school's important role in identifying cases of domestic violence - whether that gap created by schools' closure has been filled, even in part, by alternative actors such as private actors like family members, neighbors etc or public institutions.

In relation to the first question, the majority of the professionals (56.94%) answered that services to address domestic violence during the pandemic were not effective, while only 16.66% reported that they were effective (see Graph 29).

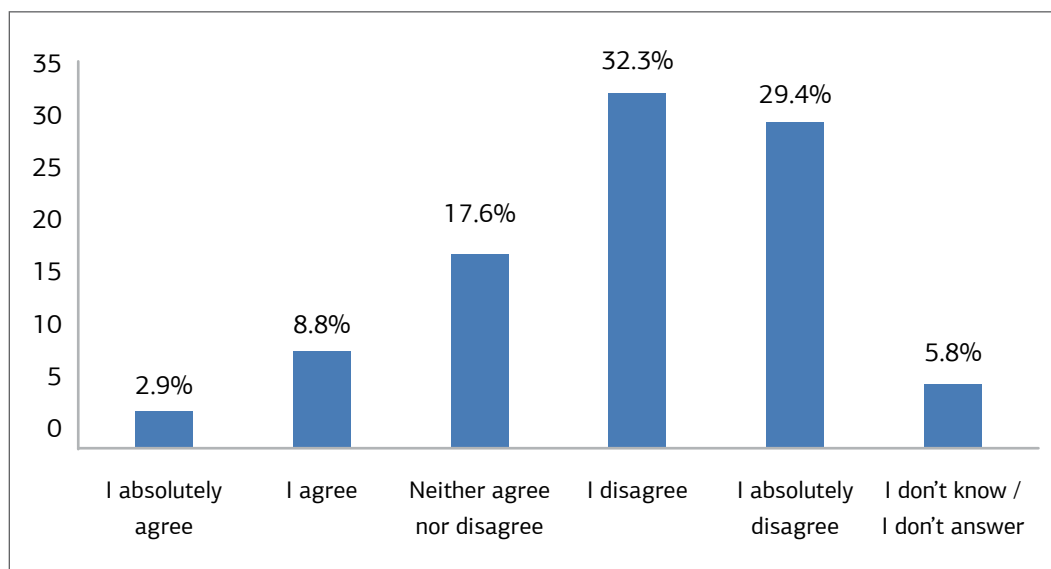
Graph 29: Were services to address domestic violence effective?



In the proposition that alternative actors filled the gap of closed schools in identifying cases of domestic violence against children, the majority of professionals (61.67%) disagreed or completely disagreed while only a minority of 11.74% saying they agreed or completely agreed (See Graph 30).



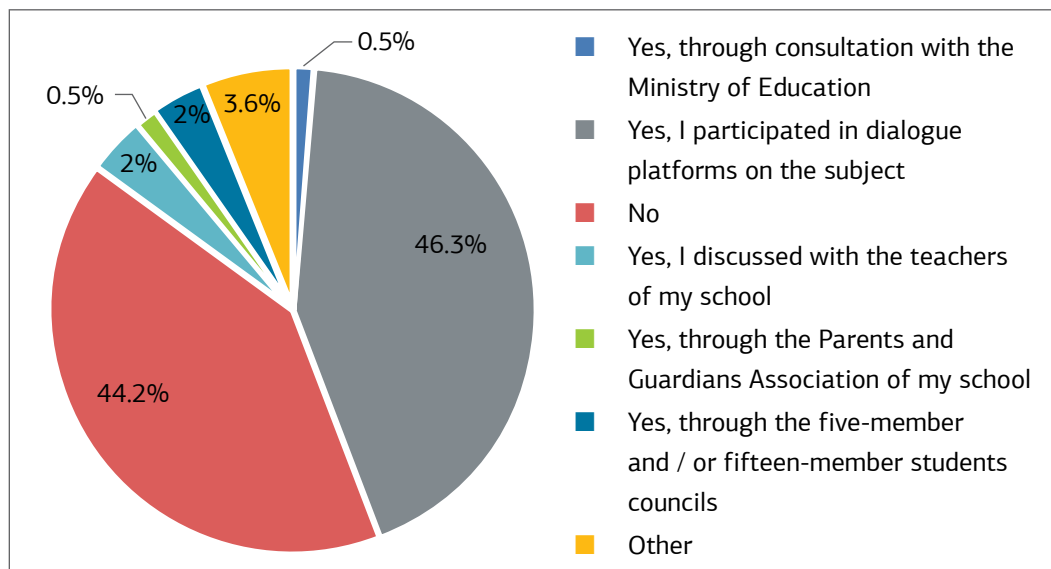
Graph 30: School plays an important role in the identification of domestic violence. During school's closure, has this gap been covered by other actors?



4.4 Children's Participation in the Decision-Making Process

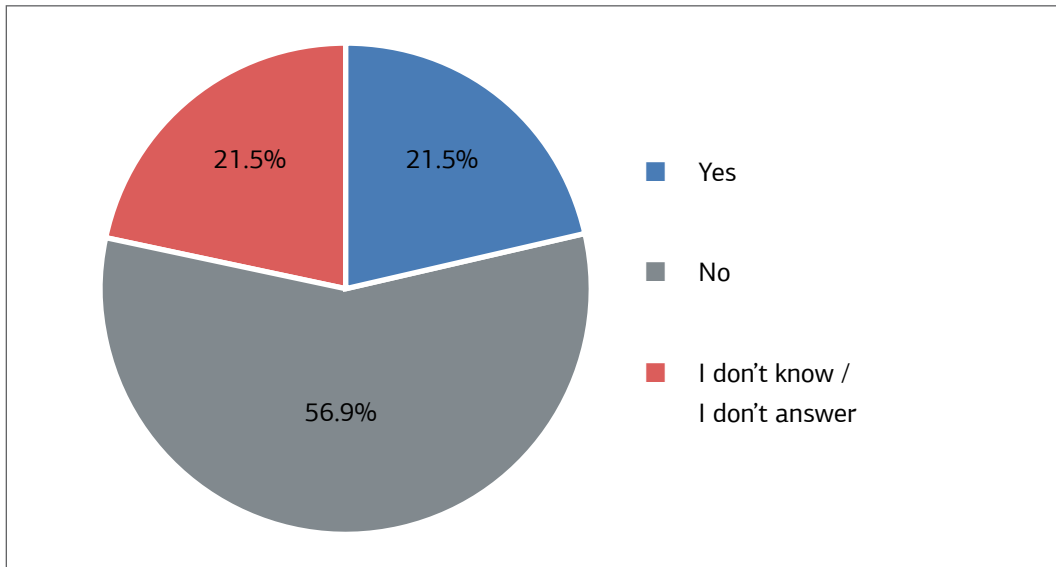
An essential component relating to pandemic measures affecting children's rights is whether children participated in any way in discussions or consultations at any stage of the decision-making process for the measures assessed by this CRIE. Specifically, the majority of children (55.73%) stated that they expressed their opinion or participated in discussions about online education (65.68% were girls and 34.31% were boys). 46.35% of children stated that they discussed this issue with their school teachers, 2.08% with the student councils, 2.08% stated that they expressed their opinion on online platforms, only 0.52% of children declared that they participated in consultation with the Ministry of Education, and 0.52% participated in the school's Parents and Guardians Association. In contrast, a large percentage of children, 44.27%, stated that they were not given the opportunity at all to engage in the dialogue to express their views on online education (55.07% were girls and 44.02% were boys). (see Graph 31).

Graph 31: Participation of children in the dialogue on distance education



On this subject, the professionals belonging to the Network for the Rights of Children on the move and the Network for Alternative Care and Deinstitutionalization were asked whether the Government would have adopted the same measures if children were involved in the decision-making process. Interestingly, the majority (56.93%) stated that the same measures would not have been adopted if the government had conducted a consultation specifically with children, while only 21.53% stated that the same measures would have been adopted (see Graph 32).

Graph 32: If children-specific consultation had taken place, would the same measures have been adopted?



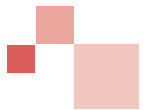
5. Key findings

5.1 Education

Online education is a new method of learning, developing with the advancement of new technologies and can be successfully applied, mainly in various training programs and usually combined with face-to-face classes. The application of online education during the pandemic revealed its utility as an alternative approach to emergencies that do not allow for face-to-face classes, for example, in the event of public health emergencies, extreme weather or other natural disasters.

The analysis of the evidence led to the following **findings**:

- The existing internet infrastructures in the whole Greek Territory were insufficient to meet the needs of online education.
- The necessary hardware infrastructure (devices) was provided late and was insufficient.
- The platform for the online education did not meet the expectations of students.
- Parents spent these months gravely concerned over their children having been over-exposed to the internet, having lost valuable progress of educational development, over the possibility of their children suffering from fear and anxiety in the future due to the pandemic and isolation, and over the fact that online education disturbed the family balance.
- Teachers did not receive adequate support to be able to deliver quality online education.
- The methods and materials used by the teachers were not adapted to online learning. It is clear that the curriculum and the teaching methodology used during online education required a more interactive, playful, experiential, and less tedious approach for children.
- Some students were excluded from education, as either they did not have the hardware infrastructure, or they and their families did not have the necessary technical knowledge to fully utilize the infrastructure.
- The long period of education (for about 5.5 months compared to 7.5 months of the school year) harmed the psycho-emotional development of students due to losing their space of socialization and expression. Even worse off were children who were completely excluded from education.



- If the competent authorities had consulted certain stakeholders, including children, the pandemic measures which affected education could have infringed on children's rights to a lesser degree.
- The positive side of the pandemic requiring online education was that students were familiarized with digital technology and embraced the world of online learning. From the side of the state, it is impressive how schools were able to adapt in such a tight space of time and under such unprecedented conditions.

However, the findings likely indicate the disproportionate impact on children's rights and possibly a loss of valuable human capital that will lead to deficits in the future. In fact, these results align with research that has been conducted during the pandemic in Greece and abroad.⁵³

The above findings are supported by the report of the Greek Ombudsman,⁵⁴ based on a survey in Reception and Identification Centers regarding the school attendance of refugee and migrant children, in which the following were demonstrated:

- Significant delays in filling teacher positions in Reception and Identification Centers making both face-to-face and online education impossible.
- A significant percentage of children were excluded from face-to-face education (as long as the schools were open) due to administrative obstacles and serious problems in transportation to and from school.
- A significant percentage of children were excluded from online education due to lack of hardware and internet connection.
- Only an extremely small number of children actually attended online education from the outbreak of the pandemic until January 2021 (only 14.2% of the total number of school-age children).
- Overall, despite state efforts all of the above point towards the conclusion that we are standing rather far from the full respect of children on the move's right to education.

53. See United Nations (2020). Policy Brief: Education during COVID-19 and beyond.

54. Report of the Ombudsman entitled "Educational integration of children living in hubs and Reception and Identification Centers of the Ministry of Immigration & Asylum" (2021). Available at <https://www.synigoros.gr/resources/docs/20210420-porisma.pdf>

Similarly, in support of the findings of the research, the observations and views of the Young Advisory Group of the Ombudsman office, which met periodically from March to June 2021 to assess the impact of the pandemic on children's rights, are, in principle, in line with the answers to the surveys. In particular, the Young Advisors stated that access difficulties often disproportionately affect children from vulnerable social groups (children with disabilities, children with special educational needs, children on the move, etc.). They also made it clear that on-line education, apart from being monotonous and uninteresting, cannot substitute face-to-face education.

To conclude, children's right to education was significantly impacted by the measures of exclusive online education. In particular, there were alternative measures which could have kept the school open and limit the spread of the virus which were not implemented. Moreover, the measures of online education was not the most appropriate or effective solution to maintain educational standards.

5.2 Mental Health

Indisputably, times of duress and states of emergency are periods of stress and are harmful to the mental health of people in general. The exigency of the pandemic increased stress for many people and created anxiety of the unknown future of the virus. These effects can severely impact mental health. Furthermore, mandatory lockdowns and confinement orders resulted in extreme, unprecedented life changes. These life changes affected family structure, income, access to education, leisure, and other services.

The analysis of the **findings** on mental health has shown the following:

- The lack of direct contact with friends and classmates led to changes in behavior such as children experiencing more stress and behavioral problems.
- The psychological pressure on children has increased significantly since the start of the pandemic measures, especially since the closure of schools. These results correspond to numerous national and international reports on the negative effects of the pandemic measures on children's mental health.⁵⁵

55. See Maria Elizabeth Loades et al, Rapid Systematic Review: The Impact of Social Isolation and Loneliness on the Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in the Context of COVID-19 (2020) 59 Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry 1218.



- Online education resulted in children missing their friends and social activities but also their physical presence at school. These results confirm the multifaceted role of the school, which is not institutionally limited to education but also serves as a means of socialization. The development of learning does not only have a negative effect on the education of students. Unfortunately, the consequences extend to the general development of children in terms of behavior, towards perspectives of society as a whole.
- Children's mental health deteriorated, and children were more nervous and anxious according to the parents' reports. Especially for all parents whose jobs were suspended during the pandemic, they declared that the psychology of their child/children was burdened, and it is possible that an additional cause was related to financial insecurity.
- About 9 in 10 parents of children with a probable mental disorder did not to seek help regarding their child's mental health. The issue was intensified by the fact that children's access to child mental health centers during restrictive measures was more difficult, as it is confirmed by 8 in 10 professionals belonging to the Network for the Rights of Children on the move and the Network for Alternative Care and Deinstitutionalization.
- The one of few positive outcomes from the lockdown and the restrictive measures during the pandemic was that parents and children stayed at home more, leading to some families spending quality time together strengthening relationships.

Nonetheless, overall, the mental health of children deteriorated during this time due to the pandemic measures. Since the simultaneous enactment of the measures, such as lockdown, closed schools, closed playgrounds, the prohibition of gatherings, and banning sports activities attributed to the deterioration of children's mental health. While these drastic life changes were put into effect, it seems that the government did not take the appropriate actions to uphold their responsibility to combat the consequences of the lockdown on children's mental health.

5.3 Domestic Violence

By nature, domestic violence is extremely challenging to detect for numerous reasons. There is, for instance, the 'sanctity' to family life or to home, which make



it difficult for people to publicly speak up. Moreover, guilt and embarrassment also keep families from sharing about this issue. Unfortunately, domestic violence against children is even harder to detect. Children may feel frightened and confused, keeping the abuse to themselves.

When general lockdowns and stay-at-home orders were imposed, many scholars around the world anxiously wondered if incidents of domestic violence would increase.⁵⁶ Sadly, far too many reports provided clear evidence of an increase of domestic violence incidents involving children.

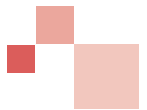
The following **findings** were revealed from the desk review in combination with the analysis of the surveys:

- In relation to Greece, the empirical knowledge of the participants aligns with findings around the world on the increase of incidents of domestic violence against children.
- While data from sources like the National Telephone Hotline for Children SOS 1056 are extremely useful and indicative of the cases on domestic violence against children, there is a lack of comprehensive data that would demonstrate the real extend of such pathology.
- Such increases in the incidents of domestic violence against children are most likely correlated to the adoption of covid-related restrictions in combination with insufficient services to address domestic violence against children as reported by the participants in the surveys.

Domestic violence has a wide spectrum of effects, from immediate injury to long-term physical and emotional trauma. Unfortunately, while 'home' was a safe place during the pandemic for many, 'home' was not the safe place to live for persons suffering from domestic violence. The reality is that for people who face domestic violence, 'home' is the space where physical, sexual and psychological abuse take place.

Still, the nature of the lockdowns to mitigate spread of the virus clearly contradicts the safety of persons experiencing domestic abuse and this issue is acknowledged. Schools play a critical role in detecting and reporting incidents of domestic violence to the authorities. By closing schools, the quality of education is dimin-

56. See for instance, Caroline Bradbury-Jones and Louise Isham, The pandemic paradox: The consequences of COVID-19 on domestic violence (2020) 10 Journal Clinical Nursing 2047.



ished, the mental health of children is deteriorated, but also repercussions occur in relation to domestic violence intervention. Lockdowns and closing schools not only confined domestic abuse victims to spend more time in the place of abuse, but the government also lost an important institutional pillar to detect cases of domestic violence to make children safer.

6. Recommendations to policy makers

Considering the experiences so far and the progress in relation to our scientific knowledge on treating the virus, the following recommendations in order to respond to emergencies and avoid similar problems in the future:

6.1 Education

- Implement online education only as a last resort.
- Enrollment of refugee and migrant children in public schools
- Exhaust all alternative measures before exclusively enforcing online education only and closing schools: smaller classes, social distancing, hygiene procedures, frequent testing for the virus, rolling breaks, etc. If not possible given the circumstances, the hybrid model of face-to-face classes along with online education (3-4 days live and 1-2 days via internet rotating between sections). Face to face learning must be the upmost priority and valued as an extremely important aspect of life for children in terms of education, mental health, and intervention in cases of domestic violence.
- Consider children's opinion before the enactment of measures which will affect children.
- Institutionalize the assessment of the impact of laws and decisions on children's rights (Child Rights Impact Assessment - CRIA) is necessary.
- Provide access to proper equipment and sufficient internet connection to all children, especially prioritizing those who need special care and the most socially vulnerable students such as children on the move.
- Prioritize children facing additional challenges (students with special educational needs) with specialized personnel and tools.
- Provide strong training and ongoing support to all users, teachers and students in terms of equipment, its use, and quickly resolve any issues that may arise in the process.
- Adapt a new curriculum approach to correspond to online education; for instance: more interactive, discussion-based, engaging, and exciting lessons as appropriate to age of the children.
- Adapt the examination, the examination material, as well as the way of grad-



ing of students taking into account the difficult conditions of teaching and supervision in the context of teaching, as well as the fact that vulnerable social categories of children were completely excluded from the process in order to ensure their equal participation and evaluation in the examination system.

- Raise awareness and take educational initiatives on child online safety

6.2 Mental Health

- Ensure the appropriate and adequate staffing of mental health services and the institutionalization of special protocols addressing times of crisis.
- Ensure proper staffing of social services in combination with training and monitoring of the competent authorities for the investigation of abuse and for the assessment of the best interest of each child.
- Introduce an interactive curriculum on children's rights with emphasis on mental health. Allow, and especially in times of stress, encourage outdoor play for children.

6.3 Domestic Violence

- Produce awareness campaigns targeting the general public with the aim to enhance community involvement to detect and report cases of domestic violence specifically against children, especially during times of lock down and school closure.
- Prepare and train teachers to better identify and respond to students' traumatic stress symptoms in order to report cases of domestic abuse, working closely in collaboration with community mental health and social services.

6.4 Children's participation in decision-making process

- Introduce the pre-legislative assessment tool of CRIA for every bill with impact on children's rights.
- Provide opportunities for children's views to be heard and taken into account at pre-legislative scrutiny stages and in post-legislative evaluation reviews.

Annexes

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B. List of stakeholders consulted

AMKE roots, Network of Sponsors and Adoptive Parents
 ARSIS Social Organization for Youth Support
 Association of Social Workers
 Association of Social Workers of Greece (SKLE)
 Attica Social Welfare Center
 Babel Day Center
 Child's smile, Melissa Guesthouse
 CHIOS CHILD AND ADOLESCENT CENTER
 Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
 Defense for Children International (DCI)
 DESIGNS, Human Rights 360, ELIX
 Doctors of the World
 Doctors Without Borders, FRA
 Hadjikyriakeio Foundation, APΣΙΣ
 Hellenic Refugee Council (GCR)
 Hellenic Union for Human Rights, Request
 HIAS
 Home project
 Institute of Child Health, UNICEF
 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
 International Organization for Migration (IOM)
 International Rescue Committee (IRC)
 LUMOS, Network of Psycho-Social Rehabilitation and Mental Health Institutions
 "Argo"
 Medical Intervention,



Municipality of Athens

National Center for Social Solidarity (EKKA)

Network for the Rights of the Child

Network for the Rights of the Child, Child's smile

PRACTICE

Safe Passage International MAKE

Solidarity Now

Solidarity Thessaloniki, Arsis Thessaloniki

SOS Children's Villages, Evolution of Life

TANDEM NGOs

Terres des Hommes

Transformation, SOS Children's Villages

UNHCR

UNICEF

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)



C. Questionnaires

QUESTIONNAIRE 1a	
SUBJECT	A survey pertaining to the measures enacted on education
Answered by:	Students of secondary education (including Refugee and Migrant children, and children in institutions)
Why are we collecting these data?	The results of this survey will provide us information on the success of the COVID 19 measures imposed during the lockdown period with reference to the respect of children's rights.. It won't take more than five minutes to fill the questionnaire. All answers will be taken into account in a report that will be drafted on the impact of COVID measures on children's rights. All respondents will remain anonymous.

1. The Office of the Deputy Ombudswoman for Children supported by UNICEF.

We'd love to hear your child's views on:

- what they feel has changed in their life because of the measures to deal with the pandemic
- what they like and do not like
- what they think can be done to improve things

The outcome of the surveys will give us insight about the effectiveness and efficiency of the Covid measures and will assist policy makers to draft better laws

The participation of children in this research is optional. If they decide to participate, and during the investigation for any reason they express that they do not want to continue the investigation, they can stop.

All questions are mandatory and they cannot skip any.

At any time, now or after the investigation, if you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact the office of the Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Ms Theoni Koufonikolakou via email at cr@synigoros.gr

Do you agree that your child should take part in the questionnaire?

☐ Yes

☐ No



2. The Office of the Deputy Ombudswoman for Children supported by UNICEF is conducting a study about the impact that COVID 19 measures on children.

We would like to hear your views about:

- what you feel has changed in your life due to COVID 19 measures**
- what you like and dislike about them**
- what you think can be done to make things better**

Your answers will remain confidential.

You don't have to take part in this survey but if you do, you can stop the survey at any time. The outcome of this survey will help us to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency Covid measures and will assist policy makers to draft better laws

As all questions are important for us, you cannot skip any.

At any time, now or after the survey, if you have any question or concern, feel free to contact the office of the Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Ms Theoni Koufonikolakou via email at cr@synigoros.gr

Do you agree to take part in the questionnaire?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. What grade are you in?

☐ 1st Grade (Junior High School)

☐ 2nd Grade (Junior High School)

☐ 3rd Grade (Junior High School)

☐ 1st Grade (High School)

☐ 2nd Grade (High School)

☐ 3rd Grade (High School)

4. What is your sex?

- ☐ Boy
- ☐ Girl

5. Do your parents work?

- ☐ Both
- ☐ One
- ☐ Both under work suspension due to the pandemic
- ☐ One under work suspension due to the pandemic
- ☐ None

6. During distance education, have you been absent from online classes?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Few times up to 10
- ☐ Several times up to 20
- ☐ Many times more than 20
- ☐ I haven't attended any online class

7. What difficulties did you face with the distance education? [you can select more than one answer]

- ☐ I did not have a device to connect
- ☐ I did not have internet at home
- ☐ I had internet but I did not have a good signal
- ☐ I did not have the necessary technical knowledge



- ☐ The platform had problems
- ☐ Teaching time was not appropriate
- ☐ There is no quiet place in the house
- ☐ I cannot concentrate on the lesson
- ☐ The lesson is not conveyed in an interesting way
- ☐ I did not face any difficulty
- ☐ Other (Please explain)

8. Were you given the opportunity to participate in a dialogue and express your opinion on the distance learning method that you consider best?

- ☐ Yes, through consultation with the Ministry of Education
- ☐ Yes, I discussed with the teachers of my school
- ☐ Yes, through the five-member and / or fifteen-member student councils
- ☐ Yes, I participated in dialogue platforms on the subject
- ☐ Yes, through the Parents and Guardians Association of my school
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other (Please explain)

9. Which of the following did the teachers use to adapt the curriculum to distance education? [you can select more than one answer]

- ☐ Interactive teaching with questions and answers
- ☐ Presentations
- ☐ Group assignments
- ☐ Online questionnaires

- ☐ Audiovisual material
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other (please explain)

10. Compared to school, during the distance education did you participate in the lesson?

- ☐ Much more
- ☐ More
- ☐ Equally
- ☐ Less
- ☐ Much less

11. Compared to physically attending school, during distance education, how effective do you think that the teaching of new material was?

- ☐ Much more
- ☐ More
- ☐ Equally
- ☐ Less
- ☐ Much less

12. The workload in distance education

- ☐ Is reduced
- ☐ Is the same
- ☐ Is increased



13. Are you satisfied with the Webex online platform?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ No opinion

14. Were your teachers familiar with the technology of distance education?

- ☐ Very much
- ☐ Very
- ☐ Satisfactorily
- ☐ A little bit
- ☐ Not at all

15. What would you change from distance education and what would you suggest to improve it? [open ended answer]

16. What did you miss most about school?

- ☐ My classmates / friends
- ☐ Socialization outdoors
- ☐ Teaching of the lesson in the classroom
- ☐ Other (Please explain)



QUESTIONNAIRE 1b	
SUBJECT	A survey pertaining to the measures enacted on education
Answered by:	Students of primary education
Why are we collecting these data?	The results of this survey will provide us information on the success of the COVID 19 measures imposed during the lockdown period with reference to the respect of children's rights.. It won't take more than five minutes to fill the questionnaire. All answers will be taken into account in a report that will be drafted on the impact of COVID measures on children's rights. All respondents will remain anonymous.

1. The Office of the Deputy Ombudswoman for Children supported by UNICEF

We'd love to hear your child's views on:

- what they feel has changed in their life because of the measures to deal with the pandemic
- what they like and do not like
- what they think can be done to improve things

The participation of children in this research is optional. If they decide to participate, and during the investigation for any reason they express that they do not want to continue the investigation, they can stop.

The outcome of this survey will help us to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency Covid measures and will assist policy makers to draft better laws

As all questions are important for us, you cannot skip any.

At any time, now or after the investigation, if you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact the office of the Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Ms Theoni Koufonikolakou via email at cr@synigoros.gr

Do you agree that your child should take part in the questionnaire?

☐ Yes

☐ No



2. The Office of the Deputy Ombudswoman for Children supported by UNICEF is conducting a study about the impact that COVID 19 measures on children.

We would like to hear your views about:

- what you feel has changed in your life due to COVID 19 measures**
- what you like and dislike about them**
- what you think can be done to make things better**

Your answers will remain confidential.

You don't have to take part in this survey but if you do, you can stop the survey at any time. The outcome of this survey will help us to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency Covid measures and will assist policy makers to draft better laws.

As all questions are important for us, you cannot skip any.

At any time, now or after the survey, if you have any question or concern, feel free to contact the office of the Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Ms Theoni Koufonikolakou via email at cr@synigoros.grcontact [cr@synigoros.gr.]

Do you want to answer a few questions about the lessons via computer

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. Do you go to primary school or kindergarten?

☐ Primary school

☐ Kindergarten

4. You are ...

☐ Boy

☐ Girl

5. Was it easy for you to connect to the internet and attend the online lesson?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. Did you know how to use the computer (or tablet)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. It was easy to watch the teacher from the computer screen (or tablet)

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. Did you like the online lesson with the computer?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I do not know

9. What did you miss most about school? [you can select more than one answer]

☐ The Teacher

☐ The lesson in the room

☐ The game at break

☐ My classmates / friends



10. This whole period of the pandemic for me was ... (complete the sentence with a word or phrase) [open question]

11. What would I change from the online lesson with the computer ? [open question]

QUESTIONNAIRE 2	
SUBJECT	A survey pertaining to the measures enacted on education
Answered by:	Teachers of preschool, primary and secondary education
Why are we collecting these data?	The results of this survey will provide us information on the success of the COVID 19 measures imposed during the lockdown period with reference to the respect of children's rights.. It won't take more than five minutes to fill the questionnaire. All answers will be taken into account in a report that will be drafted on the impact of COVID measures on children's rights. All respondents will remain anonymous.

1. The Office of the Deputy Ombudswoman for Children supported by UNICEF is conducting a study about the impact that COVID 19 measures on children.

We would like to hear your views about:

- what you feel has changed in children's life due to COVID 19 measures**
- what you think can be done to make things better**

You don't have to take part in this survey but if you do, you can stop the survey at any time.

The outcome of this survey will help us to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency Covid measures and will assist policy makers to draft better laws

As all questions are important for us, you cannot skip any.

At any time, now or after the investigation, if you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact the office of the Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Ms Theoni Koufonikolakou via email at cr@synigoros.gr

Do you agree to take part in the questionnaire?

☐ Yes

☐ No



2. What age group do you belong to?

- ☐ 18-25 years old
- ☐ 26-35 years old
- ☐ 36-45 years old
- ☐ 46-55 years old
- ☐ 56-65 years old
- ☐ Over 65 years old

3. On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means completely frustrated and 7 means completely satisfied, rate how satisfied you are with distance education

with the online course platform

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

with the digital tools of distance learning

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

by adapting the content of the curriculum

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

by covering the curriculum

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

with the school year in general

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

with the participation of students

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

4. Distance education adequately replaced the lesson in the classroom

- ☐ I absolutely agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I absolutely disagree

5. Distance education has kept students in touch with the learning process

- ☐ I absolutely agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I absolutely disagree

6. Did you discuss with students their views and suggestions regarding distance education? (you can select more than one answer)

- ☐ Yes, with individual students in the classes
- ☐ Yes, with five members' student Board
- ☐ Yes, with fifteen members' student Board
- ☐ Yes, with students I personally know
- ☐ No
- ☐ I do not know / I do not answer



7. Were the teachers provided with the necessary additional support for the smooth transition to e-learning?

- ☐ Yes, with Online training seminars (regarding the use of the software and regarding the online teaching)
- ☐ Yes, with the provision of IT tools and free connectivity (computer, mobile device, coupon for mobile broadband connections, etc.)
- ☐ Yes, with professional, psychosocial and emotional support (eg chat groups, online forums for exchange of ideas and educational content)
- ☐ Yes, with teaching material (eg use of open educational resources, course samples, etc.)
- ☐ No
- ☐ I do not know / I do not answer
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

8. Which of the following measures have been taken to ensure the smooth integration of vulnerable social groups of students into distance learning? [Select all that apply]

- ☐ Support for students with disabilities (eg sign language in online learning programs, parallel support, etc.)
- ☐ Improved access to infrastructure for students in remote and high-density urban areas
- ☐ Design of educational material for members of minority groups
- ☐ Subsidized devices for access to distance learning
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ I do not know / I do not answer
- ☐ Other (Please explain):

9. List the most serious reasons why students were absent from distance classes [Select all that apply]

- ☐ Technical connection problems
- ☐ Technical equipment problems
- ☐ Lack of internet connection
- ☐ Lack of equipment (e.g., another member of the family used the equipment)
- ☐ Inappropriate lesson time
- ☐ Health reasons
- ☐ Other reasons (please explain)

10. Distance education was able to provide the necessary knowledge to students

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ No opinion

11. Compared to face-to-face teaching, students participated during distance education

- ☐ Much more
- ☐ More
- ☐ Equally
- ☐ Less
- ☐ Much less



**12. Which of the following problems did you face with distance education?
[select all that apply]**

- ☐ Insufficient availability of equipment on the part of the school
- ☐ Insufficient availability of equipment on the part of students
- ☐ Network connectivity problems
- ☐ Problems with web security
- ☐ Inability of students to concentrate
- ☐ Indifference
- ☐ Other (Please explain)
- ☐ None of the above

**13. What measures have been taken to facilitate students' access to the
online distance learning infrastructure? [Select all that apply]**

- ☐ Offer Internet access at a subsidized or zero cost
- ☐ Ability to access distance education platforms via fixed network
- ☐ Ability to access distance education platforms via mobile phones
- ☐ Subsidized or free devices for access
- ☐ No measures were taken
- ☐ Other (please explain):



QUESTIONNAIRE 3	
SUBJECT	A survey pertaining to the measures enacted and their impact on Domestic Violence and Mental Health of Children
Answered by:	Professionals and key informants in relation to children on the move
Why are we collecting these data?	The results of this survey will provide us information on the success of the COVID 19 measures imposed during the lockdown period with reference to the respect of children's rights.. It won't take more than five minutes to fill the questionnaire. All answers will be taken into account in a report that will be drafted on the impact of COVID measures on children's rights. All respondents will remain anonymous.

1. The Office of the Deputy Ombudswoman for Children supported by UNICEF is conducting a study about the impact that COVID 19 measures on children.

We would like to hear your views about:

- what you feel has changed in children's life due to COVID 19 measures**
- what you think can be done to make things better**

You don't have to take part in this survey but if you do, you can stop the survey at any time.

The outcome of this survey will help us to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency Covid measures and will assist policy makers to draft better laws

As all questions are important for us, you cannot skip any.

At any time, now or after the investigation, if you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact the office of the Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Ms Theoni Koufonikolakou via email at cr@synigoros.gr

Do you agree to take part in the questionnaire?

☐ YES

☐ NO



2. What age group do you belong to?

- ☐ 18-25 years old
- ☐ 26-35 years old
- ☐ 36-45 years old
- ☐ 46-55 years old
- ☐ 56-65 years old
- ☐ Over 65 years old

3. Have you become aware of an increase in incidents of domestic violence?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ No opinion

4. If yes, what do you think resulted in this?

- ☐ Mandatory quarantine at home
- ☐ Social isolation from relatives and friends
- ☐ Limited ability to ask for help and turn to institutions and legal representatives
- ☐ Closure of schools
- ☐ Other (please explain)

5. Were services to prevent or address domestic violence effective during the pandemic?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ No opinion

If YES what interventions have been effective in mitigating the effects of domestic violence on children?

If NO how could these services have been strengthened [Open ended answer]

6. Which of the following was most detrimental to children's mental health? (you can choose more than one answer)

- ☐ Restrictions on movement and forced confinement of children at home
- ☐ Schools' Closure
- ☐ Restrictions on gatherings
- ☐ Mandatory parents' work from home
- ☐ The financial insecurity created as a result of the pandemic
- ☐ Closed playgrounds and sports areas
- ☐ Excessive exposure to news, images and information about the COVID -19 pandemic
- ☐ Excessive computer use
- ☐ I do not know
- ☐ Other (please explain)



7. Access by children to child mental health centers during restrictive measures was more difficult

- ☐ I absolutely agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I absolutely disagree
- ☐ I do not know

8. When the government took measures to address the pandemic, do you think it took into account their impact on children's mental health?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ No opinion

9. If during the planning of the measures to address the pandemic, the Government had conducted a consultation specifically with children, do you consider that it would have adopted the same measures?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ No opinion



10. Do you agree with the statement?

“During the pandemic, children have made too much of a sacrifice to protect public health”

- ☐ I absolutely agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I absolutely disagree

11. Given that school can play an important role in identifying cases of domestic violence, the gap created by their closure has been filled, even in part, by alternative actors?

- ☐ I absolutely agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I absolutely disagree
- ☐ I do not know



12. Given that school contributes significantly to the promotion of children's mental health, the gap created by their closure was even partially filled by distance education?

- ☐ I absolutely agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I absolutely disagree
- ☐ I do not know

13. The critical concern of the school after resumption of face-to-face classes is

- ☐ to fulfill the curriculum
- ☐ to help students set goals for themselves and their class giving a sense of perspective after the COVID era
- ☐ contribute to reconnection between students in the class including games, creative activities, group exercises, discussions
- ☐ to help students regain confidence in their social skills but also to feel safe on school premises
- ☐ I do not know
- ☐ Other (please explain)



QUESTIONNAIRE 4	
SUBJECT	A survey pertaining to the measures enacted and their impact on Education, Domestic Violence and Mental Health of Children
Answered by:	Professionals and key informants in relation to children in institutional care
Why are we collecting these data?	The results of this survey will provide us information on the success of the COVID 19 measures imposed during the lockdown period with reference to the respect of children's rights.. It won't take more than five minutes to fill the questionnaire. All answers will be taken into account in a report that will be drafted on the impact of COVID measures on children's rights. All respondents will remain anonymous.

1. The Office of the Deputy Ombudswoman for Children supported by UNICEF is conducting a study about the impact that COVID 19 measures on children.

We would like to hear your views about:

- what you feel has changed in children's life due to COVID 19 measures**
- what you think can be done to make things better**

You don't have to take part in this survey but if you do, you can stop the survey at any time.

The outcome of this survey will help us to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency Covid measures and will assist policy makers to draft better laws

As all questions are important for us, you cannot skip any.

At any time, now or after the investigation, if you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact the office of the Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Ms Theoni Koufonikolakou via email at cr@synigoros.gr

Do you agree to take part in the questionnaire?

☐ YES

☐ NO



2. What age group do you belong to?

- ☐ 18-25 years old
- ☐ 26-35 years old
- ☐ 36-45 years old
- ☐ 46-55 years old
- ☐ 56-65 years old
- ☐ Over 65 years old

3. Distance learning has kept students in touch with the learning process

- ☐ I absolutely agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I absolutely disagree
- ☐ I do not know

4. On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means completely frustrated and 7 means completely satisfied, rate how satisfied you are with distance education

with the online course platform

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

by adapting the content of the curriculum

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

by covering the curriculum

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

with the assimilation of curriculum

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

with the school year in general

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

5. Have cases of domestic violence against children increased during the pandemic?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ No opinion

6. If yes, what do you think resulted in this?

- ☐ Mandatory quarantine at home
- ☐ Social isolation from relatives and friends
- ☐ Limited ability to ask for help and turn to institutions and legal representatives
- ☐ Closure of schools
- ☐ Other (please explain)



7. Are services to prevent or address domestic violence effective during the pandemic?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ No opinion

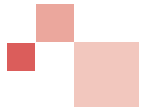
If YES what interventions have been effective in mitigating the effects of domestic violence on children?

If NO how could these services have been strengthened

[Open ended answer]

**8. Which of the following was most detrimental to children's mental health?
(you can choose more than one answer)**

- ☐ Restrictions on movement and forced confinement of children at home
- ☐ Schools' Closure
- ☐ Restrictions on gatherings
- ☐ Mandatory parents' work from home
- ☐ The financial insecurity created as a result of the pandemic
- ☐ Closed playgrounds and sports areas
- ☐ Excessive exposure to news, images and information about the COVID -19 pandemic
- ☐ Excessive computer use
- ☐ I do not know
- ☐ Other (please explain)



9. Access by children to child mental health centers during restrictive measures was more difficult

- ☐ I absolutely agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I absolutely disagree
- ☐ I do not know

10. When the government took measures to address the pandemic, do you think it took into account their impact on children's mental health?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ No opinion

11. If during the planning of the measures to address the pandemic, the Government had conducted a consultation specifically with children, do you consider that it would have adopted the same measures?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ No opinion



12. Do you agree with the statement?

“During the pandemic, children have made too much of a sacrifice to protect public health”

- ☐ I absolutely agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I absolutely disagree
- ☐ I do not know

13. The critical concern of the school after resumption of face-to-face classes is

- ☐ to fulfill the curriculum
- ☐ to help students set goals for themselves and their class giving a sense of perspective after the COVID era
- ☐ contribute to reconnection between students in the class including games, creative activities, group exercises, discussions
- ☐ to help students regain confidence in their social skills but also to feel safe on school premises
- ☐ I do not know
- ☐ Other (please explain)



QUESTIONNAIRE 5	
SUBJECT	A survey pertaining to the measures enacted during the pandemic and their impact on Children's rights
Answered by:	Parents of Children
Why are we collecting these data?	The results of this survey will provide us information on the success of the COVID 19 measures imposed during the lockdown period with reference to the respect of children's rights.. It won't take more than five minutes to fill the questionnaire. All answers will be taken into account in a report that will be drafted on the impact of COVID measures on children's rights. All respondents will remain anonymous.

1. The Office of the Deputy Ombudswoman for Children supported by UNICEF is conducting a study about the impact that COVID 19 measures on children.

We would like to hear your views about:

- what you feel has changed in your children's life due to COVID 19 measures**
- what you think can be done to make things better**

You don't have to take part in this survey but if you do, you can stop the survey at any time.

The outcome of this survey will help us to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency Covid measures and will assist policy makers to draft better laws

As all questions are important for us, you cannot skip any.

At any time, now or after the investigation, if you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact the office of the Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Ms Theoni Koufonikolakou via email at cr@synigoros.gr

Do you agree to take part in the questionnaire?

☐ YES

☐ NO



2. How many children do you have?

- ☐ One
- ☐ Two
- ☐ More than two

3. What grade do your children go to school?

- ☐ 1st Grade (Junior High School)
- ☐ 2nd Grade (Junior High School)
- ☐ 3rd Grade (Junior High School)
- ☐ 1st Grade (High School)
- ☐ 2nd Grade (High School)
- ☐ 3rd Grade (High School)
- ☐ Other

4. What is your level of education?

- ☐ Secondary education
- ☐ Higher education
- ☐ Postgraduate level
- ☐ Doctoral level
- ☐ Other

5. What was your employment status during the pandemic?

- ☐ Teleworking
- ☐ Employment at the workplace
- ☐ Suspension at work
- ☐ Unemployment
- ☐ Other

6. Do you believe that during the period of the lockdown the psychology of your child / children was aggravated?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ I do not answer

7. If YES, in what way?

- ☐ Child/children was/were more nervous and anxious
- ☐ Appearance of regression at a younger age,
- ☐ Difficulty and sleep disorders
- ☐ Loss of appetite for food
- ☐ Appearance of a conflicting mood
- ☐ Child/children seemed more closed to himself/herself
- ☐ Other



8. Did you feel the need to seek help from mental health and psychosocial support services during the period of the lockdown to enhance the children's mental well-being?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ I do not answer

9. Do you think that public structures (social services or mental health services) were / are able to support families during the lockdown ?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ I do not answer

10. Are you satisfied with distance education as a means of covering the curriculum?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very Negative

11. Did you have good cooperation with the teachers during all this time?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO
- ☐ I do not know/ I do not answer

12. In what area do you think the state has responded or has not responded satisfactorily to your needs in relation to children?

Open ended answer

13. What will be the consequences of the pandemic measures for your children in the future?

- ☐ the boundaries and balances in the family have changed
- ☐ the child/children will face greater anxiety and fear due to the experience
- ☐ the family will have financial problems
- ☐ the child/children has/ve learned to use the internet disproportionately
- ☐ the family ties will have been strengthened
- ☐ the child/children will place more emphasis on health issues
- ☐ Other
- ☐ I do not know / I do not answer

