Executive summary of the Report - WP2 – Contextualisation
"Ecosystemic report for secondary education during COVID-19 in four European countries"

The present ecosystemic report is an analysis of surveys and focus groups organized in four European countries (Belgium, France, Greece & Poland) participating in the KEEP project. This report is focused on the interrelationships between the contextual elements that contributed to the activity of teachers at macro level (regional) at meso level (local) and at micro level (personal) during the COVID pandemic.

The results to identify the **Macro level** for the ecosystem in distance education, came from stakeholders (students, parents and leaders) who were interviewed in a focus group (see 3.1) regarding their experience of distance education during the pandemic in terms of i) **obstacles,** ii) **support and management** and iii) **teachers' practices**.

They highlighted very interesting issues that shaped the contextualisation of their ecosystem. In short:
- for <u>students,</u> the main obstacles were: i) lack of motivation and ii) lack of communication and support. On the other hand, effective and innovative teaching practices pointed out the use of digital tools all integrated into a differentiated school's timetable.
- for <u>parents,</u> the main obstacles were: i) students' optional attendance, ii) lack of policy and infrastructure and iii) provision for mental and physical health. Parents would expect more government financial support and/or additional infrastructure from the state rather than getting them to deal with those issues. They also agreed that a lack of policies led to academic discontinuity and raised mental health issues.
- for <u>leaders,</u> the main obstacles were: i) lack of policy, ii) lack of infrastructure, iii) different levels of teachers' digital skills, iv) being under scrutiny, v) identity and vi) well-being. Leaders were expected to cover a range of support by managing issues raised from a technical to a pedagogical level. In the end, they admitted they experienced mental health issues by being so exposed to handling issues without having most of the time additional guidelines.

On the other hand the **Meso level** was shaped by teachers' testimonies in a focus group (see 3.2) who raised mainly issues regarding: i) **socio-economic background of students /digital divide**, ii) **support resources for engagement in learning,** iii) **online tools** and iv) **teachers' practices in remote teaching and learning ICT training**. In short:

- Students in all four countries shared a huge need for infrastructure, digital equipment and resources. Digital divide seems to be widened more and became a key factor to passive
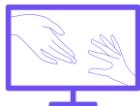
presence into the learning process and consequently dropping of it. A need for a cohesive school planning for communication management system along with a pedagogical framework to keep them engaged to the new educational conditions and minimising the stress they experienced.

- Teachers talked about management actions they were called to take to support their students' engagement in learning by delivering technical and psychological support. However, without having received additional training and guideline they did not feel adequately supported their students and keep them on track.
- Teachers pointed out many online digital tools they used to organise distance teaching (more info can be found in section 3.2). In some countries like Belgium and Greece, it is present using a standard digital space for synchronous (SmartSchool Live, Webex) and asynchronous learning (Bookwidgets, eclass/e-me), respectively.
- Teachers raised mainly a differentiated pedagogical approach that was implemented to address the new learning process by breaking down smaller steps of the learning tasks.

In the **Micro level** (see 3.3) were mapped the elements of twenty (20) teachers that were finally selected as representative of all countries for their innovative teaching and utilisation, to a great extent, digital tools, The contextualisation of those teachers highlighted: i) **their demographic characteristics**, ii) **their experience in distance education (online teaching and learning) and their training**, and also iii) **the level of institutional support they received for online teaching.**

We addressed the existing social and digital inequalities by comparing and contrasting the interrelations from macro, meso and micro levels. The risk factor of school dropouts increased due to a lack of supportive pedagogical and managerial measures that should have been in place at the beginning of the pandemic. At the macro and meso levels, teachers' and leaders' devotion is evident; professionalism and personal effort to make things work to the best of their students. Parents' and students' resilience and self-efficacy were highlighted as the main attributes at the macro level.

In conclusion, the consortium of the project expects that this report helps researchers and interested authorities get a more detailed overview of the context, notably with regards to digital divide and ICT preparation of teachers. This will be particularly helpful when it comes to explaining the conditions of success of innovative practices or identifying major obstacles to their realisation. It will be useful to replicate and transfer the good practices in other contexts.