Promoting Equal Education Opportunity

*Promoting Equal Opportunity In Primary Education under COVID-19*

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Last year 2020, we all witnessed the history. The wild fire in Australia, the hungry in Africa, natural disasters rages, swallows countless creatures. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are expected to be more severe than 2008 financial crisis. We repeat setbacks again on the road of pursuing the equal education. Confronted with COVID-19, 194 countries closed schools for the concerns of infection. Italy executes the lockdown policy in response to the high risk of gathering of people. Italy was the first country in Europe to implement a nation-wide lockdown. Schools and universities began to close in late February 2020, starting with the north of Italy. By 10 March 2020, the Government extended lockdown measures to all regions in the country. This prolonged break is of concern, as evidence from previous school closures shows that even short breaks in schooling can cause significant loss of learning for children. Primary education in the state will suffer a lot during the above period.

​ Italy has always been a positive role in promoting equal opportunity in primary education, and Italy has made substantive contribution to the equality education no matter what obstacles are in front of us.

​ To mitigate the impact of school closures, countries around the world invested rapidly in remote learning solutions delivered through different channels, including online platforms, broadcast media (TV, radio), and paper take-home packages, which was before an important but optional medium for learning. In Italy, the Ministry of Education allocated 85 million euros for remote learning activities. This included 70 million euros to provide children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds with digital devices and connectivity, 10 million for schools to acquire digital learning platforms, and 5 million for training teachers. Media outlets reporting on some preliminary results of a survey by the Ministry of Education claimed that by 18 March 2020, 67 per cent of schools (including preschools and kindergartens) had moved all of their classes online, potentially reaching 6.7 million of the 8.3 million students in Italy.

​ However, based on 2019 data on internet connectivity in Italian households, ISTAT estimated that around 3 million children aged 6–17 might have faced difficulties with remote learning during lockdown due to a lack of connectivity or devices at home. Similarly, a survey conducted by Save the Children showed that 28 per cent of children in Italy knew at least one classmate who stopped attending school (remotely or in-person) since lockdown, with internet connectivity problems as the most-often cited reason for not attending remote classes. Schools with higher proportions of low-income students suffered much higher levels of learning loss, widening existing inequities in learning. We need do more to protect the right of being educated.

Italy has carried out some new policies, and also released financial subsidies. More Possible measures in achieving the above objectives are include:

First: Provide families with additional resources and improved digital devices to make sure that digital learning is accessible to all children, especially those in poor. The only solution to current situation that lacking equipment is money. Family need money to purchase ones that meet the standard of online teaching, while it balance the deficit of family as well.

Second: Schools could run short course for parents or caregivers to impart some tips, which may improve the study efficiency. That’s a low-cost but high-paid solution to equal education. Parents’ cooperation is a indispensible part in seeking to eduaction equality. Before the epidemic, different social strata may devote different in relationship between parents and students. Lockdown policy offer a chance to stay with kids.

Third: School should assess students’ learning results, collecting and analysising data, to support to students and subjects most impacted, and to improve learning delivery in the future. Use digital communication apps to stay in touch with school. Assessing children’s potential learning loss as they return to school will be crucial to identify areas for support and remediation