

LOCKDOWN AT HOME



by Margaret Morris and Sarah Simidian

'Life in Lockdown' Series

A time to reflect and a time to connect

HERE, on our unusually quiet island, almost through our second week of lockdown we are beginning to open up and share our personal take on what is happening.

Most of the time my life feels pretty normal but then, out of nowhere it strikes me - this is NOT NORMAL. We have all been forced into a way of living that our generations have never experienced and it is something that just takes my breath away. Just for a moment, until I can breathe again and remember, we are well, we are safe and things are going to be ok.

In this series 'Life in Lockdown' I will share different 'Life in Lockdown' perspectives from our Escola Global family.

This week I want to focus on a parent perspective. Over the last two weeks staff teams and families are reflecting on how, with absolutely no notice at all, our lives have been transformed. I guess that for many of us this has felt at times like an out of control roller coaster. But now, almost through the second week, change is in the air. Our Escola Global community has moved through the change curve and this is one parent's view of what this has felt like.

"When our school closed two weeks ago, we were sent home with books, papers, passwords and with a promise that our children's education would continue in some capacity.

By Monday morning my 12 year old son was online at 09.00 talking to his teacher and other classmates and by the afternoon he'd completed tasks, knocked up a couple of poems and learnt a few more chords on his guitar. So far, so good, I thought. As someone who over-functions in a crisis, I had timetables written for the two other boys, they were dressed, bed's made, breakfast cleared away by 08.30. After congratulating myself, I looked at the 243 WhatsApp messages in despair and realised that I needed to log on to Google Classroom with different usernames and passwords and that these would be in the children's Inboxes which I needed to set up for them. But I needed to download Google Hangouts, Google Meet and a whole host of other Apps before 'hanging out the washing' and making a nutritious lunch.

I got through the first week in pretty much the same way, drinking an extra glass or two of Binissalem finest each evening. I was extremely impressed with the school's efforts to keep going, it was in keeping with my efforts.

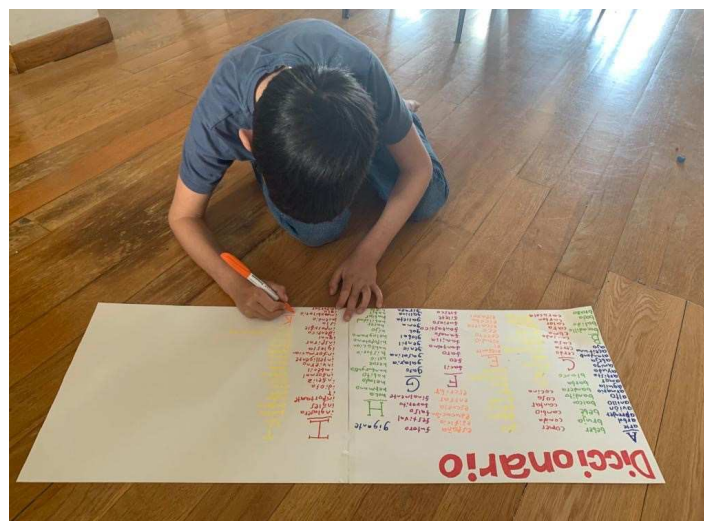
What I realise now however, is that we were all doing too much. Given the enormity of the global situation and the new way of life that we'd been thrown in to, we actually needed to stop and respond accordingly. What we wanted to do was panic, send messages, binge watch the news, drink wine and eat chocolate. School was an added unwanted stress. After another 342 WhatsApp messages, it



● After some very comforting words from our teachers and a deep breath of fresh air I realised that, going forwards, my 'prison school' was going to be more fun, more light hearted, less rigid and more about meeting my needs too.

was clear that many people in our school community were also struggling with the work-load. We are not home schooling. Home schooling is going on excursions, meeting up with like-minded people. It is also a choice. This was beginning to feel more like 'prison schooling'.

By Monday of week two I was feeling low. I reached out to others in my community and it seemed many felt the same way. After the initial burst of panic and excitement, I was experiencing a massive come down. I felt a little claustrophobic and anxious.



Our school wanted to know how we were feeling. We told them and they listened.

After some very comforting words from our teachers and a deep breath of fresh air I realised that, going forwards, my 'prison school' was going to be more fun, more light hearted, less rigid and more about meeting my needs too.

It's actually a fantasy, a parallel universe where have the power to press the stop button on life. No alarm clocks, no school run, no having to make an effort with anyone. I am trying to make the most of this time now. I have moments of despair, thinking of the suffering across the world caused by the pandemic. I have moments feeling in awe of the people putting themselves and their families' lives at risk helping others. I feel incredibly privileged to be at home with my family and lucky to be amongst a community of people who care about each other".

I hope some of this resonates with you. Our feelings and ways of coping with this massive, enforced change are deeply personal and at times pretty raw. We are making some of this up as we go along and that's ok. One of the most important things for all of us seems to be creating and sustaining connections.

In the spirit of sharing and caring, here is a link to an online booklet about Coronavirus 'Covibook' which we have found helpful for our younger children: www.mindheart.co

Next week we are going to hear from the school perspective.

Keep safe and keep well.

Margaret Morris is School Adviser at Escola Global

