

## **Factors shaping student 'habitus' of social well-being in Cyprus and Greece in the era of COVID-19: a comparative approach**

### **Abstract**

This research project uses comparative and intersectional approaches to explore the impact of the experience of the socio-economic crisis and of the current pandemic crisis of COVID-19 on students' well-being in Cyprus and Greece, in order to understand patterns of inequality that affect happiness attainment in children. The contemporary socio-economic situation in several countries in Europe prevents or limits students' well-being and happiness, as well as their ability to flourish, and strengthens inequalities and conventional class hierarchies. It could be argued that the inequalities that students face at school and in society involve not merely differences in wealth, income and economic security, but 'differences in access to valued circumstances, practices and way of life' (Sayer, 2005). The current project employs Bourdieu's concept of habitus because it holds promise for exploring the affective aspects of living in an unequal society, developing a holistic understanding of the lived, embodied, affective experiences of inequalities in contemporary society and building more complex models of social stratification (Reay, 2015). This study also attempts to explore how the exterior – wider social structures such as the socio-economic crisis in Greece and Cyprus – is experienced and mediated by the interior, the psyche (Reay, 2004), and creates the proper conditions for a happy or unhappy life. Moreover, it raises important questions about the possible role of education for the promotion of students' well-being in this context.