Mapping and debating migration and the Covid-19 pandemic in the MENA region

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and its devastating consequences for the populations as well as for the world economies have been evident since the first moments, when countries, like China in East Asia and Italy first in Europe, decided to adopt restrictive measures to prevent its spread. The pandemic has affected many countries all around the world, each of them with a specific social, political and economic system and they have adopted strategies, implemented procedures and mechanisms to cope with its growing and damaging effects.

The pandemic has demonstrated the vulnerabilities of the healthcare systems as well as stressed how international cooperation is necessary in times of crisis. The MENA region is no exception. The consequences for countries, however, vary according to local circumstances, the measures implemented, the possibilities of economic recovery and the availability of funds to face the post-pandemic. Not only has the Covid-19 pandemic emphasised the vulnerabilities of national socioeconomic, political and healthcare systems, but it has also reinforced inequalities for the poorest and marginalised groups (women, youth, refugees and migrants) and has increased the divide between the Global North and Global South. This is also evident in the education sector, where marginalised and poor pupils and students found themselves in a tremendous difficult situation where the disruption produced by the digital learning caused stress to teachers as well as to students.

As suggested by Hanieh and Ziadah (2022), in order to better understand and assess the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is necessary to move beyond an analysis and discussion of the pandemic as a public health emergency, but it is, instead, relevant to map and conceive of the pandemic as a catalyst for wider transformation which has necessarily occurred in many countries. This is evident in the academic as well as in the common language where we now tend to discuss and present an event by locating it in a temporal sequence of pre-pandemic and/or post-pandemic.

This workshop aims at debating, in a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the MENA region, and in particular on the healthcare and education systems. In some of these countries, and most notably in the GCC countries, these systems have historically and recently functioned because of the presence of foreigners too. We want to map and debate the role of migrants in the
The workshop revolves around three major themes:

- The impact of Covid-19 on the migration dynamics within the MENA region;
- International cooperation initiatives aimed at supporting migrants and refugees in the MENA region;
- The initiatives organised by the migrant communities in MENA region to face the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences.

The selected authors will be invited to present and discuss their ideas in a workshop to be held at the Free University of Bolzano-Bozen (Italy) on September 29, 2023, under the patronage of the SISI. Partial refund covering travel and accommodation costs will be provided for selected papers. On this occasion, all authors will be able to share their thoughts and ideas regarding their contribution. All presenting authors will have the opportunity to publish an article on an edited volume with an international famous publishing house.

- Abstracts and papers are accepted in English.
- Length of abstracts: approx. 500 words.
- **Abstract and short CV should be sent to Gennaro Errichiello**: ge6@soas.ac.uk
International scientific committee

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