

# A review of strategies, measures and services implemented to address the needs of disabled students during the Covid-19 outbreak in Greece: Challenges and perspectives

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**Introduction**

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Challenges, Recommendations]

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# Introduction



Aim of the presentation:

- map the strategies
- measures and policies
- challenges
- recommendations for the future

- Aim of the AIDiSo Project: design a digital preparedness plan tool for a future crisis

- Project funded by the Hellenic Foundation for Research & Innovation



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# Methods



## Participants

- 11 experts - regional education coordinators
- from across the country (Greece)

## Interview



## 11 interviews

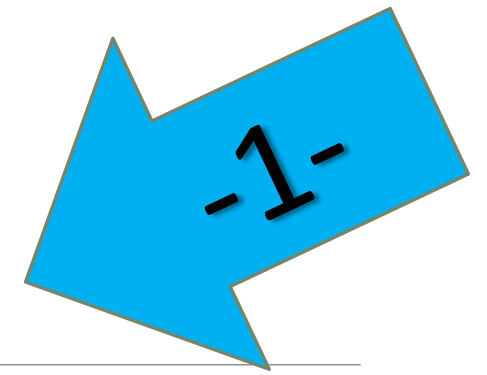
- via video conferencing platforms
- using a specific interview protocol

## Thematic Analysis



## Thematic Analysis

# Results



- No recording of needs of Students with Disabilities (SwDs) before the pandemic outbreak
- No central guidance or preparedness strategy, support and measures
- During the school year 2019-20 special schools closed for a small period of time but typical schools used distance education for a large period of time
- During the school year 2020-21 special schools were operating in person whereas typical schools operated online for many months
- Mainly teachers took initiatives to promote participation of SwDs

# Results

-2-

- ❑ **Some teachers were unwilling to use digital tools and adapt to the new conditions due to lack of proper training and time**
- ❑ **Teachers who were responsible for the SwDs played a more passive role during distance education**
- ❑ **There were serious technical problems during distance education**
- ❑ **The education coordinators took the extra mile in organizing and delivering special education working at their personal time**
- ❑ **The participation and motivation of SwDs seemed limited**
- ❑ **Participation during the year 2020-21 was higher than the first 2019-21**

# Measures & Services

-1-

- ❑ Online educational material and tools (<https://prosvasimo.iep.edu.gr/el/>) and Educational TV programs
- ❑ Guidelines, material and proposed activities on websites by experts – regional coordinators
- ❑ Individualized educational activities designed by some special education teachers responsible for the students with disabilities in each school
- ❑ Online communication groups for the encouragement of social interaction especially during the Covid-19 quarantine

# Measures & Services

-2-

- Some services stopped for large period of time (e.g. athletic activities, diagnostic services for students with disabilities, social skills programs)
- Educational material was available online for teachers and parents
- Online training programs for teachers, students and parents
- Psychological support
- Hiring psychologists and some substitute teachers
- Technical support from Regional Experts at PEKES and Computer Science Teachers in schools



# New needs of SwDs

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- Need to develop the digital skills of teachers and students**
- Need to deal with increase of cases of domestic violence, changes in students' behavior**
- Need for boundaries to parents in order to reduce their intrusiveness**
- Need for closer collaboration between teachers and parents**
- Need for accessible material and motivating and interactive activities**
- Need for equipment**
- Need for central guidance and support of schools and families**

# Challenges

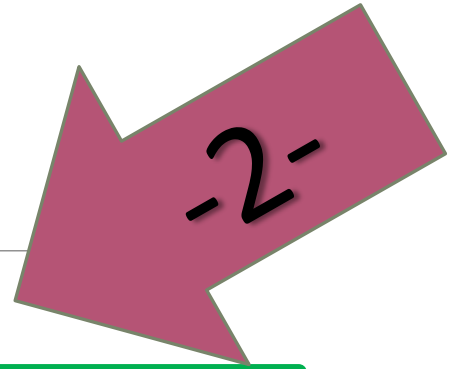


-1-

- Lack of central leadership and organized preparedness plan/protocol
- Lack of central guidance and measures to ensure accessibility
- Lack of effective communication between teachers, families and students
- Lack of equipment and infrastructure
- Inadequate knowledge and digital skills
- Lack of crisis management training
- Risk of marginalization of SwDs
- Negative emotions and behavior (fear, social distancing, anxiety)

# Challenges

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- Intrusive behavior of parents during online lessons
- Lack of specialized professionals (special educators, psychologists, social workers, technicians)
- Cases of burn-out mentioned by professionals
- Limited social interaction and lack of daily routine to the detriment of SwDs

# Recommendations

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- Need to hire more professionals (special educators, psychologists, social workers, technicians)**
- Need to organize measures and online accessible educational services**
- Need for digital skills training of students and teachers**
- Need for equipment and infrastructure**
- Economic support to students' families**
- Effective guidelines and protocol for preparedness and action during crisis**
- Accessible digital educational material and platforms**

# Discussion

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- ❑ There was lack of preparation - organized framework to deal with crisis situations, and particularly for students with disabilities
- ❑ Teachers' initiatives played an important role
- ❑ In many cases SwDs were excluded from the online educational process
- ❑ The measures and conditions were better during the year 2020-21
- ❑ The level of preparedness for a future crisis is higher due to the acquisition of know-how, the familiarity with digital tools.

***A structured preparedness plan-protocol for crisis is a necessity!***

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Fb-aldiso

Site-<https://aldiso.eds.uoa.gr>

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW article  
Front. Educ., 26 January 2023  
Sec. Special Educational Needs  
Volume 7 - 2022 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.1029163>



Organizational preparedness domains and indicators of educational organizations for students with disabilities in pandemic times: A scoping review

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