

ONLINE EDUCATION OF MARGINALIZED CHILDREN IN NORTH MACEDONIA AND ITALY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

Online Education of Marginalized Children in North Macedonia and Italy During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic abruptly interrupted the traditional education process and imposed the need to switch to online education. Children living in poverty without proper IT infrastructure have been substantially excluded from the educational process amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. During this challenging pandemic, education has been placed in quarantine. This research paper aims to qualitatively investigate the potential social exclusion and further marginalization within remote learning during the pandemic in a very particular local context, focusing on the areas of Bitola (North Macedonia) and Treviso (Italy).

KEYWORDS: migrant children, children living in poverty, marginalization, COVID-19 online education, North Macedonia, Italy

IZVLEČEK

Online izobraževanje marginaliziranih otrok v severni Makedoniji in Italiji med pandemijo Covida-19

Pandemija Covida-19 je grobo posegla v tradicionalni izobraževalni proces in sprožila potrebo po prehodu na *online* izobraževanje. Revni otroci brez ustrezne informacijske tehnološke podpore so bili med to težavno pandemijo v veliki meri izključeni iz izobraževanja, ki je potekalo v karanteni. Raziskava kvalitativno analizira potencialno socialno izključenost in nadaljnjo marginalizacijo ob izobraževanju na daljavo v konkretnem prostoru – na območju Bitole v severni Makedoniji in Trevisa v Italiji.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: otroci migranti, otroci, ki živijo v revščini, marginalizacija, Covid-19 *online* izobraževanje, Severna Makedonija, Italija

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EDUCATION ON THE MARGINS

About 91% of the world's student population did not go to school in spring 2020. The rapid spread of the virus responsible for COVID-19 and the resulting declaration of the global pandemic imposed the need for online education, leading to the exclusion of marginalized groups of children. UNICEF reported 463 million students worldwide being generally unable to access online education due to lack of technological infrastructure or remote learning policies for online education.¹

Italy was the first country after China to be caught by the unforeseen virus, which rapidly spread across the entire European continent, eventually reaching throughout the world. These circumstances led to forced lockdowns, curfews, remotely working from home, and remote schooling. However, approximately 54% of the students in Italy declared to have had difficulties in reaching the online didactics, while 7% had no access at all.² In North Macedonia, the Ministry of Education confirmed in September 2020 that 40,000 children are not able to follow online classes due to a lack of IT infrastructure.³

This research poses the question *How have teachers, parents, and students responded to the emergency online learning during spring 2020?* Furthermore, *What do they think has been the situation's impact on marginalized children in Bitola and Treviso?*

Bearing in mind the world's situation, this research examines how online education has impacted children, especially those in already marginalized positions, in the regions where we received our compulsory education. This paper examines the potential further marginalization of pupils within remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bitola (North Macedonia) and Treviso (Italy). Although there are enormous differences between the two countries – North Macedonia is a candidate state to become a member of the European Union with a population of approximately two million, and Italy is a European Union member state with a population of about sixty million – as well as different living standards and social composition, the marginalization in education amidst the pandemic is not quite disparate.

MARGINALIZING THE MARGINALIZED?

The key concepts underpinning the research are poverty, marginalization, social exclusion, and online education/remote learning. More precisely, the latter refers throughout the paper to traditional compulsory education merely transferred online.

1 UNICEF (2020) COVID-19: Are Children Able to Continue Learning During School Closures, <https://data.unicef.org/resources/remote-learning-reachability-factsheet/> (26 Jan. 2021).

2 Ipsos for Save The Children Italy: Back to School report 2020, <https://www.savethechildren.it/sites/default/files/files/IPSOS%20per%20Save%20the%20Children%20-%20Back%20to%20School%20report.pdf> (25 Jan. 2021).

3 TV21 (2020), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uw6kcXIHdCo> (22 Mar. 2021).

The abrupt switch to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic denied, indeed, the right to education for poor children who are without proper IT infrastructure and electricity. According to the United Nations (UN), this move to online education or remote learning has been the largest disruption to the education system in history.⁴ Poverty, in both its absolute and relative meanings, could be multidimensional and deprives around one billion children worldwide of basic needs, including nutrition and clean water, as well shelter, health care, and education,⁵ thus, leading to social exclusion. Poverty has an impact on children's education no matter where they live and learn. Placed in the context of North Macedonia, poverty represents a problem that affects many social spheres.

Nearly one-third of the population lives below the national poverty line having more negative effects on children than adults.⁶ One in three children lives in poverty, comprising over 100,000 children in the country, 11% being in the Pelagonia region (Bitola and Prilep).⁷ Nevertheless, poverty does not equally affect all ethnic communities. Among Roma, the poverty rate is three times the national average (Petrovska Mitrevska, Tuna 2017: 29). According to UNICEF North Macedonia, 1 in 300 poor children in the country attends preschool, and 2 out of 3 children attend secondary school.⁸ Whereas in a decade, Italy has tripled the number of children living in poverty,⁹ and these figures are increasing since child poverty is strongly connected to investments in human capital. So, individuals with a low level of education, especially those without a lower secondary school diploma, are disadvantaged and have limited access to the formal labor market, relying on less-safe jobs and yet at greater risk of poverty (ILO 1995; World Bank 2020). Unfortunately, a significant proportion of people living in poverty are migrants. For example, in Italy, they account for 24.4% in contrast to 4.9% for Italians.¹⁰

Furthermore, migrants are a substantial part of the country's population, and thus, their children nowadays compose a significant portion of the Italian student

4 United Nations Policy Brief (2020). Education During COVID-19 and Beyond, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf (22 Mar. 2021).

5 UNICEF: Child Poverty, <https://www.unicef.org/social-policy/child-poverty> (13 Mar. 2021).

6 Borgen Project: Four Facts about Poverty in Macedonia, <https://borgenproject.org/poverty-in-macedonia/> (16 Nov. 2020).

7 UNICEF North Macedonia (2018): Ending Poverty Must Start with Children, <https://www.unicef.org/northmacedonia/press-releases/ending-poverty-must-start-children> (16 Nov. 2020).

8 Ibid.

9 Kids in Poverty Have Tripled in Italy, https://www.ansa.it/english/news/general_news/2019/10/21/kids-in-poverty-have-tripled-in-italy_ca478b24-9b6e-4460-ad26-b467dd9c9c9d.html (25 Jan. 2021).

10 Migrants Living in Absolute Poverty in Italy, ISTAT <http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?QueryId=17944&lang=en> (19 Mar. 2021).

population (9.7%).¹¹ Yet, educational inequalities – in terms of unequally distributed opportunities – persist (Azzolini, 2012; Mura et al. 2020: 15) since the low socio-economic resources, experienced above all by migrants, play a significant role in accessing those chances. Thus, there is an urgent call for policy interventions to fight this gap in educational achievements between native Italian and immigrant populations (Azzolini 2012: 177; Barbanti 2016).

The other key concept present in this research is marginalization, as the educational gap represented by inequalities is strongly connected to the population belonging to the lower socio-economic classes and, thus, to some extent, marginalized (Azzolini 2012: 13). Marginality could be defined as “involuntary position and condition of an individual or group at the margins of social, political, economic, ecological and biophysical systems, preventing them from access to resources, assets, services, restraining freedom of choice, preventing the development of capabilities and eventually causing extreme poverty” (Gatzweiler et al. 2011: 3). “Marginalization describes both a process and a condition that prevents individuals or groups from full participation in social, economic, and political life.”¹² The fact that marginalization represents a dynamic social phenomenon has made it quite challenging to define marginalization as a restricted category and should be observed as a “collection of changing relationships” (Howitt 1993: 6), sometimes referred to as social exclusion. Although the role of schools should be to act as drivers of inclusion, since they are the major vehicles capable of overcoming inequalities and promoting diversities (Jalušič, Bajt, Lebowitz 2019: 44), and education should be considered the way out of marginalization, it could, however, as Munn and Lloyd (2005) contend, become an agent of marginalization with unadapted curriculum to individual needs, inflexible structures, and inconsistency between norms and the capacity of students to meet them (Mowat 2015: 460). Amidst the pandemic, the role of teachers remains significant as “every teacher has an impact on the successful inclusion of immigrant children and developing intercultural education” (Vižintin 2018: 93). Nevertheless, the absence of proper conditions for online education has significantly challenged this obligation.

Remoteness, exclusion, and extreme poverty are related, so the poorest are often encountered in rural areas and belong to ethnic minorities and socially excluded groups (Gatzweiler et al. 2011: 2). Social exclusion, as defined by Razer et al. (2013), is a state when individuals or groups “lack effective participation in key activities or benefits of the society in which they live” (Mowat 2015: 457). However, as Mowat

11 According to data provided by the Ministry of Education University and Research (MIUR), the population of students without the Italian citizenship is about 9,7% in Italy, see also: <https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/250189/Notiziario+Stranieri+1718.pdf/78ab53c4-dd30-0c0f-7f40-bf22bbcedfa6?version=1.2&t=1562937526726> (19 Mar. 2021).

12 Defining Marginalised: DFID's Leave No One Behind Agenda, <https://www.ukaidirect.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Defining-marginalised.pdf>. More on social exclusion: <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/poverta-ed-esclusione-sociale/Pagine/orientamento.aspx> (25 Jan. 2021).

further contends, marginalization also encompasses a sense of not belonging and not being valued (Ibid 2015: 457). Hence, extreme poverty is rooted in marginality and represents another layer in its complexity introducing the sub-concept “marginalized poor,” referring to those affected by marginalization and poverty.¹³ For this study, the term refers to the economic situation of the families, including their access to technological devices and infrastructure¹⁴ in the context of public schools and education in Italy and North Macedonia.

METHODOLOGY

The research employs a purely qualitative methodology conducting participatory and subject-focused research with an ethnographic approach. Through qualitative research, we aim to represent an open view capable of understanding human concerns. We analyze self-reflections and narratives of educators, students, and parents experiencing these uncertain times of global pandemic. We try to understand their perspectives on challenges that marginalized children, particularly with minority and migrant backgrounds, have been facing during the lockdown. Furthermore, in Bitola’s context,¹⁵ storytelling as a supplementary qualitative methodology has been employed.¹⁶ Narratives and testimonies from lived experiences of parents and students have been collected from the field in the period between July and August 2020.

The role of teachers and other subjects involved in the educational process in creating inclusivity within schools and implementing an education system in which achievements and success are available to all is crucial. Educators are required to accept their responsibilities in promoting participation and reducing underachievement, particularly with marginalized children, due to different reasons affecting their learning outcomes (Rouse 2008).

The research involves our personal experience as members of the researched community and familiarity with the education sector. This reality could represent a personal bias because it is not an easy process to “make the familiar strange” (Holliday 2007). Nevertheless, qualitative research settings are in any case difficult to control, and, following Holliday’s suggestion, “we have to capitalize on those that are available to us” (Ibid. 2007: 22). Finally, as argued by Liamputtong, the focus is on

13 See more at: Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung. Marginality: Addressing the Root Causes of Extreme Poverty, <https://www.zef.de/fileadmin/webfiles/downloads/projects/margip/downloads/Poster-marginality-tropentag.pdf> (20 Dec. 2020).

14 Ipsos for Save The Children: I giovani ai tempi del Coronavirus, <https://s3.savethechildren.it/public/files/uploads/pubblicazioni/i-giovani-ai-tempi-del-coronavirus.pdf> (25 Jan. 2021).

15 Immense gratitude to Macedonian Red Cross, Local branch Bitola for the support during the research conducted in Bitola area.

16 Further see Clandinin, Huber (2010). Narrative Inquiry, in International Encyclopedia of Education, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/narrative-inquiry> (14 Dec. 2020).

meanings and interpretations, as qualitative research documents the world from the point of view of the people (2010: 11).

Research Design and Ethical Considerations

We did not select our informants with premeditation; they were chosen through a snowball sampling method. They all granted their informed consent, which enabled us to record responses and successively transcribe all the interviews and surveys in their original languages (Italian and Macedonian). Therefore, in the analysis, we will use our translations into English of the significant statements. Concerning another ethical aspect of the study, we have preserved the anonymity of the respondents.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted with open-ended semi-structured interviews, whereas in North Macedonia, we employed structured surveys and storytelling as an additional method. Due to social distancing measures and the inability to conduct interviews solely, structured surveys were sent via email directly to educators. Moreover, we collected testimonies from parents sharing their experiences. These testimonies served to assess the perception, beliefs, and experiences of everyone involved in the educational process. The questions were intended to guide the informants, rather than restricting them to answering what they are just asked. Thus, through dialogues, valuable information beyond the scope of the questionnaires was collected as well. In Italy, we interviewed 11 teachers from different school cycles: primary (4), lower secondary (3), and upper secondary schools (4). In North Macedonia, we gathered data from structured surveys (8), semi-structured interviews (4), and field visits (4). There were 14 participants involved, including primary school teachers (1), secondary school teachers (5), high-school teachers (1), special educators (2), social workers (1), and parents (4).

FIELDWORK TESTIMONIES

Online Education of Marginalized Poor Children in Bitola

When schools were closed and education transferred online, marginalized poor students were confined at home, and their education rights were substantially placed in quarantine. Many of these children belong to low-income families who have been receiving emergency relief during the pandemic. Some do not have

basic living conditions, including electricity, and particularly proper IT infrastructure to access online education:

There was no way they could follow online lectures; they were at home. We do not have the conditions, not even internet or mobile. (Single mother of three children)

In my school, above 50% of the students were without proper technical conditions to follow online classes. [...]. The majority of students without conditions for online education are Roma, whether devices or the internet. (Secondary school teacher)

The fact that certain families and children could not manage to participate in online education might have completely interrupted online education in certain schools and classes: "Online teaching lasted for almost two weeks. Later some people started canceling because they did not have the internet, some did not have proper means, even mobile phones. That is why online classes were eventually canceled" (Father of a second grader).

Some of the schools, teachers and special educators managed to obtain internet and technology donations to supply the students who were not able to afford them:

The school secured donations from NGOs of a certain number of tablets distributed to the students who did not have the technical means to follow online lectures. (Secondary school teacher)

I had a low-income student in my class. Free internet was provided at my request, which unfortunately arrived after the end of the school year. The same student will receive and use it in the new school year. (Teacher/Special Educator and rehabilitator)

Teachers also consider alternatives to address the student's absences in their online classroom. They implemented different teaching methods to make sure no student is excluded. The teaching methodology used by an elementary school teacher involved "sending recorded lessons so the students could watch when he/she was able to." While the internet and technical devices were secured for some children, others' education remained in quarantine. Moreover, in some cases, it was insufficient to provide only a device, mobile phone, or tablet if the home was without an internet connection or access to electricity. Educational programs were available on certain television channels for students who did not have the proper devices to follow online education. Students from families with low income who are without computers or internet at home "were given printed materials, which were sent to their parents and several families were visited in their homes by experts from our educational institution" (Social worker).

As education was brought into the homes, parents absolved a more significant role. Moreover, as an elementary school teacher stated: "unlike classes with a physical

presence, online teaching is much harder as parents must control all of the school-related assignments” thus, parents’ illiteracy and lack of IT knowledge represented a problem. It was particularly difficult for students being dependent on their parents during the process of online education, particularly those who did not have a proper internet connection and devices or whose parents’ lacked IT knowledge and were thus unable to assist with the assignments.

What I discovered about my students and their families are very sad pictures in general. IT literacy, more precisely, parents’ lack of knowledge of computers and the internet. As they were also stating: “We do not know, we cannot log in on the platform, we have already reached the internet limit [...], we do not have money to buy them new phones, the old one does not function well, the camera is broken, and similar things.” (Secondary school teacher)

September 2020 marked the beginning of the new school year. The government’s policy included online education and education with a physical presence in school for first-, second-, and third-grade students, as well as for other children who were unable to follow online classes with previous parental consent. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, an evident effort was made by some educators to find alternatives to online education or provide the necessary conditions for students to follow online classes. However, access to quality education was significantly disabled. Whether the absence of proper technology, weak internet connection and interruptions, or lack of knowledge, the educational process has been significantly challenged. This education crisis might have a significant impact in the future, particularly on the academic performance of marginalized children who were unable to access online education properly. The lesson this pandemic taught the educational system is that there is an imminent need to address poverty for the successful digitalization of education.

Online Education of Marginalized Migrant Children in Treviso

Interviewed teachers were asked to share their stories on how they experienced online teaching during the pandemic, especially regarding their relationship with students from migrant backgrounds and with less knowledge of the Italian language. Particularly about how they reached out to them and through which strategy they included them or not in the classroom.

The answers received were quite similar. All referred to the fact that communicating with foreign¹⁷ students has been a lot more difficult if not interrupted during the online schooling period. These students belong to the category of the most

17 Foreign is here referred only to their citizenship status.

absent to classes and sometimes also to the worst performers in the evaluation. Besides, difficulties due to lack of face-to-face communication with the families of newly arrived and non-native Italian speakers have dramatically arisen, leaving those students falling behind the rest of the class in most cases.

In one of my classes, I had seven students out of eighteen who were unreachable. One was even not in Italy, as we found out later. Eventually, some of those students connected to the class, but it was impossible to communicate, especially with their families. (Lower secondary school teacher)

Almost all my foreign students were absent and never showed up to my video meet-ups. I've never received their homework. So, I did not know how to evaluate them. [...] I am expecting high dropout cases next year. (Upper secondary school teacher)

Even though teachers recognized the many-layered difficulties affecting migrant students, they did not always proactively solve hindrances. Especially in secondary education, where students are expected to possess a certain degree of freedom and responsibility, teachers left them alone in most cases. While, to a great extent, primary school education has been delegated to parental education, in the case of a family with a migratory background, parents do not always sufficiently know the language to teach their kids.

Well, foreign students were surely the most absent in my classes. In the beginning, it was impossible to communicate with them. Then, we tried every possible strategy to reach the parents. I used WhatsApp, even though the principal explicitly told us not to use it for school communications. [...] As soon as it was possible to go out from home, I brought copies of the exercises to their houses. Some of them had no computer at home and used their parents' smartphones only when possible. Others have six siblings, and the youngest were penalized. It was very hard for some children to find a quiet place to connect. (Primary school teacher)

Even though schools offer tablets and internet connection to students without technological devices, according to the teachers' sample, only a small percentage of the potential beneficiary students have profited from it. Nonetheless, according to ISTAT (Italian National Statistics Institution), in Italy, 33.8% of the families have neither a PC nor a tablet; 47.2% have just one, while only 18.6% have two or more.¹⁸

Primary school teachers have highlighted the loss of the solidarity network surrounding the students from migrant backgrounds. The Italian education system does not systematically provide extra classes for foreign students to learn the new

18 ISTAT Report on Families and Technological Devices, https://www.repubblica.it/tecnologia/2020/04/06/news/istat_un_terzo_delle_famiglie_non_ha_pc_o_tablet_in_casa_sud_penalizzato-253279893/ (25 Jan. 2021).

language (Machetti et al. 2018), which is consistently found to represent one of the most relevant hindrances for immigrant children (Azzolini 2012). Also, in spring 2020, for security reasons, none of the extra activities meant to support migrants' integration occurred.

Everything has stopped. I've seen a decline both in the performance and attendance of the class. [...] I oversee one F.A.M.I.¹⁹ project, but if the school has stopped, you can imagine extra projects ...

In Olmi,²⁰ we have many foreign students and the only way to support them properly, but also to help teachers, is to send them to extracurricular class projects where they learn the language and are tutored in doing their homework. As soon as the school closed, this network stopped. It was three times more difficult to teach, students regressed [...] Now (July) that Piccolo Carro²¹ has started again with the extra tutoring, you see how important it is for them to keep regularity in the learning process not only of the language.

If we look at school dropout rates within the migrant student population, they are still significantly high (30.1%) compared to the native population (12%) and affect immigrants' occupational possibilities.²² A recent study (2020) promoted by Ipsos Italy collected a sample of students aged 14–18 years old attending Italian public schools during the first outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and reports 28% of them thinking one of their classmates will drop out of school in 2021.²³ The primary cause is a lack of IT infrastructure and devices, but also the insufficient knowledge of the Italian language is playing a significant role. Language skills deeply affect immigrants' performance in the labor market and reduce their employment rate by about 30% (Pieroni et al. 2019).

19 F.A.M.I. are projects aimed at integration of immigrants promoted by the government with EU funds.

20 A small village in the periphery of Treviso, Italy, with a high incidence of foreign students (e.g., 39% of the children in primary school do not have the Italian citizenship).

21 Piccolo Carro is a not-for-profit association, volunteer based and active in the fields of education and inclusion.

22 Eurydice Report: Integrating Students from Migrant Backgrounds, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/integrating_students_from_migrant_backgrounds_into_schools_in_europe_national_policies_and_measures.pdf (25 Jan. 2021).

23 Ipsos for Save The Children, <https://s3.savethechildren.it/public/files/uploads/publicazioni/i-giovani-ai-tempi-del-coronavirus.pdf> (25 Jan. 2021).

CONCLUSION

Technology is rapidly advancing worldwide, yet even some of the most affordable technological means remain inaccessible for children living in poverty. Switching abruptly to online education has revealed how the educational system in both countries has been unprepared to sustain and implement proper public instruction. Online schooling has stressed the marginalization of students who already live in an economically more difficult situation and could not access their right to education mainly due to a lack of technological infrastructures and devices. However, the lack of a structure aimed at including marginalized poor students, particularly migrant children without sufficient knowledge of the language of the lessons, has contributed to this marginalization. Consequently, many students have suddenly interrupted their education processes and gone missing from the class. The reasons behind their absences are, nevertheless, multiple and complex. Dropout rates are likely to increase in the next few months,²⁴ even though the situation's aftermath will be clearer only in a few years.

Moreover, online schooling has been perceived as a pure emergency solution and not as an occasion to improve the digitalization of the education proposals. If only given the proper infrastructure, online schooling has great potential in inclusivity, offering concrete means of reducing children's marginalization. Hence, the lessons drawn from COVID-19 emphasize educational reforms, moreover "building an education system that is more resilient, adaptable to student needs, equitable, and inclusive, with a strong emphasis on the role of technology in teacher's training at scale and ensuring learning continuity between the school and the home"²⁵ should be a priority.

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POVZETEK

ONLINE IZOBRAŽEVANJE MARGINALIZIRANIH OTROK V SEVERNI MAKEDONIJI IN ITALIJI MED PANDEMIJO COVIDA-19

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Pandemija Covida-19 je grobo posegla v tradicionalni izobraževalni proces in zaradi zaprtja šol sprožila potrebo po prehodu na *online* izobraževanje. Približno 91 odstotkov šolske populacije v svetu spomladi 2020 ni obiskovalo šole. Ta položaj je še posebej prizadel marginalizirane otroke, ki zaradi revščine in pomanjkanja ustrezne informacijske infrastrukture ter podpore v izobraževanju na daljavo niso mogli sodelovati.

Pričujoči članek kvalitativno analizira potencialno socialno izključenost in nadaljnjo marginalizacijo že tako marginaliziranih otrok med izobraževanjem na daljavo, pri čemer se omejuje na dve območji, in sicer Bitole v Severni Makedoniji in Trevisa v Italiji.

Vsi vpleteni v izobraževalni proces, od učiteljev do staršev, so imeli med izobraževalno krizo, ki je prinesla različne poglede na *online* izobraževanje, težko nalogo. Avtorici sta na podlagi njihovih pogledov proučevali položaj v izobraževanju marginaliziranih otrok, še zlasti vpliv revščine na manjšinske otroke v Bitoli in na otroke migrantov v Trevisu. Udeleženci raziskave, ki so bili dejavni v izobraževanju, so v intervjujih razkrivali svoja razmišljanja in analizirali to posebno stanje, še posebej izkušnje otrok brez dostopa do izobraževanja na daljavo. V obeh državah je socialni status teh učencev povezan z revščino. Prav zato so bili med pandemijo in izobraževanjem v karanteni še dodatno marginalizirani.

V severni Makedoniji je bila revščina v vsej svoji razsežnosti ovira za šolanje otrok, ki med pandemijo niso imeli dostopa do ustrezne informacijsko tehnološke opreme. V Italiji so intervjuvani učitelji pripovedovali o nenadni prekinitvi sleherne komunikacije s tujimi učenci, še zlasti s tistimi brez znanja italijanskega jezika. Čeprav so se učitelji zavedali večplastnosti težav, ki so med pandemijo pestile priseljske družine, niso ponudili nobenih rešitev, ki bi učencem šolanje na daljavo olajšale.

Avtorici članek končujeta z ugotovitvijo, da je bil izobraževalni sistem ob nenadnem prehodu na šolanje na daljavo na izvajanje tovrstnega izobraževanja popolnoma nepripravljen. Številni učenci so nenadoma izginili oziroma so morali zaradi pomanjkanja tehnične opreme, znanja in nezmožnosti komuniciranja v učnem jeziku prekiniti izobraževalni proces.