

# Roots & Routes

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Photo credit Dr. K. Ranju Rangan

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# Editor's Note



## Contents

GCM Reports  
Article(s)  
Interview

Editorial Information  
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Dear Readers  
Greetings!

The year 2020, entrenched with the heavy baggage of COVID-19 induced pandemic, has proved highly challenging for all the communities irrespective of nationality. To overcome the pandemic's challenge, there need to be short-term, medium-term and long-term policy recommendations. In such a context, being an academic and policy think tank, GRFDT has strived to advocate the safe, orderly and regular migration for all through its various initiatives. As this year is coming to an end, we are happy to bring you the GRFDT newsletter 'Roots and Routes' for December 2020 to provide insights on our organisational activities, including publications. These publications are empathetic with the plight of migrants on the one hand while also showcasing the achievements of the migrants on the other hand, while seeing a shining light even during such an unprecedented health crisis which affected the socio-economic fabric of the people adversely across the globe.

This newsletter contains two reports based on the webinar on Global Compact for Migration (GCM) jointly organised by the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism, New Delhi, Migrant Forum in Asia, Manila, Cross-Regional Center for Refugees and Migrants (CCRM), Beirut, and Civil Society Action Committee (CSAC), Geneva. The report titled "Migration Procedures: Distance Between Expectations and Reality", based on the webinar on Objective 12 of the GCM, has been written by Deepika. One more report titled "Access to Basic Services: Where Migrant Rights Coincide with Human Rights" based on the Objective 15 of the GCM has been authored by Seyi Olawuyi. Newsletter also contains the research article written by Dr K Ranju entitled "Pandemic Impact on Migrant Children and Youth in GCC", providing crucial perspectives regarding data, confidentiality, cybercrime, socio-economic and behavioural impact on migrant children, to name a few. All these reports and articles mentioned above have been published in '[The Migration News: People on the Move](#)', a Media Outreach Initiative of GRFDT.

This issue also features an interview with Vincenzo Muratore, Project Manager of the "No Cap", which has stood against illegal hiring and labour exploitation. The interview was conducted during the International E-Conference jointly organised by GRFDT with Migrant Forum in Asia and CISAN, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in November 2020.

We hope you find our newsletter enriching and impactful in creating a positive migration discourse across the globe. Please feel free to give us feedback or suggestions at [editorinchief@grfdt.com](mailto:editorinchief@grfdt.com).

Abhishek Yadav

# Migration Procedures: Distance Between Expectations and Reality

A panel discussion on the Objective 12 of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), which aims to ‘strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral,’ was jointly organized by Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT), Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA.), Cross-Regional Center for Refugees and Migrants (CCRM), and Civil Society Action Committee (CSAC) on 17th November, 2020. The session was moderated by Ms. Paddy Siyanga Knudsen, Migration Governance Analyst, GRFDT, and saw the participation of experts from across the world as panellists.

## Process and procedures are unclear to the migrants

Mr. Stéphane Jaquemet, Director of Policy, International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), initiated the discussion by briefing about his organisation, whose main objective is identifying and facilitating access to appropriate referral procedures for the migrants. Ms. Paddy Siyanga Knudsen asked Mr. Jaquemet about their work at ICMC. Mr. Jaquemet stated that ICMC was working to ensure migrant rights, addressing their vulnerabilities with special focus on mixed migration. He was of the opinion that Objective 12 “**probably is not one of the fanciest,**” since many constituent elements of the Objective, like detention and access to services, are some choices made that are unavoidable. Mr. Jaquemet also pointed out that aspects of the migration procedure should be transparent and predictable for all migrants. The government should ensure proper registration of every migrant, giving them legal identity. But this task continues to be unrealised.

***“You need to have a procedure in place to do a bit of screening, profiling, and iden-***

***tifying people who may have particular needs”*: Mr. Stéphane Jaquemet**

Mr. Jaquemet also highlighted that the initial draft or Zero Draft of the GCM was found to be problematic by various governments. Despite this, in Objective 12, there are several elements whose institutionalization predates the Compact. Many governments had already made efforts to identify the vulnerabilities in migration procedure, and were initiating measures like child-sensitive procedures, gender-sensitive procedures, identifying and rescuing victims of trafficking etc. UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) had developed a document called the 10-Point Strategy in 2007, which was applied in the mixed migration situation. The idea was to enable identification of vulnerable migrants, victims of trafficking, women at risk, children at risk or disabled children, and take appropriate measures keeping in mind their special needs.

## Challenges to migration mobility

Ms. Aletheia Fernandez de la Reguera, Associate Researcher, Institute of Legal Research, National Autonomous University of Mexico, shed light on the plight of migrant communities in ascertaining their right to mobility.

According to Ms. Aletheia, the primary challenge lies in the detention procedures that are growing more callous and expansive every day, particularly in some popular destination and transit countries. Ms. Aletheia pointed out that it is becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate between the two different categories of labour migrants and forced migrants. Hence, there is a bigger challenge in terms of ensuring accountability and transparency in transit countries. The externalization of borders and discretionary use of the policies un-

der the trained agents are other challenges to migration mobility. The gender sensitive and child sensitive procedures are still under the discretionary use of the authorities on ground. Agents can decide arbitrarily whether the person is a labour migrant or a forced migrant, and follow different procedures accordingly. Miss Aletheia Fernandez de la Reguera also highlighted the plight of women and child migrants, stating that there exists a stark gender gap in social capital or access to the information among migrants, with women staggering behind. Women migrants lack means like smart phones, which are essential in ensuring safe migration, and are exposed to sexual violence. They lack right information and fall prey to deception, sexual violence and physical abuse, which often continues in detention centres.

### **Ensuring accessible information**

Mr. Henry Rojas, Coordinator, Lawyers Beyond Borders Network (LBB), shared his reflections on Objective 12 and its impact on migration laws and policies of origin and the destination countries, with special focus on the Philippines. He stated that it is essential to use accurate and disaggregated data to collect relevant information about immigration policies and impart them to migrants to promote the rights and welfare of the migrant workers. According to Mr Rojas, the intention of the Objective should be to make all migration related information clear and accessible to migrant workers at both countries of origin and destination.

***“In Philippines, there are pre-departure orientation seminars and pre-employment seminars...these are generic information seminars and not specific to the countries where the migrant workers would actually be working”:* Mr. Henry Rojas.**

### **Recognition of migrant rights**

Ms. Florida Sandanasamy, CSO Activist, Malaysia detailed the hurdles faced by migrant workers from Malaysian perspective. Malaysia is a popular receiving country with diverse groups of migrants,

including documented as well as large number of undocumented migrants. Ms. Sandanasamy agreed with Mr. Stéphane Jaquemet that the migration process is highly complicated. Decision making is tricky and so is advocating for their rights through the Migrant Worker Resource Centres, due to multitude of delineations like narrowly skilled or highly skilled, or documented and undocumented. In addition, there are also refugees and asylum seekers, who lack access to even the basic social services. The complicated laws further alienate undocumented migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers from adopting legal pathways. ***“In the workforce, they are not recognized even when they are allowed to stay and reside in the country,”*** Ms. Florida Sandanasamy stated. Thus, they lack access to livelihood and social support, rendering them unable to defend themselves. There are a lot of challenges faced by an undocumented migrant in this context, which are aggravated by the conditions brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, they lack access to medical treatment. They face salary deduction and job loss, which affects their already precarious livelihood. In addition, these migrants and refugees are prone to criminalization, and are side-lined in terms of social protection. Thus, the migrant workers, especially undocumented ones, domestic labourers, and refugees took the worst hit from the pandemic. Ms. Sandanaswami concluded by calling for alternatives to detention in Malaysia, since migrant workers constitute an essential proportion of Malaysian workforce.

### **Implementation of Objective 12 requires more effort**

Throughout the webinar, each speaker presented different perspectives related to Objective 12 and its implementation. They agreed that realisation of Objective 12 requires more efforts. Mr. Stéphane Jaquemet held that assistance of those who are in a vulnerable condition require trained staff, with mechanisms for child protection referral. Ms. Aletheia called for transparency and accountability in migration procedures, especially in transit countries. Mr. Henry Rojas insisted on the importance of information dissemination, not only among



migrant workers but also among authorities. Police officers and the first contact officials must be trained to meet the special needs, giving importance to protecting the migrant rights, especially that of women and children who are victims of human trafficking. Ms. Florida Sandanasamy emphasised on transparency of proceedings among all stakeholders as well as facilitation of dialogue amongst them. To conclude, all panellists agreed that implementation of GCM Objective 12 must be a collaborative effort by all stakeholders- the gov-

ernments of origin, transit and destination countries, the CSOs, and the migrant workers themselves.

**Deepika Bawa** has completed her post-graduation from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, India. She is presently living in Kolkata, India. Her interest areas include academic research, writing-articles and Journalism.

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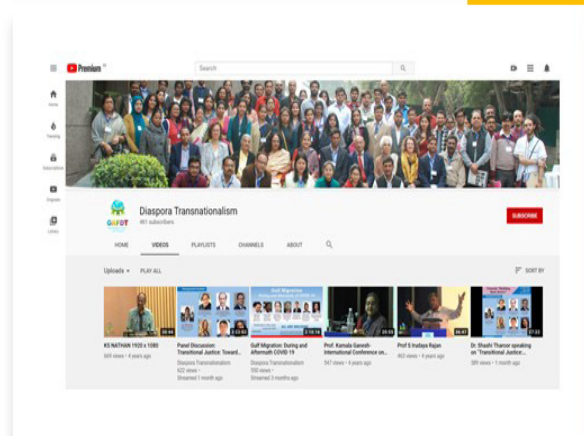
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## Access to Basic Services: Where Migrant Rights Coincide with Human Rights

The panel discussion on the Objective 15 of the Global Compact for Migration, ‘Provide access to basic services for migrants,’ was jointly organized by the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism, Cross Regional Center for Refugees and Migrants (CCRM), Civil Society Action Committee (CSAC) and Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), which took place on 8th December, 2020. The event was moderated by Mr. William Gois, Regional Coordinator, Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), who initiated the discussion by highlighting the importance of the GCM Objective 15, which is centered on provision of basic services for the migrant workers.

### **Migrants not well Captured in National Emergency Plans**

Dr. Poonam Dhavan, Senior Migration Health Policy Advisor, International Organization for Migration, acknowledged that the GCM is coherent with other key global health policy frameworks like Global Action Plan for Promoting Health of Refugees and Migrants. In practice, this translates to inclusion of migrants in national health plans regardless of their status. In her remarks, she stated that the world is practically shut down by the pandemic and as a result, IOM is working to ensure that migrants across the world, who took a disproportionate hit from the pandemic, have access to the basic and vital social services such as health, education and shelter, by collaborating with national and regional governments. IOM is closely working with WHO in order to provide services for stranded migrants through facilities like mobile clinics. Dr. Poonam also added that despite the efforts being made to support stranded migrants, they are not well captured in national emergency plans of many countries and this has been a major setback. Nevertheless, Dr. Poonam eulogized the efforts of some countries like Portugal, Turkey and Singapore in ensuring that mi-

grants, including those who are in the process of regularization, have equitable access as citizens to COVID related testing and care. Dr. Poonam concluded her presentation by stating that the present crisis has provided an opportunity for establishing the best coordination among various stakeholders at regional and international level, to ensure that all migrants have access to the basic services which are guaranteed to them by the international conventions.

***“The pandemic raises a valid issue, not only about the need of access for vulnerable populations, but also...using it as an opportunity to rethink and repurpose how the UN agencies and governments...look at responding to outbreaks and dealing with socioeconomic impacts”:* Dr. Poonam Dhavan**

### **United Nations Working Group to Develop ‘Best Practices’ Documents**

Dr. Kanokporn Kaojaroen, Country Support and Partner Coordination, Health and Migration Programme, Office of Deputy Director-General, World Health Organization, spoke about the activities of the working groups of United Nations network to improve access to services which are incorporated in GCM Objective 15. There are 6 working groups in total and the working group dealing with services comprise of 18 organizations, ranging from UN organizations like FAO, IOM, OHCHR, UN Women, and other CSOs and NGOs like Caritas Internationalis or the Red Cross, to name a few. The priority behind setting up this working group was to enable coordinated action on critical areas like health, water and sanitation, housing, education etc. Dr. Kaojaroen said that since the advent of pandemic, the network group has expanded its scope and began to look into other areas like child protection services, social protection ser-

VICES, gender-based violence, and sexual and reproductive rights. The working group, along with developing policy brief on impact of pandemic and guidelines for 'best practices', is also working on promoting inclusion of migrants, not only during the pandemic when 'no one is safe until everyone is safe', but also beyond, Dr. Kaojaroen concluded.

### **Returning Filipino Migrants Provided with Stimulus Packages**

Mr. Wilfred B Prilles Jr, City Planning and Development, City Government of Naga, Philippines, spoke about various services that the local authorities are providing in conjunction with national government to the returning overseas Filipinos. Mr. Prilles also highlighted the activities of the established Migrant Resource Center which has been complementing the work of government authorities in meeting the needs of migrants and assisting the returnees. Philippines has witnessed a huge inflow of returning migrants, most of them from Asia and Middle East, who have suffered wage loss. The goal is to ***“enable migrants at least come home in a safe manner, so they have continued semblance of continuity in their lives, and can go back abroad once the situation normalizes, if they choose to do so,”*** Mr. Wilfred stated. He also added that the government has set aside stimulus packages worth 20 million for business communities with the aim of mitigating the effects of COVID-19 and to provide succor to the local and international returnees in the form of initial capital.

### **COVID -19 Exposes Inefficiency in Health Sector**

Dr. Edline Padilla-Dela Paz, Associate Professor, College of Medicine, University of the Philippines Manila, stated that a lot of gaps in social services were exposed by the COVID-19, especially in the public health sector, using Philippines as her case study. Returning migrants were experiencing unfair treatment and discrimination at various quarantine centers and they had to pay an exorbitant amount of money for testing, ranging between 3000-15,000 Philippine pesos. Dr. Edline said

that the present universal health care law in Philippines is not efficient enough and it seems as if it has been commercialized, which was suggested by its failure to meet the main health needs of the returnees and even those at home, due to high premium that they have to pay.

***“The universal health care laws should have provided free quality services, but because it was banking on insurance as financing mechanism, it did not work since not everybody has PhilHealth, which... is also plagued with a lot of corruption.”: Dr. Edline Padilla-Dela Paz***

Dr. Edline concluded by pointing out that it seems as if the government lacks political will when it comes to providing basic services for people, otherwise, they put other factors into consideration such as private sectors and foreign investors whenever they want to make decisions and this is having adverse effects on welfare of the citizens.

### **United Arabs Emirates: Online Platforms Offer Assistance Migrant Laborers**

Mr. Paul Raymund Cortes, Consul General of the Philippines, Dubai and Northern Emirates, United Arab Emirates, shed light on various services offered to migrants coming to UAE, whose accessibility has been expanded by utilization of online platforms. Mr. Paul pointed out the example of TWAFUQ service- government run online website through which migrants can not only access information and file complaints, but also settle scores, ensure quick registration and documentation, as well as initiate procedures to avail their rights. With regards to health issues, all employees working in UAE are expected to be registered by their employers under health insurance scheme which shall be taking good care of their health. Mr. Paul Raymund also said that the Ministry of Labour, and the services provided by the government, are available through mobile apps, making them more visible and accessible.

However, COVID-19 has put forward severe challenges before this system. Migrants have lost jobs,



are denied wages and many lack access to proper medical care to thwart the virus. Many immigrants even lack food to sustain themselves. Mr. Paul stated that these issues were looked into through the assistance of police and health personnel, and food items were being sent to the needy to tide over these precarious times. Consular Generals are sharing best practices and coordinating among themselves to make lives better for other nationals living in UAE. Mr. Paul concluded by adding that since undocumented migrants were not inclusive in the Ministry of Labour packages, his office is helping Filipino undocumented migrants by providing basic services.

The webinar had been highly enriching, with each panelist contributing to their common argument on why it is imperative for international organizations as well as governments to ensure that migrants across the world, regardless of their status, have equal access to basic services, so that their rights, not only as migrants, but as humans, are fulfilled.

**Seyi Olawuyi**, an independent migration and environmental consultant, CEO at World Ecological Concepts Ltd. Nigeria.  
Twitter @Omoobalans



Date: 08 December 2020  
Time: 05:30 PM Indian Time (GMT + 05:30)

## GCM OBJECTIVE 15: PROVIDE ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS

 <p><b>William Gois</b> Regional coordinator, Migrant Forum in Asia <b>(Moderator)</b></p>	 <p><b>Dr. Kanokporn Kaojaroen</b> Country Support and Partner Coordination, Health and Migration Programme, Office of Deputy Director-General, World Health Organization</p>	 <p><b>Dr. Poonam Dhavan</b> Senior Migration Health Policy Advisor, International Organization for Migration</p>
 <p><b>Paul Raymund Cortes</b> Consul General of the Philippines, Dubai and Northern Emirates, United Arab Emirates</p>	 <p><b>Dr. Edelina Padilla-Dela Paz</b> Associate Professor, College of Medicine University of the Philippines Manila</p>	 <p><b>Wilfredo B. Prilles, Jr.</b> City Planning and Development Coordinator, City Government of Naga, Philippines</p>

All are Welcome. The event will be organized using 'Zoom' App. Send an email to [convenor@grfdt.com](mailto:convenor@grfdt.com) in case of any difficulty in registration. Livestreaming: [www.grfdt.com](http://www.grfdt.com).

Register: <https://forms.gle/wKBY8ngYYWe7n3Tc6>



# Pandemic Impact on Migrant Children and Youth in GCC

Dr. K Ranju\*

## Introduction

GCC migrants' children, born in GCC Countries and migrated, are very much like domesticated parrots. Weakened health networks and disturbed health services have a direct impact on the well-being of children and young people, on parents' work and income reductions, disrupted entry to education and limits on transport and mobility. Many whose lives are still characterised by insecurity would be further impacted. According to the UN report, in 2019, some 33 million children, including those who have been forcefully displaced, lived outside their country of birth (Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2019-UNHRC). Worldwide, 52% of migrant children and over 90% of refugee children are residing in countries with low and medium wages, with health services overloaded and long-term under capacity. GCC countries have developed education programs to support the educational needs of the children of migrants to encourage economic migrants. They depend on private schools, though, where access and efficiency are related to the willingness of an individual to pay tuition. The bulk of students in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar today are migrants, including a large number of students in the other four GCC nations.

Migrant children who have faced difficulties in navigating regular school programs or worldwide online materials and remote classes are best represented as displaced learners. The pandemic has impacted 1.5 billion student schools worldwide and is expected to worsen the vulnerabilities of millions of migrant and homeless learners worldwide (UNICEF data 2020). They're at risk of slipping further behind in education. And provided that economic downturns usually contribute to more children being confined between the four walls

and their computer screens, the condition has deteriorated. Increasing global deaths indicate that individual migrants and migrant children would be orphaned and exposed to child welfare abuses. Migrant and displaced children's protection and stability are further undermined as employment and wages are lost. Lockdowns, lack of jobs, and small-scale confinement exacerbate risks to children's welfare and well-being. Children from migrants and displaced families are less likely to have extended families around for support, forcing many to fend for themselves.

In all GCC industries, schooling was among the least equipped for disruptions such as COVID-19 and perhaps the most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In virtually no warning, a well-established paradigm of in-person schooling was compelled to move entirely online, sending 2.75 million children home (OECD,2020). A direct result of which is a possibility of decreasing long-term learning standards, coupled with a possible rise in children's digital literacy deficit. Most GCC education ministries are now working hard to set the right conditions to update online learning, teaching, and materials. However, considering continuing disruptions to in-person learning in the future, policymakers should take longer-term steps to strengthen online learning by improving digital infrastructure and ensuring universal access to online services. Most GCC education ministries are now working hard to set the right conditions to update online learning, teaching, and materials. However, considering continuing disruptions to in-person learning in the future, policymakers should take longer-term steps to strengthen online learning by improving digital infrastructure and ensuring universal access to online services.

\*Dr. K. RanjuRangan, Independent Researcher and an HR professional from Qatar, is the founder of Exodus Research. In the GCC countries, he was actively involved in labor migration issues of South-East Asians.

## Research Methodology

The research area focused on migrants children in GCC countries. The study excluded migrant children in hostels. Individual country studies were undertaken in Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE from February 2020 to September 2020 and developed a comprehensive questionnaire to 10 families in each country, having migrant kids two or more and all were born in GCC or migrated to GCC in as young as two years old. The assessment was made on the below aspects:

1. Disruptions to education, limited access to on-line/ home learning, delayed solutions for sustainable education
2. Cybersecurity and data protection
3. Increased time at home for parents and children, increased childcare needs.
4. Closure of child-friendly spaces, parks and play areas

The appraisal is based on informal interviews. While sparsely available, data were obtained from the Statistical Department; data were obtained basically from the migrant children interactions only. There are certain limitations to this analysis. Firstly, a face-to-face interview was omitted in the face of health threats, though self-reporting has some drawbacks relative to face-to-face interviews. Secondly, the effectiveness of psychiatric facilities did not monitor as a transversal analysis.

## Objective

According to WHO, statistics show that children under the age of 18 constitute around 8.5% of confirmed cases, with comparatively few deaths compared to other age ranges and typically moderate illness. Critical illness was established, however. Children's role in transmission isn't yet well known. To date, few outbreaks were recorded affecting children or classrooms. However, the small number of outbreaks reported by teaching or related staff to date indicate minimal dissemination of COVID-19 in educational settings. Since children typically have milder sickness with fewer

symptoms, cases often go unnoticed. Importantly, early research results indicate adolescent infection rates could be higher than in younger children. The initial lockdown surge in the early part of this year prompted educators to switch online education quickly. While this broad-based change to digital approaches has been primarily reactive, it has also intensified an ongoing transition to a more blended and technologically focused approach. Pandemic COVID-19 prompted colleges and universities to shut and return students home. Learning experienced a change from conventional to more virtual application. This fact will prove to help bridge the digital divide, pushing countries to find immediate solutions and technologies that will have a long-term effect on the education industry. The transition to online learning, though, was not necessarily frictionless. Access to online learning in many private schools was based on paying term fees. Due to the coronavirus crisis, some families under economic pressure find it difficult to compensate. School operators announced that the move to e-learning required higher running expenses – teachers' digital preparation and buying e-learning platform licenses. This was in addition to the effect on children from traditional school-based learning to home-based learning. This article necessarily aims to figure out certain pandemic socio-mental effects on children because of the education system transition.

## Protection of data, confidentiality and cybercrime

Data is the lifeblood of the strategic planning efforts of every higher education institution and offers proof of success and a basis for new programs. In reaction to the pandemic of COVID-19, colleges and universities rely extensively on modern instruments and remote approaches to gather diverse data points on their stakeholders. This abundance of data is a double-edged sword: on the one hand, some data applications optimise the student experience; on the other, it is easy to use personal information unethically, ill-informed or even criminally. The pandemic brought most analysts to recognise that existing data security reg-

ulations in most GCC countries are obsolete and need to be updated to match themselves with an ever-developing industry. With the emergence of the pandemic and when the schooling system for many institutions is expected to be entirely or partly distant, education only enhanced the vital importance of ensuring adequate data protection and governance policies and protocols. And as directions and operations in individuals resume, new technologies and data sets remain relevant online distribution and related.

Online learning has voiced doubts about how to secure students' confidential records, the safety of children and the possibility of exposing to cyber-crime. Distance learning has pushed schools to use new technology and programs to ensure continuity of schooling. These online resources are used by students to submit learning assignments, enrol in events and interact with other students. Schools are required to monitor their students and teachers to ensure good student discipline and practical education. Such control and use of different systems also include the processing, storing and exchange of personal information. Many GCC countries have Data Protection Regulators where, like others, cyber-based data protection regulations apply. However, school officials' indifference and inadequate understanding of such laws also risk children's education online. Educators and parents should be familiar with how the legislation will safeguard student data. The mere collecting of consent from parents to store their children's personal data and the transparency of such data collection practices are not the primary concern of the school administrators but should ensure that all such data are kept securely and appropriately in order to deter illegal and unauthorised infringements.

Pandemic has given bad actors and hackers a positive life with the exposure of big internet users. Cyber analysts identified a major uptick in e-mail compromising to extortion and ransomware. Scammers take advantage of COVID anxiety by sending phishing e-mails with demands for donations and offering help from credible sources.

The risk of student and teacher spoofing is increased due to relaxed controls. Video conferencing applications have been increasingly targeted in contrast. The standard checks and best practices should also remind students and instructors, including not clicking on suspicious links or providing information to unknown third parties. There is a risk of misconduct, cyberbullying, and the distribution of false information and defamatory opinions through social media networks to reach students online. Many parents were also afraid that children would get engaged in porn movies and violent short films. Increased ads on children's websites scare parents in particular, and the government should find urgent action to curb those intruders.

As classrooms shut down and moved online, schools often saw a shift in the forms of cybersecurity incidents. This is primarily because the students and teachers using software vary from those they used previously. Teachers rely on video conferencing and cloud apps to take classes from home, and students use the same applications to remain in solitude with peers and classmates. Just after remote learning has begun, schools and students have witnessed events where unauthorised persons have hijacked simulated classrooms to create chaos and mayhem. Another example is teachers who record and share their lessons online without understanding the repercussions. Social networking sites are full of virtual class pictures of students and personal material from inside homes. This poses an immense cybersecurity danger as cyber attackers use this information to perform social engineering attacks and obtain access to school accounts. In addition, publishing class records and lessons online is a data privacy risk as schools are responsible for. It is time for IT providers to fill the holes, track the acquisition of new cloud applications and stable and confidential sensitive school data.

### **Socio-Economic impacts**

The pandemic has had unintended and unparalleled effects on people's lives in every corner of

the globe, affecting millions of people regardless of rights and income, socioeconomic and legal circumstances, faith, ethnicity, traditions, expertise, ethnicity, sex and era. The GCC countries are no different, well-known for their thriving economy and bustling metropolis. The consequences of COVID-19 were felt globally by the most vulnerable sections of the population in various ways as a result of intrinsic interventions and immediate exposure to the health, economic and social effects of the pandemic. The GCC countries have disadvantaged segments of the population: women who are most prone to domestic violence, girls, teens and young people who have lost access to group education and leisure, refugees who have lost their livelihoods, dependent families who have lost funds and those with existing medical conditions who need healthcare and whatnot, and it made a clean sweep of all sectors.

Although most colleges and institutions of higher education have moved to remote learning, many students have been left behind by airports and frontier closures. In addition, many faced higher housing costs from closing schools, as well as often a scarcity of support networks. As international students are typically not required to work full-time, many revert to savings or rely on bursaries and family support that can be affected by COVID-19 economic crisis. 22 per cent of GCC migrant communities have families with them and children are taught. Most of them rely on their parents' only income without any bursaries, and high school fees added to the pandemic's budget. Children are not the face of this pandemic, but risk being its biggest victims. Isolation and social distance situations, particularly in the early years, may have a devastating effect on children's lives. The burden on parents and carers will also negatively influence parental activities. This is further intensified by closing the schools, given the possibility of declines in the quality of education, particularly in special needs education, which involves individual coaching and close observation. Entry to schooling for migrant children is not always assured, and the COVID-19 crisis aggravated this situation. Equally significant are the limits on social engagement and its effect on the general

well-being and wellbeing of children as school systems are increasingly incorporating telecommunication technology in their education and learning opportunities.

Digital solutions are constantly relied on to satisfy and distance social policy to adapt to these challenges. These interactive solutions, however, face an intrinsic danger of transforming social human nature and culture. It is, therefore, necessary to encourage, incorporate and innovative cultural engagement, endorse policies that invest in cultural development and digital dissemination channels, as well as awards and promotional support for creative and cultural output.

### **Gap in Education**

The GCC regarded education as a critical factor in sustainable growth. As regional governments pursued economic diversification in an effort to leverage non-oil-based sectors and increase knowledge-based economies, higher education was seen as a priority. Regional education programs aim not only to leverage the potential of the youth population of the GCC – predicted to grow to 65 million by 2030 – but also to educate an entire generation of professionals with excellent technological skills, effectively bridging the gap between current skills and those needed by employers in the future.

The GCC countries, on the other hand, enjoy more robust emergency response systems due to their unwavering economies, extensive internet access, and established education frameworks. Despite the overall response, there is still a strong difference in preparedness and crisis management skills between the various education services, despite government and private sector efforts that sought to ensure that most programs were ready to migrate to remote teaching. Although many schools and universities have found ways to use new or existing platforms to communicate with and continue with their students, others have lacked the requisite technical resources and platforms for teacher-student interaction. Kuwait, for instance, froze the academic year for the public sector, while the private sector stayed open because it was able



to retain remote services. This inequity ignited a public discussion through Kuwait's social media sites, in which students asked to resume their studies remotely. Unlike Kuwait, many of Qatar's public and private organisations already had learning networks to meet the needs of remote education. The remaining education providers either purchased or developed online facilities and forums to connect their teachers and students, thereby benefiting from powerful internet access and government and community support. Despite this rapid response, however, there was still uncertainty and concern across social media about student well-being, skills growth, evaluation, and the next academic year. Remote education, although unable to replace face-to-face teaching, did reasonably well in the case of an emergency, but only where equipment and services existed, to the advantage of the privileged.

The transition to innovation and sustainable development required near-and long-term investment in human capital, infrastructure and technology to keep up with the pace of the scientific and technological revolution. To this end, regional governments have made concerted efforts to achieve qualitative and quantitative growth in the higher education sector. Education is one of the industries that has undergone major transformations, mostly due to the internationalisation of higher education, along with countries that are transforming the market, so that they are online with global trends and best practices. Global revolution, digital advances and a change in customer needs have not only created millions of job openings but have also increased the demand for technical and cross-functional skills. Education is not only a fundamental human right. It is an enabling right with a clear effect on the enforcement of all other human rights. It is a global common good and a key driver of change across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for a just, fair, equitable and peaceful society. Peace, stable and efficient economies cannot be sustained when education systems crumble.

### **Behavioural Changes**

School offers order and routine for students' lives. Following the habit of waking up at a particular time, wearing a uniform and going to school at a fixed time and returning home at a specific time, gives them a sense of normality in their lives. The predictability of understanding that the second-period science class follows the first-period mathematics class helps students' brains to concentrate on academic material. The standards for conduct and academic success are well known and well accepted. As schools switched to online students, they lost their structure and routine. Many get home with task bundles to complete, so it's up to them to determine when and in what order they're going to complete assignments. At first, this more incredible amount of independence and flexibility feels good – and then falls behind to slip over to be distracted by other more attractive choices (Netflix, video games, PS4, social media) or to get bored.

For most students, school is not only about academics, but also about social experiences. A lot of friendships started by sitting next to each other in the classroom. The highlight of a student's day might be walking down a particular corridor during the break because that's when they can confidently expect to see the person they're crushing or getting applause from their teachers for scoring good marks that will boost their self-confidence. Groups of friends have lunch every day. Through their experience with teachers and other school staff, young people learn how to communicate with non-family authority figures. In the classrooms and corridors of their school, young people are exposed to a range of different cultures, backgrounds and ways of life that may be different from their own homes.

School closures have also impacted extracurricular events. Many students enjoy participating in athletics, music, school games, robotics and several other events. Participation in these programs allows students to become a more promising candidate to schools, universities and prospective employers. More specifically, involvement in these events is an integral part of the identity of students. Students who are confined at home with their par-

ents because of COVID-19 may feel more stressed and anxious. Sprang and Silman (2013) show that children who have been isolated or quarantined during a pandemic are more likely to suffer from acute stress disorder, adjustment disorder, and grief. Such adverse psychological factors in turn, may have a detrimental effect on learning (Kuban and Steele 2011).

The school climate is known for its peer-related effects that impact achievement. It can create essential positive exteriorities by being in a classroom and therefore getting the ability to communicate with classmates. There are several different channels for peer impact. Students will instruct and improve each other. The high performance of classmates will inspire the student to work harder (through competition or social influence). Classroom activities also play a crucial role in helping students develop social skills which have significant effects on their personal and occupational growth in the future (Goodman et al. 2015). To establish positive freedom, independence and a sense of identity, communicating with teachers and other students is essential. It also strengthens the capacity of students to work collaboratively and efficiently in groups. There is strong evidence that social competences are linked positively to cognitive competences and school success (Malecki and Elliot 2002; Cunha and Heckman 2007).

### Key findings

- Coronavirus poses health vulnerabilities for a group of children who have not previously missed school due to illness. 57% of children confirmed to have a disease that makes them vulnerable to coronavirus did not yet miss school due to their condition.
- Health issues about coronavirus were critical reasons for non-attendance. The most common explanation given was the risk that a healthy child would contract coronavirus and become sick. The second most common reason was the risk that a household member would catch coronavirus from the child.

- Mental health problems that arose or developed during the pandemic were a cause for 2 per cent of all children in the study to struggle.

- Children from wealthy families are more likely to go back to school in person. The data indicate a high degree of confidence that a more significant percentage of children from higher socio-economic groups (55 per cent) expect to attend school than those from lower socio-economic groups (45 per cent).

- Prior or pre-existing health problems are a source of concern for attending school. Six per cent of children confirmed to have a significant medical problem or disease that has forced them to miss school in the past.

- Due to the pandemic, 76% of parents and caregivers fear children may be lonely for some time, often, or all of the time.

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The GCC Countries Face COVID-19 A Report which Clarifies the Efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries to Stop the Spread of COVID-19 and Limit the Expected Negative Economic Effects on the Countries of the Gulf Region

## Putting light into the dark side of our system: In Conversation with Vincenzo Muratore<sup>1</sup>

**Paddy Siyanga Knudsen:** It's time for me to introduce a migrant achiever organization. Because when I stumbled upon the story some years ago instead of as part of research, it was a story about a young man who had gone out to work as a migrant worker on a tomato farm. And as he was out there, so the kind of inhuman treatment that particularly Africa, young African migrants, was subjected to on Italian tomato farms. And he decided to do something about it. Unfortunately, he's not here to join us.

But the best part is that there is an organization that was formed by him...and Vincenzo will tell us a little bit more about it, because he's the project manager of an organization known as No Cap. And it's essentially I like what they put on their website. It's the story of activities Yvan Sagnet, who is not here with us and his international No Cap Association for the fight against illegal hiring and exploitation of labor. Vincenzo Maura Tory, please take us through what you do at No Cap. I know Yvan is not here with us. But I think he can tell us a bit more about what you do as a migrant achiever organization.

**Vincenzo Muratore:** So thank you very much for inviting us. And we're very proud to be here. And I would like also to thank all the people that have before me....Anyway, I'm here to talk about something else. I prefer the choice more presentation. So, if I can, I'd like to share with you thought

to be also a bit more aligned with the moment please...



So, well, this is our organization called 'No-Cap'. And you can see here, our email and I want to introduce before just time, our organization and everybody would like to split my interpretation into

three main parts. So, I want to introduce before Yvan Sagnet, and that of course, center, you have the greetings and for the thanks for this invitation. Then I would like to just speak a little bit about this phenomenon that is called a plateau in Italy. You're talking about notation, we are talking about new slavery actually and at the ends about I will have to talk about 'No-Cap'.

So he is Yvan Sagnet. He is a 35 years old guy came in Italy in 2008. He came in Italy to study attend a Polytechnic University in Torino, Italy to begin engineering. After 2011 more or less, he gets lost there.....so he needed to find a proper job continuing to study so he decided to move from the north of Italy to the south of Italy in a small country in a small city actually call it now though in Puyallup is a southeast of Italy. And he was working as a tomato pickers. What was very strange that sadly, after a while, he understood that something was very wrong. I will show you some picture because it's quite interesting to see that these were the condition which the people were living, they were living in ghettos illegally in this country was unbelievable. And they were completely exploited

<sup>1</sup>Vincenzo Muratore is representing the Migrant Achiever led organization "No Cap" as its Project Manager.

by an illegal urbanization, we can call them Kappally, as an English book became Master, actually. And they were exploited walking for 10-12 hours per day, or salary was ridiculous.

We are talking about 10-15 year old bad day and working without any respect of their human rights without access to them top 40 so what you're done actually was just to the side to fat process was one of the most famous products in Italy in 2011. We call their now door strike. And it was quite interesting because at the beginning, he was completely alone, but he understood that he needed community to fight together. And as he brought, he said, Actually, the workers in that ghetto doesn't know they arrived. They were completely normal about what was the low in Italy. They were mainly immigrants, of course, but he The main problem was that they were completely normal and not aware about their rights.

So he started this be tried, it was a big protest. And for the first time, I remember that, apparently, it was in 2011. And I remember that all the newspaper for the first time started to talk about the slavery in Italy. It was shocked prolapse. And we didn't know really, we didn't know. And that one was the first main process that we had before in the agricultural sector, that is one of the main sector, where these illegal activities take place. And after that, of course, he started the big activities he created, the group started creating our No-Cap, his organization, and after that, he brought several books. And at the end, just one of the most important recognition, he received one of the most important awards in Italy, and his medal for his fight, for this human right which was very important is what teach this exploitation because we didn't know in that period, and he started to understand that the main important thing was "to put light into this dark side of our system".

So we have at the moment what we had a mo-

ment on sorry, we have 1.3 million workers in the sector, agricultural sector, and part of them are forming. It's quite important because we are not talking about just about people coming from outside the EU talking about also European Union citizens, and also Italian citizens working in slavery, actually, in this very pet system. We are 430,000 exploitive people that work mainly as a system award seasonal workers. And we can say that we have more or less at the moment in Italy 180,000 people come, we can consider its race. This is unbelievable. And we have eight zones in Italy, that we consider now as a high risk of copper lotto. And that 60% of these modern slaves, we call them modern slaves, they don't have access to the NHS or the top water order, you know, legalizing, and we are totally on the alpha and illegal business in general on this produce something like so content billions emails per year isn't a very big, business.

And what we have done actually walking hard is I will not say you all the work that was behind this, but actually Finally, in 2016, we achieved his main goal, which was to have an approval from our local Italian Vogue mentor, the first anti copper collateral node. We know that also in the UK, we had in in 2015, the first and modern and modern slavery act. And finally, in 2018, we had a directive from the European Union that condemned this kind of theory all around Europe, it was shocking also to understand, because at the beginning, we were thinking that the problem was just in South Italy, you know, after that we discovered the problem was in North Italia, studying deeply who is cold. And we are discovering day by day that the problem is all around Europe, we have the same situation in a different way, in Spain, in France, and also in Germany, and Belgium and so on.

For watching the entire Interview, please feel free to go to GRFDT's official [YouTube Channel](#) "Diaspora Transnationalism".