

ITALY

THE KIDS AIN'T ALRIGHT



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parallel o z e r o

Generation Z and the pandemic

"Covid and I don't get on well at all. It robs of me of my liberty, friends, favourite places and sometimes even my hope." Almost one year on from the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, numerous studies are showing that teenagers seem to be paying the highest price in terms of their mental health. This is due to the knock-on effects of the substantial limitations on their social relations, having to spend the majority of their time at home, the interruption of their in-person schooling and the general drop-off in physical activity (and the consequent overuse of electronic devices).

This condition will perhaps have wider consequences but it is proving difficult to talk about, or rather, difficult to get youngsters to talk about. The hermit-like teenagers of Generation Z are more inclined to open up (with one another) in 30 second bursts on TikTok than before the eyes of the outside world.

Twelve young people, aged from 14 to 19, agreed to be photographed in the places that are special to them and they told us how they are experiencing these times. "This situation should have taught people to be more human, but it seems that isn't the case: they have become even more selfish, excessively bitchy, toxic and apathetic due to the lack of human contact."

Many stories and many places, skate parks and playgrounds, discos, gyms and sports centres where now "everything is silent, all those places where we could escape just for a moment are now inaccessible". And the schools: "I am firmly convinced that education cannot be imparted through a cold electronic device. As Plutarch said, *education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire*".



The worst part of distance learning is the complete lack of interaction and direct attention. Sitting in front of a computer for 6 hours in a row is tiring: it's harder to concentrate and you learn less.

We young people can't wait to go back to school.

Sofia (aged 18)

Canova artistic and musical high school, Forlì





I want to dance until it hurts and not give a damn about the rules.

Rock Planet has been closed now for a year and I want to dance without a facemask. I want to go out at night without feeling oppressed or afraid of the police.

That's why Covid and I don't get on.

Aron (aged 19)

Rock Planet, Pinarella, Cervia





At the beginning of Covid-19 there was hope: "Stay at home, everything will be OK" but the sacrifice was for nothing and now my hope is exhausted.

The concept of normality doesn't exist any more: everything that used to be "normal" is now forbidden.

Lara (aged 18)

Higher education, beginning a career, new experiences and travel all seem impossible.

We're watching the best years of our lives pass by and we can't do anything about it.

Zahie (aged 18)

Free to Fly youth centre, Alfonsine, Ravenna



Scared?

I'd say petrified by this nothingness that can KILL you.

It's now one year since the dance studios closed. I hope that everything gets back to NORMALITY because I want to BELIEVE.

Denise (aged 16)

Endas dance school, Cervia





This virus has changed everyone's lives, stopping us from doing what we always did to keep happy.

Not being able to go out for a skate is destructive. I can no longer develop my passion like before, nor my relationships with friends.

Michele (aged 18)
Skate park, Cesena



Chiara (aged 18)
Canova artistic and musical high school, Forlì





I miss swimming through the water with all my energy to let off steam after a hard day studying.

Everything is silent: there are no children, young people, instructors or the sound of water to break that deafening silence.

Covid has taken all of them away.

Giorgia (aged 18)

Municipal swimming pool, Cervia



We haven't played basketball matches for around a year, which is strange and a bit sad.

We train less often and for a shorter time, but we still manage to stay committed and to work with intensity and that makes me happy. Outside basketball I don't see many friends like before, but sometimes we try and organize to see each other.

Luca (aged 15)

ASD Basket, Cesena





The arena has always been a meeting place, a happy place. The park divides the two municipalities of Mercato Saraceno and Cesena.

During the quarantine it gave people from the different municipalities the chance to meet up.

Teresa (aged 14)

Borello Arena, Cesena



We're students but first of all we are people and we need interaction, not only with our classmates but with our teachers too.

Distance learning inhibits any type of relationship and students are reduced simply to objects. This might work for machines, but not for humans.

Rita (aged 18)

Canova artistic and musical high school, Forlì





Even when playing, the main feeling is one of tension rather than diversion – the fear of being around other people and the anxiety that the situation could worsen.

Like me, my friends can't bear this situation any more. The first months we stuck with it but now we've reached a limit.

Riccardo (aged 18)

Parco 5 Pini, Pinarella, Cervia



Training sessions take place in the open air. We all come wrapped up in jumpers and thermal tracksuits to resist the cold. For now it's the only way we can train and it's also fun, at least until you can no longer shoot because your fingers are frozen.

Outside basketball I can't manage to see my friends other than on the screen of my phone or computer.

Matteo (aged 16)
ASD Basket, Cesena



Cheyenne (aged 18)
Canova artistic and musical high school, Forlì

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