



Global Survey COVID-19 - Media Summary

# **Schools are shut but learning is on!**

Confinement and the new normality post COVID-19 explained by children from around the world. An analysis from the perspective of Child and Adolescent Wellbeing



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# Confined heroes

*Heroes in the hospitals, heroes cleaning the streets, heroes looking after us, and the biggest heroes of them all, the CHILDREN fighting alongside their parents for the common good, without understanding everything that is going on, but always keeping smiles on their faces.*

Boy from Bolivia

**For Educo, the heroes of this pandemic have undeniably been the children and adolescents** who from one day to the next have been deprived of their freedom and their rights. They are the most vulnerable group and the one that suffers the most during a crisis, but at the same time, the most cooperative and resilient when it is time to join forces and adapt to new realities.

At Educo we have been working for more than 25 years to defend children's rights and wellbeing. We work so that they can fully enjoy dignified lives, and an equitable and quality education. We also work so that they can express their ideas and opinions freely and that these are then taken into account and included in the decision-making processes related to the issues which affect them.

**Many children and adolescents have been deprived of spaces for socialising, have experienced stressful situations in their homes**

If there is one thing that concerns us right now, it is how children are experiencing the global pandemic which we are currently living through. Due to the emergency situation they have been immersed in, many children and adolescents have been **deprived of spaces for socialising, have experienced stressful situations in their homes, and in many cases, their education has also been seriously affected by school closures and a lack of access to alternatives.**

At Educo, and also as a member of ChildFund Alliance, **we put the voice of children at the centre of our research and all of our intervention projects.** In 2019 we published *Small Voices Big Dreams*, a study which almost 5500 children from 15 different countries participated in, to highlight children's perceptions of violence against children. The results were more than shocking: **"1 in 2 children think that in their country their opinions about the issues that are important to them are not listened to"**. That is why, given the exceptional situation we are faced with, we decided to listen to their opinions. When we let them participate, when we empower them, when we listen to them, they are capable of teaching us important lessons and they have demonstrated exactly that in this questionnaire. We strongly believe that including and replying to the voices, opinions and expectations of children is vital for the success of any policy or action aimed at helping children.

The questionnaire we have carried out has been online and global, so that it would be a questionnaire open to all children, all over the world. One of the aims has been to promote child participation, family dialogue and find out how children are experiencing confinement and the crisis caused by COVID-19. By doing so, we want to **highlight their perceptions, concerns and expectations in the face of this pandemic, from**



**Children and adolescents are fully aware of the emergency situation and its consequences on their relational, material and subjective well-being**

**a wellbeing approach.** We have asked them what they miss the most, but also what aspects of the situation they appreciate. We also wanted to know about their concerns and expectations for the future after the pandemic is over. Lastly, we have offered them a space in which to share messages of encouragement, advice and whatever they feel is important to them with their peers from around the world.

In light of the results we have obtained, we believe, more than ever, that we must listen to and take into account children's ideas and opinions in order to create, together, a fairer and more dignified world for children. The findings from this questionnaire confirm that **children and adolescents are fully aware of the emergency situation and its consequences on their relational, material and subjective well-being**<sup>1</sup>. On

7th May 2020, the questionnaire<sup>2</sup> was launched globally. By 23rd May it had been filled in by 4476 children and young people aged between 0 and 24 years old in more than 20 countries<sup>3</sup>.

This document features an analysis of the responses from the 6 to 18-year-old age group, because most of the answers came from this age group and the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that a child is considered as such until the age of 18. A total of **3,047 children** from 10 countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe (98.73 per cent) responded, as well as a lower participation rate from another 9 countries (1.27 per cent).

1 We understand child wellbeing as the fulfilment of children's rights and the opportunity for all children to be and do what they value, according to their abilities, potential and skills, taking into account the three dimensions: the material dimension, the relational dimension and the subjective one.

This questionnaire fundamentally explores aspects related to the subjective dimension of wellbeing, although it is inevitable that there will be a crossover from this dimension to the other dimensions due to the logic of the approach.

2 We would like to emphasise that the survey was conducted during the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the majority of countries imposed measures like social distancing, restrictions on movement, family confinement and quarantines, among others, and as a result we have an exploratory study of the perception of children in very diverse situations and conditions. This meant that we applied non-statistical sampling, the generalisation of which is not necessarily valid beyond the group that was surveyed, but which shows a certain frequency of responses that brings us closer to the daily lives and experiences of the participants and those around them.

3 The complete report with all the age ranges can be found in [https://www.educo.org/educos/media/Descarga/informes/Informe\\_tecnico\\_completo\\_COVID19\\_Educo.pdf](https://www.educo.org/educos/media/Descarga/informes/Informe_tecnico_completo_COVID19_Educo.pdf)



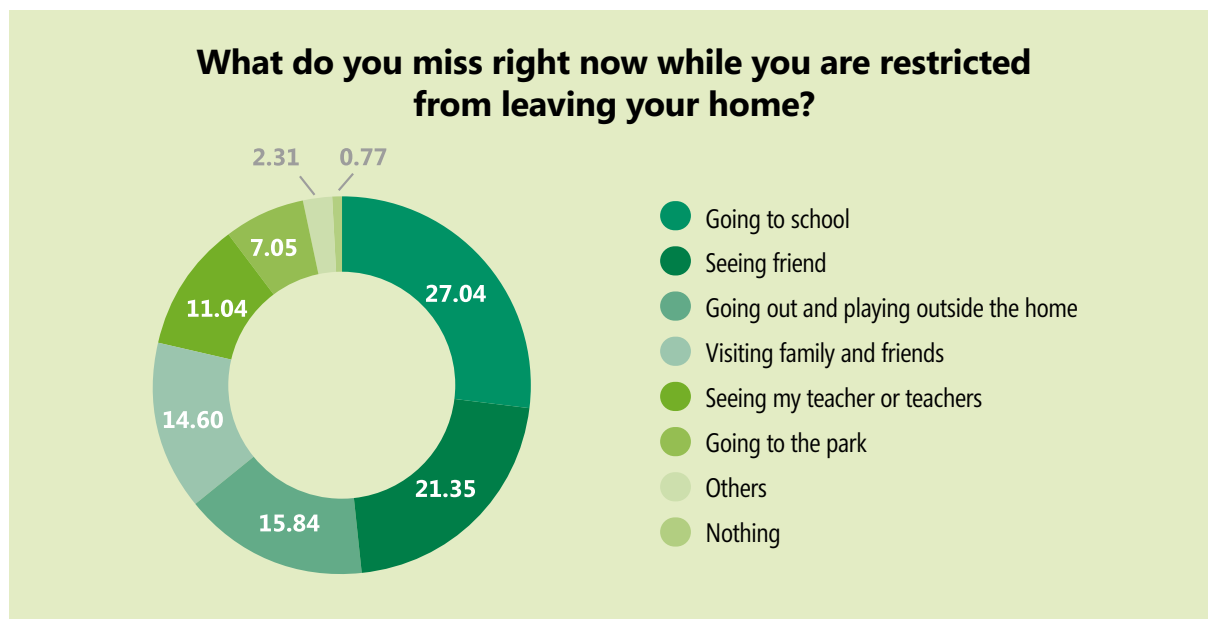
# We want to go back to school

*To my friends and my teacher, I miss you, I hope you are well and that we will see each other soon and keep learning at school*

Boy from Bolivia

The crisis caused by the emergence of COVID-19 has forced governments around the world to take action to address a global emergency that no one was prepared for. The most important and urgent task was to stop the constant spread of infection and death. To this end, families have been confined to their homes and the movement of people in the streets of communities, towns and cities has been limited.

From one day to the next, children all over the world have seen their daily lives disrupted, leaving them in suspense, only able to relate to the world within a limited physical space or through the Internet. Therefore, we wanted to ask them what they have missed most during the time they have had restrictions on leaving the house::

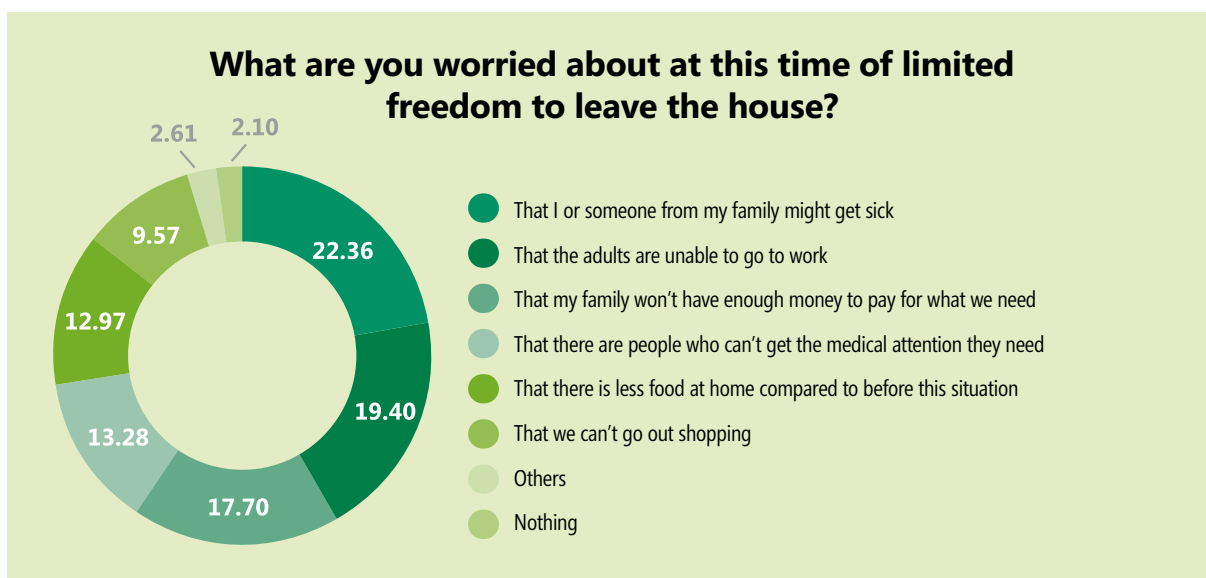


As we can see, what the surveyed children miss the most is not being able to go to school, making up 27% of the responses. Everything related to education appears to have a strong presence in the lives of children. We are not just referring to teaching. 11% also mention that they miss their teachers, important figures in the social development of children, and who, in many cases, provide very important support on an emotional level. **Because school is not just the place where children go to learn their lessons. It is also a place where they develop as people, mature and relate to others, discover new realities and access new opportunities.** School is a relational space and a space for diversity.

Children have also really missed being able to relate to others outside the home. Specifically, 21% said they missed seeing their friends and 14% said they missed seeing their family. Both these results demonstrate the level of significance that social relationships have for children and the fact that they are unable to share their lives and experiences with people who do not live with them, especially their peers.

# We are worried about our family's health

Such an exceptional situation like the global pandemic we are experiencing affects all people to one extent or another, whatever their age or wherever they live. As an NGO focused on the defence of children's rights and wellbeing, we wanted to know how children were being affected by this unsettling reality, by asking them what their main concerns were.



**Another of their major concerns is that, if they fall ill, their relatives will not be able to receive medical care**

Looking at the results, we see that half of the responses given by children are related to economic problems that may have occurred in their families, like adults not being able to go out to work, not enough money at home, and food shortages. However, the main concern that worries them is that a family member could get sick due to COVID-19. This idea is reinforced by the fact that another of their major concerns is that, if they fall ill, their relatives will not be able to receive medical care.

These answers demonstrate that children are very aware of what is going on around them. **An adult-centred outlook makes us think that children, including the youngest ones, do not understand what is happening. Nothing could be further from the truth.** Perhaps they don't understand the complexities of it, but they have seen how things

have changed from one day to the next and how the pandemic is affecting them and the people closest to them, especially in relation to health and financial resources. **Children are part of our society and therefore must be listened to and taken into account, because the context we live in and the decisions that that are taken affect their lives directly.**

# Now we can spend more time with our families

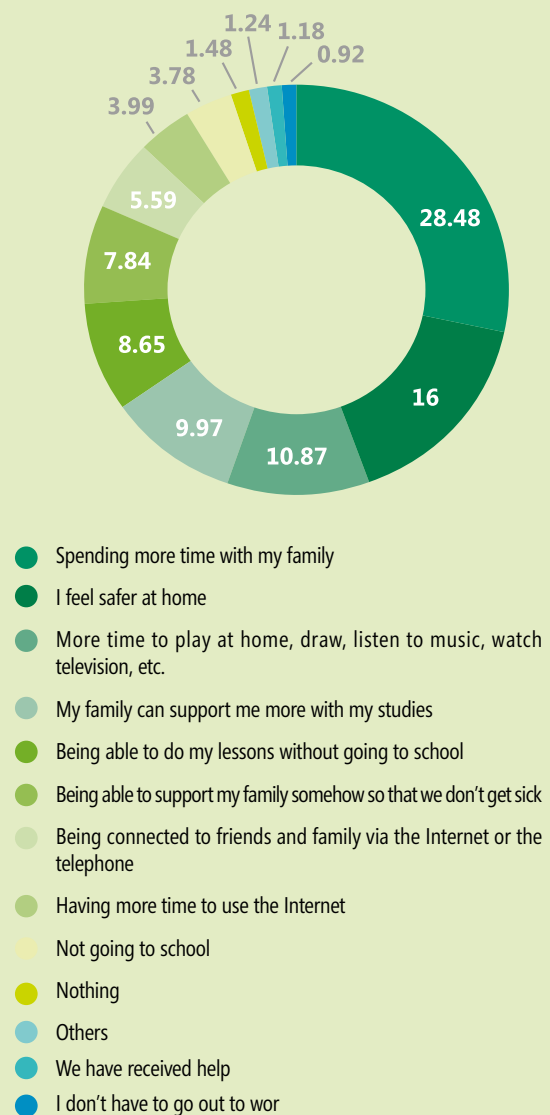
## Children perceive their homes as places they feel safe in.

During this global pandemic, children have been inspiring role models. Often the measures which the different governments have introduced have affected them directly, like for example the closure of schools. However, they have shown an admirable ability to adapt to this totally adverse situation. And not just that, they have also learnt from it and have been capable of seeing the positive side that we adults struggle to see. When we asked them what they valued the most about this situation these were their responses:

Clearly and emphatically, the children we asked told us that what they appreciate most about this situation is being able to spend more time with their families. This information should make us think as a society about the time we spend bringing up our children and the quality of that time. In their opinion, it seems that perhaps we are not giving them the time they deserve.

The second response that has received the most votes reveals that children perceive their homes as places they feel safe in. This implies that the context in which many of them live is perceived, at the very least, as insecure. **Therefore, it is important to remember that children's development will never be complete unless a series of conditions are in place that allow them to develop their lives calmly and safely.**

### Do you think there is anything positive about this situation?



# What will my life be like after covid-19?

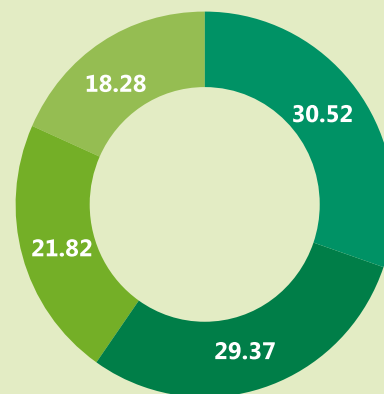
*We are making History.*

Girl from Spain

This is the question that many of us are asking ourselves. When all this is over, whenever that is, what will it be like? We still have a lot to learn and the answer is probably complex. However, we wanted to know what perception the children who participated in our survey have of their future.

Although the answers that obtained the most votes is the most optimistic one, we can see that the rest of the options have also received a high percentage. What we find extremely interesting are the opinions that children have shared about their perception of the future.

**What do you think will happen when we come out of this situation?**



- My life will be better 30,52%
- I don't know or I'm not sure 29,37%
- My life will be the same as it was before 21,82%
- My life will be more difficult 18,28%







# Children explain what their lives will be like after the coronavirus

## MY LIFE WILL BE BETTER

*Now I will appreciate my family more. The quarantine has helped me to spend more time with my parents and siblings. / Boy from Bolivia*

*Because I am going to learn to appreciate the little things more. / Girl from Nicaragua*

*I will be able to go back to my routine, play with my friends and go to school. / Girl from Mali*

*My parents will be able to go back to work and provide us with what we need. Schools too. / Girl from Benin*

*This has helped us appreciate the life we have. / Girl from Bolivia*

## I DON'T KNOW OR I'M NOT SURE

*There are still so many changes in the country, the world, the people, the economy, ... and they don't seem to stop. / Girl from Bolivia*

*Because the virus is still there and vaccine is not available so I feel unsure. / Boy from India*

*I am not sure. Things will be different. Because of social distancing we cannot do the usual things that we do with our family and friends. / Girl from Filipinas*

*Because the situation is strange and because the crises are adding up. / Girl from Mali*

*We will need to take great care of ourselves so that this situation doesn't happen again and we don't know what the consequences will be. / Girl from Bolivia*

## MY LIFE WILL BE THE SAME AS IT WAS BEFORE

*Because I miss my old life. / Girl from Guatemala*

*It is a moment in our lives that we have to accept. / Girl from Mali*

*I'm sure that we will continue to have what we need to carry on with our lives after this situation: health, food, time with our family and play. / Boy from Guatemala*

*I will go to school with my friends, visit my family and buy sweets from the shop. / Girl from Mali*

## MY LIFE WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT

*I know that my life will not be the same like what my life before. It will be more difficult because this crisis affect our life and lifestyle. / Girl from Philippines*

*Due to school closure I have missed lot of class. So that I cannot learn my expected learning outcome. / Boy from Bangladesh*

*I won't be able to study with the same security I had before, I won't be able to have direct contact with my classmates and that makes me very sad. / Boy from Bolivia*

*Our country is facing economic problems in this situation and we are facing the consequences of it. So I think after the situation ends, I and everyone on this country's life will be difficult. / Girl from Bangladesh*



# What message would you send to other children?

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*However long the storm may last the sun will always shine through the clouds.*

Girl from Guatemala



*Let's protect ourselves and those around us for a better life, together we will make it.*

Girl from Mali



*Live, dream, make your home into a world for exploring and having fun; and most of all, never give up.*

Girl from El Salvador



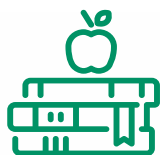
*Heroes in the hospitals, heroes cleaning the streets, heroes looking after us, and the biggest heroes of them all, the CHILDREN fighting alongside their parents for the common good, without understanding everything that is going on, but always keeping smiles on their faces.*

Boy from Bolivia



*Schools are shut but learning is on, playgrounds are shut but play is on.*

Boy from Bangladesh



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# What message would you send to other children?



*Stay positive and don't be sad about the schools being closed.*

Girl from Burkina Faso



*My friends all over the world I would ask you to go back to school after this situation.*

Boy from Benín



*That we are making History.*

Girl from España



*To all my friends and my teacher, I miss you, I hope you are well and that we will see each other soon and keep learning at school*

Boy from Bolivia



*School will be open and every children will be go to school. Maintain social distance and wash your hands frequently.*

Girl from Bangladesh



# Conclusions and recommendations

*Let's protect ourselves and those around us for a better life, together we will make it.*

Girl from Mali

At Educo we firmly believe that, so that children fully enjoy their wellbeing, their rights and the opportunity to develop their potential, we must **adapt to their context, invite them to participate and appreciate their ideas and opinions.**

That is why their responses and contributions are valuable and allow us to improve our projects and demands by taking into account their voices and opinions so that, together, we can **generate a series of conditions that will allow them to develop their lives calmly and safely.**

This global pandemic has highlighted that we are responsible for one another. The global feeling of fragility and vulnerability has led to an awareness of responsibility and common interest, of interdependence. Children and adolescents reveal what they value most through this survey: their education and their family, both of which are relational spaces.

They are fully aware of the repercussions of this crisis on their lives and on their families' lives. They worry about their health and that of their family members. They know what their duties and obligations are, they know that **looking after themselves and others is vital and on top of all that their perspective is constructive and full of hope.**

*Those who help others just because they should or have to and because it's the right thing to do are without a doubt authentic superheroes*

Boy from Bolivia



We will not tire of saying it, the most vulnerable and at the same time the bravest are the true heroes of our societies. Now, more than ever, so that children and adolescents can actively participate in fulfilling their dreams, we believe that it is fundamental:

# 1

## To listen to and take into account children and adolescents

**Listening to the voices of children and taking their opinions into account, even in crisis situations**, has been part of the main purpose of this investigation. Their perceptions are very important and the exercise of listening to them generates learning; which is why we recommend:

**Establishing, or improving, mechanisms that enable you to find out what they think and feel systematically, reliably and directly**, so that their opinions are heard under any circumstances, even in crisis situations.

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**Establishing appropriate channels so that the opinions of children are widely shared and can be taken into account in legislation**, public policies, and are made known to society, the academic world, children themselves, etc.

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**Including them in public discussions and debates** on educational policies and programs in general, and on education in the current context in particular.

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# 2

## Build collective wellbeing which includes the voices of children

The results clearly show that children possess an acute perception of what is going on around them. In their responses, we can see what is of vital importance to them, in particular the importance of relationships, especially family and friends, in relation to their wellbeing; we therefore also recommend:

Increasing research efforts in order to **gain in-depth knowledge of the perception of children and adolescents and their unique perspective on key aspects of their lives**, such as child labour, education, age and gender differences, the value of relationships and general well-being.


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**Recognising children as fundamental social change agents**, with a singular outlook on life, society and the planet; with their own concerns and interests; with specific expectations and hopes, and with a concrete vision of what collective wellbeing means and the abilities needed for contributing to its construction.

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**That the authorities establish community and family care programs; as well as policies** to be able to adequately reconcile family and work life, and that they be more ambitious and consistent with the developmental needs of children and adolescents; as well as with their rights and wellbeing, and that their voices be taken into account according to their situation and context.

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At Educo, as an organisation that promotes child wellbeing, we focus on those that are most affected: those homes and contexts thousands of children live in where there is a shortage of resources, time or support networks. That is why we adapt our projects to be able to respond to the new realities of children so that, when everything goes back to normal, they will be able to continue to have the **opportunity to lead dignified and happy lives.**

*All the problems will pass and sooner or later we will be safe. Maybe the whole world will be different, but together we are strong. / Boy from Bolivia*

