



European Educational Research Journal

Open Call for papers

Education in Europe and the COVID-19 Pandemic

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**Please submit your contribution on
<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/eer>
by November 30th, 2020**

The new decade has begun in the most unimaginable fashion. It was as early as the 31st of December 2019, when the WHO China Country Office was informed of cases of 'pneumonia of unknown etiology'. One hundred days later, the Covid-19 pandemic has shattered social life as we normally know it and has taken tens of thousands of lives, whilst confining billions in their homes in worldwide 'lockdowns', in an effort to mitigate the spread of the lethal disease. In a matter of days, the global health emergency led to an education crisis, too. As country after country ordered school closures, education was suddenly faced with an extraordinary new reality: billions of children around the world became homebound, together with their parents and extended families.

Yet, education did not stop. From nurseries to schools to higher education, we have seen concerted and speedy adaptation efforts to create home-schooling and online education environments where students and teachers can interact. The extent to which these solutions are effective, or even available to all learners, will be studied in depth in months and years to come. What is certain is that, similar to all other social policy areas, the effects of the pandemic in education are disproportionately worse for those from more unstable and weaker economic and social backgrounds. Education worldwide was already facing multiple crises: deep and decades-long entrenched class and gender inequalities in the Global North; lack of basic schooling and teaching provision in the Global South; a preoccupation to adapt education to fit an 'economised' world, as well as the long-held belief that education can and should provide the solutions to all social problems, from the surge of nationalism and extremism, to climate change and fake news. The mid- to long-term consequences of this sudden education crisis, happening alongside a much wider and indiscriminate social, economic and political crisis, are unknown and will remain so until the pandemic is over. The European Education Research Journal (EERJ) is issuing a special call for papers that discuss the current education crisis with a particular focus on its European and global ramifications.

First, the current education crisis will exacerbate inequalities in education across the globe. Inequity is of paramount concern to all education policy makers and professionals; it is expected that school closures will disproportionately hurt vulnerable and disadvantaged students who rely on schools for a range of social services, including health and nutrition. Although the situation is much more critical in the Global South, there are many countries in the Global North, including countries in Europe, that will also be facing these deepening inequalities.

Second, and closer to home, within the European context, the effects of the pandemic on education are multiple. The European political project, built on solidarity between European nations and a shared sense of history and culture, appears, yet again, under threat. Built on the mobility of people and ideas, reliant on borderlessness and unity, the EU has so far not given a concerted answer to the Covid-19 crisis; there was no agreement on issuing the Eurobond, and so far at least, dealing with the most severe public health crisis in Europe for decades, has primarily been a national problem. Although school closures are the reality in most European countries, the DG Education and Culture's response has so far been limited to the provision of online materials for learning.

The crisis is much larger than just enabling a swift move from a physical to an online schooling environment: for example, the challenges of home-schooling for teachers, school managers, parents and students alike; the role, interests and actors of the digital platforming of education; the challenges to civic liberties that the lockdown has brought; the threats to academic mobility and research; the mental health toll on children, parents and teachers; the changed conditions of children's social development (given the requirement for prolonged physical distancing); the real threats of hunger and domestic abuse that many children face; the particular challenges to migrant children in Europe, needing to be confined in houses they may not even have; as well as the challenges to teachers adapting to online teaching instruction. These are only some of the very real, every day, practical problems that education in Europe faces.

The Covid-19 crisis is raising important issues around bordering and borderlessness in Europe. These are issues that relate to unity and fragmentation, the relationship between the local, cultural, historical, scientific and political in the face of a health emergency, and, last but not least, the ever-present policy learning through constructing country comparisons and 'reference societies'. These emerging issues can be an *experimentum crucis* to understand whether the European political project will have a future as a complex composition of differences and as an unfinished architecture of unity and diversity: can it be relaunched in a process of a new or re-born paradigm (for example a new 'Social Europe'), where the fabrication of a European space of education plays a decisive role? Or is the European project destined to be delayed to a date to be defined with the resurgence and the consolidation of national confinements, and the emergent scenario of fragmentation and strengthening of local and regional boundaries? Of course, the pandemic is a challenge not only for the European political project, but also to the overall globalization of education. It can be interpreted as a suspension, a definite stop, or a new, perhaps reinvigorated, phase in the current dynamics of global education policy at the national and at the international level. In that respect, new investigations are needed to understand whether globalization and Europeanisation of education will continue as usual, be turbo-charged via digital means, or are to be rethought altogether.

EERJ is calling on education researchers to respond to this call for papers, with a particular focus on the following topics:

Politics and policy of education in Europe during and after the pandemic:

1. European, global and national policies of school and university closures;
2. The role of international organisations, the emerging networks of educational technology companies and public-private partnerships;
3. A new politics of education? Care and the rise of health literacy.
4. Deepening educational inequalities in Europe as a consequence of the pandemic

The practice of education in Europe:

5. Online education: platforms, software, apps and the remaking of the educational experience;
6. Home-schooling: challenges and tensions between family, school and work;
7. The teaching profession: teaching, leading, learning and being accountable in 'schools without bodies'.

Education research during the pandemic:

8. Missing objects: doing educational research during social confinement;
9. The data on education during the pandemic: what knowledge, for what and for whom.

Guidelines for authors

Potential contributors are asked to propose theoretical and empirical papers that address some, or several of the topics and of the listed questions. They are requested to adopt a critical analysis approach and be specific about the theoretical and empirical substance of their proposed contribution. Submissions should preferably escape 'methodological nationalism' and investigate the chosen topic from a transnational point of view.

Please send abstracts to Sotiria.Grek@ed.ac.uk by May 31st. Final article submissions are expected by the end of November and should be uploaded on <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/eer>. Given the challenging circumstances, please note that we would be happy to consider modest extensions to these deadlines.

EERJ hopes to fast track the production of this double-blind, peer reviewed special issue in the first half of 2021.