

Lessons of resilience and social inclusion from the Covid-19 pandemic

Summary

The outbreak of Covid-19 in 2019 has brought chaos and misfortune to many around the world. People found themselves disconnected from loved ones, friends and acquaintances. Schools were shut down and many lost their jobs. All this changed our understanding and experiences of inclusion and belonging. This conference aims to explore what we have learnt, and what there is left to learn, from the current global pandemic in relation to inclusion and exclusion in society and what conclusions we can draw as we transit into a post-pandemic world. With an international and multidisciplinary team of experts, the conference will present emerging research in the interconnected areas of social mobility, inclusion, and school belonging with the purpose of supporting future aspirations, resilience and capabilities across a range of contexts.

Details of the conference

The focus of the conference is on inequalities, resilience and inclusion within the context of the current global pandemic. The communities represented in the conference have been historically excluded and increasingly affected by the pandemic. The speakers comprise a multidisciplinary team of international experts who employ diverse research methodologies to explore both the struggles and the strategies of resilience amongst children, youngsters, teachers, diverse learners and migrants. The aim of the conference is to present and discuss updated developments in research and practice about the challenges and achievements of diverse communities during the pandemic in order to make an impact on scholarship. The conference represents an unparalleled opportunity to explore these timely topics from varied angles and contexts. The objective of the talks is to generate a collective discussion of the many challenges that the pandemic has imposed to diverse communities and the many different coping strategies employed across different contexts. The conference is organised around four major themes that gradually evolve from struggles and challenges to lessons of resilience: learning disruption; migrants' resources; digitalisation strategies and experiences of resistance and resilience. A variety of geographical regions, both from the speakers' own backgrounds and from the communities they represent, will be present in the conference including the United Kingdom, Europe, the U.S.A., Asia, Africa and Latin America and it is expected that this variety will generate wide public interest as well as setting a precedent for local and regional public policies. The original combination of multifaceted speakers taking part are united around a profound commitment towards social justice and inclusion, which are essential values as communities transit into a post-pandemic world.

Conference Dates and Venue, in person and hybrid

1st and 2nd of June 2023 09:30 - 17:00

Kohn Centre, Royal Society, 6-9 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AG

Conference Convenor

Dr Marta Cristina Azaola (University of Southampton).

Dr Marta Cristina Azaola is a full-time Lecturer at the Centre for Research in Inclusion at the School of Education at the University of Southampton. She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. She is interested in educational inequalities; social inclusion and exclusion through schooling. She has participated in a wide range of international projects. In rural Mexico, she conducted an ethnographic study exploring the ways in which home-school-community links impact the educational and occupational trajectories of migrant communities. She also coordinated a workshop funded by the British Council aimed at enhancing reflective learning and school collaboration across rural schools, and currently, she investigates the experiences of school belonging across deprived urban upper secondary schools in Mexico. She has also explored issues of choice, opportunity, and wellbeing amongst migrant pupils in England and Jersey as well as the relationship between gender, mothering and leadership amongst head teachers in South Africa. Her most recent paper ‘Challenges of working in undervalued technical schools. A continuum between discourses of deficit and trust’ will soon be published in the British Journal of Sociology of Education. She is currently the Associate Director of the MSc in Education. A graduate of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, she holds an MA in Educational Research from Lancaster University and a PhD from the University of Bristol.

The organisation of the conference was also supported by Dr Achala Gupta (University of Southampton) and Dr Jay de los Reyes (University of Southampton).

Day 1, 1st June

Time	Programme	Session
09:30-10:30	Conference Registration and Tea/Coffee Reception	
10:30-10:45	Opening Remarks	

10:45-11:30	Presentation 1: Professor Umut Erel (The Open University)	(1) Migrants' Resources
11:30-12:00	Coffee/Tea Break	
12:00-13:00	Presentations 2: Dr Stefano Piemontese (University of Birmingham) Presentation 3: Dr Emmaleena Käkelä (University of Strathclyde)	
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00-15:00	Presentation 4: Dr Rafael de Hoyos (World Bank) Presentation 5: Professor Christian Bokhove (Southampton University)	(2) Learning Disruption
15:00-15:30	Coffee/Tea Break	
15:30-16:30	Presentation 6: Dr Emilio Blanco (Colegio de Mexico) Presentation 7: Dr Marcos Delprato (University of Sussex)	
16:30-17:00	Closing Remarks	
17:00-19:00	Drinks Reception	

Day 2, 2nd June

Time	Programme	Session
09:30-10:00	Conference Registration and Tea/Coffee Reception	
10:00-10:15	Opening Remarks	
10:15-11:15	Presentation 1: Sophie Pender (The 93% Club) Presentation 2: Professor Antoni Verger and Dr Adrián Zancajo (Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona)	(3) Digitalisation Strategies
11:15-11:45	Coffee/Tea Break	
11:45-12:45	Presentation 3: Professor Maria Teresa Tatto (Arizona State University) Presentation 4: Barbara Ringwood (Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities)	

13:00-14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00-15:00	Presentation 5: Professor Mel Ainscow, Dr Paul Armstrong and Dr Stephen Rayner (The University of Manchester) Presentation 6: Dr Rocio Garcia-Carrion (Universidad de Deusto)	(4) Experiences of Resistance and Resilience
15:00-15:30	Coffee/Tea Break	
15:30-16:30	Presentation 7: Professor Andreas Köpfer (University of Education, Freiburg) Presentation 8: Dr Cath Gristy (University of Plymouth and Dr Silvie Rita Kučerová (J. E. Purkyne University, Czech Republic)	
16:30-17:00	Closing Remarks	

Session Breakdown - Day 1, 1st June

Opening Remarks (10:30-10:45)

Session 1 (10:45-13:00) – Migrants’ resources

Speakers:

Professor Umut Erel; The Open University

Dr Stefano Piemontese; University of Birmingham

Dr Emmaleena Käkälä; The University of Strathclyde

Chair: Dr Achala Gupta

The first day of the conference focuses on existing inequalities and further challenges brought by the pandemic specifically in the field of education. The morning session consists of four presentations that focus on migrants’ struggles and the resources they operationalise during the pandemic. Professor Umut Erel starts with the first talk, which explores how migrant community organizations in the UK used online participatory theatre for civic engagement, community building and activism and how online participatory arts-based work can be prolonged post pandemic. The second talk by Dr Stefano Piemontese, discusses the challenges and evolving strategies of young EU nationals and their ways of navigating education, un/employment, welfare, health provision and how these shape their aspirations and plans to settle or remigrate. Dr Emmaleena Käkälä provides the third talk, which explores the insights from the Gen-

Migra project on the impact of the pandemic on migrant women, and her recent work on practice-based resistance by refugee sector organisations.

Session 2 (14:00-16:30) – Learning disruption

Speakers:

Dr Rafael de Hoyos; World Bank

Professor Christian Bokhove; Southampton University

Dr Emilio Blanco; Colegio de Mexico

Dr Marcos Delprato; University of Sussex

Chair: Professor Kyriaki (Kiki) Messiou

Continuing with the theme of existing inequalities and the ways in which education has been impacted by the pandemic, the afternoon session discusses the challenges that the pandemic has brought to children's learning. It starts with Dr Rafael de Hoyos providing a global perspective about learning inequality, within and between countries, which existed before the pandemic, showing how inequality in learning was further affected during the pandemic. This is followed by a presentation by Professor Christian Bokhove about a longitudinal analysis of learning inequality in the UK throughout 2020 and 2021, showing disparities in schoolwork completed, access to technology and parental support across different socioeconomic backgrounds. This is followed by two presentations discussing learning inequalities in Latin America. Whilst the first one, by Dr Emilio Blanco, explores Latin America as a region, it puts a special emphasis on Mexico, presenting variations across socioeconomic backgrounds and institutional co-morbidities to show the repercussions of the pandemic on educational exclusion. The last afternoon presentation, by Dr Marcos Delprato, focuses on the responses undertaken by the Argentinian education system in relation to their primary and secondary educational levels. Implications for policy and practice in relation to learning loss are also explored across presentations in this session.

Closing Remarks (16:30-17:00)

Session Breakdown - Day 2, 2nd June

Opening Remarks (10:00-10:15)

Session 3 (10:15-12:45) – Digitalisation strategies

Speakers:

Sophie Pender; The 93% Club

Professor Antoni Verger and Dr Adrián Zancajo; Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona

Professor Maria Teresa Tatto; Arizona State University Comparative Education

Barbara Ringwood; Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Chair: Professor Umut Erel

The existing inequalities and the challenges imposed by the pandemic give way to the exploration of different experiences of resistance and resilience across diverse contexts. The morning session consists of four presentations that explore different strategies of digitalisation across a range of contexts and the challenges that an increased online presence has represented for particular groups. Sophie Pender opens up the first session, which explores the impacts of remote working environments on state educated, mainly working class, UK university students, and reflects on online ways of working post-pandemic. The second talk by Dr Antoni Verger and Dr Adrián Zancajo, explores strategies articulated by European governments in the education sector in three main domains: the digitalisation of the educational system, tackling educational inequalities, and teachers' development. Professor Maria Teresa Tatto discusses in the third presentation the results of an online programme of teacher education in the U.S. that commenced at the start of the outbreak, which includes classroom teachers from different countries. Barbara Ringwood shares in the last presentation, the experiences of digital peer engagement and the social expectations of students with intellectual disabilities.

Session 4 (14:00-16:30) – Experiences of resistance and resilience

Speakers:

Professor Mel Ainscow and Dr Stephen Rayner; The University of Manchester

Dr Rocio Garcia-Carrion; Universidad de Deusto

Prof. Dr. Andreas Köpfer; University of Education, Freiburg

Dr Cath Gristy and Dr Silvie Rita Kučerová; University of Plymouth and J. E. Purkyne University, Czech Republic

Chair: Dr Cristina Azaola

Continuing with experiences of resistance and resilience, the last session of the conference consists of four presentations that cover topics of collaboration, agency, dialogue and school belonging. The first presentation by Professor Mel Ainscow, Dr Paul Armstrong and Dr Stephen Rayner, discusses an educational recovery strategy implemented during the pandemic to support schools across Greater Manchester through action learning trios. Dr Rocio Garcia-Carrion explores in the second presentation the implementation of dialogic learning environments that have facilitated school engagement of vulnerable populations across Europe during the pandemic and how these interventions can be transferred across diverse contexts in the post-pandemic future. The next presentation by Prof. Andreas Köpfer explores how students appropriate space including aspects of students' agency and belonging in inclusive schools. The last talk of the conference with Dr Cath Gristy and Dr Silvie Rita Kučerová presents lessons for resilience and inclusion in relation to changes in perceptions of rural places and their schools occurred during the pandemic as people increasingly look for safe places to live and raise children.

Closing Remarks (16:30-17:00)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The conference groups a diverse community of scholars and practitioners across the social sciences. Participants occupy different positions in a variety of sectors and institutions including a global organisation, different universities and one charity. Speakers cover a variety of roles in academia and beyond including a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow, a Senior Occupational Therapist, university professors and lecturers and a charity founder. Together they comprise a multifaceted team of international experts that represent wide diversity in relation to age, gender, work experience and nationalities.