Chapter 15

Social Justice Leadership for Co-Educating Refugee and Migrant Students in Greek Primary Schools Through Distance Education During COVID-19

Argyro Rentzi

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2189-2760

University of Alicante, Spain

ABSTRACT

2020 is the year marked by the global pandemic of coronavirus (COVID-19), which affected humanity to a great extent, creating unfavorable social, health, and economic conditions. As in the world, so in Greece the school is affected by this new social situation, resulting in schools having been closed for long periods of time and the lessons for all their students done remotely through a special electronic platform. Principals are called upon to manage a crisis situation, creating smooth e-learning conditions for all the students, including the children who belong to ethnic minorities. This study aims to demonstrate that school leaders can play a significant role in the co-education of the refugee and migrant students through distance learning. At the same time, the author also offers proposals regarding the implementation of relevant actions in this direction.

INTRODUCTION

As the years go by, humanity has received multiple blows, which have affected social cohesion and living conditions. Wars, violence, economic crisis, pandemics are the most, characteristically, difficult elements in history, which continue to plague human societies worldwide, causing significant changes

in human survival and lifestyle. Two thousand and twenty (2020) is a milestone year, which will be remembered, in the world history, as the year that humanity experienced one of the worst pandemics, that of the Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19).

The oldest known case of infection dated back in December 1st 2019 in the city of Yuhan China and, then, the virus spread rapidly in all provinces of China and in more than 150 other countries around the world, including Greece (CONID-19 Dashboard CSSE, 2020). This pandemic of COVID-19 is caused by the severe respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-COV-2) with rapid human to human transmission and a mortality rate of approximately 0.6%, as deaths from this virus have reached the number of 1,761,381 by December 2020, according to the World Health Organization (WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard, 2020). In particular, the baseline number (Ro) is 5.7, which means that any infection with the virus is expected to lead to 5.7 new infections, when no new members of the community are immune and no precautions are taken, while, additionally, the virus spreads mainly between humans through close conduct and through airborne droplets, produced by coughing or sneezing (Wiersinga, Rhodes, Cheng, Peacock & Prescott, 2020). According to the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), regarding the prevention and control of infections, a number of measures must be taken in order to reduce the transmission of this virus, such as: hand hygiene and use of a protective mask, proposing, however, the avoidance of social conduct and home isolation (quarantine) as the main measure. These measures have created a new way of life and new social conditions, to which people must adapt in order to avoid infection.

School is an important part of the wider social system and, therefore, becomes a daily recipient of intense developments and changes, influenced by what is happening in the external environment. As a result, when a society is hit by the pandemic phenomenon, the school organization, extroverted and interconnected with the external social standards, is directly affected, conducting a series of educational changes in order to appear effective in these new social data. School principals play the most important role in managing such a crucial social situation and in assisting the school unit to cope with these changes successfully. As Murphy, Yff and Shipman (2000) point out, a school principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding and responding to current socio-economic, political, institutional and cultural content. Furthermore, society, in addition to the pandemic phenomenon, has to deal with other critical situations, such as the management of the refugee and migrant flows, which have defined and, decisively, determined the modern world, bringing increased impact to the European countries around the Mediterranean area (Greece, Spain, Italy). Similarly, school, as an open organization which interacts with society, has been influenced by this situation, forming a multicultural student population, composed of groups with particular ethnic, religious and cultural characteristics.

The principal of the school organization is called to find effective ways of integration and co-education of refugee and migrant children, promoting the creation of an intercultural school environment. In addition, worldwide, the institutional framework for educating the entire school population has changed, due to the pandemic, as, now, teaching is provided through distance learning tools (distance education). The principal, therefore, must create favorable educational conditions for all students, including refugee and migrant children, who come from different socio-cultural backgrounds and have special educational needs. School leaders, who perform social justice, are the orchestrators of promoting the vision of inclusive schools by creating conditions for acceptance, good treatment and care of all children in their school, aiming at s successful progress and education of all students, even in difficult social conditions, such as that of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Related Content

Failure of Governance, State Legitimacy, and Hate Speech in Ethiopia: Use of Social Media Post 2018
Degwale Gebeyehu Belay (2020). *International Journal of Political Activism and Engagement (pp. 64-76).*
www.irma-international.org/article/failure-of-governance-state-legitimacy-and-hate-speech-in-ethiopia/246353

How Narrative Skills Associate With Peer Relations: An Empirical Study on Chinese Primary School Children
Yiyuan Wang, Rong Yan, Miao Li, Meng Wuand Zihan Chen (2024). *International Journal of Public Sociology and Sociotherapy (pp. 1-17).*
www.irma-international.org/article/how-narrative-skills-associate-with-peer-relations/343045

Being "Badass": Identity of a Teacher Activist Organization
Brianne N. Kramer (2022). *International Journal of Political Activism and Engagement (pp. 1-12).*
www.irma-international.org/article/being-badass/315602

Intercultural Learning via Videoconferencing: Students' Attitudes and Experiences
Ruby Vurdienand Pasi Puranen (2020). *Multicultural Instructional Design: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 626-645).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/intercultural-learning-via-videoconferencing/231366

Citizens and Mobile Government Adoption: A Comparison of Activities and Uses
Christopher G. Reddick (2014). *International Journal of Civic Engagement and Social Change (pp. 13-26).*
www.irma-international.org/article/citizens-and-mobile-government-adoption/106944